



SOLARIZE EVENT GUIDE

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EVENT IDEAS

LAUNCH EVENT

The launch event to your Solarize campaign should bring together community members, community leaders, program partners, and program coordinators for the official announcement of the program. Important information to include during this announcement is: describe what the purpose of Solarize is and how to participate, introduce partnered installers at the event, outline your Solarize goals in numbers, explain the tiered rebate pricing system, and provide timelines of all of your upcoming events for the next month.

Another opportunity that adds clout to going solar would be to bring in a community voice of someone who has gone solar and had a positive experience. Bringing in a well-known resident or business owner to provide a testimonial and answer questions can increase the reputability of your presentation and pique the interest of a wider audience of community members.

This is also an important opportunity for facetime with potential participants and partners. After a formal presentation, take time to go around the room, and have installers do the same, and talk individually with community members.



CASE STUDY: DELTA COUNTY

In 2017, program coordinators of Delta County Solarize, Solar Energy International, hosted a launch event for their third and final round of Solarize, which had a focus on farms and businesses.

The launch event consisted of a tour of a local business with a 25 kW solar system followed by a presentation at a centrally-located, popular bar and restaurant, CB's Tavern. Prior to the launch, program coordinators and installers reached out to business owners and personally invited them to the tour. Program coordinators partnered with the Delta Chamber, to make this a chamber special event, ensuring a larger turnout. With the Chamber sending out invitations to its members, coordinators could focus on inviting community leaders. CB's helped with advertising the event as well. Supporting local businesses is a win-win for Solarize.

Installers were announced and introduced during the presentation. Past rounds were celebrated and goals for the current round were announced. After the presentation, installers and program coordinators talked one-on-one and in small groups with all of the attendees.

Location, location, location!

Pick a local hot spot like a bar or restaurant to draw a large crowd for your launch



Pictured: A popular neighborhood bar is a great place for launch! CB's Tavern in Delta, Colorado.

A great aspect of Solarize is its ability to generate local business through outreach.

Partner with local businesses for outreach events and share marketing responsibilities, it's a win-win! Look for popular venues with flyers, community calendars, live events or an active social media presence and collaborate on promotion.



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PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING YOUR LAUNCH EVENT:

The launch event is a three-pronged process: planning, implementation, and follow up. See the following task completion charts for more details.

Planning:

Before you begin, if possible recruit a launch volunteer committee to assist with your planning and implementation process. Gauge their availability and then distribute tasks accordingly. See below:

Task	Description	Deadline
Select a date	Pick a few dates that coincide with the first few weeks of your 13-week outreach campaign. Send them to your installers or any important guests you have in mind to see what works. Weekday evenings are usually a good bet.	3-4 Weeks prior to event
Make a basic program plan	What is most important to have at your event? Make a preliminary program plan outlining your needs. For example, a projector, a screen, x amount of seating, live music? These will be important factors to consider in booking your venue.	3-4 Weeks prior to event
Book your venue	Based on your needs, brainstorm and book your venue. These are some factors to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost and availability • Length of event • Do you want food? Assess your budget, this is the time to let them know your catering needs • Do they have a quiet space to accommodate your presentation? • Can they provide additional marketing support? Pick a popular venue with outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating and sound • Accessibility for the guests you have in mind. Is this centrally located to the community targeted in your program? 	3-4 Weeks prior to event
Solidify programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a timeline and floor plan for your event. Where will people sign in, will they be seated/standing, how much time for people to chat/get drinks before you present • Create your presentation, include program description, timeline, goals, installer introductions • Identify and reach out to any guest speakers, solidify their space in your program and include this in outreach 	3-4 Weeks out
Make a guest list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the most important people to have at this event, whether it be your board members, press, or community influencers and start reaching out with personal messages 	3-4 Weeks out



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you reach the community? Envision your outreach. Consider partnering on this event with another community group like a non-profit, chamber, or rotary to access a wider audience • Which geographic areas would you like residents from to attend? Identify these groups and get the word out. Utilize your network and have connections spread the word. • Creating a free EventBrite event and having people register is a good way to gauge the amount of people that might show up 	
Outreach and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media: Issue a press release (template provided by Solar Forward) to local media outlets • Media: Make sure your event is on community bulletins and calendars • Media: purchase short radio ads and underwriting. • Social media: Share on Facebook, Twitter, and engage your audience. Have your team share across their platforms • Program partners: Engage your Solarize program partners and have them send out the message in their newsletter, social media • Print outreach: Hang up flyers in local bars, coffee shops, grocery stores, bulletin boards, wherever you can! • Personal guest list: Continue locking down your personal invites 	2-3 Weeks out
Identify and prepare materials for your event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How-to flyers and promotional print materials should be handed out at the event • Print out a sign-in sheet and have registration forms available for people who want to participate on the spot • Installers can also bring promotional materials • Have your contact info and ample business cards ready 	2 Weeks out
Follow up with your invites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a few calls to remind guests of the upcoming event • Make cold calls to people who have already indicated interest in the program and invite them personally to the event. 	Week of
Recruit day-of helpers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send an inquiry out to friends and your organization to see if anyone can help out day-of. These are some things you might need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help setting up (1-2 people) - Help cleaning up (1-2 people) - Photographer to snap photos of the event for social media - Greeters: people to represent your program, lead programming by making sure people sign in, answer questions and help people fill out registration forms (2-3 people) 	4 Weeks out through week of



