

SMPTE UK Tradition – meeting organising.

This tradition looks at the way in which an individual meeting is organised.

It does not cover the way in which the programme of meetings are decided, (Preceding activity) or the arrangements from about 2mths before the event and its staging – or detailed publicity – and then reporting on the meeting (Succeeding activities)

This is being written in October 12 because in the early days there seemed to be problems in getting meetings set up.

This is being edited in March 14 and June/July 14

It has been modified to fit in with the Section hand book structure - this gives a lot of other ideas and background on which this tradition is based

Preamble

There is a lot to do in organising a meeting – and it helps a lot if you bear in mind at all times during your day job on the topics and likely speakers/location etc. – which you can input into the setting of the Programme – which needs to cover a range of topics Locations etc...

This input and discussion to meld the programs is very useful and helps in that the programme of meetings can give some very clear direction as to what an event is about.

The other factor is that the meeting needs to be **produced** – you are taking the commission brief and working on it to make it attractive to our members and provide a contribution to the art and science of our industries.

A key feature is that is a meeting of members- this is important – it is not just a lecture but a more a social gathering with a speakers

So the Venue and arrangements are important as “We meet where members work”

And you as the organiser producer need to tell the speakers what is required of them and the content/ look and feel of the meeting (and SMPTE meetings in general-) see <https://www.smpte.org/sections/united-kingdom/about-meetings> and some other tradition documents.

**Start early, communicate well and don't panic.**

## What is required? –

In simple terms what is the billing on the website!

The programme committee should give you some guidance on the key elements – which are the deliverables- you need to take them add your skill and work

- **Title** – guidance is likely to be a working title – the output is a snappy eye-catching title
- **Speaker**- this may be a series of names. / Companies or a suggestion as to a panel approach.  
– Output fixed names – eminence is not required!
- **Date/time** this is very likely to be set to fit in with a sequence on the programme to give “balance”
- **Location** – this is like to be outlined – output is fixed location
- **Number of attendees** for registration and how many e.eg students may just turn up.!
- **Topic/synopsis** – this is likely to be why is SMPTE UK putting on this event as rough guidance – but this is what you as a producer have to develop and then provide a few paragraphs for website/publicity.
- **Who are providing** venue /the space and the refreshments - this is a SMPTE feature which does make things a bit more complex - Ideally we want two sponsors... but it may be simpler if a host provide room and Refreshments before the meeting.  
We hope as time goes by to have sustaining members queuing up to sponsor meetings or to contribute to a meeting refreshments fund!
- **Anything special** – like joint with a Kindred Society

All of this should be put on “info” document – from which the website editor and others can take the key text and just cut and paste it with minimal editing. (This will be a word template perhaps)

Note that there will be some editing done - but the nearer you can give perfect copy the better!

The Info sheet is one of three that mark each meeting – the others being the commissioning brief/ document sheet that the Meetings committee gives the organiser /Producer and the final one is the report sheet which records statistical attendance information and a description of what was presented and discussed, with overall comments.

The website is where the most up to date version of what a meeting is to be is kept.

You should look at the running a meeting Tradition just to get a flavour of what you may be able to do as you arrange the meeting which make running it easier. - It is better to plan for something.

## **Producing the event.**

We always need to have the needs of the Audience at the forefront of our minds – and in some way what we want to do is to educate (draw out) things which will enhance the careers of our members and generally improve the ability of the UK creative/technical communities.

We are also looking to get members mixing so the event cannot be too specialised. .... And should be attractive to “film/TV/Web” “old and young” Student/ practitioners as the main focus /retired”

**Think about giving the event a bit of a twist – something that makes it just a bit more memorable.**

**And in the staging of the event** Our style is professional but not overly formal- with good organisation and a degree of slickness.

As someone with a great knowledge of the industries - you can guide the speakers to say what is needed rather than what they will say normally!

Thus it is helpful to sketch out a sentence or two about that you want to be covered  
– and perhaps three bullet points  
– and suggest that the speaker has about another 3 to 6 points that they might like to make (but you are not the expert!) And some exclusions to some extent less in more!

It is very important and helpful to the speaker to have this guidance and Context ... and it makes writing the synopsis a lot easier!

## The venue

Although this may be suggested/ given by the programme committee “We meet where people work!!”

But you need to find spaces which work for the meeting as a whole. For London meetings an average audience is about say 40- 50 so we need rooms which can take say 60 over refreshments as well as for the lecture. Cluster meeting are usually smaller – but can be larger depending on topic!

