



Thoughts on managing your STEM engagement activity/event

Ashley Kent, Cheltenham Science Festival, January 2014

Think about an event that you went to that was really good. It could be a concert, a wedding, a science festival or even a conference.

The hallmark of a good event is good organisation and that everyone knows what is happening and expected of them. The London Olympics was an amazing event, however, if their ticket readers weren't working and you couldn't get in, that would have been the worst event you never got to go to!

You need to think about each step in the process from the point of view of the audience, the delivery people, your staff and you.

Good event managers go to a lot of events. Think about your event minute by minute – what is happening at any one time? Do you have a plan for this? What if it goes wrong, do you have contingency plans?

Share your plans with others, early and often. It's no good if you are the only one who knows what is going on. And often times, others will think of things you missed.

If you need help with answers on how to deal with something, use your community - [join BIG Chat](#) and ask 1,000 STEM engagement professionals and volunteers to help you solve problems. It's also a great place to promote yourself, your colleagues and your activity.

Things to consider:

- 1 Title
- 2 Copy
- 3 Duration
- 4 Date
- 5 Venue
 - Opening hours and a/c or heating
 - Cleaning requirements
 - Power problems?
- 6 Time of day/year
- 7 Age ranges
 - What do you need to do about minors?
- 8 Capacity
- 9 Format
 - Panel, workshop, demo, comedy, lecture, piss up, traditional/wacky
 - Turnaround time – setting up, resetting and packing away.
- 10 Costs – can you afford this? How?

Things to consider (cont.):

11 Staffing

- Do you need staff? For how long? To do what jobs?
- Delegate, delegate, delegate!

12 Tickets and price

- How do people pay? Do they pay? Collect tickets?
- What does the price of your event say about your event?

13 Speakers/presenters

- Who are they? And what do they need to know about the event and the audience?
- Are you paying them?
- Are you feeding them? What about travel expenses?
- Do they know what is going on before during and after the event?
- You want them to have a good time, otherwise they won't want to work for you again!

14 Audience

- Who are they?
- What do they know already?
- What do they want to know?

15 Marketing – how are you going to reach your audience?

16 Where does it fit in the local scene?

17 Evaluation – don't forget pens and someplace for people to write!

18 Introduction/introducer?

- Remember, the intro isn't the event – don't let it overshadow what people came to see!

19 Q&A - who is leading this? Do you have a plan for difficult questions/audience members?

20 Sound/lighting/projection

- How are all these things going to work? Who is going to set them up and take them down? Mac cable and adaptor compatibility?! Can you get a copy of the presentation early?
- If you think you don't need a microphone, think again because you do. Almost always.
- Anything odd you need to source? Make a list and check it twice.
- Are you filming the event? Or will you want vox pops later?

21 Seating and room layout – does this match your event format?

- Do you need assigned seats?
- Do you need to have a seating plan and hold comp tickets for speakers/VIPs?
- Fire escape seats!

22 Weather

- Outdoor events need back-up plans
- Schools wet weather plan

23 What are the expectations?

- What are your audience expecting to get from your event? Even if you have an awesome event, if it doesn't match the expectations of the audience, they will feel let down.
- On the audience? – do they cheer? Cry? Laugh? Ask questions? Get up and do something?
- On the speakers? – just talk? Slides? Take questions?
- Have you done a staff briefing? No? Should you?

24 Where can I park, get a cup of tea, use toilets, other amenities?

25 Health and safety

- Risk assessments
- Protestors
- Crowd control

26 Event follow up

- Audience feedback
- Speaker/presenter thank yous/pay them promptly!