

YOUR GUIDE TO

***PLANNING
EVENTS FOR
YOUR MEMBER
COMMUNITY***





WHY PLAN EVENTS?

Hosting events at your coworking space is one of the most effective ways to **gain members and support retention.**

Events draw new people to your space, plus they help your current members expand their networks and meet potential collaborators or customers. When your events are valuable, your members will show up to participate.

Here are 10 steps you can follow to plan and execute your next event successfully.

UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS

of Your Community

Before you start planning any logistics for your event, first consider what events your members want. What would get your members excited about attending? What type of event would encourage members to invite their friends and networks? Do they want to learn something new, or simply meet new people?



One of the best ways to understand what types of events your community wants is to send a simple survey. Keep it short, be specific, and ask your members:

What aspects of an event are most valuable to you?

This could include professional development, networking, recruiting, or fun and laidback opportunities to meet other members. This is essentially the goal of an event, and it's the incentive your members have to attend.

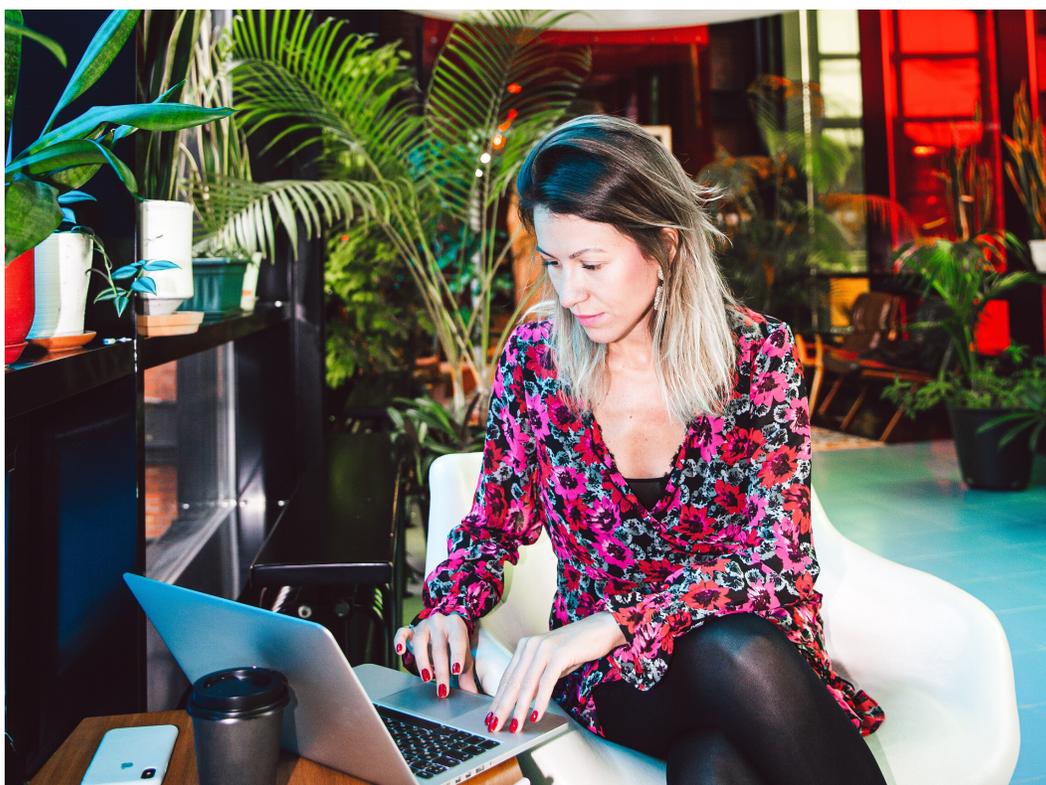
What's a professional topic you'd like to learn more about?

You likely have a wide variety of professionals in your coworking space, but you may have some common themes in skills your members would like to develop. From digital marketing or design basics, to using LinkedIn or mastering Squarespace, there are tons of skills your members could use support in learning.

What time of day are you most likely to attend an event?

This one is simple. Some members may prefer happy hour, while others might want a breakfast session. Either way, make sure you understand when your members are available and most likely to show up to your event.

Tools such as Google Forms and Typeform are free and easy to customize. Send your survey via email, and consider offering a small prize as an incentive to complete the survey.



SELECT AN EVENT STRUCTURE AND TOPIC

Consider this common event structure:

- Start with time for open conversation and networking
- Follow with a word about your coworking space and what you offer
- End with a featured speaker or panel on a topic of interest to your members

Plan for 60-90 minutes. This event length and structure allows a mix of connecting and networking without focusing the entire event on an activity that some find uncomfortable. It also provides an opportunity for your members to learn something new without sitting through a long or overwhelming session.

Narrow down the topic that will be presented at your event, and consider what experts or leaders on that topic could teach or present at your session.

