



48 Using events and talks to sell your business

What are talks and events?

A talk is when you speak about a subject of interest to your target audience at either your own or a host's event. An event is an occasion that either you or a host creates to connect with target customers and offer an opportunity to build relationships and for those customers to learn more about your products and services in the process. Some examples of an event might be speed networking, a conference, a party, wine tasting, an exhibition, dinner with a guest speaker, a debate, a teleconference or a demonstration.

Why are they important?

Special events can give you great distinction and connection with your customers and they can be a lot of fun! You offer your prospects or customers a chance to come to you to learn and be stimulated.

A special event gives you the opportunity to attract potential customers through giving them something of value. This needs to be something that ultimately connects with you and your product or service. You could share some up-to-date research data, provoke a discussion, demonstrate a product or service. If this is run well, it will provoke interest in you and your service without you having to sell it.

Your challenge

Getting people to attend your event will be your biggest challenge. They will only come if they can see clearly what is in it for them. You need to do your research and find out what people ultimately could be interested in. What are the current hot topics, what are the major problems your target customer group faces? When would they be most likely to come – is a breakfast or evening event better? What about trying out some new technology and using teleconference facilities – that way your audience reach is likely to be wider.

What makes an event or talk successful?

- The right target people attend.

- They enjoy it and get personal value out of it.
- You get positive feedback.
- Attendees want to make contact with you for business as a direct consequence of the impact the event or talk had on them.
- You are in a position to follow up the leads generated by the event.
- You generate a positive return on your investment of time and resource.

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AN EVENT OR TALK – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Events

- ▶ What have you done in the past that has worked?
- ▶ What have you yourself attended that has been good?
- ▶ How could you use an event to promote your services?
- ▶ Who currently runs events that attract the kind of audience you want to reach?
- ▶ What would your target audience be interested in?
- ▶ The timing – when, where and how long? Make sure that it doesn't clash with public or school holidays. Consider when your target audience are most likely to want to attend that event. Bad timing can put people off.

Talks

- ▶ What could you talk about that might ultimately result in some interest in an element of your business?
- ▶ Research your initial ideas with your target audience and the people who are in regular contact with them.
- ▶ The title of the talk – will it attract the attention of your audience?
- ▶ Your description of the potential value the talk offers.

HOW TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TALKS – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ Networking events – are there any networking events that your target customer attends on a regular basis that you could talk at?
- ▶ Breakfast meetings – are there any business groups that meet throughout the month?
- ▶ Chamber of commerce – could you speak at one of their events?
- ▶ Round table.
- ▶ Conferences or trade shows.
- ▶ Business shows.
- ▶ Could you run your own event in association with Business Link who offer free event marketing in return for an opportunity to promote Business Link at your event?

Sample event feedback card

Thank you for attending this event.

To help us to improve what we do we would appreciate your feedback.

Name

Address

Telephone

Mobile

Email

What did you find of most value?

What did you find of least value?

What action do you plan to take as a result of attending this event/talk?

.....

What else would interest you if we were to run a similar event in the future?

.....

I am interested in (tick box)

Receiving free newsletter ☐

Receiving free report ☐

Receiving free consultation ☐

Further information about.....

☐ Please tick this box if you do not want to receive our regular information alerts

Thank you for your help

How to make the most of your talks and events

To make the most of your talk or event – whether you run it yourself or speak at a host’s event – you will need to make sure that you get the attendees’ contact details for follow-through marketing. An event feedback card is not only a useful way for you to measure what was appreciated by your attendees, but also gives an opportunity to ask for opt-in to the next step. That step might be agreement to receive ongoing information and ideas from your organisation which might be to have a free consultation or receive a free report. If you can offer something at the event that encourages attendees to take the next step in your sales process it will make it much easier for you to convert.

Think talk and help your customers get the answers to their burning questions