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Continue outreach until day-of!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay for boosted social media posts, continue media advertising, share on local Facebook group pages, and engage your following to do the same! 	Week of
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Implementation:

Task	Description	Assigned
Gather all materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flyers, stickers, promotional materials Technology, screen, projector, laptop, cables, extension chords, dongle, microphone Sign-in sheets, contact information, business cards If you are at a library or a park: any food, plates, chairs, beverages, etc. Camera 	Event planner
Confirm any guest speakers or special guests will be there, if needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call to confirm everyone is all set on the game plan and if they have any special accommodations. This way you can give them a friendly reminder the event is happening without explicitly reminding them the event is happening 	Event planner
Get to venue early, set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables, chairs, technology, do some tests with your presentation Make sure there is a visible sign in table at the front of the room Hang your banners, lay out table cloths, make flyers visible for the taking 	Volunteers + event planner
Clean up, pay venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't forget your banner! 	Volunteers + event planner
Recap your awesome event in real-time on social media or immediately after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage your followers with program updates! These photos and records will also come in handy for end-of-program reporting. 	Volunteers + event planner

Follow up:

Phew! The hard part is over and hopefully you had a successful event with a lot of solid leads. Make the most out of your hard work and do the following:

- 1) Write personal thank-you notes to any special guest, guest speakers that you had at your event
- 2) Add everyone who signed in onto an interest email list for your newsletter, send out a newsletter to them thanking them for coming, and sending them the link to register, and a timeline for upcoming events
- 3) Add anyone who registered in-person to your database
- 4) Keep your sign-in sheet and keep track of how many people attended your event on your master stacking guide
- 5) Make personal follow ups to people who were genuinely interested. Provide further details on the program, answer questions, invite them to your next event
- 6) Time to gear up for 13-weeks of outreach programming!

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH EVENTS



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One of the main components of Solarize is bringing educational resources on going solar to the community through outreach events. The following are a few ideas of Solarize events for the community. Feel free to pick your favorites and put on a personal spin for your community.

EVENT	DESCRIPTION	NEEDS
Solar Home Tour	<p>Convene with interested community members in a central location, and then carpool to area homes with installed solar for a tour of the systems.</p> <p>Attendees can engage with program coordinators and homeowners to hear first-hand about residential solar. Community members can take notes on a provided brochure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 homes with installed solar • Homeowners available to answer questions • An installer for technical questions (optional) • Create handout with system details and space for notes, provide pens
Solar Business Tour	<p>Does a local business in your community have solar? Maybe it's a brewery or firehouse, arrange a tour and the venue with the event tailored to appeal to business owners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book venue • Informational brochure on system • Possible refreshments • Program coordinator or installer in attendance. • If inside, presentation
Business After Hours	<p>Local Chambers will often have 'business after hours' to showcase local businesses. Find out about these events and try to book a booth to inform business owners about solar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunity and sign up • Promo materials: flyers, banner, tablecloth • A program coordinator in attendance
Solar Community Pint Nights	<p>Schedule a happy hour at a local bar, and use this event as a way for the community to meet the installers and program coordinators in an approachable setting. Do a short solarize presentation and bring a lot of flyers.</p> <p>Promote this event by saying the first beer is on you. You won't have to pay for the venue (typically) as it is a win-win for Solarize and the local business!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book with restaurant • Space to present • Print materials • Installer attendance • Program coordinator attendance
Solar/PV101	<p>Solar Forward has provided a solar 101 presentation for communities. Book a space such as a library or community center and teach interested residents what residential solar, and Solarize, is all about!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 101 presentation • Solarize presentation • Program coordinator • Installer
Reduce then Produce	<p>Partner with your local utility or rural electric cooperative and present a talk on energy efficiency. It's a great way to make the most of your solar system, or simply to just save on your utility bill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with your local COOP or utility • A presentation (provided by them) on energy efficiency tips • Solarize presentation • Program coordinators
Solar Makes Sense: Financing Workshop	<p>Loop in your local banks (if they have green lending programs) and present on how to finance a solar system. SF has provided one presentation, but installers often have their own financing packages. Update this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installers • SF presentation • Banks (if applicable) • Program coordinators • Solarize presentation



