



Event Management Introduction

ReconciliACTIONnsw

The Purpose of this pack is to assist you with your first efforts at organising small events such as project launches or small gigs. It is not meant as a training package or “How To” method, simply an introduction to the techniques we find effective. At the end of the pack you will find resources that can assist you further in developing your skills.

Enjoy,
ReconciliACTIONnsw

Always Remember

There are three main points to keep in mind during this whole process. Everything else feeds from these.

1. Organise everything before you need to; otherwise you will organise it too late.
2. Promote. Promote like there is no tomorrow. Promote as if your life depends on it. Promote like there IS a tomorrow, but you won't see it unless you promote.
3. If at any time you are unsure or have a question, find someone to ask. Otherwise, you won't find out.

How to use this pack:

This pack has two sections; a Timeline/Checklist of tasks and an expansion to explain and assist with these tasks.

The Timeline/Checklist is designed so that the tasks are completed before the date they fall under. If you have not completed the tasks by this point in time it is important that you make a plan of how you will complete this task, and follow it through. If you avoid a task because it is difficult, it will not get done.

Tasks are split into general tasks and those specific to organising a launch or a music gig. You should adapt these to best suit the event that you are planning. The tasks are organised so that they flow (for example if you don't have a venue you can't have a poster, if you don't have a poster early you won't have enough time to advertise) so it is important that you stick to this timeline.

A Glossary of Terms and list of further resources are also included.

Timeline / Checklist

Before you start

1. Planning session: See tasks description below
2. Confirm a venue
3. Set a date. The date should be set at least eight weeks in advance.

Six Weeks Out

1. Start spreading word of mouth about your event
2. Indicative budget prepared
3. Launch: Find speakers
4. Consider any technical requirements you may have (i.e. projectors, p.a. and microphones for speakers)
5. Gig: Finding headliner and support bands
6. Scout for a sound technician or start training up a friend

Four Weeks Out

1. Promotion strategy planned
2. Poster/Flyers designed
3. Distribute promotional material
4. Online Marketing
5. Launch: Confirm speakers
6. Gig: Confirm performers
7. Equipment lists received from bands/performers
8. Organise a stage manager

Three Weeks Out

1. MC organised
2. Launch: Equipment is organised. This means p.a., laptop, projector, extension leads, etc. and the venue is aware of requirements.
3. Runsheet completed and distributed to all organisers/presenters.
4. Gig: Equipment is organised. This means all mics, leads, staging, power points, kit (if supplied), lighting, P.A, everything is organised, and the venue is aware of any needs or requirements.
5. Worksheet completed and distributed to bands

One Week Checklist

(All of the following should be complete by this stage)

1. Venue confirmed and date set
2. Equipment finalised
3. Sound technician confirmed
4. Stage manager confirmed

5. MC organised
6. Speakers/performers confirmed
7. Posters/flyers out in the public realm
8. Worksheet/Runsheet

Five Days

1. Contact all bands, the venue, the sound technician and the stage manager involved and confirm everyone is ready and set for the gig, know where to turn up and at what time.
2. Notify local Police and security of your event.

The Big Day

1. Brief the MC, Sound Technician and the Stage Manager.
2. Get to venue early.
3. Be friendly and chat to everyone. This leaves a great impression and people will want to help you in the future.
4. Wrap-up
5. Remember to factor in the clean up and return of any equipment you have borrowed.
6. In the couple of weeks following the event if people helped out as volunteers, performed for free or gave you a deal at a cheap rate then it is good idea to send them a thank you, even if it's just an email.
7. Finalised budget and report to grant and funding providers.



Tasks

Planning Session

It is important to sit down and brainstorm exactly what it is you want to achieve from your event, who you wish to attend and how you are going to achieve it.

Think about who you want your audience to be, where you want to hold it, whether you want a big or small event, and what kind of music you want. Think about who will be involved in organising - how many volunteers are likely to help out, what access to money you have to cover costs, who do you know who can give you advice about how to put on a gig, or can help if something goes wrong? Keep thinking about these questions as you go through all the tasks - so that you don't run into any big problems that will derail your gig before you get there.

If you do this planning before you begin, it will help keep you on track and have a clear idea of your goals. The most important thing is to be realistic about the kind of event you can successfully pull off!



The Venue

This is the obvious starting point when organising a gig or launch event. The considerations include size, staffing, equipment available, cost and access. Whilst you need a venue big enough for your expected audience, it's no fun playing to a half empty hall.

If you are organising this gig in a Youth Centre or other community facility, this may help keep costs minimal and staffing may be provided if the event is within normal operational hours. These facilities will hopefully have equipment that you could use also.

