

A GUIDE TO ORGANISING  
HIGH IMPACT, LOW COST EVENTS



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the CIPFA Board for the Regions guide to organising high impact, low cost events.

## 1.1 The need for high impact, low cost events

Local events are a great way of bringing together CIPFA members and students to develop their skills, to share their experiences and to broaden their professional and social networks.

With the introduction of mandatory continuing professional development, the Institute has committed itself to ensuring that all members have access to at least four events a year within two hours' travel of where they live, of which two must be within one hour's travel.

It is, therefore, more important than ever that all parts of the Institute work together to deliver a range of interesting, thought provoking and high quality events to members.

## 1.2 The role of the regions

However, such events do not organise themselves. CIPFA volunteers work hard to choose topics, to find speakers and venues and to do the many other things that enable the Institute to deliver an outstanding range of local events across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The Institute's regional councils are at the front line of organising and delivering these events. In particular, regional councils and their sub-groups can help CIPFA to meet its commitment to members by:

- developing and coordinating an ongoing programme of events across their regions;
- supporting regional volunteers in organising and running events;
- coordinating their activities with other parts of the Institute;
- working with CIPFA employers and other professional bodies to broaden the range of opportunities open to our members.

## 1.3 How this guide can help

This guide brings together the combined experience of CIPFA volunteers across the regions in developing high value, low cost local events for members and students. It explains what makes such events successful and enables new and existing volunteers to draw on the knowledge and experience of their colleagues across the Institute when organising events of their own.

Firstly, we consider how to get the basics right. We focus in particular on how to identify an inspiring and timely topic, how to target the right audience and how to choose speakers who do justice to the former whilst entertaining the latter.

Secondly, we look at how to plan the event in detail. This includes deciding on what sort of event to run and when to run it, how to find the right venue and how to make it work financially.

Thirdly, we think about what we need to do in the run up to the event. We discuss, amongst other things, how to advertise and promote the event successfully to our target audience, how to communicate effectively with attendees in the run up to the event and how to structure the event so that everyone gets what they came for.

Fourthly, we discuss how to keep things running smoothly on the day. We look at how to take the stress out of the event by allocating clear roles and responsibilities, how to make sure that the venue is set up and ready to go and how to make attendees and speakers feel welcome.

Finally, we consider how to maximise the long-term effectiveness of the event. We look at how to use feedback from attendees and speakers to improve future events, how to leverage the success of the event to get people engaged in other Institute activities and how to make sure the people involved in the organisation of the event just can't wait to work with us again.

We hope that this guide will provide you with inspiration for your own events, both now and in the future.

## 2 GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

When planning an event, there are three things that we need to consider above all else. If we get these right, then we have laid the foundations for a fantastic event that attendees will talk about for months afterwards.

Firstly, we need to decide what **topic** the event is to address. Whatever the focus of our event, an interesting and current topic is essential if we are to attract attendees and make it worthwhile.

Secondly, we need to decide what our **target audience** is. Whether we target all members and students or a more specific group, we need to decide on the audience so that we can pitch the event at the right level.

And thirdly, we need to decide **who will speak** at the event and what they will speak about. This final point is perhaps the most critical, as our speakers need to do justice to our topic whilst entertaining our audience.

### THE BASICS

- an interesting topic
- a targeted audience
- effective speakers

### 2.1 Choosing a topic for the event

An interesting and current topic is critical if we are to get the attention of members and students and convince them to attend the event. The more the event promises to help the target audience develop skills they need or

resolve a problem that they are currently facing, then the more likely people are to attend.

It is clear, therefore, that we need a topic that will appeal to members and students. And we need it to appeal to a sufficiently large number of them to make the event viable.

In deciding on a topic, there are a few things that we need to think about. First, do we want the topic to be quite broad or do we want to address a specific issue. In general, if we want to attract a large audience, then a broad topic (e.g. partnership working) may be best. On the other hand, if we want to organise a small event, then a more specific topic (e.g. using competitive dialogue) may be more appropriate.

Second, do we want the event to be accountancy and finance focused or do we want to address a more policy-related issue? If we want to attract mostly CIPFA members and other finance staff, then a finance focus (e.g. faster preparation of year end accounts) may perhaps be the way to go. But if we want to attract a wider audience – perhaps to stimulate a broader debate – then a more policy-oriented topic (e.g. new models of health care) may work better.

Third, do we want to attract attendees from all sectors or from one specific sector? If we want to hold a cross-sector event, then a topic that affects the whole public sector (e.g. improving efficiency) would have wide appeal. On the other hand, if we want to attract attendees from a particular sector, then a sector-specific topic (e.g.

developments in local government finance) might be more effective.

Having considered the sort of topic that we want the event to address, we need to decide on the topic itself. While the number of topics that an event could address is pretty much limitless, topics tend to fall into one of seven categories.

First, we have **‘breaking news’** topics. These look at issues that have just arisen and to which public sector bodies need to respond. Such issues could include Government announcements, organisational successes or news items that have hit the headlines. The thing with breaking news topics is that they have a limited shelf life – if we want to organise an event on issues like this, we need to do it quickly before the interest surrounding the topic passes.

Second, there are always numerous **ongoing practical issues** in the public sector. These are topics that affect public sector bodies on an ongoing basis – though interest in them may wax and wane, they are always at the back of peoples’ minds. Such issues include things like partnership working, efficiency and performance management. These are ideal topics for events, as we can plan them in advance knowing that people will still be interested in the issue on the day of the event.

Third, topics can take the form of technical issues. These are usually of a finance or accounting nature, and often arise as a result of a new accounting standard or a new sector

statement of recommended practice. There are also numerous ongoing technical issues – such as audit or fraud related topics – that have continued appeal. Furthermore, we can structure events in the form of ‘an introduction to...’, meaning that we can run every once in a while as demand dictates.

Fourth, **personal development** topics are always popular. These look at ways in which people can perform more effectively in the workplace, and appeal to people at all levels and across all parts of the public sector. Personal development topics include things like time management, speed reading and managing meetings, and are useful way of ensuring that an event has something that will appeal to everyone.

#### SOME TOPIC IDEAS

- **breaking news**
- **ongoing practical issues**
- **technical issues**
- **personal development**
- **current CIPFA topics**
- **examination and training**
- **regional or local flavour**

Fifth, events can focus on **current CIPFA topics**. The Institute issues frequently new publications and guidelines, any of which can form the basis of an interesting regional ‘launch’. A good thing about such topics is that there is usually someone within CIPFA who has been involved heavily in developing the Institute’s thinking on the issue and who would be happy to speak at an event.

