The Institution of Engineering and Technology

LOCAL NETWORK EVENTS

Continuing Professional Development

This event is designed to introduce engineers, whether or not they are members of the IET, to the concepts of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and demonstrates the importance of committing to structured CPD throughout professional life. It explains the key practical steps to "get going" with CPD and details how the IET's products and services can directly support a member throughout their career.

Fitting into the IET corporate ambition

The aims of the event are:

- to provide information and assistance to members and other engineers so that they reach their personal goals and are proud of their Institution, wanting to spread the word to colleagues about the help that the IET can give
- to stimulate members to become more active within the IET and make more use of its services
- to encourage engineers to consider Professional Registration
- to help recruit new members.

Using the LN event Framework

There are ten steps to putting on any LN event. This Event in a Box follows these steps:

1. Decide what the LN wants to achieve from the event
2. Decide who you want at the event in order to achieve the desired outcome
3. Secure a speaker using the Professional Development Department's course booking system
4. Decide what the volunteers have to do during the event to achieve their outcome
5. Keep on top of the money side of things
6. Set up the event
7. Market the event
8. Ensure the event goes well
9. Follow up where appropriate
10. Evaluate and learn

1. Decide what the LN wants to achieve from the event

The primary desired outcome of this event is to persuade more people to commit to structured professional development throughout their professional life.

There are subsidiary aims as well:

- to showcase the IET's professional development services
- to encourage members to become more active and participate in IET activities
- to recruit more members.

The topics covered are:

- the importance of CPD
- the learning cycle and how to structure your CPD
- how to use competencies to support professional development
- how the IET can help, including using Career Manager.

These topics, or the amount of emphasis on each, can be tailored to suit your target audience if required. For example, a younger audience might be more interested in using the learning cycle to help them work towards an aim of achieving Professional Registration. Please contact the Professional Development Department to discuss your particular requirements prior to booking.

Likewise, the timings for this event can be flexible. Normally, the speaker will talk for about 45 minutes and allow 15 minutes for questions. However, this can be shortened or lengthened slightly to fit with your requirements.

2. Decide who you want at the event in order to achieve the desired outcome

This event is aimed at all members and potential members who want to understand the concepts of CPD and need a little encouragement to get them started.

It is ideal for an audience of young engineers just starting out in their careers and could be used to attract non-members who may be working in a particular catchment area/location or for a particular employer.

3. Secure a speaker using the Professional Development Department's course booking system

Speakers for this event are provided by the IET's Professional Development Department, and would normally be a member of staff. In the first instance please contact Fiona McKechan on **(01438) 767337** or via **fmckechan@theiet.org** with suggested dates, venue, and an idea of the numbers you would expect. This, along with any requests you have to tailor the session, will help to decide who would be the most appropriate representative. If you would like us to supply appropriately themed literature for the event, please tell us when booking.

4. Decide what the volunteers have to do during the event to achieve their outcome

Before and after the talk, LN members are expected to circulate and mix with the attendees, chatting with them about the importance of CPD and the value that IET membership adds. Before the talk, they will set expectations about the event still to come, and afterwards they can refer to relevant, interesting points from the talk.

In both instances they would be expected to convey the notion that:

- professional development is essential for every engineer
- structuring your own development is helpful in furthering your own career
- IET membership is a useful aid to Professional Development
- IET offers useful services to help people in their Professional Development.

As ever, wherever the opportunity arises, volunteers would be expected to recruit at the event as well as explain and provide information. Volunteers are also needed for specific tasks, too.

All existing members helping at the event would have name badges for identification.

5. Keep on top of the money side of things

Set a budget and monitor expenditure against it. It's a basic rule, and always worth following. You can, of course, learn for the future by monitoring expenditure and costs, along with results, for every event. Financial aspects of events are always measurable.

The main costs here will be:

Venue hire

This should always include podium, lectern, AV equipment, microphone and speaker as necessary. A good relationship with a partner organisation may mean venue costs are reduced or even free. An overt subsidiary aim of one of your events could be to foster a relationship with a particular individual or group in order to gain future access to a good venue at reduced rates.

Refreshments

Experience will show you how best to keep to budget and to keep costs down. Monitor how much food is left at each event and adjust future orders accordingly. Also, consider how extensive any refreshments have to be in order to attract repeat audiences.

Speaker's out of pocket expenses

Speaker's fees and expenses are normally covered by the Professional Development Department for events held within the UK. In recognition of this commitment we do ask that you work to attract as large an audience as possible, and we do reserve the right to cancel events with very low numbers of registrants.

Publicity materials

These could include: flyers and posters given to local companies, or emails to existing members in the area.

6. Set up the event

You will need a venue with a room large enough to seat the desired audience, with audio facilities such that everyone can hear, a laptop with projector and screen, and other appropriate equipment as requested by the speaker where the session has been tailored for your needs.

You will also need to allow for networking sessions before and after the talk, when refreshments can be served if appropriate.

