



BLACK COUNTRY BUSINESS FESTIVAL™

INNOVATION | CULTURE | COMMERCE

EVENT ORGANISER HANDBOOK

PLANNING

PROCESS

PROMOTION

PRESENTING

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ON HOW TO HOST AN AMAZING EVENT
WITHIN BLACK COUNTRY BUSINESS FESTIVAL





Event Organisers Handbook

Black Country Business Festival

About

What is the Black Country Business Festival (BCBF)?

The BCBF is an annual, two-week Festival incorporating hundreds of free business events which take place throughout the Black Country.

Events of all descriptions are staged by local businesses to benefit the people and businesses in the region; help business and economic growth; challenge and stimulate; and to draw attention to region.

The dates for 2020 are **Monday 5th October – Thursday 15th October**

How can I get involved?

Any business or organisation can apply to host an event. Business Festival events are all put on by local businesses to benefit the people and businesses in the Black Country, and therefore help business growth, ultimately having a positive impact on the region's economy.

Other ways to get involved include:

- Partnership/sponsorship
- Becoming a venue host
- Promoting the festival
- Attending events

Please contact hello@blackcountrybusinessfestival.com to discuss any of the above ways to get involved.



Planning

Events

What type of event can I put on?

Your event can take any shape or form, from a seminar, webinar, roadshow, workshop, through to a trade show, exhibition or major conference.

In 2018, subject matters ranged from GDPR, business finance, sales, marketing and social media, property, land and investment, exporting, recruitment and skills development.

Event Criteria

To meet the objectives of the festival, every event should aim to meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Benefit the local business community (such as interact, engage, promote, share best practice, learn new skills and network)
- Aim to increase economic growth and drive inward investment for the region
- Showcase what the region has to offer, demonstrating to the wider world prominence within the region
- Strengthen ongoing partnerships or develop new collaborations between research and academic institutions, local authorities and businesses
- Help to increase employability and grow talent within the region, raise aspirations, cultivate future stars and show opportunities and progression
- Drive business engagement and cross-sector collaboration
- Have potential to attract interest from businesses/individuals from outside of the region, to cultivate a range of local, national and international links
- Focus on wider issues or controversial topics (for example new technologies, innovation, economic issues or address challenges facing the local economy)

Other Conditions:

- Organisers will need to agree to the BCBF Terms & Conditions, which are available here: www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com/apply.
- Business Festival events may not be used purely as a self-promotional platform. (Although hosting an event will provide a natural showcase and further incremental business opportunities.)

Sectors

Each event will be slotted into one of the following 8 sectors (some may fit into more than one)

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Automotive



- Creative
- Education & Skills
- Professional Services
- Business Support & Communications
- Retail, Tourism & Hospitality
- Property, Construction & Infrastructure

How long should it be?

Your event can take any length of time from 1 hour to a full day.

How many people should attend?

You can open up your event to as many or as few people as required within limitations of your chosen venue.

We recommend being **realistic** on the number of attendees expected. This is a busy fortnight with over 100 events, so there may be similar events taking place over the fortnight which might compete with yours (a good promotional strategy will also help!).

Top tip! As events are free, it is natural to expect a number of 'no shows' on the day. To help alleviate this, we recommend 'overbooking' by 20-30 per cent. So for example, if you are expecting 30 attendees, you may wish to open up to 38 or 40 bookable spaces to allow for drop outs. Please indicate this on your initial booking form.

Do I have to pay to put on an event?

There is no application fee to put on an event as part of the festival, however other charges **may** apply including:

- Venue Hire (although many BCBF venue partners are offering venue space for free or at a heavily discounted rate – see the BCBF website for details)
- AV equipment
- Refreshments/Catering
- Promotional and marketing materials
- Advertising
- Speaker Fees
- Any administration costs such as delegate badges

Please note all of the above inclusions are completely on an individual basis as required/agreed with your chosen venue/event and are not a requirement of the festival.

Is there any sponsorship available?

The BCBF cannot offer any individual sponsorship for you to host your event, however you are welcome to obtain your own event sponsorship if necessary.



Can I charge for my event?

Events should be free to attend where possible. If you wish to charge a fee this must be agreed by the festival organisers at the time of application, stating why a fee is necessary.

Featured Events

The festival organisers may wish to list your event as a 'featured' event. Featured events are selected from each sector for their innovation, relevance and impact on the region and are chosen by the BCBF Board.

Can I cancel my event?

Once an event has been approved into the Business Festival, it **cannot** be cancelled unless there is a viable reason and the cancellation has been agreed to in advance, by the Business Festival event management company (Associate Events). Cancellation of events reflects poorly on your business as well as being detrimental to the overall Business Festival.

Venues

Where do I hold my event?