Sixth, we have **examination and training** topics. Of particular interest to students and employers, such issues can focus on aspects of the CIPFA education and training scheme, such as initial professional development, or on topics relevant to particular exams.

Seventh, events can look at topics that have a particular **regional or local flavour**. These can include things like how the local council is planning for a significant sporting event or how a new hospital will help to improve the delivery of health care services in the locality. Such topics do not have to be finance or accountancy related and can consequently appeal to a particularly broad audience.

It is clear, then, that there are many potential topics that an event could address. Some topics will almost suggest themselves, while others may require a bit more thought. Sometimes, the most difficult thing is sifting through the many ideas we have in order to decide which topics will make the most successful events. Occasionally, however, we may need a little guidance on what topics could make a successful event. When this is the case, there are a number of things we can do:

■ **ask the regional council** – the regional council or a dedicated sub-group can be an excellent forum for identifying topics for future events, with members usually being able to advise on what has worked well in the past and what current issues could form the basis of a successful event;

- **ask our members** – a survey of members and students across the region, perhaps on an annual basis, can be a great way of identifying what skills they would like to develop and what sort of topics they would like to learn about;
- **consider topical issues** – the newspapers and other publications, such as Public Finance, are always full of what is new and what is causing problems in the public sector – all things that are of interest to members and students;
- **think about speakers** – good speakers can be hard to find, so if you are aware of an interesting and effective speaker who has something useful to say, consider whether it would be worthwhile organising an event around them;
- **get suggestions** – colleagues and other contacts can be a useful source of ideas for future events – you could even put a ‘suggestion box’ on the regional website or add it as a question on the feedback form for current events; and
- **look at other regions** – CIPFA regions organise a huge number of events, most of which are advertised on the Institute’s website – have a look at these and see if they give you any ideas.

For larger events, with two or more speakers, we can use the topic we have chosen to create a theme for an event. The theme will set the overall focus of the event, with individual sessions looking at different aspects of this broader focus. We could have a technical theme for an event – such as public private partnerships or performance management – or

something more flexible that will allow a broader range of sessions. An example would be 'improving performance', which could look at both organisational and personal development.

### STUCK FOR IDEAS?

- ask the regional council
- ask our members
- consider topic issues
- think about speakers
- get suggestions
- look at other regions

When deciding how to organise sessions within a theme, it is favourable to achieve a good balance between theory and practice. The theory behind an issue can provide valuable background information and teach attendees about the topic, but it is practical examples – perhaps in the form of organisational case studies – that reinforce their understanding and bring an event to life.

Furthermore, if we have an event with a number of sessions, these do not all have to take the form of speaker presentations. Group discussions and workshops all have a role to play, as do breakout sessions and other forms of interaction. And if we are holding an event in an interesting or unusual venue, then a quick tour with a knowledgeable guide can make the event one to remember.

Having a theme helps us to market an event, as it is easier to give potential attendees a flavour of what the event

is about. And while it can take a bit longer to organise the event so that all the elements work well together, having a theme helps to provide structure to the event and to enhance its impact on the attendees. And it can also help us to understand the audience at whom we should target the event.

## 2.2 Identifying the target audience

There is no such thing as the wrong topic, but there is such a thing as the wrong topic for a given audience. So when we are choosing a topic for our event, it is important that we also consider the audience at which we should target it. By considering who will be in the audience, we can determine what level of prior knowledge they are likely to have, what aspects of the topic may be of particular interest to them and even what format of event may be the most appropriate.

It is likely that most regional events will be targeted at the broadest possible audience, so will be designed to appeal to all members. However, there are a number of different ways in which we can categorise our potential audience, which may be useful for specific events.

Firstly, we could target **student or newly-qualified members**. This would be particularly useful for events linked to examination and training issues, for those focusing on personal development issues or for those that provide an introduction to specific technical topics.

Secondly, we could target **members from specific sectors**, such as local government, health or housing. This would be appropriate if we were organising an event on a topic that is relevant to only one sector or if we want to concentrate on sector-specific issues.

Thirdly, we could target **members in specific positions within organisations**, such as directors of finance, chief accountants or internal auditors. This would help us to organise events that had a very specific technical focus, as it would enable us to focus more specifically on the needs and interests of a narrow group of attendees.

Finally, we could target **members from a specific geographical area**. This may be sensible if the topic of the event has a particular regional flavour, but would also be practical if we were organising a number of similar events at different locations.

### TARGETING THE AUDIENCE

- all members
- student or newly qualified members
- members from specific sectors
- members in specific positions within organisations
- members from a specific geographical area

When targeting events, it is often useful to consider what other events are available to CIPFA members in the local area. For example, directors of

finance and senior managers may have their own networks that organise events in the area. Likewise, the area may have a strong audit forum that puts on regular seminars. In such circumstances, it can be valuable to identify the gaps in the events that are currently available, and to target audiences that are not already catered for. This not only helps us to avoid competing with established networks, but can also be extremely beneficial to those hitherto overlooked groups or individuals at whom we target our events.

The principal issue when deciding on the target audience for an event is that of the breadth of the topic to be covered versus the depth in which we plan to cover it. In general, the narrower the target audience, the more prior knowledge we can assume and the more depth we can go into. So if we want to organise an event with a fairly broad topic that assumes a low level of prior knowledge, we could happily target it at all members. If, on the other hand, we want to organise an event that looks in detail at a specific technical topic, it may be more advisable to target it at a narrow audience of appropriate individuals within relevant organisations.

We can also use this principle to help determine the scale of our events. If we want to attract a large number of attendees, it is usually best to have a broad topic that will be of interest to all members. And conversely, if we want to keep things small, we can focus the event on more specific issues that will appeal to a narrower audience.

Having decided on the topic and the target audience for an event, we need to find knowledgeable and interesting speakers who can entertain the audience.

## 2.3 Finding and approaching speakers

While the topic and the target audience determine the focus of the event, it is the speakers that bring it to life. Consequently, finding good speakers is probably the most difficult task facing us when we organise any event, from a short after-work seminar to a multi-day conference.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPEAKER?

