£2.50

Checklist for events that go with a Cang





Jackie Barrie founded Comms Plus in 2001. It's a writing and design business that specialises in making complex information appear simple. But, sometimes, effective communication can't be achieved by a piece of paper or on screen, it just has to be done face-to-face.

We don't organise events because we are event managers. We organise them because we are communicators who pay attention to detail. We are also happy to contribute to events organised by other people. Please see www.jackiebarrie.com for some of our recent public speaking engagements.

[&]quot;It was the best networking event I have ever been to and also the funniest. I personally recommend Jackie as a networking event organiser if you ever need real expertise in this area."

Event management

There is some research to suggest we take in only 7% of our information verbally. 35% is from tone of voice, with the remaining 58% from non-verbal body language. That means e-mail is the worst way to communicate, phone is next best, and the most effective method by far is face-to-face.

So when you have an important message to communicate, you may decide to present the information in an informal meeting, a formal presentation or an interactive workshop. Any of these need event management skills to make sure they go to plan. The comments in this booklet are designed for a full-scale conference, but apply to events of any size and type.

[&]quot;Thank you for your excellent advice and documentation of our discussion, not to mention the lightning response time!"



Before you do anything else, decide or find out the answers to the six key WWWWWH questions.

WHY

What is the objective of the event, what is the outcome that is required?

WHO

Who are the presenter(s), who makes up the audience, who can facilitate, who can help?

WHAT

What format is required, for example is it a meeting, an interactive workshop, a conference or something else?

WHEN

What date(s) and time(s) will it run?

WHERE

In what venue or location will it happen?

HOW

Will any special equipment or refreshments be required?

[&]quot;We're good at what we do, but we're not writers. Jackie is very good at what she does, that's why we use her. We're more than happy with the work done." Richard Hubball, Choice Bedrooms & Kitchens



Prepare a running order for the event, considering:

- **1.** Opening and closing session e.g. start with a surprise, end on a high point
- 2. Start / finish times may link to travel arrangements
- 3. Pace and variety e.g.
 - show-and-tell v. interaction
 - · video v. stills
 - fun v. serious
- **4.** Something active for the 'graveyard' shift after the lunch break
- 5. WWWWWH for each session

[&]quot;Jackie held a brainstorming session that generated hundreds of quality ideas from a variety of techniques. We would definitely ask for her help again." Nigel Green, Marketing Director, Freemans PLC

Presentations

All sessions should match the overall theme and go towards achieving your objective. Check that all the presentations fit together, that nothing overlaps, and nothing is missed out.

Content

Think what 3-7 things do you want the audience to know, then include them in priority order. People can't remember much more detail than that.

Structure

Make sure you include a beginning, a middle and an end. You could write an introduction, followed by detail and examples, then a conclusion or summary of key points. Or you could describe the problem, suggest a solution, and note the actions to be taken.

Visual aids

Consider what visual aids may be required. Be creative – you can vary between words, numbers, pictures and sound, music and action. People benchmark your visual aids against TV. Video can be highly effective and is becoming more affordable. Remember that for video presentations you can have visuals without words but not words without visuals.

[&]quot;I very much like the design. Your designer deserves more than a bit of praise."



The role of the event manager is to coordinate between the audience and presenter(s) and any production crew. The objective is to make sure that everyone has what they need to do their job, by clarifying what they need to do and when they need to do it.

As the event manager, it is your responsibility to book the meeting room (or delegate this task to someone else, but make sure that it gets done). Agree the room layout, book the furniture and organise any props that might be needed. Obtain any equipment the presenters need e.g. flipcharts, pens, OHP, laptop(s), projector(s), extension leads. If possible, always have a spare available. Order refreshments.

Use organisation tools to keep control. Prepare a schedule and checklist of action points, with responsibilities individually allocated and deadlines. Remember to allow time to set up, rehearse and clear away.

[&]quot;My PR man is good at PR but no good at writing. I had a go at it but I'm no writer and anyway I ran out of time so I gave it to Jackie. She was brilliant! And so quick too! When I gave it back to the agency they said it was 10 times better than before."

Before the event

You may need to arrange design and print for:

- **1.** Invitations (including maps, directions and RSVP)
- 2. Name badges
- 3. Agenda
- 4. Handouts
- 5. Exit questionnaires to collect feedback

Issue invitations in advance, and consider an e-mail reminder shortly before the event. Collate the final guest list so the venue and caterers know exactly how many to expect.

On the day, arrive early and check:

- Are tables and chairs arranged as you want
- **2.** Is all equipment delivered and working
- **3.** Can you and your visual aids be seen OK from every seat
- 4. Know your entrances and exits
- **5.** Practice speaking so you become comfortable in the space

[&]quot;After a 5-minute meeting, Jackie summed up my business in one paragraph better than my whole family and I could after hours of trying! She does what it says on her card – makes complex information appear simple."

During the event

Try to enjoy it (but be prepared for any contingency!).

After the event

Your role is not yet over. You are responsible for doing or delegating any clearing-up that has to be done. You probably didn't do it on your own, so be sure to thank all the presenters and helpers. Sign off any invoices and check them against your budget. Analyse the exit questionnaires to see how well your objective was achieved. Feed back the results to the presenters and all those who attended. Copy the results to anyone who missed your event. Finally, chair a review meeting with your team and note all your learning for next time.

[&]quot;Thanks for organising a good event, very informative."

[&]quot;Enjoyed the event very much."

[&]quot;Very good presentation."

Tips for Powerpoint

- 1. Use bullet point text
- Maximum 7 lines per slide or simple visual(s)
- **3.** White or yellow on dark blue reads best when projected
- 4. Slides can 'build' line by line
- **5.** Slides can have animation effects
- **6.** You can print handouts for the audience, and choose whether to distribute them before or after the presentation
- 7. You can print out your script as 'speaker notes'. Use at least 18pt. type, double-spaced so it's easy to read. Give a copy to the PowerPoint operator as their cue to change slides.

[&]quot;Superb organisational skills ensured a major management conference was successfully delivered without a hitch."

Tips for presenters

Check that you know how to use the equipment:

OHP

- Which way do you put the slide on the projector
- How do you switch it on and focus it
- Practice pointing at the slide not the screen

Laptop

- How do you forward slides (mouse or remote control)
- 1. Introduce yourself
- 2. Vary the pace
- **3.** Avoid jargon
- 4. Make eye contact with the audience
- 5. Don't read off the slides
- 6. Speak slowly and clearly
- **7.** Repeat questions back to the audience so everyone can hear
- **8.** Answer as you go along or at the end of the presentation, if at the end, summarise your key points afterwards

Contact Comms Plus for help with all your events and other written and spoken communications.

[&]quot;Provides effective project management married to excellent creative problem solving. We have deployed these skills and saved both time and money."

Nick Rawlings, Marketing Manager,
Freemans PLC



Newsletters
Copywriting
Web design
Proof-reading
Events

Other tips booklets include:

- Ssh! Discover the secrets of successful communication
- 8 guaranteed ice-breakers
- 10 top tips for effective networking
 - Climb that marketing mountain, with ease

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