



NATIONAL
**SCIENCE &
ENGINEERING
WEEK**



Guide to:
**running your
event**

A definitive guide to running your National
Science & Engineering Week 2012 events
and activities.

For further information visit
www.nsew.org.uk

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A step-by step-guide to running a public event

Preparation is the key to any event. This booklet will take you through some of the major points to consider when planning an event. It is by no means exhaustive and much will depend on your own ideas and resources. Throughout your preparations use the British Science Association as much as you need. We can provide ideas, contacts, information and resources.

More Guides

Try out our other guides:

- Guide to Running your Event
- Guide to Publicity
- Science on a Shoestring

Event Case-Studies:

If you are looking for inspiration take a look at our case-studies of some of National Science & Engineering Week's best events from schools, universities, museums, visitor centres and other organisations.

For full information visit www.nsew.org.uk

During National Science & Engineering Week there are thousands of events running concurrently around the country. Due to these huge numbers, the British Science Association sadly is not able to assist in the organisation or marketing of individual events, however, we are more than happy to provide advice, inspiration or resources to make your job easier! If you have any queries related to your event, please do not hesitate to let us know.

There are no restrictions to your events in terms of topic, venue, format or audience; all we ask is that a) it engages as many people as possible with science, engineering or technology and b) that you let us know what your plans are, whether it is an engineering quiz for your pupils during your lunch break or a full-scale science festival for your whole city!

Now onto the planning....

1. Why?

Before deciding what to do, it is a good idea to consider your aims.

What do you hope to achieve for:

- yourself?
- your organisation?
- the presenters?
- the participants?
- science and engineering?

This will also help you identify your target audience(s)-see below.

2. Who to target?

Identifying your target audience is an important step in developing your event and essential to your publicity campaign. Consider your aims. Which audiences fit the bill?

Are you looking for:

- new audiences?
- local audiences?

- specialist interest groups?
- schools?
- children?
- adults?
- families?

3. What to do?

You will need to consider the subject matter, theme and format of your event. What type of event would your target audience be interested in? Ideas and inspiration can be found almost anywhere. Here are a few suggestions:

- old National Science & Engineering Week programmes (now available online)
- topical issues in the media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet)
- brainstorming with friends/colleagues.

Science, engineering and technology can be explored through formats ranging from hands-on activities to tours of places of interest—the only limit is your imagination. Some popular event formats include the following elements:

- hands-on activities
- public discussions
- demonstrations
- exhibitions/displays
- talks/presentations.

Generate several ideas, analyse their relative strengths and select the strongest combination of subject, theme and format, taking into consideration your aims and target audience. Remember to be realistic about your time, personnel, resources and budget. It may be useful to pilot your ideas on a sample of the target audience.

4. Who to work with?

Whatever the event, you will need to work with others to see it become a reality. Consider how many people you will need to:

- plan the event
- publicise the event
- set up and run the event on the day (presenting, chairing, helping, catering, and clearing up).

A good place to look for presenters is www.sciencelive.net an online directory of science presenters.

The number of people required will largely depend on the size and scope of the event. Working with a partner organisation can 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:

- schools
- universities
- museums/galleries
- industry/business.

Whoever you work with, ensure everyone is clear about their responsibilities.

5. How much will it cost?

It is important to produce a detailed cost plan for your event. Try to minimise costs and make sure you know your maximum budget. The budget sheet at the back of this booklet may help with your initial planning.

6. How to pay for it?

Income can be generated through admission fees, sponsorship, grants and donations. For more information on how to approach sponsors or which grants may be available to you, see our "Guide to funding your National Science & Engineering Week event".

If you decide to charge an admission fee, will tickets be sold in advance, on the door or both? What equipment will you need to process payments – credit card/cheque/cash? If you will be handling cash don't forget to ensure there is adequate security for you and the money.

7. Where to hold the event?

Events can take place at absolutely any type of venue including home, school, work, or in a public place (such as a shopping centre); in small rooms, whole buildings or outdoors. They can even take place in cyberspace. Many organisers feel that using cultural venues, such as a museum or bar, can help to make people feel more at ease and also may help to attract a different type of audience?

You will need to choose a venue suitable for both the event format and the expected audience. How much space do you need? What shaped space do you need – lots of small areas or one large open area? For instance a theatre allows a great many people to see and hear what is presented but restricts their direct participation, while a mobile demonstration (e.g. to people in a queue) only allows a few people at a time to view the event, but they can join in or even carry out the activity themselves.

8. When to hold the event?

National Science & Engineering Week takes place over ten days every March. Your target audience may dictate the timing of your event—schools will come during weekdays, families will come at weekends. Consider who will be coming when you choose the day and time for your event.

9. 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 as part of the National Science & Engineering Week online programme (even if it is a private event we would like to know about it) you may also want to send out press releases, make flyers and posters or send out a mail out to attract participants.