- **knowledge and experience**
- **ability to engage the audience**

What makes a good speaker? Well firstly, they need to be able to speak fluently about the topic of the event, or at least about the topic of their session. And secondly, they need to be able to entertain the audience. We have all been subjected to presentations by people who were extremely knowledgeable about their topic but who didn't quite make contact with the audience, and we have experienced excellent speakers who unfortunately knew little or nothing about their subject matter. The difficult bit is to get the best of both.

So finding speakers for our event, we need to consider two things. Firstly,

we need to consider their **knowledge and experience**. A good speaker should:

- be knowledgeable about the subject matter and be able to talk about it fluently;
- be able to explain both the theory behind the topic and its practical implications;
- be able to provide real life examples and case studies; and
- be able to help attendees at the event to learn from his or her experience.

Secondly, we need to consider their **ability to engage the audience**. A good speaker should:

- be charismatic and have an outgoing personality;
- speak clearly and concisely, without going off on unnecessary tangents;
- explain acronyms and technical terms and avoid unnecessary jargon;
- be enthusiastic about their topic and able to communicate that enthusiasm; and
- be able to relate to the audience through shared experiences.

Sometimes, however, it can be difficult to find a speaker on a particular topic at all. And it can be difficult to know if someone will be an effective speaker if we don't know them personally and have never heard them in front of an audience.

So the best way to choose a speaker is to find **someone we know**, as we will usually have a fairly good idea of what they know and how well they will be able to communicate their topic to the audience. Failing that, we can seek **personal recommendations**

from members of the regional council, other CIPFA volunteers or from work colleagues. Just by working with these existing contacts, we will already have access to a broad range of individuals who could potentially contribute to an event.

## FINDING GOOD SPEAKERS

- **someone we know**
- **personal recommendations**
- **organisations and interest groups**
- **people who have something to sell**
- **training firms**
- **CIPFA**
- **well know practitioners**
- **other regions**

For more specific topics, we can approach local or national **organisations and interest groups**, to see if they would be willing to send a representative to speak at our event. This is particularly effective if we can find organisations, such as environmental bodies, that have an interest in communicating their message to our audience. Another option is to approach **people who have something to sell** – such as professional firms or recruitment consultancies – to see if they would be willing to provide a speaker on a topic that relates to the services that they provide. We need to make it clear to such speakers, however, that we are not looking for a sales pitch – so it is usually best to approach only people whom we know can be relied on to stick to the topic. And for personal

development events, **training firms** can usually provide experienced speakers on a range of topics. These can, however, be expensive.

Another good source of speakers is **CIPFA** itself. The Institute employs a range of experienced individuals who are often more than willing to share their expertise with a wider audience. Furthermore, for any given topic there are usually a number of **well known practitioners** in the local area who have something to say and whose opinions make interesting and often thought-provoking listening. And if all else fails, look to see if **other regions** have run a similar event and find out who spoke at them and on what topics.

Having decided which individuals or organisations we would like to speak at our event, we need to approach them to see if they would like to get involved. The easiest way to do this is via a contact or colleague who knows the speaker personally. If we do not have a direct contact in this way, it is usually equally effective to simply telephone or email the potential speaker, tell them a bit about CIPFA and the event, and ask them if they would like to give a presentation.

In order to help speakers decide whether they would like to speak at the event and to prepare what they will say, we should provide them with some basic information about the event. This could include:

- the size of the audience and who will be attending (e.g. students, operational staff, directors of finance);
- the date, time and location of the event;

- how the event will be structured (e.g. number of speakers, timing of sessions);
- why we are approaching them and what we hope the audience to get from their presentation.

When approaching speakers, it is worth emphasising that CIPFA is a charitable body and that the event is being organised by volunteers for the benefit of CIPFA members across the public sector. We can also highlight the benefits that the speaker will get from being involved with the event. These will vary from speaker to speaker and from event to event, but will relate usually to the topic of the event and who the audience will be.

When planning an event, we may wish to consider whether we should pay the speakers a fee. This is unavoidable in some cases, for example if we have invited a speaker from a commercial training firm. However, in most cases speakers will not expect a fee – and we will probably not be able to afford to pay one. It is worth clarifying this when we first approach the speaker, so that there are no crossed wires.

## THINGS THAT SPEAKERS WILL WANT TO KNOW

- **the nature and size of the audience**
- **the date, time and location of the event**
- **how the event will be structured**
- **what topic or point of view we would like their presentation to address**

What we can often do, however, is provide the speaker with lunch (if the event includes one) and also invite the speaker to attend the whole event if they are interested, and possibly even to bring a guest. It is also usually appropriate to offer to pay the speaker's travel expenses, although in many cases speakers will not take us up on this offer. So if we have a small budget for the event, it is best to invite local speakers who do not have far to travel! A further nice touch is to send the speaker a thank you note after the event, together with a gift token or other inexpensive gift. This does not cost much, but can leave a very positive impression.

Having chosen a topic for the event, identified the target audience and found appropriate speakers, we now need to consider in more detail what form the event will take, where we will hold it and how we will finance it.

# 3 PLANNING THE EVENT IN DETAIL

When organising an event, there are many things that we need to consider. Having decided upon our topic, our audience and our speakers, we can start to decide what format the event will take and when we want to hold it. We can also identify an appropriate venue for the event. And we can think about how much the event will cost and how we can finance it.

## 3.1 Determining the format and timing of the event

When thinking about the format of an event, we need to bear in mind how many people are likely to be attending and the extent to which we want to encourage interaction between attendees. If we want to promote discussion between attendees, for example, this is more easily achieved if we keep the event relatively small. And for events with a larger number of participants, a more traditional format with the speaker talking directly to the audience may be more effective.

### EVENT FORMATS

- seminar
- workshop
- conference
- weekend school

There are a number of general formats that we can consider when planning events:

- a **seminar** takes the form of one or more speakers addressing an audience of between ten and thirty attendees, often in a relatively short event looking at a specific topic;

- a **workshop** requires more active participation from attendees, often using the experiences of attendees themselves to drive the event with the assistance of a facilitator. Workshops are most effective if restricted to between ten and twenty attendees, so that each has the opportunity to contribute;
- a **conference** takes a similar format to a seminar, except with a larger audience. A small conference can attract between twenty and fifty attendees, while a larger conference may attract considerably more. Conferences can be whole or multi-day events, and can cover a broader range of topics;
- a **weekend school** combines event session with a range of networking and social activities, and is usually held on a residential site. Such events can be particularly successful if the topic is of broad interest and the audience is well targeted.

