



Guide to a Perfect Event Communication Plan

www.lyyti.com Professional event management

There is usually a lot of talk about communication and how to make it more effective. Most companies think they are good at communicating, while the truth is that only a few companies manage their communications at even a satisfactory level.

Usually, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the design of event invitations and other details, while an actual event communication plan is left out of the picture. A well-constructed event communication plan will include a schedule detailing when, where and what to communicate with your attendees.

In this handbook we have set out a step-by-step guide for a complete event communication plan. As well as the guide, we will also provide a structured event communication timeline sheet to help you get started with your very own event communication plan!

1. The perfect plan

First step: Pre-event marketing



Pre-event marketing enables you to start promoting an event before sending invitations.

This will allow your participants an early opportunity to become acquainted with your event. And in some cases, such as sports events, a pre-marketing stage for the event may take place without any need for invitations.

Pre-event marketing helps create a buzz about your event before tickets are available to purchase or registration is open. There are several channels that can be used for pre-event marketing, e.g. company intranet, websites, Facebook and other social media channels, and traditional media.

Social media is an effective way to spread the news about your event and to keep the event content alive online outside of the boundaries of the actual event. Preparation is key, and at this stage you should already have a defined schedule for the upcoming steps.

A comprehensive plan will help you decide the information that should be published at every stage. At each step you should have specific goals and a question to ask yourself.

Things to think about in the pre-event marketing stage:

1. What actions do I want my attendees to take?
What do I want to promote (e.g. early bird special)?
2. Are all other stages scheduled?
3. The goals for this stage: get more followers to event page, Create content, Publish headliner.

2. The perfect plan

Second step: The famous invitations

Depending on your event, you can either send a public invitation to anyone who may be interested in your event or send private personalized invitations. Whichever method you decide upon, your participants should receive their invitations well ahead of the date so that they have time to react. An invitation should be sent 2 months to 2 weeks prior to the event. How early the invitation is sent depends completely on the size and complexity of your event: a small meeting might not need as much preparation as a huge company event.

But keep in mind that you still need enough time to send confirmations and reminders. Include only the essentials in the invitation, and make additional information available from your site. If possible, direct your attendees to your website as much as possible; this means including a link to your event site in the invitation, on the registration page and any social media site you may use.

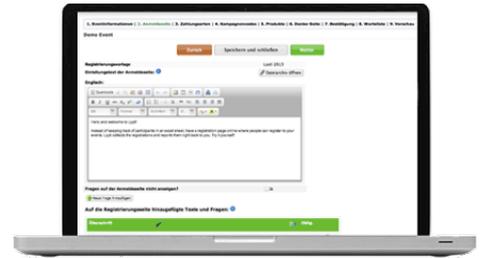
A short invitation will keep your participants interested long enough for them to read all the details. If you offer an 'early bird' special for your event, remember to emphasise it in your invitation. People receive invitations and e-mails from all directions, so it is crucial to make your message short and simple. The final thing you should do before sending out the invitation is to test it on somebody who has not been part of the planning process. Impartial feedback is vital.

Things to think about in the invitation stage:

1. Is the invitation clear enough and will the receivers know where to register? Remember to ask the opinion of someone impartial.
2. Clear goals for this stage: invitations out in time, a working registration page, a confirmation message ready for all the people that register.

3. The perfect plan

Third step: The hard part: Registration



Essentially, a good invitation will lead to easy and successful registration. Your registration options depend completely on your target group. Some target groups may require several registration options in addition to the typical online registration.

Whichever method you choose, it is strongly recommended that you manage all registrations on one platform. One platform will make your life as an organizer a lot easier, and will help you further down the line of your event communication.

Concerning pre-event marketing, invitations and registrations, it is good to increase the amount of event information at each step. On a pre-event marketing site, you may only want to show the highlights of your event. You could add a few more details in the invitation, and you could publish the complete program/schedule on the registration site or include a link to your event website on the registration page.

It is also important to make sure your registration site is user-friendly. An attendee should be able to register information to the event gradually or change information easily. Nothing is worse than investing in a registration site that is difficult to use or has no flexibility. Some attendees might not even finish their registration if the registration process is too difficult. So keep in mind the necessity of a simple registration tool.

It is also important that the registration site is flexible from the organizer's perspective. This means an organizer should be able to make changes on the site whenever required.

Hot tip: Even though you send your invitations via traditional mail, your registration can still take place online. Just add the online registration link to the invitation.

Things to think about in the invitation stage:

1. Confirmation message must be ready!
2. Remember to include a link to your event website on the registration page. This way people can easily look up schedules and additional information about the event.

4. The perfect plan

Fourth step: Confirmation

After registering, your attendees should receive a confirmation to reassure them that their registration has been received and processed. Unfortunately, confirmation messages are quite rarely used for events. However, this gives you an opportunity to set yourself apart from other events by sending confirmations and reminders to your attendees.