TIP: Leverage your members. Is there a member of your community with expertise on your topic? Always ask your members to present if they're qualified to speak on the information you're planning to share at your event.

Also consider businesses and organizations that provide benefits to your members. Do they have experts that can speak on your topic?

Steer clear of presenters and speakers who are brand new to you and your community unless they're referred by a trusted source. You don't want to find out at your event that your speaker is only there to peddle a product.



MAKE A LIST OF LOGISTICS

It's time to get your event details in order. Your first consideration should be budget. Are you serving coffee and donuts at your event? Beer and wine? Make sure your budget is appropriate for the number of attendees you expect. If you're serving alcohol, make sure you comply with local regulations for events and have any necessary licensing.

Your list of tasks should include:

- Confirm event budget
- Confirm event title
- Confirm event date and time
- Book event location and room
- Confirm event speakers
- Send event schedule to speakers
- Assess food and beverage needs
- Plan setup for tables and chairs
- Plan setup for audio and visual equipment
- Assess need for additional supplies including cups, napkins, or name tags
- Designate someone to check in attendees when they arrive
- Plan for cleanup after the event

SET UP EVENT REGISTRATION

TIP: Use the Proximity Platform to list your events, register members, and check in attendees. This also allows you to easily capture emails and follow up with attendees after the event.

Other popular platforms include Eventbrite, Facebook, or basic forms you can build into your website.

No matter what platform you use for registration, make sure you have a clear event title, a concise description, the event schedule, and the names of featured speakers and their organizations. Triple check your event date and time are accurate. Also be sure to provide a specific location and address for registrants who have never been to your coworking space.

Always test your registration process before it's live to ensure you're capturing all of the information you need.

ANNOUNCE YOUR EVENT

Use an email service such as Mailchimp to create and send emails to your members with your event details. **Tell them about your event multiple times.**

Send a save-the-date email six to eight weeks in advance or include the event in an email newsletter with a link to registration. Continue to remind members regularly via email and be sure to send a reminder email the day before the event to registered attendees.

Post your event on platforms where your community shares information including Slack and Facebook Groups.

Create an event sign or poster to hang in prominent places in your coworking space. Physical or digital signage is one of the most effective ways to let your members know about upcoming events.

USE FACEBOOK EVENTS

Facebook Events are an excellent tool for attracting new attendees to your event, and a modest budget can go a long way in reaching new audiences with your event promotion.

Be specific and concise with your event listing, and be sure to include a ticketing link to your registration page. This way attendees can still sign up directly through your platform of choice. Also include a compelling image that matches your brand and reflects the topic and nature of your event.

ADD YOUR EVENT

to Your Google Business Listing

When prospective members Google search for your coworking space, your Google Business listing will show up on the first page of results. Add your event here to let prospective members know what's coming up at your space, and prompt them to visit even if they're not ready to book a tour.



LEVERAGE PARTNERS TO PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

Will your event have speakers from organizations that are compatible with your audience? If so, ask your speakers to promote your event via their organization's website and social media. This is especially effective for organizations with a large following and allows you to reach a new, broad audience and potentially bring them into your coworking space.

Consider event sponsorships as another way to involve partners. If you know of a business that would like to get its brand in front of your members, ask for a sponsorship to cover food and beverages, or even help with event setup and cleanup. Sponsors should be named in your event listings and promotions, and tagged on social media when you share about your event.



GREET YOUR GUESTS

It may sound obvious, but nobody likes to show up to an event and not feel welcome. Make sure your community manager or one of your staff is at the door to greet guests on event day. If a guest is new to your space, have someone on standby to provide a tour if your guest is interested. Be sure to introduce attendees to each other and your current members.

TIP: Use the Proximity Platform to check in or register attendees when they arrive at your event.

FOLLOW UP AND SAY THANKS

You've done so much hard work to plan and promote your event, and hopefully you filled your gathering with members and new guests. Don't forget the finishing touch to show you appreciate the time your attendees took to come to your coworking space. The day after your event, **send a thank you email** to your attendees. You can also send an email to registrants who didn't attend to let them know you missed them.

Want to see your new contacts back in your space? Send them an offer for a free drop-in day, or invite them to schedule a formal tour with you. If you have your next event scheduled, you can also share what's coming up next at your coworking space.

ABOUT VIRTUAL EVENTS

Let's face it. Post-pandemic, large events at coworking spaces aren't going to happen for quite some time. Many coworking space owners have been running virtual events during the coronavirus outbreak, and these are a great way to keep engaged with your member community when you can't all be together in person.

We expect virtual events to continue, and we put together several ideas and tips for you. Head over to our blog for more details on virtual events.

WANT OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES?

Head to **Proximity Connect** where you'll have access to other coworking space owners and managers to share ideas and learn from your peers. Twice a month, join our free Coworking Community Call where we discuss helpful, practical tips for managing your coworking space. Proximity's School of Coworking is also a resource for space founders and managers to learn everything you need to run a thriving space.



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