Firstly the building has to be fairly easy to find (Or easy to describe where it is) and then easy directions to get to where we are meeting. (This may require signage or greeters at the door)

It is often good to have a room for refreshments which is separate but not too far away from the lecture space - but tables in the lecture room with a good space is just as good.

Because we meet in a variety of locations - we are used for a wide range of layouts and agreements - so it just has to work for the meeting!

Having a member of staff at the venue that can look after these things for you - perhaps the idealism marketing department event organiser - But it is amazing how good some CTOs are at getting the refreshments organised!

(Perhaps we need some draft letter/ email words here)

If the venue has things that can be shown – it may be worthwhile to arrange tours around the facility - or for the host to have a small display.... this is a bonus for a meeting - although some “summer meetings” may be a meeting with the lecture slot being a short talk and a tour.

It may be that the facility is so large complex compelling that a short say 10 min tour cannot do it justice – this gives us the opportunity for a formal members visit – so bear this in mind!

Although the responsibility for overall safety lies with the Venue itself - be aware of H&S issues as from the audience coming off the street until they are safely back there. !

It is important to ensure that the venue has the appropriate AV and in particular projection equipment – and may be technicians who can get it working.

If the projection facilities are not suitable Avcom – Eric Bastin a past Manager - offers equipment and sometime rigging free of charge –

Streaming and Video recording are things which need careful consideration – Consult the Hon Secretary or Chairman of meetings – Generally a Normal meeting does not lend itself to Streaming or making use of the recordings.

## Refreshments

The UK section has built its reputation around the meeting which starts with informal discussions/ networking over “Ample Refreshments”.

Thus refreshments are a very important enabler to the meeting and time should be made in arranging meeting to allow for them. Thus it is usual that “doors are open” about 45 mins before the meeting starts .e .e.g 18h15 (although with tours this may be 18h00)

Although we do not expect those hosting or the speakers to provide Refreshments it is very nice when they can. Note that Public bodies such as Universities and the BBC cannot provide refreshments and thus these will need to be sponsored (and often cost a lot!).

The basic specification is “more than just sandwiches “– so wraps and perhaps even Pizza slices are encouraged (SMPTE in the USA seems to live on these!). Remember to have ample vegetarian options and perhaps for large meetings Gluten free.

We tend not to go for hot food as / if it costs more (and goes cold) but it may provide variety for a more prestigious event.

Coffee, Waters and fruit juices (and may be tea) are normal drinks but for special events – and often if the host is paying – wine or beer in moderation is very agreeable.

For a December meeting – Mince Pies or Christmas cake can be a nice touch.

Quantities need to be set with a great care – but in many places anything left over before the speaker can be quickly eaten afterwards!

Generally err a bit on the high side of the actual numbers – but check when you have to set the numbers... if it is only a week or so we can then get it almost perfect – but for a London meeting about 48/50 is about the right number.

A rough financial limit - the total bill should not normally exceed £10 a head Including VAT and non-alcoholic drinks and something below £7 a head is more normal (E.g say £5 plus VAT for sandwiches and wraps plus the drinks)

Let the Hon sec/ treasurer and the Chairman of meeting know what the costs are to be and when the **caterers want paying – it often is before the event.**

**SMPTE UK is VAT registered ( number 197 9542 42 ) but we need to be very clear on if the pricing includes VAT etc.**

Similarly to aid our cash flow and fiscal position we may be able to pay spring food bills in December.

## How many speakers?

As SMPTE is focused on meetings and discussion - we need to encourage more than one speaker ... *this does not mean that one speaker is banned - but two voices makes the lecture part easier on the ear and gives a number of voices in discussion – and the other person time to think!*

So tend to go for two speakers .... Or one speaker.... with perhaps few in the audience primed for discussion.....

With more than say two speakers it means that people do not have much time to speak – and thus you need to apply your production skills (and have a good chairman on the night).

There are two types of multiple voiced meetings

- A magazine presentation - these is three (may be four) experts lecturing and then a general discussion of what they have said – this may need s chairman/ Presenter / linker / to give a concise context to each presentation.
- Discussion Panels– but in the time we have the maximum number should be 4 panel members plus a non-vocal chair (to 3+1 panel members being a chair.)

If there needs to be more voices – put them in the audience! – This gives some encouragements to for the average member to speak and also shows that eminent/ knowledgeable people also attend our meetings.

Large panels do not work!

Having multiple speakers does require a lot of organisation before and on the night – it may be that the company who have been approached will provide them - which make life easier - but the more spacers you have the less time per speaker and thus the less time for members.

