

WHAT IS THE EVENT FOR?

As this, the first stage of the event planning process, this is the stage where you have to ask a lot of questions. Determining the need for an event should have a huge impact on the way it is organised, who organises it, who pays for it and whether it should be held at all.

What can events be for?

There are many reasons for holding an event – events are (in my opinion) the best way to communicate – events are live – events are face to face – events are relevant and events are interactive.

Businesses use events to communicate with their staff, their current (and potential) customers and their suppliers through conferences, exhibitions and training days.

Promoters use events to make money – they sell tickets to see artistes and make a profit after all the costs have been taken into consideration. An example of this is the world famous Glastonbury Festival.

Charities use events to promote awareness (just take the Live8 concerts around the world) as well as to raise money for their cause.

Individuals use events to celebrate, to meet, to share and to involve. From weddings to parties – man (and woman) has been celebrating and holding events for years.

Who chooses what the event is for?

Because events take place for a number of reasons, the decision maker can be a number of different people. Event Management agencies are often employed by a client who wants to put on an event – so the client (and their organisation if they have one) are the ones to choose what the event is for. In this case, the person with the need for the event may work for a different organisation to the one that is organising the event. Other times, an event may be organised by an ‘in-house’ department – so the event need is in the same company – see the table below:

Event Type	Event Need	Event Management	Solution
Sales Conference	Sales Dept	External Agency	If the business does not have an event management department, an outside agency may be brought in to assist.
Training Day	HR Dept	Event Department	In some cases, larger firms may have their own internal event management department.

What is the desired outcome?

For an event to be a success, an event organiser must have clear objectives for the event that they are organising. Setting targets will ensure that a clear approach is undertaken.

Can you afford it?

Running an event is never cheap – and until you have experience of organising events you may be surprised how expensive everything is! It is important that all event organisers undertake a financial feasibility study to ensure that they can afford to hold the event before they start work on it.

Do you have to hold your event?

Many events take place each year ‘just because’ or because ‘well we did it last year’. With all of the time, planning and effort that is required for planning even the smallest event – one of the early questions should be ‘Do we need to?’

Whilst events are a great way to communicate, it might be that there is a more effective way – or the need for the event is not strong enough (or has passed). By asking these questions before you start planning, you will save yourself a lot of hassle, money and time in the long run.

Do you have the capacity?

Finally, one of the most important questions you should ask of yourself and your organisation is whether you have the capacity to organise the event. Even a simple wedding is expected to take up to 240 hours to organise – so for larger or more complicated events this can be multiplied many times. It is also not just a case of whether you and your team have the time – it is also whether you have the experience or the expertise.

When you bring hundreds or thousands of people together for a conference or outdoor event there are many factors that have to be taken into consideration – which can otherwise result in higher costs and lower revenue than necessary. There are also many safety regulations and licences that must be completed, even for the simplest of events.

If you look at the need for your event, and decide that it should take place – that there is a need for it, and that it has a purpose then you need to begin to build your team – the people that will help you to plan, manage and run your event. Join our mailing list for event management hints and tips straight to your inbox.