It is also important to consider safety and security, and this will become more important with larger events. You should nominate a First Aid officer with a First Aid kit; have emergency procedures including the identifying of exits; and have an emergency contact list including local fire and police services.

Depending on the size and nature of your event, you may wish to notify the local Police; organise security if needed; and consider whether pass outs will be issued. If your gig is being held at a Youth Centre, much of this can be looked after by the staff.

If you are to have a cover charge, you must consider who will staff the door and you must also organise a float. It is important also to have some way of identifying which people have already paid for entry. Stamps and wrist bands are great for this.

Posters and Flyers

It is important that any promotional material be clear and easy to read. It should include the name and address of the location, the cost of the event (or clearly state if it is free) and the names of all acts. Consider the cost of printing when you design the poster, this could impact on cost. Do you know anyone who could print this for you? If the event is all ages the advertising material should clearly state that it is a drug and alcohol free event.

Think creatively about where you could distribute these. There are two points to keep in mind; the more often people see your posters and flyers the more likely that they will remember and give it consideration, and that there is so much advertising to be seen every day that you will have a very low conversion rate. So make the promotion visible and effectively placed.

For example, any store with street press and postcards should let you leave flyers, but make sure you ask as this is private property. Anywhere that draws people who are interested in music and culture is a smart target, think CD stores, music stores, cinemas, video stores, local galleries, and youth focused clothing stores. Schools are good, especially your own. Think of local libraries and other places young people hang out, such as skate parks.

One of the more effective uses of pamphlets is to hand them out in public places such as transport hubs. Train stations and bus stops in peak hour offer a high concentration of people.

The internet is also very useful and targeted emails are a cheap way to get flyers distributed to a lot of people. Remember to also do 'text only' versions of email for people who may not be able to read a flash flyer, especially if it is an attachment.

Budget

Money, money, money. Where does it come from; where does it go?

Sitting down early to write an indicative budget is important because it will influence the venue, size and relative extravagance of your event.

Start by thinking about all the equipment, promotional and other resource needs of your event. Next, think about ways you can get these things for free (for example, can you borrow a P.A., use a Youth Centre or other venue that may be free? Work in partnership with another group/organisation?)

Next you should think about organisations that may be able to hire you things on the cheap - the sound system, chairs, lighting or even the venue itself. Local Councils often have cheap community rates on venues if your gig is not for profit, and also can hire equipment.

For the remainder you should get quotes and be realistic about cost. Put this information together and add up your total costs. This will of course need to be met by your total funds for the event.

Some fundraising ideas include grants, donations and sponsorship. Unfortunately there is not enough space here to cover this in detail, see the Internet Resources section at the end of this guide.

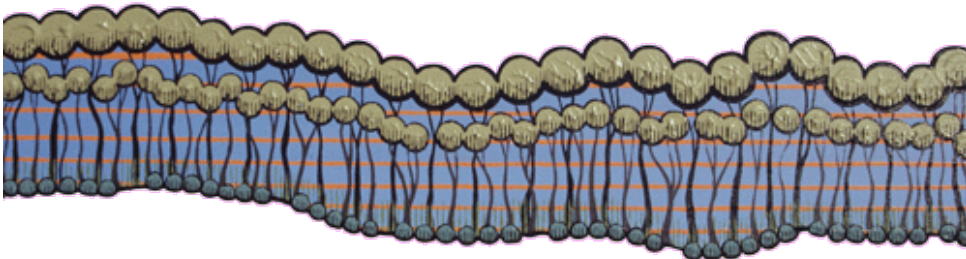
For a gig you can also cover costs with the cover-charge, however you will need to be cautious about over relying on this as you may not get the numbers you expect, and could require plan B.

Be sure to complete a finalised budget after the event, both to ensure all bills are paid and for the benefit of your report to grant providers and funding providers. Make sure you keep a record of all invoices received and the date they were paid.

Worksheet/Contact list

The work sheet is the most important checkpoint in the organisation of your event. It will not only act as a check list that you have the required information and contact details, but it helps share this information with other people involved in the event. It is important that this distributed no later than two weeks before your gig. It also lets you lay the ground rules and hand set up and playing times to all performers in writing, so no one can say they were misinformed. You will find a worksheet pro-forma in this pack.

It is important also that volunteers and staff have a contact list. This list should indicate a level of responsibility, with different tasks allocated to different people if relevant (e.g. performers/speakers, venue, equipment, etc). Only one person should be nominated "If All Goes To Crap, Contact Me" duties, in case of emergency.