We have a number of venue partners who have kindly agreed to offer their venue space either 'free of charge' or at heavily discounted rates. A list of these venues can be found on our 'Venues' page www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com/apply.

Each event organiser is responsible for sourcing and booking their own event venue.

Please contact the venue directly to check availability. The Festival Organisers are not responsible for finding your venue however are happy to help with any recommendations. Please say you are booking as part of BCBF to obtain these reduced rates when you make your enquiry.

Any contracts or T&Cs should be agreed directly with the venue. Please note that some venues may charge for room hire, AV equipment or refreshments.

If you wish to use a venue that is not listed on the venue partners page, that is also absolutely fine.

Venue Top Tips! *Things to think about when choosing your venue and planning your event:*

- **Venue type** – hotel, business meeting space, venue – is this a suitable venue to host your event?
- **Location** – Is it accessible? Easy to find? Please ensure you provide the sat nav post code if different to the main post code
- **Parking** – does the venue have ample parking for your attendees?



- **Does it have the facilities required to make your event work?** Go and visit your venue so you can familiarise yourself with the area, facilities and walk through your event
- **Capacity** – check carefully that the venue you have chosen meets with your expectations and can accommodate the number of attendees you have submitted on your form
- **Layout** – what is the format of your event and how will the layout work best?
- **Do you require any staging, a lectern or a top table?**
- **Subsistence** – do you need to offer refreshments? Where will this be served? We would recommend a minimum of refreshments (tea, coffee, water) on arrival
- **Audio Visual** – What equipment do you require? Screen, projector flipchart, PA system? There may be additional costs for these items, be sure to check with your venue if they are included
- **Do you need a registration desk?** It would be advisable to ask attendees to sign in on arrival, collect a badge? *Check where this will be located (usually in a foyer outside of a meeting space for larger events?)*
- **Does the venue have Wi-Fi?** Is this free of charge? How do attendees log in? Obtain this information in advance so you can inform attendees on the day
- **Health & Safety** – Check with the venue where fire exits are located, muster points and any planned fire alarms. It is a good idea to announce these before the event starts
- **Accessibility** – check out the accessibility e.g. disabled access, lifts, hearing loops
- **Branding** – you will be offered the use of BCBF promotional banners to use at your venue. It is worth just mentioning this in advance to the venue to ensure they are happy for you to display these, especially in public areas



Process

Event Application Process

What is the application process?

There is a quick form you need to fill out to host an event during the festival, this can be found here: www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com/apply.

Before you submit your application, you will need to:

1. **Decide on your subject matter, subject and title.** Make sure your event is interesting and attractive to your audience. It can take any shape (see criteria). *Top tip!* Think, 'Would I attend this event? Does it sound interesting / exciting / appealing?'
2. **Audience** – have a clear strategy about who your target audience is (this might include a specific sector e.g. tourism businesses or particular level of employee or manager for example. *Top tip!* Consider why they would go and what they might get out of the event.
3. **Decide on a date, time and duration of the event**
Top tip! Make sure the event does not go on longer than necessary; consider when would be the best time e.g. after work, early morning. Also, do some background research to check that nothing else e.g. big industry events, are happening at the same time.
4. **Find and book a venue** (NOTE: We advise not confirming your venue until your application has been accepted and confirmed. Most venues will happily keep your preferred date on hold until this time) See the venues section for further assistance.
5. **Speakers** Contact your intended presenters to check their availability and hold the date in their diary.
6. **Submit your application!** www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com/apply.

What happens once I have submitted my expression of interest?

Once you have submitted your application it will start being processed and we will endeavour to get back to you within 14 days. You may be asked to supply more information.

Once all confirmed, your event will be listed on the BCBF website ticketing system 'Ticketleap' and tickets will be available for people to book.

Please ensure you check your listing thoroughly once it has gone live!

You can then start to promote your event!

Can my event listing be amended once it has gone live?

Yes it can. Please email hello@blackcountrybusinessfestival.com and we will happily make any amends.



Can I use my own ticketing system e.g. Eventbrite?

The festival organisers do not permit the use of alternative ticketing systems. The reason for this is to allow an easy user experience for the attendee so multiple ticketing sites are not used. It also allows the festival organisers to have sight of the overall engagement, attendee numbers and data which are necessary for the final statistics and justification of the festival.

What happens to the data?

The data collected will be used in a number of ways*:

1. Relevant event data is passed onto the event organisers, so they have a list of their attendees and information to use to contact their attendees in advance of their event
2. Data is used for festival statistics e.g. number of attendees, attendees from outside the region
3. Data is used to keep attendees updated on festival news and invitations

**All data is collected and used in line with GDPR.*

Ticketing System

How do people book onto my event?

