

Open Space Event Organiser Checklist

What to remember when planning or hosting an Open Space Technology Event

Preliminaries

- **Appropriateness** – Is Open Space right for our purpose?
- **Theme** – Is there a clear focus, and pressing need, but with sufficient room for imagination?
- **Invitation** – Does it evoke participation, with clear place, time and readiness to work?
- **Time** – Has enough time been allotted to achieve purpose (1 – 3 days)?
- **Main Space** – Is the main space large enough for participants to sit comfortably in a circle?
- **The Wall** – Is there unobstructed wall wide enough for all to stand in front of and read board?
- **Other Spaces** – Are there enough breakout rooms, or is there enough room in main space?
- **Building Management** – are they aware participants will be moving around a lot?
- **Food and Drink** – Apart from meals is there a coffee/tea table with snacks?
- **Newsroom** – Is there enough space for (a) table(s) on the side with laptops for entering reports?
- **Consultation with support teams** – does everyone understand process, incl. joining in?
- **Supplies and Equipment** – are necessary supplies available (any special requirements)?

Pre-Event

- Who is the organising team & sponsor? Determine roles. Support team – roles?
- Be clear about the need / purpose / theme → Invitation (ideally frame theme as a question)
- Consider audience, stakeholders and other affected persons
- Determine date and duration
- Publicity and preparing participants
- Booking and budgeting
- Venue
 - Ensure large wall space, preferably completely clear
 - Accessibility, disabilities, amenities
 - Materials, furniture (portable chairs, free of furniture, except food, computers)
 - Available breakout spaces
 - Spare foldable chairs
- Food and refreshments (including vegetarian vegan and other dietary needs)
- Equipment and materials – are microphones, laptops, printer, scanner needed?
- Will any post event space be needed, for example, restaurant or bar?
- Output Format: determine desired outcomes, format for any output, how to capture important information from sessions, and how to ensure it happens (quality in designing in the outputs in advance determines quality of reports and other outputs), follow up meetings or communication as applicable. (Proceedings to take home on the day?) Some of the options for session outputs:
 - **Session Output A4 Sheets** for hand writing basic reports of sessions (plus any actions)
 - Minimally should have: Session Title, Space/room, Host, Participants, Key points/actions
 - Large paper sheets (or flipcharts) for pictorial notes, mind maps, flowcharts etc.
 - Where possible participants type Output Sheets into Wiki in breaks during day (helpers?)
 - Online 'Wiki' type page, GoogleDocs or similar for direct input into a shared space
 - Digital photos or scans (if A4) of session output sheets, uploaded directly
 - Video summaries, audio recordings (with tweet updates or other social media if relevant)
 - Key point – have materials available, participants will use whatever they feel appropriate.
- Schedule: Number and lengths of sessions, probable number of breakout spaces desired
- Participant Contact List (ask participants re publishing contact details!) plus spare for on the day

The Event

Equipment checklist

- Flipcharts, pens, cards, sticky notes, masking tape, post-it notes, sticky labels, scissors
- Plenty of paper and colour marker pens for announcing sessions for the bulletin board
- Masking Tape (easier on walls) or Bluetac/Whitetac (check with venue if allowed)
- Session Output Sheets (pre-printed): Title, Convener, Participants, Discussion Notes, Actions
- Laptops connected with WiFi codes or local network
- Microphone(s)? / Projector? / Printer / Scanner / plenty of sockets and extensions if necessary
- Tibetan chime / singing bowl or similar gentle but audible sound to denote session finish / starts
- Make the space warm and welcoming... plants / flowers?

Venue Set up

- Breakout (session or workshop) spaces (portable chairs)
- Signage (for sessions: 2 per session, 1 for work space, 1 for marketplace bulletin board)
- Refreshments area - food taken care of?
- Registration desk / participant welcome as required
- Arrange or check layout of chairs - leave plenty of space between circle and market place, between concentric circles of chairs, and gaps (aisles) to move in and out of circle.
- Set up market place:
 - Bulletin board (agenda wall – with session schedule table)
 - Announcements, community news or similar information sharing spaces
 - Space for session outputs

Signs

- **5 Principles:**
 - Whoever comes are the right people
 - Wherever it happens is the right place
 - Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
 - Whenever it starts is the right time
 - When it's over it's over
- **The Law of Two Feet** - if you are neither learning or contributing then move on
- Be prepared to be surprised!
- Butterflies and Bumblebees - images
- Workstation Signage: Marketplace, Sessions (by name, number, e.g. animals, animation characters etc.), Newsroom, News Wall, Bulletin Board, Community News, Coffee/Tea

Event Output

Ideally distribute reports (proceeds) or preliminary outputs at the end of the event (or ensure clarity of how it will happen) – a polished corrected version can always be sent or published online later.

Post-Event

- Debrief, let off steam, celebrate, learn
- Follow-up: links to outputs as applicable
- Evaluation / feedback request
- Acknowledgement / thank you email
- Next steps: who when why what where how