



THE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE TO HELP YOU **BeBrilliant**

Before, During and After

B&BPRESS
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SO YOU'RE PLANNING AN EVENT AND YOU HAVE SOME ROUGH IDEAS IN MIND. YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU WANT TO INVITE, THE THEME OF THE EVENT, THE VENUE AND THE OVERALL VIBE THAT YOU WANT. BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START AND EVENT PLANNING IS A PRETTY STRESSFUL TASK, EVEN IF YOU'RE AN EVENT PLANNING VETERAN. FORBES EVEN NAMED EVENT COORDINATOR AS THE FIFTH MOST STRESSFUL JOB IN 2017.

AND IT MIGHT NOT EVEN BE YOUR DAY-TO-DAY TASK, BUT YOU'VE GOT AN EVENT TO PLAN, SO LET'S GET DOWN TO IT.

For your event to run smoothly, you need to make sure that your planning is top notch. As they say, if you fail to prepare, you are preparing to fail. This is where an event planning guide comes in. It's there to help you stay on target with the things you need to accomplish.

Our handy event planning guide includes all of the different tasks you need to prioritise before, during and after the event. Use it to help reduce stress and make sure nothing slips through the cracks. Every event is different, but our all-in-one guide will help your event BeBrilliant.

Quick One

If you're wondering why we keep capitalising 'BeBrilliant', it's because it's the name of our exclusive club. It was created for marketers, salespeople and business owners who want to share and learn new ways of working. For people who want to meet like-minded souls who believe that sharing ideas and knowledge is how you can actually BeBrilliant.

Members receive newsletters packed with tips, stories and exclusive merchandise. And we all meet up in the second half of each year for the BeBrilliant event.

Make use of all the checklists and advice and feel free to give us a shout if you want any ideas.

BEFORE

Before you get started with your event planning, consider whether you've checked these preliminary milestones off your to-do list.

- ☐ **Have you put together an event planning team?**
In order to boost productivity and avoid confusion, these staff members should be the only people from your company working on the event.
- ☐ **Have you brainstormed what kind of event you want to host?**
What its purpose is? Think about the themes you might want.
- ☐ **Have you drafted a budget?**
Use figures from past events as a baseline and fill in the gaps with educated guesses.
- ☐ **Have you thought about which guest speakers and sponsors you might want?**
Reach out to them early to ensure availability.
- ☐ **Have you considered the venue?**
Consider its size, facilities and infrastructure.
- ☐ **Have you got an idea of the date?**
Have several dates as backups.
- ☐ **Do you know how many people you want to invite?**
Always invite just over the venue capacity to cater to dropouts.

If you've got boxes unticked from the checklist above, get to work in trying to complete them. Remember, the sooner you start, the better. Once you've crossed those barriers, it's time to think about these points in more detail:

- ✓ Venue and Health & Safety
- ✓ Costs
- ✓ Marketing and Promotion

TOP TIP

START AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. AS SOON AS YOU'VE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT FOR YOUR EVENT, GET TO WORK IMMEDIATELY. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE AND AT THE VERY MINIMUM, YOU NEED TO START YOUR FIRST TASKS AT LEAST FOUR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE YOUR EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE.

VENUE AND HEALTH & SAFETY

Once you've established the goals and objectives of your event, you can start to think about the venue in more depth. You might already have an idea of the kind of place that you want, but it needs to be somewhere that meets your requirements.

You need to consider:

- ✓ Which geographic location is best for your event?
- ✓ Roughly, how many people will be attending your event?
- ✓ What facilities does the venue provide?
- ✓ Will there be WiFi available for guests and presentations?
- ✓ Does the venue have good infrastructure so attendees can arrive easily?



ESTIMATING THE GUEST LIST

Generally, people only attend events if they have something valuable to gain from them. But people can also be fickle and drop out at the last minute, often without warning. So it's difficult to estimate an exact head count.

Remember, when you're estimating how many attendees will be attending, don't solely base it on your RSVP list. Some people might RSVP straight away but others might leave it until the last minute to say they're going or don't RSVP at all but still show up. And then there are the no-shows (who may or may not say they're not coming).