We also need to think about what time of day we want to hold the event. While this decision will be determined at least in part by the format that we propose to adopt for the event, we have a number of options.

First, we could organise a **whole day** event. This could run from, say 10am to 4pm and could include between four and six speakers. Whole day events are particularly effective if we have a broad topic that we would like to explore from a number of different perspectives, or if we want to combine an event with something else, such as a regional annual general meeting.

Second, we could organise a **half day** event. This could run in either the morning or the afternoon, and could possibly include lunch. An event like this could include two or three speakers. Half day events are usually better attended if held in the morning, though this will depend on who is attending the event and where it is held.

### EVENT TIMINGS

- a whole day
- half a day
- at lunch time
- afternoon/early evening
- in the evening

Third, we could organise a **lunch time** event, consisting of a buffet or sit-down lunch together with one or two speakers before or after the meal. Such events are difficult to make a success, however, as people are often reluctant to leave work at this time of day only to have to return later on. This event format could be useful, however, if it is held at the attendees' place of work, where it could serve as a welcome break from their usual activities.

Fourth, we could organise an **afternoon/early evening** event, which could start at, say, 4pm and run until 6pm or so. An event like this could include one to three speakers, though it may be difficult for those members who have responsibilities after work to attend.

Fifth, we could organise an **evening** event after work, which could include one or two speakers and run for one

to one and a half hours. Such events are particularly effective if held in central venues, which attendees can reach easily after work.

When deciding on the timing of events, it is also useful to bear in mind that if people are travelling any distance, it is probably best to not start the event too early. A 10am start should give most people ample time to get there. It is also best to avoid clashes with school holidays, major public sector financial reporting deadlines and CIPFA exam dates.

While an interesting topic will help to attract people to our events, they will also come along to network with the other attendees. So it is helpful if we plan in plenty of opportunities for people to catch up with old friends and to make new acquaintances. The easiest way to do this is by including refreshment breaks at frequent intervals, such as drinks or even breakfast at the start of the event (this also gives delegates something to do when they arrive), tea and coffee breaks throughout the day and a lunch break if appropriate.

Other things that we can do to facilitate networking are to provide all attendees with name badges – stating who they are and where they work – and to distribute an attendee list in advance of the event. We can also encourage attendees to let us know if there are other attendees that they would particularly like to meet, so that we can make the necessary introductions.

Having decided what format the event will take and when we want it to

happen, we now need to decide where we are going to hold it. We need to find a venue.

### 3.2 Selecting a venue

When it comes to organising a venue for our event, it is a question of location, location, location. As a general rule, the event needs to be as near as possible to where the potential attendees are. While some people will be happy to travel some distance to get to an event, most people are unwilling to travel for more than an hour or so.

So when organising a series of events, it may be helpful to spread the venues for the events across the region, so that we reach the widest possible audience. Or we could try out a new venue in a new town or part of the region each year, to see which venues are the most popular among members. Alternatively, we could hold one half of our events in one or two central locations and the other half in a variety of more widespread locations. In each case, we need to strike a balance between finding venues that are accessible to a large number of potential attendees and ensuring that all members – regardless of where they live and work – are able to access at least one or two events a year.

When thinking about accessibility, we also need to consider how attendees will travel to the venue. It is useful if the venue we use is accessible by public transport, especially by rail. It should also be accessible easily by

road – perhaps near a motorway or 'A' road – and have ample car parking.

#### CHOOSING A VENUE

- is it welcoming?
- is it well lit?
- does it have good acoustics?
- are the staff friendly?
- is it big enough?
- does it have the right equipment?
- does it offer refreshments?
- is it available?
- is it affordable?

However, just being easy to get to isn't enough. The venue also needs to be right for the event. When deciding if a venue will meet our needs, there are a number of things that we can consider:

- is the venue nice and **welcoming**, with pleasant surroundings?
- is the room where we would hold the event **well-lit** and temperature controlled?
- does the venue have **good acoustics**?
- are the **staff** friendly and helpful?
- is the venue **big enough** to host the number of attendees we are hoping to attract?
- is the venue able to provide us with the **technical equipment** we require?
- can the venue provide good quality **refreshments**?
- is the venue **available** on the date we plan to hold the event?
- is the venue **affordable**?

When thinking about venues for events, we have a number of options. Many public sector bodies have large seminar or meeting rooms, which we

may be able to use for little or no cost. Local universities and colleges may also have rooms available, particularly outside of term time.

We could also consider approaching private sector companies or other organisations, who may have meeting facilities that they would be willing to let us use. For larger or longer events, it is often more practical to approach local hotels and conference centres. While these will inevitably be more expensive, they have more experience of hosting events and can usually provide a full package that will meet our needs. Specialist venue finding agencies can also help us to identify potential venues and to compare the options available.

Sometimes, the venue can form part of the event itself. An interesting or novel venue, particularly one that is connected to the topic of the event, will help to attract attendees. City chambers, devolved parliament buildings, art galleries, sports grounds and zoological gardens are always popular venues, as they represent places where people would not usually go or to which they would not usually have access. And if the event can include a tour of things the attendees would not usually get to see, this would be an added bonus.

Over time, we may find it more effective to work with a small number of core venues. This will enable us to get to know how the venue works and how it can help to make our events a success. We may also be able to negotiate discounts if we use these venues frequently.

On this note, we now need to consider how we will finance the event. One option that we may wish to consider is sponsorship.

### 3.3 Securing sponsorship for the event

Our main aim in seeking sponsorship is to maximise the level of financial support for our event. However, we also need to ensure that in doing so we protect CIPFA's reputation and avoid conflicts with the Institute's existing activities. There are two main types of sponsorship. Firstly, there is **in-kind sponsorship**. This is where a sponsor provides us with something for free or at a reduced cost, such as a venue, refreshments or even a speaker. In-kind sponsorship could also take the form of assistance with the administration of the event or with the printing information for delegate packs. In-kind sponsors could even provide us with interesting freebies for distribution to attendees, such as flash drives with copies of the speakers' presentations on.

#### TYPES OF SPONSORSHIP

- **in-kind sponsorship**
- **financial sponsorship**

The second type of sponsorship is **financial sponsorship**. This is where the sponsor provides us with direct financial support for the event, and is usually significantly more difficult to come by.