The confirmation message will also give you a chance to recap important information, including the contact information for the organizer, the schedule, how to get to the venue and the information provided by the attendee when they registered.

An excellent confirmation will also contain the following:

1. map
2. link to cancel registration
3. link to change registration information
4. name tag
5. unique QR code, e.g. a ticket
6. possibility to add event to calendar (reduces those no-shows!)

With a proper registration tool, sending a confirmation is no hassle. A confirmation message can be sent directly through e-mail or a shorter confirmation can be sent via text message:

“Hi Mike, thank you for registering for our event! Shortly you will receive more detailed information via e-mail. If you don’t receive an e-mail, check your registration information at www.lyyti.com with your code EVENTNOW.”

Things to think about in the confirmation stage:

1. When registrations are rolling in and confirmations are going out, remember to have your reminders ready.
2. Your goals for confirmations: your attendees know their registration has been processed and they receive a recap of all the information they need.

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Fifth step:

Don't forget the reminders

Nowadays people receive numerous invitations, and some of these get lost in the crowd of messages and e-mails. Therefore, it is good to send reminders to participants who have not yet registered. Though you should send reminders, you should also be careful that they are not perceived as spam.

Reminders can also be useful for communicating with your registered participants. In addition to a good confirmation, it is necessary to send a reminder about the event one or two weeks prior to it. Human errors occur, and it is also possible that your participants could forget that they have registered to your event. Another helpful tip is to include a calendar link in your confirmation, which will also work as an effective reminder for participants.

When registrations are complete and the event is fast approaching, create a text message that will be sent a day or a couple of hours before the event starts. While smartphones are common, not everyone reads their e-mail constantly. A text message is a short and simple way to welcome attendees to your event. Furthermore, a text message receives ten times more attention than a regular e-mail and will set you apart from other events that might not use reminders at all.

Things to think about in this stage:

1. Use two types of reminders: one that works as a second invitation and another that is a simple reminder about the event one or two weeks prior to it.
2. The main goals for reminders: to increase attendance and decrease no-shows.

6. The perfect plan

Sixth step:

Post-event marketing and communication

So, your event is over, but this does not mean that your job as an event communicator ends. After the event it is time for some post-event marketing. And what you do at this stage can make the difference between short-term wins and long-term results.

Even though the purpose of your event is to gather a list of leads and eventually turn them into customers through constant contact, you should start with something softer than a 'buy from us right now' message. Instead, begin your post-event communication with something simple such as a 'thank you' to your attendees. A thank you message is a nice touch and will extend the event experience. The message should be sent the day after the event has ended. The simplest method is to automate the message so it is sent only to the persons that attended and at the time you want it to go out.

You can attach a questionnaire about your event to the thank you message. The sooner you send your questionnaire, the more realistic the answers. Always give your attendees the option to answer feedback anonymously because some attendees might be afraid to criticize your event honestly if they know that you can see their identity. So be sure to provide your attendees with the possibility to respond to feedback with or without a name. Also make sure that your questionnaire has a maximum of ten questions. You are never going to get full answers to a feedback form that is several pages long.

After a thank you message you can still send a recap e-mail of the event. Maybe you need to share some material or photos that could not be fixed in time for the first e-mail. Presentations can be put on Slideshare and photos can either be sent to the attendees personally or published on a specific site. Links to these pages can be added to the second e-mail as well as a greeting about next year's event.

Things to consider in the post-event marketing phase:

1. What feedback is crucial for next year? Ask yourself what is more important to ask: if the food was good or if a speaker was interesting — add only the crucial questions to the feedback form.
2. Remember to ask permission for any photos or material that is going to be published online

Event Communication Timeline



1. Pre-event marketing

1 to 2 months before the event.



2. Invitation

2 months to 2 weeks before the event.



3. Confirmation

Immediately after the registration is received.



4. Reminder

1 to 2 weeks after invitations have been sent.
Send it to non-responders.



5. Second reminder

1 to 2 weeks before the event. Send it to attendees.



6. Text message

1 day to 1 hour before the event. Send it to attendees.



7. Post-event marketing

THANK YOU! Send via e-mail with a feedback questionnaire attached.

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Thanks for reading.
We hope you enjoyed it!

Lyyti is a Finnish company that was founded to help organisations to arrange successful events. We have developed Finland's leading event management software, Lyyti, which helps you arrange and manage your events easily and effectively.

Lyyti is a completely web-based service that doesn't require any installation on your side. You have everything you need for a successful event in your browser.

As a reader of this guide, you now have an excellent opportunity to see more of our articles at <http://www.lyyti.com/guides> or try Lyyti event management software for free at www.lyyti.com



The author Linda Kullas has wide experience in marketing and event management. She works with digital marketing at Lyyti and produces guides and articles for event professionals.