Many event planning websites estimate that the dropout rate of free events can be up to 50% while paid-for events is between 10 and 30%. There are various things you can do to entice people to turn up, such as offer a unique, one-off experience, have bespoke goodie bags or well-known guest speakers.

THERE ARE TRICKS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE ESTIMATING MUCH EASIER:

- Send out personalised reminder invites and encourage people to respond to them.
- Use social media to encourage people into sharing event-related posts under a particular hashtag (such as #ImGoingToBeBrilliant) so you know they're attending. Plus, it's a great way to engage with your attendees and promote your event at the same time.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Event organisers have a duty to protect both attendees and staff from harm. You need to take preventative measures and have a plan to handle any emergency situations that might arise. An event safety plan is an important part of the overall event planning process. Make sure your venue provider can help box off all of the following:

1.

Assess your venue's suitability. Your venue needs to be able to accommodate all of your staff and attendees without overcrowding and allow easy access for vehicles and pedestrians.

2.

How far is your venue from the nearest hospital and emergency services?

3.

Conduct risk assessments, from equipment and occupational hazards to first aid and crowd management. The HSE have a guide on risk assessments [here](#).

4.

Have an emergency plan for any situation that may occur, even if it seems unlikely.

COSTS

It's important that you start the budgeting process as early as possible. You should already have an idea of your budgets from when you were planning to pitch your event idea to your clients and bosses. As you continue planning, more precise estimates and quotes will begin to fall into place.

The aspects which you need to budget include:

- The venue.
- Your staff.
- Equipment - will you be hiring or do you already have equipment you can use?
- Guest speakers.
- Photographers and film team - will you be hiring or will your event team do it themselves?
- Food and drink.
- Miscellaneous items - such as goodie bags and staff uniforms.
- Marketing and promotion.
- Website creation - every good event has a dedicated website or at least a tab on the host's website dedicated to it.

BUDGETING TIPS:

- Update your budget regularly and document everything using easy-to-read spreadsheets. It's far too easy to misplace quotes and receipts so ensure that you keep up with new developments in real-time. That way, you can avoid letting things pile up or have confusing gaps in your budgeting timeline.
- Get multiple quotes from vendors and never accept the first price. Event planners are excellent negotiators (as well as organisers) so be sure to exercise this skill often.
- Have a contingency figure in your budget to give you enough breathing room for unexpected costs.
- Find other sources of income - such as through sponsors or piggybacking on other events and sharing costs for equipment.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION BEFORE THE EVENT

It's difficult to sell every last ticket because it depends on a variety of factors, such as who the guest speakers are, the freebies you're giving away and your event overall. However, your marketing and promotional tactics can certainly help.

The way you market and promote your event is extremely important because it encourages people to share news and talk about it. You need to generate a buzz. Even the biggest brands with millions of fans would struggle to get a decent turnout if there wasn't a buzz for their event.

TOP TIP

When it comes to event marketing and promotion, don't be afraid to shock or surprise some people and take a chance in your comms. It's the only way to stand out.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION BEFORE THE EVENT

Try and think outside of the box when you're promoting your event. Consider these tactics and implement as many as you can in your event marketing and promotion strategy to increase your coverage:

- ☐ **Social media**
Great for boosting awareness instantly via paid-for brand awareness campaigns, especially when people share your content.
- ☐ **Personal touches**
They make people feel special and flattered, enticing them to attend.
- ☐ **Collaborating with well-known influencers**
Meant to motivate your attendees with their inspiring words so the more well-known and relevant they are, the more people will want to attend.
- ☐ **Using press releases**
Great for widespread awareness and having a strong relationship with the press means you're more likely to get future media coverage.
- ☐ **Traditional printed methods**
Just as eye-catching as digital approaches and gives people something physical to take away and look at.



THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to start and it's fairly inexpensive.. 🤪 🐷

Engage with your audience by telling a story through social media. People love to feel like insiders. So in the run-up to your event, give them in-the-moment stories, such as behind the scenes preparations and exclusive interviews with guest speakers. This will help your audience feel special and included, which can inspire them to attend your event.

Social media is fantastic for boosting your event's shareable content. These stories encourage people to talk about your event and you can hold event-related competitions to improve engagement and increase awareness even more. Offer incentives to make people notice your event and want to talk about it and attend.