If we decide to look for sponsorship for our event, it is often easiest to start with the people we know. We can ask our contacts and those of our colleagues within the region whether their organisations would be interested in sponsoring an event, perhaps by providing a venue or some other in-kind support. We may also have contacts with commercial firms, such as insurers and recruitment agencies, who may be willing to provide financial support.

Once we have exhausted our personal contacts, we can consider other organisations that may be willing to sponsor our event. We can start by drawing up a list of local or locally-represented commercial organisations that have an interest in the public sector or – even better – in the specific topic of our event. We can then contact these organisations to explain who we are and what event we are organising, and to enquire as to whether they would be interested in supporting it.

When approaching potential sponsors, it is often difficult to know to whom we should address our enquiries. The most effective approach is often to find someone who already has a contact with the organisation and to use this relationship as a starting point for contact. Failing this, a quick call to the organisation's switchboard or a look at its website can usually get us the name of an initial contact. When looking at potential sponsors for an event, there are a number of issues that we should consider:

- **suitability** – are we happy to be associated with the sponsor?

- **competition** – is the sponsor a competitor of any of the parts of the CIPFA group?
- **relevance** – is the sponsor relevant to the topic of the event?
- **conflicts** – will the sponsor conflict with any other sponsors of the event?

It is helpful to consider carefully what we would be willing to provide a sponsor with in return for their support. Anything that we offer sponsors, such as a stand at the event or their name on printed materials, should be consistent with the event and should, where possible, enhance it.

It may be worthwhile to consider in advance the different elements of the event that people could sponsor, such as refreshments or venue hire, and to work out how much each of these will cost and what sponsors would get in return for sponsoring these. We can then give sponsors a good idea of how they could support the event, how much it would cost them and how they would benefit from it.

## SPONSORSHIP – ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- **suitability**
- **competition**
- **relevance**
- **conflicts**

When working with sponsors, it is advisable to agree in writing what the sponsor will provide and what benefits they will get in return. It is also useful to phrase these benefits in terms of specific inputs that we can guarantee,

such as a stand of a certain size at the event, the sponsor's logo on the front of the event programme or an acknowledgement in all communications to delegates. It is best to avoid 'hard sell' sponsors who may be more interested in the marketing of their produce or service than in the success of the event.

Sponsorship can help us to finance our event. However, we may also need to consider whether or not we will charge the attendees.

### 3.4 Deciding whether or not to charge

Having decided on the format and timing of our event and chosen a venue, we will have a reasonable idea of how much it is going to cost. We have three main sources of funds to cover this cost:

- our own regional or local funds;
- sponsorship; and
- charges to attendees.

So whether or not we need to charge for an event depends on what level of sponsorship we are able to obtain and whether we can cover the remaining costs from our own funds. If we do not wish to charge but are not able to cover the costs of the event from sponsorship or our own budget, then we need to reduce the cost of the event by scaling it down or finding a cheaper venue.

It is generally accepted that we do not charge members for attending events. However, there are certain circumstances when making a charge

may be appropriate. Firstly, we may be providing attendees with something specific, such as a gala dinner, for which it is not unreasonable to make a charge. Secondly, charging for the event may attract a different type of audience by projecting a more professional image. There is some suggestion, for example, that senior managers are more likely to attend an event for which a charge is made than one that is provided for free. Finally, charging delegates may be the only way of making the event financially viable.

If we decide to charge for the event, it is important to explain to people what value they will get from it and why it is worth paying money for. We may also wish to charge different amounts for members, retired members and students, to ensure that we do not inadvertently exclude any particular section of the membership.

We also need to consider how we will invoice people and how we will collect payment. It is usually easier to collect money from people in advance of the event, and to make it clear whether the charge will be refunded in the case of non-attendance. We also need to think about how we will respond to people who book a place on the event but from whom payment is not forthcoming. In such cases, it is worth making arrangements for people to pay on the day if necessary.

With the event planned, the venue booked and the finances arranged, we can now focus on promoting the event to potential attendees and on organising the final details.

## 4 MANAGING THE RUN UP TO THE EVENT

Events take time and effort to organise. And not only do we have to plan and develop the event, we also need to promote it to potential attendees and to take care of the many other things that will help to make the day a success.

### 4.1 Sorting our who does what

From contacting speakers to liaising with the venue and from preparing flyers to reviewing feedback forms, organising a successful event requires a number of skills and takes a considerable amount of time. Given that most of us have full time jobs and other responsibilities, it is beneficial to involve a number of people in the organisation of the event, rather than leaving it all to a single individual.

For smaller events, two people may be more than sufficient to get everything sorted out. For larger or more complicated events, up to four or five people may be needed to do everything that needs to be done.

In order to avoid any confusion, it is best to allocate specific roles or tasks to each member of the team, particularly as some people may have certain skills or contacts – for example, with speakers or potential sponsors – that may be particularly useful.

### 4.2 Promoting the event

The key to promoting the event is getting the message out and getting it to the right people. This means that

we need first to have a clear idea of who our target audience is. We can then address our promotional material to that audience, emphasising the value that they will gain from attending the event.

There are numerous ways in which we can promote the event. First, we can provide details of the event on our **website**, perhaps in the form of a specially designed flyer. This can give details about the topic, the speakers and the venue, together with the date and time of the event and any charge that can be made. The advantage of doing this is that we can in other communications refer people to our website, rather than having to provide all of the details of the event each time.

Second, we can contact potential attendees directly via **email**. This is a relatively low cost way of promoting the event to a large number of individuals, though it can be difficult to target specific groups of individuals within the general membership. Furthermore, not all members will have access to email, so it may not be appropriate to rely solely on email to promote events.

#### PROMOTING THE EVENT

- **website**
- **email**
- **CIPFA employers**
- **letter**
- **facebook**
- **regional council**
- **other professional bodies**
- **relevant publications**

We can also send details of the event to local **CIPFA employers** or other relevant organisations and ask them if they could promote it on our behalf. If the event is relevant to those organisations – and particularly if it is free – then they are usually more than happy to do so.

If we want to target specific potential attendees, then we can contact them by **letter**. This more personal approach may be more successful than sending an email, but the disadvantage is that is costly and time consuming if we want to contact more than a small number of individuals.

The development of information technology also provides us with means of promoting our event. For example, online networking sites such as **Facebook** enable us to send details of events to interested individuals, and even to create an online community to whom we can easily promote future events and activities.