Choosing the venue will be as a result of a combination of factors, for example:

- desired audience – making it easy for them to attend
- availability of a suitably sized venue at an affordable rate
- partnerships with other organisations
- ability to develop new partnerships
- budget available.

If you are targeting an audience from a geographical location, such as a business park or trading estate, a small amount of research and a few phone calls will probably elicit a suitable venue somewhere in the area itself. Perhaps a small business would be able to host it. With a bit of imagination it could even be held in a small warehouse – as long as it is warm, everyone can hear and the audience can still get a great experience of the IET through the event, there is no reason to restrict yourself to formal meeting-style rooms. The location will add to the sensory effect and the impact of their interaction with the IET. Be appropriate to the event, and use your imagination.

You might be able to further develop a burgeoning relationship with a local educational establishment, for example, and make use of their facilities, thus deepening their involvement and relationship with you.

Pre-registration

Asking attendees to register for the event in advance is essential and will help you keep track of numbers – which is useful for organising refreshments and setting up the room, and can manage numbers when the venue provides limited space. Pre-registration will also help the speaker know how many people to prepare for, and ensure the right volume of literature is sent.

If requested, literature will be sent to you directly a couple of days before the event, so please let us know indicative numbers at least one week prior to the event.

The PD Department will help you with pre-registration via Plus4events. Please contact Fiona McKechan for assistance.

7. Market the event

Whilst existing members are an obvious means of building an audience, you will also hope to attract non-members. Publicity to members should encourage them to bring along a colleague.

To build an audience it is best to think about your possible channels of communication. If you want to target employees on a business park, for example, by way of getting a toe-hold into some local SMEs, then letters to the companies, along with flyers and posters, will help. Visiting the companies is always helpful, too.

Look out for partner organisations that would publicise your event. Chambers of Commerce might be particularly helpful, but any local community group may help you out.

There are templates and marketing materials available for use via the online Marketing Toolkit to help publicise events such as these.

8. Ensure the event goes well

Refreshments

A cup of tea and a sandwich would be appropriate for this type of event. Think about the timing and consider whether you wish to offer refreshments before or after the talk. Remember that the refreshments help to encourage networking so should be timed to achieve this explicitly.

People

One person must be in overall charge of running the event. This must be someone able to concentrate on making the whole event run smoothly, who is always available to make decisions and be flexible about the running of the event. 5-6 volunteers would be best for around 30 participants.

The most important job is to work the room and to interact with the audience, chatting about the event content and the value of CPD generally. This is an ideal kind of event to encourage more volunteers to help out. Volunteers must wear IET name badges and be able to encourage participants to come to future IET events.

One key aspect of good professional development is effective networking, and this can be ably demonstrated by volunteers before and after the event. Briefing your volunteers to ask attendees about their career goals and development aims can help them to talk about their own experiences of how the IET has supported their personal growth.

Welcome desk

We would like to collect everyone's contact details so that we can invite them to future events.

Have a number of signing in stations, and have people circulating, collecting contact details. Be clear that we only want them so we can invite them to future, similar events.

Information table

The information table must be in a different location to the welcome desk, otherwise it will cause extra congestion on arrival. We need people to arrive, sign in and then move away to allow others to sign in.

The information table will only need one person to staff it at any one time. Most of the explanation about the IET will happen by the volunteers who are circulating, so the information table will simply be a place from which to collect information, rather than a place to stay and chat. It must always be staffed by at least one person so that the IET appears welcoming.

The Room(s)

You will need volunteers to help set up the room(s). Consider signage, branding, speakers' stage, sound system, putting out the IET information and setting up chairs, if the venue doesn't do this. Make sure that there is sufficient signage for the audience to find the venue. Once this work is complete, these volunteers can join with circulating and recruiting.

Set up the networking/refreshment area to encourage people to stand and interact. Try to organise it so that people do not sit down immediately in the seats they will use later. If people get seated too early they tend to stay seated without moving, and this makes it harder for our volunteers to move among them to network, chat and recruit.

Make sure there is visible IET branding, and that there are plenty of pens and membership forms around the room.

9. Follow up where appropriate

It would be nice to send a letter to every attendee, simply expressing the hope that they enjoyed themselves, found the event interesting and stimulating and may be keen to attend a future, similar event. Let them know that we'll write to them with future invitations. Even if you don't write immediately following the event, it is to be expected that the participants go onto a mailing list for future events.

Also, follow up with volunteers. Send a note or call to thank them and discuss their participation in the next planned event. Take care of your volunteers – with careful nurturing they will grow and contribute much more.

10. Evaluate and learn

The speaker will bring and use evaluation forms, which they will analyse to help them improve their presentation. They will be pleased to share this feedback with you on request.

Monitoring the steps taken to publicise the event, and which ones worked, will be invaluable to other LNs. It will also help in developing good links to individuals, businesses and other organisations that have been previously hard to reach. These successes can then be shared across other LNs for possible use in building contact lists for further use in delivering events.