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	presentation as you see fit, and host this event at a library or community center.	
Solarize Informational Breakfast or “Solar and Scones”	<p>Book a popular community breakfast spot for an informational breakfast. Purchase coffee and scones, and have program coordinators and installers available to sit down at tables, and lead round table discussions on topics like what is your biggest barrier to going solar? What would you most like to learn about going solar?</p> <p>Do a short presentation and make sure to have ample print materials available! This is a great way to catch people before work. Book a 3 hour timeslot and have a casual setting for people to come in and out as they please.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solarize presentation • Coffee and muffins/scones • Program coordinators and an installer if they are available • Table discussion topics • Print materials
Solar in the Streets	<p>Table for a day in your community’s park or town square and hand out information on solarize, residential solar, and timelines of your upcoming solarize events.</p> <p>Make sure to acquire the proper permitting and permission from your town.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get permission • Gather print materials • Bring table, pop-up tent • Program coordinators in attendance • Interest sheet
Meet the Installers	This can happen anywhere—at a library, happy hour or informational event. Host an event where installers can come talk about their business and their history in the community. People are more likely to go solar if they feel like they can trust who they are getting it from.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installers in attendance • Venue • Installer presentation, solarize presentation • Print materials
Solar Trivia Night	Trivia Nights are extremely popular at the moment. Host one at your local bar and include facts about solar, residential solar and financing. See how much your community knows about solar, and then use the opportunity to give a Solarize presentation and answer any question that came up about solar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar 101, solarize presentation • Solar fact cards • Book venue: brewery, bar or even the library for a kid-friendly experience
Community Leader Panel	<p>Organize an educational panel on community sustainability, moderate it with topics such as renewable energy, and then host break out round table discussions.</p> <p>Include your Solarize presentation and use this as an opportunity to engage community members in a larger conversation about solar in your community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book community leaders (ex: sustainability officer, mayor) • Book a venue, something with a mic/space for presenting • Installers, program coordinators in attendance • Solarize presentation • Print materials • Optional: food, drink
RENU Financing Workshop	The RENU Loan program is a statewide residential loan program sponsored by the Colorado Energy Office (CEO), in partnership with Elevations Credit Union. It makes home energy upgrades easy and affordable by offering low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program coordinators, well-versed in subject • Venue • RENU program representative (if available) • Installers • Print materials on RENU



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	If you are promoting this as a financing mechanism, host and educational workshop so people know this opportunity is available and how to utilize it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solarize presentation • RENU presentation • Solarize print materials
C-PACE Financing Workshop	C-PACE , or commercial-property assessed clean energy program, is a financing mechanism for businesses to fund energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy systems. Host a workshop for business owners to learn more about this opportunity and connect them with contracted installers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-PACE contractors • C-PACE program rep (if available) • Program coordinators, installers • C-PACE presentation • C-PACE print materials • Solarize presentation, materials

FUNDRAISERS

EVENT	DESCRIPTION	NEEDS
Solar Fair	Community members gather for a festival celebrating solar! Recruit community groups to set up booths and demonstrations. Have a kids tent, live music, local food and drink. Have door prizes and a suggestion donation upon entrance to the event. Have solar and sustainability demonstrations. Plug and describe solarize in the middle of live music and have a sign-in table front-and-center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacious venue (park) • Live music • Local food and drink • Permit if serving alcohol • Community partners for boothing • Parking, town/city permission • Demonstrators • Kids booth • Pop up tents, tables, seating, porta potties • Everything you need for a full-blown festival
Solar Summer Concert	Host a summer concert by booking a space at a venue with live music. Mutual promote the event with the venue and present your solarize presentation. Suggest a donation at the door, with venue approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue • Band • Solarize presentation • Solarize program coordinators • Print and promotional materials
Documentary Screening	Sign up to screen a solar-related documentary, pick a cheap venue and use ticket costs as a donation to your program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights to a movie • A venue • Print tickets • Solarize presentation • Program coordinators in attendance



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OTHER

A great way to promote Solarize without planning an event is to make sure to have a booth or table at every upcoming community festival. Solarize often runs through summer, so there are usually ample opportunities to make an appearance at summer community festivals. The best way to sign up for these ahead of time is by checking community bulletins, chamber of commerce newsletters, and local community calendars, often located in newspapers. Most of these events have boothing fees ranging from \$20-\$100. Make sure to factor this in when creating your Solarize budget at the beginning of your campaign.

DELTA COUNTY: A CASE STUDY

Paonia, Colorado is known for being in the heart of the U.S.'s highest elevation wine country. Program coordinators in Solarize Delta County utilized this unique community trait to host a Solar Wine Tour. How can you create an event that is unique to your community?