Attendees should visit our ticketing site (the link will be provided once it is developed) to find their chosen event and complete the 'registration' process

When attendees book for your event please note they can only book one ticket at a time. Additional attendees, colleagues will need to book individually. This also helps us to capture the data of all attendees to your events.

How does the ticketing system work?

Events can be found by date, or filtered by sector, area and if it is a featured event.

When your event is set up we will ask you for the number of attendees/tickets available. The ticketing system will automatically become 'full' when these numbers are reached. If you wish to reduce or extend your numbers at any time, please do contact us.

What if my event 'sells out'?

Unfortunately, the ticketing system cannot operate a waiting list, however if you are lucky enough to 'sell out' we can ask any interested attendees to email you directly or add your contact details to the top of your listing.

You should also consider increasing your numbers to allow for any 'no shows' on the day.



Sales Reports

There are two different sales reports that are sent to hosts prior to the Festival and their event. Further information will be sent when appropriate.



Promotion

Event Promotion

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING AND MARKETING YOUR OWN EVENT!

Do the festival organisers promote my event?

The Business Festival will promote events via a range of channels from press, social media, web and online marketing both in the lead-up and every day during the Festival.

The Business Festival has an official programme and every event is listed. A huge number of copies will be distributed around the region, and to all event hosts. This year's brochure is still being discussed, and more information will be released in due course.

However, with over 100 events anticipated, it's really important that you carry out as much promotional activity around your own events as possible too.

The festival organisers are not responsible for promoting your event!

How do I promote my event?

STEP 1 – consider these things:

Who is your audience and how will you reach them?

- Do they work in the same sector as you? Where might they go where they might see about your event? Are you aiming at big companies, SMEs, start-up businesses? What might they read, watch or listen to? The answer to this will help you to decide which promotional channels to use.

When would be a good time to promote your event?

- You can promote your event as soon as it is live on Ticketleap. There are several ways to start promoting instantly (like social media / online). But there are also other ways that could take a little longer – such as designing leaflets or adverts. Remember: Don't leave your promotion until the last minute and always include a link or details of how to book on to the event.

Why would people want to come to your event? What's in it for them?

- Will they learn something new? Are they coming to see or hear about something that might help them or their business? Will they be meeting new contacts? Are you addressing a common problem or challenge in the industry? The answer to this question is what you want to get across in the content of your publicity.

STEP 2 – decide which channels to use

Here are some ideas:



1. Social media

Twitter and LinkedIn are popular social media platforms to get the word out. If you're not already using them, it's free and easy to sign up.

Don't forget to tag us in to your tweets and posts using our twitter handle @BlackCountryBF or the hashtag #BCBF_20 or #ThisIsTheBlackCountry

2. Website

Put some details on the home page of your website so that people visiting your site will see it straight away. A blog or news page is also another good place.

3. E-marketing (emails/electronic newsletters)

If you have a database of relevant contacts, drop them an email to tell them about your event.

Software such as Mailchimp also allows you to send free (up to a certain quantity) online newsletters to your contacts.

4. Newsletters

If your company already sends out newsletters, see if you can get a piece about your event included in it. This goes for internal communications too – both online and printed – particularly if your event is relevant to your staff. Employees can also be great advocates and help to spread the word.

5. Advertising

All of our media partners are offering huge discounts of their full rates for any event organiser or sponsor/partner involved in the Business Festival.

6. Printed materials e.g. Flyers, leaflets, posters

If you are getting leaflets or flyers made up, distribute them far and wide. Put them in the canteen, down the social club or anywhere that people you think could be interested in your event, might go to.

Contact us if you need any help with design as we can offer a professional service at a very reasonable cost.

7. Press releases

If you have a press department, send all the information to them to create a press release for you. If not, why not have a go at writing one yourself?

Press releases should be factual and relevant to the audience. They should also be written in the 3rd person (e.g. John Smith Associates is running an event to help businesses – rather than 'I am...' or 'We are...').



Create a catchy headline to grab the attention of journalists and briefly summarise the news. Then start the main part of the release with an introductory paragraph that generally gives basic details - who, what, when, where and why. The following paragraphs can then explain more.

8. Word of mouth

Tell the world! Your friends, colleagues, family, everyone. And ask them to pass it on to everyone they know too!

STEP 3 – Create your content

Keep your content simple – don't use 30 words when 10 will do. Try to think of how to make your event stand out from the rest and make sure you include all the necessary information:

- What is the event (short description)?
- Why should people go? Who is it aimed at?
- When is it (date and time)?
- Where is it (location, parking, transport links, map)?
- How do people book - this should be a link to your event on the Black Country Business Festival website?
- You should also include a contact details for more information should anyone have any questions.