We can promote the event more informally through members of the **regional council**, who will themselves no doubt have an extensive network of contacts. We can also promote our event at other events that may be held across the region. Another option is to contact other regional councils – particularly those with regions adjacent to ours – with details of the event, so that they can promote it to members within their region.

We can also promote the event to members of **other professional bodies**, particularly where we already have good regional links. This not only

provides us with a wider audience for our event but – if we can arrange reciprocal arrangements with these bodies – can also broaden significantly the range of events that we can offer to our own members.

Furthermore, we can also promote the event in relevant **publications**, such as regional newsletters, Spreadsheet or Public Finance. It is worth bearing in mind that some publications and websites charge to advertise events, while others may be willing to include our event for free.

Once we have promoted the event to potential attendees, we need then to encourage them to book a place and to communicate with them in the run up to it.

### 4.3 Communicating with attendees

When we promote the event to potential attendees, we are essentially trying to sell it to them. Even if we are not planning to charge for the event, attendees will be making an investment of their time and also the cost of travelling to the event. We need to convince them that this investment will be worthwhile.

At a minimum, our initial promotional material sent to potential attendees needs to include:

- the topic of the event and why it is important;
- when the event is to be held and at what time;
- where it will be held;
- what the attendee will gain from the

event and why it is a valuable investment of their time;

- what the event will cost them; and
- how they can book their place.

Depending on the initial response to our promotional efforts, we may need to repeat them – by the same or other means – in order to generate sufficient interest.

There are a number of ways in which we can ask attendees to register for the event. We could ask them to send us an email, for example, or to complete an online booking on our website. Alternatively, we could accept registrations by post or by telephone. It is usually easier to accept bookings by email or post or via the website, however, as we can respond to them at our convenience.

The most important thing, however, is that attendees have a clear way of booking their place at the event and that we confirm that their booking has been received.

Shortly before the event, it is useful to send out joining instructions to registered attendees. These can include confirmation of the date and time of the event, a map showing the location of the venue and possibly even a list of attendees and their organisations.

It is usually easiest – and cheapest – to send joining instructions by email. However, we may need to send them out by post to attendees for whom we do not have an email address. If we do send them out by email, instead of attaching various documents, we could simply provide a link to these

documents on our website. This will enable us to update the documents if necessary and will also encourage people to visit our website.

As well as communicating with delegates prior to the event, we need to consider how we will look after them on the day. This means that we need to organise refreshments.

#### INITIAL INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL ATTENDEES

- topic
- date / time
- location
- benefits
- cost
- how to book

### 4.4 Organising refreshments

There are several reasons why we may wish to provide refreshments at our event. Firstly, and most obviously, if the event lasts for more than a couple of hours then attendees are likely to get hungry or thirsty. Secondly, a refreshment break provides attendees with the opportunity to stretch their legs, to visit the conveniences and to reflect on the content of the event so far. And thirdly, refreshment breaks allow attendees to network with each other, which is often the main reason many of them will have come to the event in the first place.

So we need to ensure not only that we provide appropriate refreshments, but that attendees have somewhere to mingle or to sit down during refreshments breaks, that they have the opportunity to stretch their legs and that appropriate washroom facilities are available.

The refreshments that we provide depend on a number of factors:

- **the nature of the event** – shorter events may not require a refreshment break, whereas longer ones or those with a strong networking element may require several;
- **the timing of the event** – events that start first thing in the morning will work better if tea and coffee are available, while those that run over a mealtime will almost certainly require some form of catering;
- **the number of attendees** – if we have a large number of attendees, then given the likely timescales, a light buffet lunch may be more practical than, for example, a large sit down meal;
- **the cost of refreshments** – if we do not wish to charge attendees, we need to consider how we will pay for the refreshments – this may rule out certain more expensive options.

In terms of the sorts of refreshments that we can provide, it is reasonably popular – and often expected – that there will be tea, coffee and water available in the morning and afternoon breaks. It is often not worth arranging for similar refreshments at the end of the event, as attendees will usually want to head for home fairly quickly.

If the event starts fairly early in the morning, we could consider providing some form of breakfast. Where the event runs over lunchtime, we could consider providing a meal for the delegates. This could take the form of a hot or cold buffet or – if resources permit – a sit down meal. If we are not able to fund this, we could consider charging the delegates for their lunch. If we would rather not do this, it may be easier to leave a reasonable break for lunch and to provide attendees with a list of local cafes and restaurants. We could even arrange for attendees to receive a discount on presentation of their event name badge.

If the event runs into the evening, we could arrange an informal reception – popular options involve either champagne or cheese and wine. We may even wish to arrange a dinner for the attendees, which would be particularly suitable if the event is a significant one on the regional calendar.

For all refreshments, it is important to consider the requirements of attendees. Peoples' dietary requirements vary, so it is advisable to ask delegates to let us know if they have any particular needs, so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. In any case, it is sensible to offer attendees a reasonable choice of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes and of caffeinated and non-caffeinated drinks.

As well as refreshments, attendees will also want to know about the event itself. This is where delegate packs can be a useful addition to the day.

## 4.5 Preparing delegate packs

When planning an event, we can ask ourselves the question of whether delegate packs will add value to the attendees' experience. The answer, inevitably, is that it depends what we put in them.

There are many things that we could include in delegate packs:

- an up to date **agenda** for the event;
- copies of **speakers' presentations**;
- continuing professional development (CPD) **certificates**;
- attendee **feedback forms**;
- a **list of attendees** and the organisations that they represent;
- **promotional material** from sponsors; and
- details of **forthcoming events** in the region.

We also need to collate the delegate packs in some way, usually in a document wallet or a smart plastic bag. Packs can also include pens and writing pads, which attendees can use over the course of the event.

When considering whether or not to provide delegate packs, we need to consider a number of issues. First, we will need to get hold of the things to put in them. Some of these – such as CPD and feedback forms – can be provided by CIPFA. Other things we will have to arrange ourselves. Second, we may need to print some of the documents. If we have an event with a large number of delegates, this could involve a significant amount of work. Third, we will need to sort the documents and insert them into the

delegate packs. This can in itself take quite a while and is best not left until the morning of the event. And finally, we will need to distribute the delegate packs to attendees. This is usually quite straightforward, as we can hand them out as people arrive or place them beforehand on peoples' seats.

