



How to run a National Skills Week Event

In order to run a successful event it is essential that you carefully plan and prepare it. This guide will give you some advice on elements to consider when planning your National Skills Week event. Please note that this guide will give you a foundation for your event planning, the details of each event vary depending on its size, ideas and objectives.

INITIAL IDEAS

National Skills Week aims to showcase and highlight the diversity of vocational education, the opportunities, career pathways and success stories. You have complete freedom to be creative and innovative when planning your event, however the event should aim to fulfil the objectives of National Skills Week, outlined below:

- Raise the status of practical and vocational learning, enabling all Australians to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities, their potential, and how they can contribute to a successful, modern economy.
- To articulate and advocate – “learning by doing is as important as academic learning”.
- To showcase examples of the many pathways to success and to dispel some of the out-dated myths often associated with vocational training.
- To shine a spotlight on the achievements and success stories of practical learners.
- Highlight opportunities for minority groups such as Indigenous Australians and workers with disabilities or encourage women to get into non-traditional trades such as building and construction or automotive.
- To highlight the talent and skills of apprentices to the wider public and employers- i.e. through WorldSkills competitors, Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors etc.
- Profile RTO’s, Trade Training Centres in schools (VETiS), GTO’s and employers.
- Showcase the vocational landscape, its diversity and the opportunities for young and old.

DEFINE WHO, WHAT & WHY?

We suggest starting your planning with the following initial thoughts -

- Who is the event going to be for (audience, i.e. students, teachers, employers, etc.)?
- What type of event will I host (format, i.e. Open Day, competition, online or on campus etc.)?
- Why am I going to hold this event (objectives, i.e. what do I want to promote, what outcome do I wish to achieve)?

AUDIENCE

Identifying your target audience is essential in developing your event. When defining your target audience and ensuring it is consistent with your event objectives and format, you may want to consider the following:

- Age;
- Location;
- Interests;
- Experience in the subject area of your event; and
- Why they would want to attend your event

Inspire people to discover and use their talent through quality vocational education and convince others of its real value to individuals and society.



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Type & Format

Considering the subject matter, theme and format of your event will determine the type of event you host. Also you need to consider your audience when developing your event's type and format. What type of event would they be interested in?

Inspiration for event ideas can be found almost anywhere. A few suggestions are:

- Consider topical issues in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet);
- Research other festivals and events; or
- Brainstorm with your colleagues and get inspired by previous National Skills Week events.

Some popular event formats include:

- Hands-on activities;
- Displays or exhibitions;
- Public discussions or debates;
- Demonstrations;
- Online activities like competitions etc. or
- Talks and presentations.

Objectives

Along with defining your target audience and your event format and type, you will need to consider your objectives. Over the period of planning, implementing and evaluating your event, the objectives will always be a strong reference point to keep you on track, and can be used as a guideline by others involved. Make sure your objectives are written down clear and concise for future reference.

To determine your objectives, think about what you hope to achieve for your organisation and your participants.

Gather a Team

No matter the scale of your event, you will most probably need to work with others to run it. Consider how many people you will need to:

- Plan the event;
- Publicise the event; and
- Set up and run the event on the day (presenting, chairing, helping, catering, and cleaning up).

The number of people required will largely depend on the size and scope of the event. When bringing a team together, consider that each member of the event team should have a skills that will contribute to the event, this could be in event management, media relations, skills to display at the event etc.

You can also consider working with a partner organisation to allow you to share best practice, combine resources and optimise both your audiences. Consider what types of organisation might make a good partner for your event (i.e. schools, RTOs, industry, business etc.).



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PREPARE THE BUDGET

A budget for your event is imperative and it is important to plan carefully and be diligent with your budget. To prepare your budget you will need to consider the income and expenses of the event. Income streams may include:

- Admissions fees;
- Sponsorship;
- Grants; and/or
- Donations
-

Expenses to consider include:

- Speakers fee;
- Venue hire;
- Equipment required;
- Advertising & publicity; and
- Insurance.

Whatever your maximum budget, always allow some contingency for unseen incidental costs as these will inevitably occur. When preparing your budget, be aware of the following:

Identify all items of expenditure early in the event planning e.g. administration, event delivery, marketing and communication;

- Make sure the budget represents true costs. Hidden costs, such as hiring extra equipment that was originally under-estimated can be significant.
- Most events will attract some income, whether it's direct (such as tickets, catering, car parking) or indirect (such as advertising, sponsorships, sales, donations); and
- Show all sponsorships as income. It is best not to overestimate the amount. Remember that it may cost money to obtain a sponsorship and this cost should also be included in expenditure.

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PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING

By now you should have:

- Defined the who, what and why of the event;
- Gathered a team; and
- Prepared the budget

This is your foundation to the structure of your event; now you can start detailed preparations for your event.



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IDENTIFY TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

You need to ensure that every aspect of your event is considered and planned. The list below is a generic starting point for elements and tasks involved. You will need to determine who is responsible for each and when they need to be completed.

- Venue
- Equipment
- Theming
- Catering
- Advertising & Publicity
- Bookings & RSVPs
- Venue Security
- Activities, displays, etc.
- VIPs
- Transport

You may want to decide on some of these elements as a team or leave it up to the individuals; this is all up to you and your team and how you work together. Also, please remember that this list is a guide and not tailored to your event. Most likely there are other elements you need to consider for your specific event.

