

IET Communities Volunteer Briefing: Date and venue selection

Introduction

When choosing a date you should aim to avoid religious and school holidays and also actively avoid clashes of date and subject with other IET events and competitor events, as this will affect delegate attendance.

Select a date that provides enough time to market the event. We recommend as much marketing time as possible, **ideally three months and no less than six weeks.**

Booking a venue

The venue can play a very important part in holding a successful event. When seeking a venue, things to consider include:

- Location – ensure location is easily accessible, with good transportation links
- Venue facilities – disabled access, parking availability
- Space requirements – areas for registration, refreshments, sponsors and the seminar/lecture room
- Seminar/lecture room – make sure that the venue can easily accommodate your expected target audience size in a comfortable and relaxed manner, with the required equipment (audio and visual, exhibition stands, catering tables)

Consider booking the venue an hour or so before the start of registration to ensure room set-up can be completed in advance of delegate arrival, and an hour after the event to allow time to pack away.

Here are some questions you may wish to ask the venue before booking:

- What room layout options are there? Cabaret, theatre style etc.
- Where will/could the delegate registration desk be positioned?
- What space could be used for exhibitions / breakout sessions?
- Where will refreshments be served?
- What are the catering options?
- What are the catering costs?
- When do catering options need to be confirmed by? For example 2 weeks before event?
- Is there an on-site caterer or will you have to find an independent one?
- Is there a fee for using an independent caterer?
- Does the venue have its own wait staff?
- What is their booking policy? Is there a deposit needed or a payment plan available?
- What is the cancellation policy?
- How long before the event can you cancel without incurring any costs?
- What are the insurance requirements?
- Does the venue have a list of preferred suppliers?
- Has the venue ever held an event like yours before?
- How many employees will be available on the day of your event to ensure it runs smoothly? Will the venue provide a dedicated Event Co-ordinator and AV technician
- What are the venue's A/V capabilities? Screen, laptop, microphones (roaming and lapel etc.)

- Is there a lift or way to load-in/load-out any equipment that has to be brought to the space?
- Is there an area to store equipment out of sight of guests? And overnight?
- What are the best ways to get to and from the venue location? These details can then be included in the delegate joining instructions
- Are there parking facilities?
- What public transport is available to get to the venue, nearest train/ bus stop
- Are there any on-site amenities? Is there an on-site computer or printer? Is there an office for you to work out of or business centre the delegates could use?
- What is the total cost to book the venue?

Room set-up

The venue should be able to give advice on appropriate room set-up and capacity, as well as provide a housekeeping notice to inform delegates of fire exits, health and safety etc.

Audio visual requirements

When booking the venue it is worth agreeing audio visual requirements for the day, for example microphones, lapel microphones, laptops, laser pointers. Some venues charge a considerable amount for these services and prices should be identified as soon as possible.

Catering

It is usual to provide refreshments mid-morning and mid-afternoon for a full day event. Tea, coffee and water are standard offerings. Lunch need not be extravagant; a sandwich lunch is normally acceptable.

For an evening event we recommend that you provide tea, coffee and water. Arrange basic catering requirements when making the booking; the venue will then advise when they need to know final requirements and numbers. Also check if the venue has a minimum number to cater for.

Have you got something to say on this subject? Would you like to connect with other IET Communities volunteers? Then go to the IET Volunteers Community on www.theiet.org/vc

You can view the latest version of this briefing on www.theiet.org/running-events

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