If we do not have sufficient time or resources to print all of the things we would like to put into delegate packs – such as speakers' presentations –we can upload these to our website and simply provide attendees with details of how they can access them. We could even do this prior to the event, so that attendees can print off things themselves if they wish and bring them with them to the event.

#### DELEGATE PACKS – THINGS TO INCLUDE

- **agenda**
- **speakers' presentations**
- **CPD certificate**
- **feedback form**
- **list of attendees**
- **promotional material**
- **forthcoming events**

With attendees registered, venue and refreshments booked and delegate packs prepared, we need now to make sure that everything runs smoothly on the day.

# 5 KEEPING THINGS RUNNING SMOOTHLY ON THE DAY

When it comes to the day of the event, there will be a lot of things that we need to do. The key thing is to make sure that everyone involved in the running of the event knows what they need to do. But we also need to check the venue, to greet attendees and speakers as they arrive and to keep everything running to schedule.

## 5.1 Allocating roles on the day

On the day itself, it is useful to allocate at least two specific roles. The first role is what we could call 'front of house' and represents the face of the event that the attendees see. This role is usually undertaken by a chairperson, who has a visible presence throughout the event.

The second role is that of 'backstage'. This role can be undertaken by one or more people who ensure that everything behind the scenes goes according to plan. While the chairperson has to remain cool, calm and collected, the role of the backstage coordinators can be more hectic, as they respond to problems as they arise.

In general, the bigger and more complex the event, the more people we will need to make sure that it runs smoothly. With anything other than with the most straightforward venues and formats, events will not run themselves. There will always be something – such as a speaker running late or coffee that is not ready – that needs to be addressed quickly on the day.

With roles allocated, the first thing we need to do is make sure that the venue is ready for our attendees.

## 5.2 Getting the venue up and running

In order to get the best from a venue, it is often useful to make contact early on and to develop a relationship with its events staff. This will help them to understand our needs and to get a better idea of how they can help us on the day. They will also be more committed to the success of our event if we have developed a personal relationship with them.

However, no matter how much time we have spent on preparation before the event, it is essential to check everything on the day.

### THE VENUE – THINGS TO CHECK ON THE DAY

- the room where the event will be held
- audio-visual equipment
- refreshments

First, we need to check **the room where the event will be held** and, in particular, how the room is laid out. If we have a large audience, then a theatre-style layout may be most appropriate. For smaller audiences, or where group working will be required, it may be better to seat attendees in groups around tables. In any case, we can discuss this with the venue in advance, so all we need to do on the day is check that the room is set up as we require.

Second, we need to ensure that any **audio-visual equipment** that we require has been set up. Again, we can arrange this in advance, but we need to ensure that any laptops, projectors, flipcharts (and pens!), televisions and microphones that we require are there and that we are able to operate them. In general, it is laptops and data projectors that cause the most problems, so it is advisable to check before attendees arrive that the relevant presentations are loaded, that the projector works and that we are able to use it.

Third, we need to confirm with the venue staff what times **refreshments** will be served. If possible, we could have refreshments served in a different room, so that they can be set up and cleared without disturbing the speakers or the audience. Furthermore, if the schedule slips during the day, it is useful to let the venue staff know, so that they can adjust the timings of the refreshment breaks accordingly.

When we are happy that the venue is as we want it, we need to prepare for the arrival of the attendees. Depending on the scale of the event, we may wish to set up a 'welcome' table, at which the attendees can register and collect their name badges and delegate packs. We may also wish to put up signs directing attendees from the main entrance of the venue to our registration area, if it is not obvious where they need to go. It is worth bearing in mind that most commercial venues will take care of this for us, if we ask them.

If we are not in a commercial venue – for example, if we are holding our event in a local authority building – it is worth checking that the person on the main reception is aware of the event and knows where attendees should go when they arrive.

Once this is done, it is often worth just having a quick walk around to check that everything is ready, perhaps even doing a trial ‘entrance’ in to the venue to see things from an attendee’s point of view and to ensure that everything is set out reasonably. With this done, we are now ready to greet the attendees and speakers as they arrive.

### 5.3 Greeting attendees and speakers

In attending our event, attendees will no doubt want to learn something about the topic under discussion. They will also want to network with their peers and to make new acquaintances. But above all, they will want to enjoy themselves. And our role as organisers of the event is to make sure that they do.

So above all, we need to make the attendees feel welcome. It may seem obvious, but this means that we should treat them as we would guests into our home. We should be pleased to see them, we should greet them warmly and we should seek to ensure that they have everything they need.

As delegates arrive, it is helpful to have a member of the regional council or one of the event organisers on hand to greet people and to answer any questions they may have. If we have a

welcome desk, we can register delegates and hand out name badges and delegate packs. We can also direct attendees to where the sessions will be held and where the refreshments are.

At this early stage in the event, it is useful to mingle with the attendees to make them feel welcome and to find out where they have come from and what they are hoping to gain from the event. We can also try to introduce attendees to each other, in order to help them network and to stimulate discussion.

Speakers will be attending the event for slightly different reasons. They will still want to enjoy themselves, but they are more likely to be concerned with presenting their topic well and making a good impression on the audience.

When our speakers arrive, we should greet them and try to make them feel welcome, just as with the other attendees. Speakers will probably want to prepare for their session, so we should show them where their presentation will be held and introduce them to the audio-visual equipment available, so that they can familiarise themselves with it. We can also run through the format of the day and let them know who will be speaking before and after them, if relevant.

It is worth remembering that speakers may not always arrive at the beginning of the event, but may attend only for their session. We should ask speakers in advance when they are planning to arrive, so that we can arrange for

someone to meet them – and so that we know when to start worrying that they are not there.

With the venue set up and speakers and attendees in place, we are ready to start. All we need to do now is to keep things running to schedule.

### 5.4 Keeping things running to schedule

The key to keeping the event on schedule is to have an effective chairperson. In particular, the chairperson will:

- lead the event sessions and be the focal point for the event;
- introduce speakers at the beginning of each session and thank them at the end;
- keep the speakers to time – and bring them gently to a conclusion if they overrun; and
- run question and answer sessions after the speakers have presented.

The chairperson for our event needs to have sufficient seniority, presence and authority to run the session. He or she should be familiar with the topic of the event and should also be able to relate to the audience. In general, the role of chairperson can be performed by a member of the regional council, but in some circumstances – such as for larger conferences – a guest chair could be invited.