And don't forget you can always pay to reach more people than your existing follower list.

HELLO YOU!

PERSONALLY REACH OUT TO ATTENDEES

Personal touches go a long way as they help to make people feel special and flattered that you took the time to get to know them.

It doesn't have to be as extravagant as a gift wrapped care package (although that certainly works and catches attention). Just make your prospective attendees feel like more than just a number on your guest list. They may be inspired to not just come to your event but also talk about it on social and bring plus ones.

Possible personalisation ideas include:

- Emails crafted especially for them.
- Reaching out or replying on social media.
- Personalised videos.
- Special postcards.
- Care packages with useful or entertaining gifts.

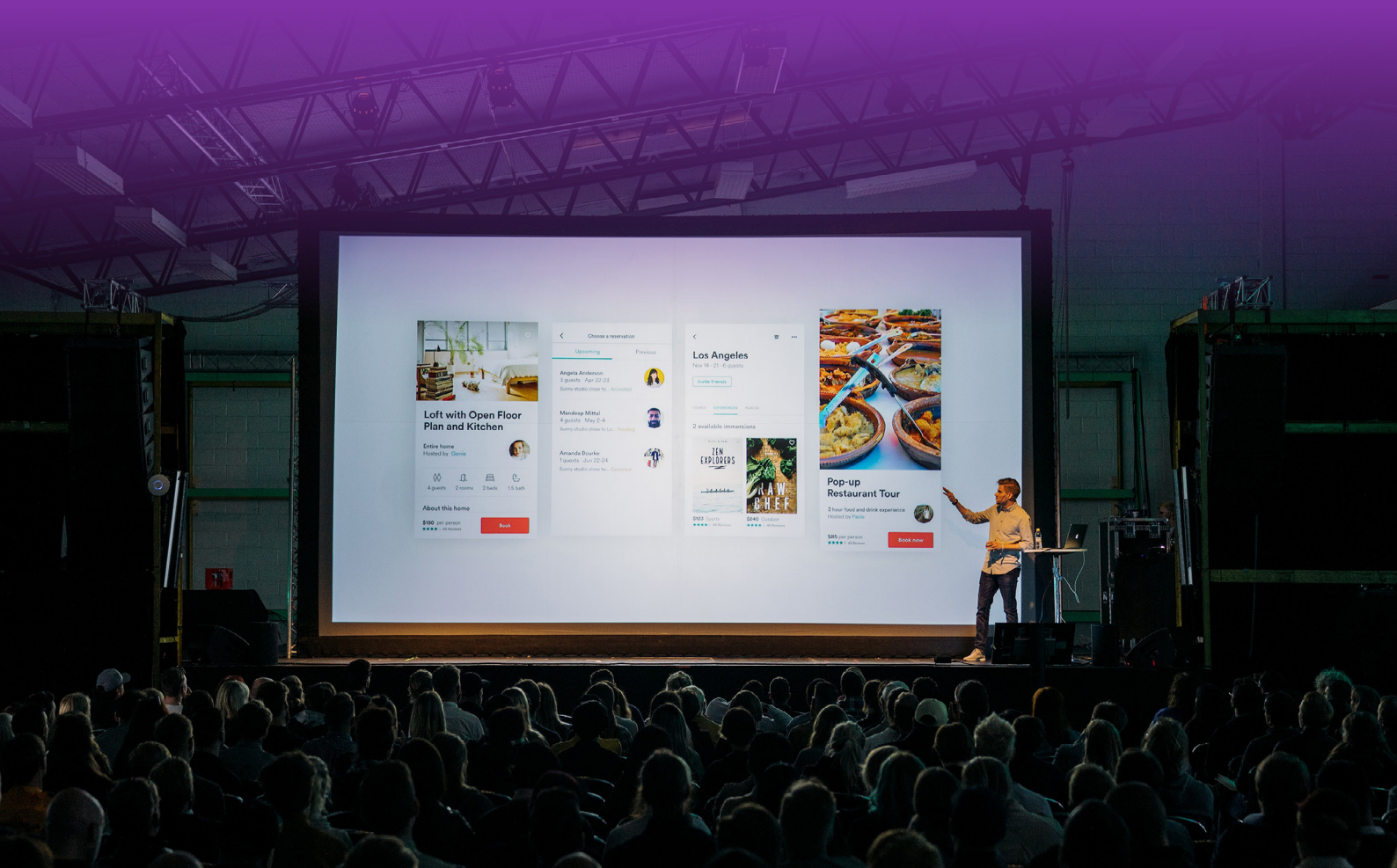
Sometimes, the personal touches can just serve as reminders. Your attendees are busy people and they might have every intention to attend your event, but it might slip their mind. Treat your attendees like the special people that they are and they'll be sure to attend.

