

How to plan an event to promote sport?

Events are both expensive and time consuming so before work begins it is worth asking if it will achieve the desired outcome - the promotion of sport and physical activity to increase participation.

An event should be focused on a specific purpose such as consultation, negotiation or information sharing etc or for targeted purposes such as a press conference, team day or awards ceremony.

Hopefully the following steps will help guide your event planning:

1. Develop strategies for success

- Outline what the goals of the event are. These should be measurable.
- Consider what type of event is suitable i.e. if it is to inform people of changes is a team day appropriate?
- If it is to recognise achievements, an awards ceremony might be appropriate.
- Allow as much time as possible to plan the event. We recommend planning for an event starts at least six months in advance.
- Discuss with colleagues and ensure that you have full support for the event. If need be, pull together additional people with relevant experience.
- Plan who to invite, think about whom this event will be of interest to and who will help you achieve the goals of the event. These could be partners, ministers, charities or business leaders.
- Develop ways of measuring your goals; these could be feedback forms or attendance levels.
- Talk to colleagues who have successfully staged similar events.

2. Make a checklist

A checklist should provide a step-by-step guide to organising and executing your event. Including a timeline ensures you meet all deadlines.

3. Create a budget

The budget should be specific, and include venue finding, venue hire, event management (if you outsource), speakers, T&S, catering, accommodation and print costs etc.

4. Consider logistics

With any event many activities tend to be going on simultaneously so there are many details which will need to be checked. Priority areas to consider and plan for include: size of space or venue used, breakout rooms, setup (tables and chairs etc) travel for delegates, parking, suitability for delegates with a disability and catering etc.

Plan for media

Promoting a special event takes creative thinking balanced with practicality. The primary objective is to publicise the event, but you should also consider the following

- Are you trying to inform or consult with the event?
- Do you need to increase awareness or attendance of the event?
- Do you need to build support from a specific audience?
- Do you need to facilitate good partner relations?

Meet with your Press Office colleagues in the Comms Team to be aware of all the available media and information channels. Take with you a note of whom you think will want to know about your event and when.

Evaluate the event

Take time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh. You may want to consider having a questionnaire for participants to fill out. Some general evaluative criteria might include:

- Did the event fulfil its goals and objectives? Why or why not?
- Identify what worked and what needs improving?
- What had you missed off your original checklist?
- Was the event well attended?
- Was informal and formal feedback about the event positive?
- Given all that went into staging the event, was it worth doing?

Finally, and this is really important, remember to celebrate your successes and to thank all of those who contributed.