Speakers

If you are organising a launch, you obviously want people to turn up. If you are using this kit we expect that you are only beginning your experience as a community campaigner, and your project alone will probably not have the profile to attract a broader audience than those who wish to support you personally. The best way to broaden the audience is to organise a speaker who is well respected, a good speaker and has a high profile in your community.

Good people to approach are experienced activists, politicians or professionals in a field relevant to your project. Other options are sports people and others who receive media attention. It is best if these people are known to be interested in the issues that your project focuses on. If you have more than one speaker, try to keep them diverse so that they will have different things to speak about.

Performers

You should aim for two or three support bands. Just like yourselves, many young bands and performers are looking for opportunities to perform. You may find them at school, by asking bands you know about bands they know, by attending other gigs and approaching bands you liked, through the friends of brothers and sisters. If you are a more established band, this is a great opportunity to offer a younger/less experienced band a great opportunity and spread that good karma. Consider also whether the cover charge (if there is one) will be shared, and how it will be shared (on this point also consider the sound technician).

If you can audition a few bands this is a great way of making sure there is both variation and a degree of consistency in the acts. No-one wants to sit through 3 hours of what seems to be the same band, but programming Marilyn Manson to play before Delta Goodrem wouldn't be much fun either.

Once bands have confirmed they will play, make sure that you have a single contact person. Also get a list of equipment provided to each band a list of their set up. Samples are provided in this pack.

MC

An MC should be easy to organise, you may wish to do this yourself or at a gig the stage manager could take this role. If the speakers are well prepared and keep to time, and if bands are experienced then this can be a very minimal role, however less experienced bands may appreciate being introduced, and then joined on stage as they leave. These are the awkward moments for beginners. The MC should thank everyone involved in the organising of the event.

Sound Technician and Stage Manager

Finding a sound technician can be straightforward or difficult, depending on the circumstance. You may know someone who is willing to help you out and has the necessary skills. Alternatively you may need to pay someone. If the P.A. is easy to operate and you have a willing person with a basic knowledge of sound equipment you may be able to train them up, but make sure you do this on the actual equipment to be used on the day.

The stage manager has to be someone who is organised and can be firm with people who are not following instructions. If not everything will run overtime. The stage manager will need to make sure bands are ready to come on stage, help the sound technician with the setting up of mics and other equipment, organise the sound check and move bands away from the stage area as soon as they have finished. This can all be harder than it sounds if the bands are enjoying the spotlight; they will start talking to audience members and mates instead of packing down. If you are playing in a Youth Centre or other venue that is supplying staff, there is a strong chance they will have a good stage manager for you.

It is important that the sound technician and the stage manager are well briefed on the day before any musicians turn up. They need to know what order the bands are to play in, what instruments they have, how many mics they need and have a name of the "go to" person for each band.

Equipment

There are a number of things to consider here. What equipment is available at the venue? What equipment do the bands have? What equipment do the bands need? If there is a gap between have and need, how are you going to fill it? Do you have the funds to hire any equipment?

Keep in mind also that the number of mics needed by each band, the number of power points available and lighting also need to be considered. You will find a blank band equipment form and a venue equipment sample form attached to this pack.



Glossary of Terms

Headliner / Support bands: The headliner is the band with the highest profile, who will play last at the event. The support bands are the other bands playing before the headliner.

Sound technician: This is the person who sets up the sound equipment, runs the sound checks and monitors the sound levels during the gig.

Stage manager: The stage manager is the cranky guy who makes sure everyone one is organised and gets onstage on time. The stage manager will often swear at you, but don't take it personally.

Worksheet: A form letting everyone know where they have to be and what time.

MC: Introduces the bands and helps fill the gaps between performers.

Cover charge: Fee payed by the audience to enter the venue.

Pass outs: The ability to leave a venue and re-enter once cover charge has been paid. Usually used in the context of "No Pass-Outs".

Float: The float goes in the cash tin or register used when collecting the cover charge. It is the change available before money has been collected, so that the till will start in a "positive: amount.

Online Marketing: This includes such services as Facebook, Myspace, last.fm, gig guides and e-lists. They are free and very effective ways of making many people aware of your event.

Indicative budget:: An early budget of expected income and expenditure, to assist with planning.

Internet Resources

<http://www.yapa.org.au/youth/facts/gig.pdf>

<http://www.events.nsw.gov.au/event-starter-guide>

GRANTS

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants>

<http://www.grantslink.gov.au/>

<http://www.apf.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/spgrants.htm#nongov>

<http://www.grantsearch.com.au/index.html>

This kit was produced for the ReconciliACTIONnsw Online Education Kit, which can be viewed at www.reconciliacion.org.au/nsw. To contact ReconciliACTIONnsw, email recon@reconciliacion.org.au.