

The background of the page features silhouettes of a group of people standing on a reflective surface, likely a beach at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange and pink, and the silhouettes are reflected in the water below. A large, dark teal circle is centered on the page, containing the text. At the bottom of the page, there are two white, curved lines that resemble a stylized arch or a partial circle.

06

who should
attend and why?
what are the rules
for attendance?

WHO SHOULD ATTEND AND WHY? WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR ATTENDANCE?

Deciding who should attend your event is dependent upon its purpose and goals, as well as the role of the attendees at the event and within your organisation. The cost of attending the event must also be weighed against the cost of them being away from the office or their own business. Intangible benefits, such as perception and relationship building, may weigh more heavily in the decision than monetary factors.

A simple way to determine who attends is to create a list of potential attendees and then consider the value of each one being at the event. Some attendees will have active roles while others will be more passive as they may be there to learn and develop professional skills rather than to be speakers or lead sessions.

Customers at a product educational event may be arranged in buying level categories or specific levels to suit experience. This creates a natural complement to the investment in those customers to maintain relationship and product loyalty.

C-suite customers attending major industry gatherings are invited as they influence large purchase decisions and business direction. The value of these relationships to the company is high and thus sessions are specifically designed to bring in high profile speakers and demonstrate innovation to attract these customers. This shows you value their time by giving them real benefit.

Partners must also be considered, though more so for an incentive program or conference than a strictly professional development event. A parallel partners program will often be developed to accommodate them during the business sessions and nurture these supportive relationships. At times partners may also be involved in the business so they'll attend business sessions.

In addition to external professional speakers and possibly channel partners, clients or suppliers, there will be management and staff who will be presenting, running workshops, leading teams and performing other roles. Confirm these roles prior to the agenda being prepared and brief all participants on what is expected of them.

Consider complementary sponsor offerings and look to see how their influence can become an integral part of your marketing strategy. The more a sponsor can align with your goals and add value with key engagement with your attendees the more it will add extra value to your program and generate additional revenue. Real stories such as case studies show challenges and solutions that may align closely with your attendees', needs.

Operational staff, such as those running registration desks, exhibition stands, managing movements around the venue, media managers, attendee hospitality, IT support and more, can be contracted specifically through the event manager, may be staff from your organisation or a combination of both.

Clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour are provided for all attendees via the attendee kits or an address by a person of authority from the stage. You don't want one bad apple to spoil it for everyone and whilst rare it still can occur.

It is important to be conscious of the balance between corporate and office staff, sponsors and suppliers, and attendees. Though the attendees are the main focus, other participants have special requirements as well. You may provide a separate break out area for speakers, sponsors or the media where they have access to refreshments, internet and a quiet space to work.

making a difference

“ A moment that really touched and inspired me was seeing a ‘best practice’ session come to life with a group of attendees. They were learning from each other, sharing their stories, perspectives, challenges and successes. Seeing this honesty and open sharing was invaluable to others in the network and it created a stronger, connected community and sense of belonging. Plus it put faith in themselves and their business, to take back their learnings for a stronger business and recharged personal confidence to give it their all. ”

EXPERT TIPS

Give attendees roles at the event to get them even more engaged – team organiser, speaker, workshop facilitator, joke-teller to open a session, record video testimonials on an iPhone, bus conductor when travelling away from venue, registration and welcome desk, general support staff, introducer at social functions to match up attendees. Using staff who know the attendees makes it easier for them to engage with attendees and can be helpful, saving on costs.

Appoint a media liaison officer if media are attending. Prepare media kits, arrange interviews and photo opportunities with managers, sponsors or whoever is appropriate for the event. Establish a break-out room for media and ensure journalists only speak with approved executives. Attendees need to understand they are not to speak with media without authority.

Sponsors come to events to showcase and develop understanding of their products, launch new products, build relationships and learn more about the business they're supporting. Provide them with structured networking opportunities to showcase their products, services and other value add opportunities. Make them feel a part of the group and invite them to relevant sessions. Provide opportunities for guests to mingle and network in breaks with sponsor stands or display areas. Invite them to social functions and ensure they are spread throughout the room, not just at their own table. Look for fun ways to engage them and help them grow their relationships outside of the standard offerings. Value their attendance and thank them for being there. Be sure the sponsor only brings a specific number of attendees to keep the costs from outweighing their conference funding contribution.

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Partners should be recognised for their contribution to the success of the business. We all lead busy and demanding lives whether in our own careers or raising a family. Create an opportunity to say thank you and perhaps invite them into the sessions or offer their own activity where they can build relationships, share experiences, and network within the partner group. Whilst some are involved in the day to day operations they all love opportunities to get involved in the social and relationship building activities.

Key team members who engage with the network or assist with delivering the product can be an asset at a conference. They are often excited about attending and can gain valuable tips for improvement within the business as they network with the attendees. Encouraging them to keep their ears open can also lead to opportunities between attendees while at the event.

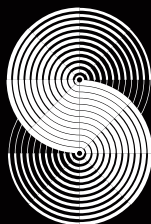
Always conduct a feedback survey, either during the final session or promptly post-event. You need to gauge your success and gain insights while the event is still top of mind for the attendees.



**we create events that awaken, ignite
and motivate your people, building a
renewed sense of connection and
commitment to your organisation.**

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