Panel discussions in particular can take a lot of time – the panellist need to be introduced so you know their background, they then make their propositions and then discuss amongst themselves before the audience gets a word in edgeways – so you really need to have pane slits who are well known for being concise and with some pithy statements ..... and a chairman who takes control.

AS can be seen there is quite a bit of work/ guidance which you need to give when you have found a speakers/ panellist

This is where you having a clear and Idea of what the synopsis / billing for the events is – why is SMPTE UK doing it??

## So how do you find and Approach the speakers?

The Programme committee is likely to have suggested a speaker or a company.... Or it may be that you know them – but it is often that they are a friend of another committee member or your contact .... This slight “arm’s length” can be helpful as it puts a bit of formality in – and this makes you define what is needed rather than knowing that xyz always speaks well.

Thus to approach with the general outline (and perhaps not the bullet points) to the first contact with an speaker/panellist who is not known to you will also inform you more about the subject area – and thus what can or cannot be said.

Once you have got them interested and thus you begin “know” them - it is very good to provide them with clear guidance as to what is required – Probably the bullet points made by the Programme committee modified and added to by you in producing the lecture.

It may be that you offer about 6 points - “here are the main reasons for us wanting you to talk on this subject (say 3 points) “and we would also like you to cover (3 or so points) and omit / not cover (a point or two)

The speaker will find this helpful as they will have a much better idea of what they should speak about and what they should NOT cover.

You should also tell them about timings –

“We would like you to arrive about 18h00 so that we can check arrangements and get your laptop working with the projector – the audience will arrive and network from about 18h15 – and at 19h00 prompt the chairman will introduce the meeting and do the “parish notes .

We would like you to speak of about 50 minutes followed by 30 minutes discussion – so we start to wind up formal proceedings soon after 20h30 as we have to be out of the building by 21h00.

We prefer questions to be at the end of your presentation or at a few key points during it”

Note we say 50 or 55 mins i.e. under an hour - but obviously depending on the format these 90 minute of so “performance” is sliced up differently. Always allow ample question time as speakers usually overrun.....

The questions could be at a change of speakers - but we want to try to get most at the end as this stops the speaker going off script for a long time and thus over running!

It is a useful check is to get the speakers to draft a say Two paragraph synopsis (as well as a one paragraph Biography) \_which can go as the info document for the website – This information will be needed in any case and it gives you as the Producer the opportunity to see what they say they will be speaking about and to steer it at the same time. Around the meeting date it is useful to have the Slide pack to write the report – we do not require it for public use – unless the speaker does!

Remember that we need both a synopsis that appeals to the membership at large – and a meeting which is a success and gives the audience something to think about or “take away”

## **When to do this**

In Normal option – the cycle starts in about May – so that the work described in this document is done in June early July – i.e., before the summer break – so that in August /before IBC there is a complete program of meetings.

From taking the commission from the Programme committee it is best to start to get the location sorted out first - it may be that this is where the speaker is from - but may be not ..... As it helps to say to a speaker that the meeting is at “date time at a location “

After starting the location – start the search for the speakers / panellists - this can take time and people never reply to their emails! – And needs some chasing..!

Finding who you are to approach is the first step and may be done as you try to find locations ...

The sponsorship of refreshments also need to be done - but it sounds a lot better if you can say we need some to pay for refreshments for the meeting on “date at location on subject with speaker”

But also be aware that if a location or speaker company cannot do it – they can still fund the refreshments or support the UK section.

Basically by doing things early and in good time mean that the hassle level is a lot lower as there is always time to find someone/where else .. The period IBC to Christmas is always very busy and so you cannot really allows things to drift.

## **What can go wrong?**

It is very important to keep up the pressure of getting the meetings arranged - expect that there will be progress every week – and chase when this is not happening!

It is very important to keep the other who depend on the information – Typically the Chairman of the Programme Committee and those involved in publicity aware of where you are and to flag up any problems early.

## **Cannot find a location? -**

(Longer terms work with Sustaining members / Universities will enable there to be a sort of list of locations available – and in any Cluster there must an a few otherwise there is not a cluster!)

## **The Speaker cannot do the date /location –**

Talk to the Programme chair and see if things can be swapped or the date changed – this may not be possible , the Chairman may consider perhaps holding an extra event – or setting a date in the next session - in London we stick to Thursdays and elsewhere perhaps Monday or Tuesdays....

A feeling may be that we hold an extra meeting if the topic is so compelling – or is deferred if it is less so- One the whole the sooner we know the easier it is to slip a week or so!

NOTE STILL WORK IN PROGRESS DEC 14