COLLABORATE WITH WELL-KNOWN INFLUENCERS

Working with influencers and ambassadors is a great way to reach people outside of your normal target audience. It's important that you choose the right influencers, so ensure that their image aligns with your company's and will be able to offer something valuable to your event.

For your networking event, look for industry leaders, prominent business owners, technology providers or influential people relevant to your sector. For example, for the culinary sector, chefs, prominent restaurateurs and food writers would be ideal. They can lend their expert knowledge to your attendees.

The point of guest speakers are to motivate your attendees with their inspiring experiences and make people want to talk about what they learnt from your event - especially on social media. This will help to drive awareness about your event and boost attendance in not just this event but your future ones too.





PRESS RELEASES

Maintain a good relationship with the press because they can help spread awareness about your event. From word of mouth to sharing on their publication's social media, website or publishing it in print, the press can help generate buzz about your event for you. This takes some of the pressure off of your events team.

Press releases are great for a number of reasons:

- They give you widespread publicity - far outside of your usual target audience.
- They're cost-effective for the potential high reward.
- They help to boost your company's visibility, especially when you stick to a long-term press release distribution strategy. You're letting a wider target audience know who you are and what you do, plus catching the eye of journalists who can give you even more media coverage.
- They can establish you as an industry expert. This will gain more trust from your customers (old and new), making it more likely that they'll buy from you.
- They can catch the eye of investors and sponsors who might become important partners or contacts for your company.





TRADITIONAL PRINTED METHODS

Classic promotional techniques, such as flyers and leaflets, can work just as well as the approaches which seem more creative like: social media, PR stunts and promotional videos.

A well-designed event flyer, leaflet or poster can catch the eye of your potential audience with bigger impact than a post on social media. While you can reach many people with digital ads, don't neglect the effectiveness of a well-crafted print piece.

Online space is super-competitive, but people love a well-thought out and lovingly crafted piece of print marketing. It's a lot less disposable than a sponsored tweet - and hints that your event is something special too.

You can play into the personalisation benefit even more with printed products. For example, a handcrafted event invitation will stand out more than an email invitation, mainly because these days, fewer companies send physical invite cards out. The market is saturated with Facebook and EventBrite events instead.

A handcrafted invitation will attract your potential audience, persuading them to attend. As well as this, it shows people what your company represents and allows you to show off your creativity. In an age where everyone else is creating flashy videos and animations, a cleverly designed card invitation with interesting typography and cut out details will certainly intrigue people. We think the key is to do both in cohesion.

DURING

In the lead-up to your event, you should be keeping a constant track of your event attendee list, the guest speakers, number of tickets sold, sponsors, catering, equipment rentals or maintenance and marketing analytics. That way, you and your events team can keep a close eye on your planning, making sure nothing slips through the cracks.

Two weeks before the event:

- ☐ Created a final list of event attendees.
- ☐ Created a final list of event team staff, from paid to volunteers, and their day-of duties. Send out reminders.
- ☐ Confirmed event information with your suppliers.
- ☐ Contacted local media to cover the event (send event details at least one month in advance).

On the day of your event:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A final list of event attendees. | <input type="checkbox"/> Fully set up for the event and test equipment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A final list of event team staff, from paid to volunteers, and their duties. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take plenty of photos and videos. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A list of emergency contacts - distribute this among your team. | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to man the door and check the guest list. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet up with your event team and volunteers before the event starts to ensure everyone knows their tasks. | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to look after your social media and post content throughout the event. |

DURING

You should have already conducted the necessary risk assessments, hazard checks and your venue's overall suitability. But it's also important that you closely monitor health and safety all throughout your event. You never know when something might go wrong.