REGULAR TEAM MEETINGS

During the Planning & Implementation stage it is important to keep regular communication between yourself and the members of your event team. This can be a telephone conference, face-to face, meeting or via email. It is essential to keep the communication open and everyone up to date with progress in order to proceed with your planning. Keeping track with meeting minutes and/or agendas is always a good idea.

EVENT LOGISTICS

As identified in Tasks & Responsibilities, when planning an event for National Skills Week there are many elements to consider. Below are some points to consider on just a few of key event elements.

WHERE TO HOLD THE EVENT?

Events can take place at a variety of venues including schools, workplaces, or in a public space (such as a shopping centre). They can be held in small rooms, across whole buildings or outdoors, and can even take place in cyberspace!

Choosing a venue suitable for your event will be contingent on both the event format and the target audience. Ensure you consider both of these when choosing your venue.

WHEN TO HOLD THE EVENT

In 2018, National Skills Week will take place from August 27th - September 2nd. We encourage you to host your event during National Skills Week as it maximises the impact of National Skills Week. However, if this is not possible due to other factors you may hold your event in the lead-up to the week or even the week after.

In regard to timing of your event, your target audience may dictate your decision. For example, schools will come during weekdays, families will come at weekends, and working professionals will attend out of business hours or in their lunch hours. Consider who will be coming when you choose the day and time for your event.



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HOW TO ATTRACT YOUR AUDIENCE

Your publicity campaign will be crucial to the success of your event and how you market the event will depend on the event itself and who you wish to attract.

As well as registering your event on the National Skills Week website, we encourage you to send out press releases, distribute flyers and posters or send out a mail out to attract participants. Please refer to “How to generate publicity” for more detailed information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgments could either be done by mentioning National Skills Week i.e. “National Skills Week brings you (NAME OF EVENT)” or “(NAME OF EVENT) is brought to you as a part of National Skills Week” or by using our logo. Logos and promotional material can be downloaded from our website.

SPECIFICS ON THE DAY - VENUE

Take some time to plan the setup of the room/venue in advance. Work closely with venue staff and speakers if applicable. Consider the following in your planning:

- Book the venue for longer than the actual event, as you will need time to set up and to clean up;
- Check access to the venue: will you need signs/door stops? Is there disabled access?
- How will you get staff and equipment to the venue? Do you need to arrange transport?
- Check what equipment/facilities are needed and who will provide them: check electrical supplies are adequate etc.
- Check the best arrangement for the layout: seating, standing etc.
- Check that public liability insurance will be covered by the venue.

ATTENDEES

Once you have an interested audience you need to make sure that you supply them with all the information and facilities they need to enjoy the event. Some things you might want to consider are:

- Booking systems: do they need to book/pay, and if so how and when;
- Check that everything is clear in the information sent out to confirm bookings;
- Consider audience comfort, including furniture, refreshments, audio levels, room temperature and amenities access.

STAFF

Your staff on the day will be pivotal to the experience your audience receives. You may want to think about:

- How the speaker/presenter will interact with your target audience;
- Brief staff so that they are confident with their roles and responsibilities;
- Select an MC who will be confident and work well with the format of your event; and
- Consider whether you need to organise travel or lunch arrangements for your staff



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PREPARING A RUN SHEET

A running sheet outlines the event minute-to-minute, designating responsibilities and tasks for the day. Preparing a running sheet for your event will assist in its success as it makes it clear to all, what is to take place and when. An event running sheet should include:

- Allocated time and location for every activity;
- Names of those involved; and,
- People responsible.

Everyone involved in the event should have a copy of the running sheet and follow it carefully. Running sheets are also used for briefings of all involved.

ON THE DAY

The day of the event is generally the most hectic part. But with careful planning your event can run smoothly. It is almost guaranteed that not everything will run to plan; there will be countless situations that will arise and will require immediate decisions. Don't stress if this occurs, expect it and just take it in your stride.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Arrive in plenty of time and with enough people on hand to set up the event.

Ensure signs, furniture, equipment and facilities are correctly set up and working, especially audio visual equipment. Allow enough time for you to get everything ready and to be relaxed before people begin to arrive.

DURING THE EVENT

Keep a tight hold of your running sheet, monitor the event and be ready to activate your Plan B if anything goes wrong. If the event isn't ticketed, be sure to keep a track on the number of attendees.

AFTER THE EVENT

Ensure the clean-up operation is effective. Return furniture to its original location. Arrange for all equipment and materials to be returned to their proper places. Complete any financial transactions resulting from the event. And most importantly, be sure to sincerely thank all staff and presenters.

EVENT EVALUATION

It is essential that an evaluation process of the event be developed. Feedback after the event is always useful for future planning. Consider:

- Who came?
- Was the audience initial targeted people?
- Whether they enjoyed the event?
- How successful was your publicity campaign?
- Whether the attendees found the venue easily?
- Was there sufficient info sent out beforehand?
- Whether the presenters were suitable and interesting?

Remember to:

- Send out results and media information;
- Thank all volunteers, participants, media and sponsors;
- Balance accounts;
- Hold a debriefing session with your event team;
- Send out reports to the sponsors (if necessary);
- Ensure adequate records kept for running future events

Once all this is done, you can give yourself a big pat on the back and start planning for next year's National Skills Week!