In addition to the ‘front of house’ role of the chair, there are other things that we will need to do in order to keep the event running smoothly. We will need to ensure that late

arrivals are registered and shown into the event area discreetly and that any changes to the schedule that are likely to affect the timing of refreshments are communicated to venue staff. We should also monitor the sound and temperature levels in the event area and make any necessary adjustments. Furthermore, we should check in advance of each refreshment break that the refreshments are indeed ready.

Should anything arise that will affect the timing or running order of the sessions – for example if a speaker will be late arriving or if refreshments are not available at the appropriate time – we should inform the chairperson so that he or she can make the appropriate adjustments to the schedule. This communication can be in the form of prearranged hand signals or – perhaps more easily – by way of a note.

There are any number of things that can impact on the running of the event, at least some of which we can anticipate in advance. Here are some of the things we can do to try to head off the most common problems:

- leave plenty of time for everything, particularly setting up at the beginning of the event;
- give speakers a contact number on the day, so that they can let us know if they are running late;
- load speakers' presentations onto the laptop in advance and check that they appear correctly;

- check that all of the audio-visual equipment works – then check again;
- have a contingency plan in case a speaker does not show up.

If everything goes to plan – and even if it does not – we should have an interesting and thought-provoking event that motivates the audience and inspires them both personally and professionally. We need now to harness this motivation and inspiration to maximise the long term effectiveness of the event.

With the event over, it is tempting to take a breather and move on to the next one. However, if we are to maximise the long term impact of the event and to use it to enhance the opportunities that we provide to CIPFA members then we need not only to thank those who helped to make the event a success but also to seek feedback on the event and to find out how we can improve in the future. We can also use the success of this event to encourage people to get involved in our work within the region.

# 6 MAXIMISING THE LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EVENT

## 6.1 Saying thank you

There are many people who will have helped us with the organisation of the event, such as the chair, our speakers, the venue staff, our sponsors and – of course – the attendees.

We should make sure that we thank all of these people for the role that they have played in making the event a success. A personal letter of thanks to the chairperson and to each of the speakers is a nice touch, as is a letter to our main contact at the venue thanking them for their assistance and for their hospitality. We can thank attendees by way of a short email after the event, which we could also use to promote other forthcoming events in the region.

## 6.2 Getting feedback from attendees and speakers

We should also try to get feedback from speakers and from attendees about what they thought of the event. We can use this feedback both to find out what worked well and to identify what we could do to make future events even more effective.

We can seek feedback in a number of ways. We could ask attendees to complete a **feedback form**, either a paper copy provided on the day or an electronic version sent after the event. Or we could ask them to complete an **online survey**, such as those that can be compiled using Survey Monkey or similar software. Alternatively, we could conduct **feedback interviews** with a sample of delegates, either in

person on the day or via telephone after the event.

### GETTING FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES

- **feedback form**
- **online survey**
- **feedback interviews**

However we seek feedback on the event, there are a number of elements that we should cover:

- how effective was the chairperson in leading the event?
- how effective were each of the speakers – in terms of what they said and how they said it?
- what were the attendee's objectives in attending the event and were these met?
- what was the most useful thing that the attendee took away from the event?
- what did the attendee think of the venue?
- how well was the administration of the event carried out?
- how useful were the delegate packs?
- how were the catering and refreshments?
- what is the attendee's overall opinion of the event?
- how did the attendee hear about the event?
- does the attendee have any suggestions for future event topics?

We can provide a range of responses to each of these questions, from which delegates can choose the one that is most consistent with their views. This makes it easier to collate the feedback

received from attendees and to identify trends. We should also, however, allow attendees to make qualitative comments and suggestions, so that they can expand on their responses if they wish. For example, if an attendee tells us that they did not like the venue, it would be helpful if he or she could tell us why.

We can then use this feedback to gain an insight into what attendees thought of each aspect of the event and to learn how we can make our events even more successful in the future.

## 6.3 Learning for the future

Having sought feedback from delegates, it is important that we use it to learn what we can do to improve future events. We can start by identifying what attendees found positive about the event – perhaps a particularly engaging chair, an effective event format or a successful venue. Once we have identified things that work well, we can seek to implement them at future events.

We can then try to gain an insight into what delegates thought could be improved. This is likely to be more difficult, as people will undoubtedly have differing views on almost every aspect of the event. However, it is usually possible to identify from attendees' feedback a number of things that we can try to improve on when we organise our next event.

In considering the success of the event, we can also think about our own views on how well things went as

well as those of our fellow organisers. We can also seek feedback from the chairperson, the speakers and any sponsors who were present. This will help us to understand the extent to which the event met their needs and whether there are any things we could do differently in future.

In addition to finding out how we could improve future events, we can also use the success of each event to encourage people to get involved in our work within the region.

## 6.4 Getting people involved in future events

Through the events that we organise, we have access to a wide range of CIPFA members. We can, therefore, use these events and our communications with attendees to inform them of our work in the region and to motivate them to get involved.

There are a number of ways that we can do this. First, we can ask the chairperson to include in their **opening or closing remarks** a brief introduction to the role of the regional council, the types of activities that we organise and the opportunities for other members to get involved.

Second, we could develop a **flyer** setting out details of what we do, how other members could get involved and how they would benefit from this. We could then hand these flyers out at the event or include them in delegate packs.

Third, we could include in the event a brief **presentation on the work of the region**, which highlights current and future activities and explains how attendees could contribute to their success. Alternatively, we could have a regional stand at the event, staffed by members of the regional council who could promote our work and answer questions from attendees.

### HOW TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED IN FUTURE EVENTS

- a mention in the chair's remarks
- a flyer in delegate packs
- a presentation on the work of the region
- a report on the success of the event
- inclusion on mailing lists

Fourth, we could prepare a **report on the event** and publish it in a regional newsletter, on our website or in other publications, such as Spreadsheet. Such a report could summarise the content of the event – including the key messages from the speakers' presentations – and could also serve to showcase the work of the region and the opportunities for members to get involved.

And finally, we can add attendees' names and contact details to our **mailing lists**, so that they can be made aware of future events in the region. In this way, we can develop rapidly a large network of interested

professionals to whom we can market our events and whom we can approach when we are next looking for topic ideas, speakers, venues or any of the many other things that contribute to the success of high impact, low cost events.



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