You will need to get a good head start on your marketing campaign so to help you on your way check out our "Guide to generating publicity for your National Science & Engineering Week event".

10. Acknowledgements



The British Science Association would be very appreciative if you were able to acknowledge National Science & Engineering Week in any promotional material you create. This could be done by either just mentioning us or by downloading our logo from our website.

Our logo was created so that events and their organisers can easily be recognised as participants of National Science & Engineering Week. This will hopefully provide a greater sense of ownership of the Week as well as helping to spread awareness of the initiative.

11. What to prepare in advance?

Venue

Take some time to plan the setup of the room in advance. Build a good relationship with the venue staff and presenters.

- Book the venue for longer than the event—you will need time to set up and to clean up.
- Check accessibility—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—some scientific equipment may be covered by safety regulations. Check electrical supplies are adequate.
- Check layout—are you using the best arrangement for your event? What type of seating arrangement would best suit the format of the event?
- Learn the occupational health and safety procedures and fire regulations for the building.
- Will public liability insurance be covered by the venue or do you need to arrange it?

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. If so how and when?
- Check the information sent out to confirm bookings. Is everything clear?
- How will they know where to go? Produce signs/maps and information on parking, public transport, walking distances and disabled access.
- If children are coming do they need to be accompanied?
- How long is the event? Will they need access to toilet facilities?
- Consider audience comfort—furniture, refreshments, room temperature

Staff

- Consider how presenters will interact with your target audience.
- Book presenters in advance and liaise with them in the venue and schedule arrangements.
- Provide all staff (including presenters) with session times and audience profile in advance.
- Brief staff so that they are confident with their roles and responsibilities (e.g. a crib sheet).
- A good chairperson can make an event. Who would work well with the format of your event?
- Staff comfort—if it's a large event would a staff common room be useful?

Anything else

Could anything prevent the staff or the participants from getting to the venue and enjoying the event? e.g. strikes, adverse weather conditions, inadequate directions.

- Think about risk assessments, first aid cover, fire regulations, CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks – www.crb.org.uk. (if you are using STEM Ambassadors they will already be CRB checked.)
- What is your margin of error? Some events will be more flexible than others.
- Do you have adequate support—practical, technical and psychological?
- Have a Plan B—if it rains, if the speaker doesn't arrive etc.
- Above all EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED...

12. What to do on the day

Before the event

Arrive in plenty of time and with plenty of people. Ensure signs, furniture, equipment and facilities are correctly set up and working. Allow enough time for you to get everything ready and to be relaxed before people begin to arrive.

During the event

Monitor the event and be ready to activate your Plan B if anything goes wrong.

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. Thank all staff and presenters. Complete any financial transactions resulting from the event.

13. How to assess what you have done?

Feedback after the event is useful for evaluation purposes and for future planning. What do you want to find out from your audience?

- Who came?
- Are they the people you targeted?
- Did they enjoy the event?
- How successful was your publicity campaign?
- Did they find the venue easily?
- Was there sufficient clear information sent out beforehand?
- What about the presenters? Were they appropriate for the audience?

Do you need to capture the names and contact details of any of your attendees so that you can target them to attend other events in the future? If so, how will you do this? Sign up sheets, evaluation forms on chairs, asking at the point of booking?

To keep improving the way we administer National Science & Engineering Week we need to gather as much useful and accurate information as we can. Each year the British Science Association conducts an evaluation and we ask that you as an organiser assist us in two ways wherever possible. First by using and returning the questionnaires that we supply, and secondly by assisting the external organisation that carries out the qualitative evaluation on our behalf.

Checklist

	Identify target audience
	Determine event format and content
	Identify partners
	Produce budget
	Apply for funding
	Decide timing
	Choose and book venue
	Formulate a contingency plan
	Publicity campaign
	Prepare venue
	Brief staff
	Clear up
	Evaluate

What can the British Science Association offer you?

The British Science Association coordinates National Science & Engineering Week, providing a national context for every event and offering support to organisers.

Events can be entered onto the online programme at our website www.nsew.org.uk.

The British Science Association also provides a series of resources designed to help you organise your National Science & Engineering Week activities

Guide to Funding your National Science & Engineering Week event

Guide to Publicity for your event

Case-studies of events and activities that are proven to work

National Science & Engineering Week Quiz

A selection of NSEW Activity Packs

A science booklist

Logos

Posters, bookmarks and stickers

Media Guide

An online shop to buy cheap NSEW merchandise or prizes

Contact our Regional Officers for event support:

<http://www.britishscienceassociation.org/web/ContactUs/RegionalStaff.htm>

These can be accessed from the website www.nsew.org.uk or requested from a member of our team (see below).

We also can provide a personal advisory service for organisers. If you require more information, advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will try our best to help.

Finally, if you have any comments about this or any other service provided by our team, please contact us at the address below.

Thank you!

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