To help you along the way the Business Festival team are reinforcing all your promotion with our general communication about the Festival including:

- BCBF website www.blackcountrybusinessfestival.com
- BCBF brochure – further details to be released in due course
- Media and PR
- E-marketing
- Social media: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram (@BlackCountryBF)
- Business Festival partners

If you have any questions or need any help by all means, get in touch with us on 01902 912 304 or email hello@blackcountrybusinessfestival.com.



Presenting

Final Tips Leading Up To The Festival

Reminders/Joining Instructions

We will send out reminders to registered attendees the day before your event. We do this simply because some people will have booked onto events months ago, and we want to ensure that you get your full delegation attending your event. These reminders do not contain details of the event, so it is useful to send your own to confirm location, time etc.

Pre-event Top Tips!

- We would strongly recommend that you send an email to all attendees confirming the details of the event around one week prior, including date, timings, venue, information re car parking/location (include a map if the venue can provide one)
- Confirm your timings (always arrive at your venue nice and early to set up before attendees start arriving)
- Have you been to visit your venue, so you are familiar with the layout/facilities?
- Confirm your numbers and preferred room layout.... so, you have enough seats or not too many!
- Confirm your catering requirements if you are providing these (you may want to check your attendees don't have any special dietary requirements or other special requirements on the day)
- Check the car parking arrangements at the venue
- Ask the venue if they will be providing any directional signage on the day or do you need to provide this, so attendees know where to go on arrival? It is always good to see branding when you walk into a venue!
- Do you want to provide name badges for you attendees?
- We would advise having a sign in sheet, so you know who has attended
- Health & Safety - Check the venue doesn't have any planned fire drills that day and where the muster points are located, should you need to evacuate! It is often good to announce this at the beginning of your session!

Event Hosts and Organisers should take out the relevant comprehensive and associated insurance to cover their events

Festival branding

Yes please – branding and logos can be downloaded from the BCBF website (media and downloads page). If you need any assistance with this then please get in touch!

Please don't forget to keep in line with the brand guidelines if you are creating your own marketing materials. When circulating any information about the festival please also remember to include the festival logo.



Presentation slides

The BCBF Presentation deck is to be used at all events where there is a PowerPoint or keynote in use. This is a great branding asset and is a major part of providing a 'festival feel' when attendees are going to multiple events.

There are three slides at the start of the presentation deck that we ask you to keep in place, along with two at the end.

The slides will be available on the BCBF website

Roller Banners

To enhance the 'Festival feel' across the region and show that you are part of it; we are providing a huge volume of banners to display at every event to place the brand far and wide. We have allocated each event two banners and these will need to be collected and returned for the next person to use.

Further information regarding the banners will be available nearer the date.

If you wish to produce any of your own marketing banners this is absolutely fine however you will need to incur any costs. Festival branding can be downloaded from the BCBF website.

Official Programme

We would be delighted if every event organiser can take a minimum of 100 copies of the official programme (more if you can!) to use in the build-up of the festival and at the festival itself.

If you are based at a venue/office and can display these in your reception area/staff canteen/coffee lounge or other, this would also be fantastic.

The Festival

What happens during the festival?

The festival opens with a launch event on the first morning. All event organisers, sponsors, partners and friends are invited to celebrate the opening of the event attended by key business leaders and politicians. Keep an eye out for your invitation.

Events then take place across the region each day for the ensuing two weeks.

The festival organisers will send out a daily news update featuring daily events, best photos and best 'tweets' of the day, so keep an eye out for these.



On the last day, a closing event will take place. This is an opportunity to celebrate the end of the festival and thank the partners, sponsors and all those that took part in some way, shape or form for their hard work and support. All sponsors, event organisers, sector leads, venue hosts and attendees are invited. Again, keep an eye out for your invitation.

Statistics from the festival will be released and we will look back at the highlights that took place over the two weeks.

Filming

The festival organisers will have a crew out and about throughout the fortnight. Unfortunately, not all events can be filmed, however we will try to capture events that we think will be visually exciting for the promotional videos.

If you would like to film your own event and share online or via social media, that's great but don't forget to tag us! @BlackCountryBF #BCBF_20

Dates for your diary

Opening event: 08:00 – 09:30 Monday 5th October 2020

Closing event: the afternoon of Thursday 15th October 2020

Feedback

Feedback and Surveys

To build the Festival for 2021 we will be sending all attendees a feedback survey after they have attended an event. We kindly ask that at the end of your event, you encourage attendees to fill this out.

Shortly after BCBF 2020, we will be sending you (the event organiser) a very short feedback survey around your experience as an event host during #BCBF_20. This feedback is critical in making BCBF 2021 even better so please do let us know what you think.