Keep a look out for:

- ☐ Equipment hazards.
- ☐ Trip and fall hazards.
- ☐ Crowd management - are there enough seating and standing areas?
- ☐ Blocked fire and emergency exits.
- ☐ First aid - do you have first aid trained staff and the necessary equipment?
- ☐ Fire hazards.
- ☐ Food and drink hazards - such as allergies.
- ☐ Occupational hazards to your events team - will they be doing any heavy lifting, for example?

MARKETING AND PROMOTION DURING THE EVENT

Your marketing and promotion strategy covers your entire event, not just the run-up to it.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Keep updating your audience on how the event's going, even if they didn't attend. These can include snippets of talks from your guest speakers and photos of your attendees listening. You never know which update might entice somebody to attend a future event.

You could have a special geofilter on Snapchat, an Instagram photo booth or quirky photo frames for attendees to take pictures with. This will also encourage them to share content of your event and boost awareness.

Ensure that you have a dedicated hashtag created for the event and encourage attendees to use it or tag your company in it. It'll allow the events team member in charge of social media for that day to repost the content. You can also use this for analytical purposes.

FREEBIES AND GOODIE BAGS

Goodie bags aren't something that you have to do, but they do help to leave a lasting impact. And they don't have to be huge, wildly extravagant pieces either. Little items like stationery - all with your company's logo on - is a great idea. Plus, when they're branded, it adds that personal touch and helps to boost awareness of your company.

For example, for our annual BeBrilliant events and members, we give away free printed items such as diaries, planners and notepads. Anything that might help our club members and attendees plan their own events.

What's BeBrilliant All About, Again?

BeBrilliant is a virtual club where marketing and sales folk can come together and learn anything they need to improve their marketing and sales knowledge, product, service or business. BeBrilliant isn't just about print - it's meant to help marketers grow. That's why we at B&B Press formed it three years ago.

BeBrilliant members have access to exclusive content geared to help them build on their knowledge, branded merchandise and a free annual event that we hold, featuring talks from industry leaders and a host of learning opportunities.

AFTER

When your event has ended and the guests have left, it's time to start with the break down. It's not just cleaning up that you need to think about.

Your post-event planning involves tying up any loose ends, such as:

- ☐ Pay attention to load-out times - some venues have strict guidelines and you don't want to be charged extra.
- ☐ Organise any final or outstanding bills to your vendors, venue owners and tips (if any) to your service staff.
- ☐ Pack up any rentals and organise to have them returned.
- ☐ Send personalised thank you notes and emails to vendors and attendees.
- ☐ Organise a post-event meeting with your team to discuss everything, from what went well and what could have gone better.
- ☐ Analyse data from social media promotions, email open rates and attendance figures.
- ☐ Continue to promote the event and use this time to introduce the next one.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION AFTER THE EVENT

You should already have dedicated hashtags for your event and encouraged your attendees to post using them, if you followed the checklists above. But it's not just for trending purposes.

It's also so your team can keep track of what's being posted and repost them at a later point, whether it's during the event or some time later as "throwback" content or when you promote a future event.

Now is also the time to look at all of the photos and videos you've taken during your event and to put them up on your event's website under a relevant folder - for example, "Networking Event 2019". This can show off how successful your event was and potential attendees for future events can look back at these photos, which can persuade them to attend.

Don't forget to publicly thank your vendors, guest speakers and attendees too. Personal touches, again, are a great way to show your appreciation on social media.

It's a stressful business and an event planning guide can help you keep track of your entire event, from start to finish and even beyond. You can set targets and deadlines, help hold you and your team accountable and remind you of what has and what still needs to be done.

WHAT NEXT?

It sounds like you're well on your way with planning your next event. You might just need help in a few key areas. If you hadn't previously considered printed marketing materials or branded banners, notebooks and giveaways for during the event, feel free to brainstorm ideas with one of our experts. There's no obligation, just get in touch using the button below or by giving us a call.

SEND US AN EMAIL



Alternatively, why not come and join the **BeBrilliant** Club and get loads more helpful downloads, tips and advice for free. You'll be the first to know about our next event and any other giveaways too.

JOIN THE CLUB

B&B Press

Aldwarke Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S62 6DY
Phone: **01709 710000**

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