

Step 7: Get feedback and evaluate

At your event, collecting information about your event and those who attended will help you with a number of things, for example:

- Establishing how successful your event has been;
- Informing marketing and public relations activity;
- Reporting back to budget holders and your funders; and
- Planning for future events.

Visitor numbers will give you an idea of the popularity of your event but direct feedback from people who attended or helped to deliver your event is the most valuable way of assessing how well it went. It's also important to learn from things that didn't go so well to inform future event planning and design.

With well-designed research you can help build the reputation of the event. It's a good idea to track media coverage, such as print and broadcast media articles, online comments and social media sites to get a feel for the event's success too.

Some funders may specify key performance indicators, evidence requirements or measures that you have to meet as a condition of funding and this will need to be taken into account to ensure you are meeting the funder's requirements with the evidence that you collect.

What information do you need to collect?

Think about the information that you would find useful when planning a future event and meeting the needs of your audience. You might like to know things like:

- Where they have travelled from and how they got there;

- What they thought about the event and any suggestions they have to improve it;
- Whether they would come to the event or visit the area again;
- More detailed feedback about the facilities, catering, access, entertainment, helpfulness of stewards etc.;
- How they found out about the event;
- Socio-economic data (age, gender, employment status, ability). This helps with marketing and also accessibility equalities requirements.

How do you collect this information?

Depending on whether or not you have collected contact details, which you might have done on booking or on arrival, you could collect your data via:

- Feedback forms at the event;
- Face to face interviews;
- Telephone interviews; and
- Online survey.

Social media is increasingly being used to gauge reactions. For example, you could create a Twitter account to promote the event, and then set up a hashtag (#) which can be used to promote the event live and track comments. Or you could set up facebook page, or a page on a website where you update event information, and encourage comments and feedback.

Estimating audience size

You'll need to have an estimate of audience size for planning the event, to assess attendance levels for your survey sampling and to feed in to your evaluation report after the event.

Counting on the day

To estimate attendance on the day you could use numbered ticketing at the entrance, programme sales or a clicker system at the entrance or exit.

Things to bear in mind include:

- It's easier if your venue has clearly defined entry/exit points
- How you collate the information
- People arriving or leaving at the same time can make it difficult to keep track
- Take care not to count people twice

Gathering Views

Your sample size and design is a critical consideration. The 'population' is everyone you are interested in – i.e. everyone who attended the event, but it's impractical to get feedback from everyone, so the answer is to take a smaller sample that can be representative of the population of attendees, and will give a reliable overview of the wider population's views.

If you are using feedback forms or self-completion questionnaires, design is critical: it needs to be clear, with box-ticking responses, although do leave space for comments. Avoid leading questions, where the wording of the question could influence the respondent's response.

Consider the types of questions that will be most useful. Open questions invite more qualitative responses; and closed questions that just require a yes, no – or selection/tick-box from pre-defined list can be easier to track. You can use tick boxes, and if you are seeking reasons or comments make sure there is enough room for the response.

Ranking can be a useful tool in evaluating satisfaction, with the scoring set out clearly. A balanced 1-5 ranking is often used, for example where:

1 = Extremely dissatisfied

2 = Dissatisfied

3 = Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied

4 = Satisfied

5 = Extremely satisfied

There is a **Visitor Survey template** available to download from www.BridgendBites.com/Events.

Evaluation

Evaluation is about assessing whether your event achieved its intended aims. Use it in the planning process, for keeping on track, giving a picture of the event in retrospect and helping you learn for the future. It is also a way of assessing the impact that the event has had.

Staging events can provide a strong economic return on investment through the attraction of visitors to a host region. The **economic impact** of an event is therefore a critical measure particularly in securing public funding support.

Events can have a variety of **environmental impacts** in the areas of waste, carbon and sustainability. It is increasingly important for event organisers to understand the scale of these, in order to best develop systems that manage them.

The **social impact** of an event concerns its effect on the people and communities around which it takes place. These include the development of skills and volunteering, inspiring participation and delivering satisfaction.

The **media impact** of an event is related to the amount of media coverage achieved by that event.

An **Evaluation Report Template** is available to download from www.BridgendBites.com/Events.

TOP TIP

The **eventIMPACTS** toolkit has been developed by a number of organisations and provides some key guidance and good practice principles for evaluating the social, economic, environmental and media-related impacts associated with staging major events and festivals. It can be downloaded at www.eventimpacts.com and is targeted primarily towards event owners, funders and event industry employees across the UK.