STACKING STRATEGY

SUCCESSFULLY MAP OUT YOUR 13-WEEK SOLARIZE CAMPAIGN

Planning 13-weeks of events can seem like a daunting task, but managing outreach events can be easy if you map out your events first on a master schedule, and share it with program coordinators and your installers. This way, when you book venues, you can book every event you need there at once with the same point of contact, and installers can assign team members to go to events ahead of time. Indicate which events installers are required to go to, and send out an additional email reminder at the beginning of each month. See the following event stacking spreadsheet example:

STACKING EXAMPLE

Event	Location	Planned date	Venue	Cost	Contact	Correspondence
Launch	Delta	4/15, 6 p.m.	CB's Tavern	\$85	Nancy ###-###-####	Booked launch, Solar happy hour #/##
Launch	Crawford	4/20 6 p.m.	Old Mad Dog Cafe	\$50	Martha ###-###-####	Booked launch, Solar happy hour #/##. Bring projector
Rotary presentation	Paonia	4/22 1 p.m.	Town Hall	\$0	Bob S. ###-###-####	Confirmed #/## to be the guest speaker. Follow up #/## to see if we need to bring a screen



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Spring Festival Booth	Hotchkiss	4/28 9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Town Park	\$25	Angela, xxxx@gmail.com	Mailed in registration form with check
PV101	Paonia	5/1 @ xx p.m.	Paonia Library	\$0	Adelle ###-###-####	Booked 101 and financing
PV101	Hotchkiss	5/7 @ xx p.m.	Hotchkiss Library	\$0		
PV101	Delta	5/15 @ xx p.m.	Delta Library	\$0	Brady ###-###-####	Booked 101 and financing
Solar Happy Hour	Delta	5/22 @ zz p.m.	CB's Tavern	\$50, first drink on us!	Nancy ###-###-####	Booked launch, Solar happy hour #/##
Solar Happy Hour	Crawford	6/1 @ xx p.m.	Old Mad Dog Cafe	\$50, first drink on us!	Martha ###-###-####	Booked launch, Solar happy hour #/##
Financing Workshop	Paonia	6/5 @ xx p.m.	Paonia Library	\$0	Adelle ###-###-####	Booked 101 and financing
Financing Workshop	Delta	6/12 @ xx p.m.	Delta Library	\$0	Brady ###-###-####	Booked 101 and financing
Documentary Fundraiser	Paonia	6/18 @ xx p.m.	Paradise Theater	\$85 movie \$0 venue donated		Booked, technology check on #/##
Solar Home Tour	Paonia, Hotchkiss	6/22 @ xx p.m.	Janet's house Greg's house Molly's house	\$40 gas money	Janet- ###-###-### M- ###-###-### G- ###-###-###	Janet-confirmed Molly-call back Greg-confirmed
Summer Solar Concert	Hotchkiss	6/25 @ xx p.m.	Delicious Orchards	###, band ###, food	Andy ###-###-####	Concert booked, solar scones booked
Solar business tour	Delta	6/27 @ xx a.m.	Furniture factory	###, food		Booked, follow up on ###
Solar and scones	Hotchkiss	7/13 @ xx a.m.	Delicious Orchards	###, food ###, venue	Andy ###-###-####	Concert booked, solar scones booked
Registration rush! Final event		7/15 @ xx a.m.	CB's Tavern	TBD	Nancy ###-###-####	Adding this to the cal in case we have time! Let Nancy know ##/###

Important strategies to consider in this table:

- 1) Venues in towns are repeated.** For example, for events in Delta, CB's was used twice. In Paonia, Delicious Orchards was used twice. Libraries were also used multiple times. Purposefully stack these events so you can call and book all of them at the same time, keep one point of contact and keep track of your correspondence with them.
- 2) Types of events are strategically stacked.** Start off with appearances to get the word out. Present at club meetings, booth at festivals, get facetime with the community. Then, start off with educational and



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introductory events, mixed in with ways for people to meet installers like ‘Solar Happy Hours.’ Once the word is out more, and people are seriously considering going solar, host a few financing workshops and home tours. Throw in some fun events like a documentary viewing when you are at peak interest and use this as a fundraising opportunity.

- 3) **Be mindful of time commitments.** Your installers will be busy, and it’s your job to make their job easier. Mix in events where you really don’t need them there: boothing, presentations at club meetings, etc. Make sure they don’t have to travel far to different cities/towns multiple times a week, aim for having one installer at an event three times a month and geographically spread out events accordingly.
- 4) **Create an installer needed column or color code.** Example, events in red, we need one installer to attend. Share as a google doc and have a representative from the installation company sign up for which events they will attend ahead of time, so you know who to follow up with.
- 5) **How many events should I plan?** That depends on your budget and your organization’s capacity. Quality events with good attendance are way more important than a ton of half-baked events with little attendance. First, aim for attending as many other community events as possible like festivals and club presentations. Then, add in your own personal events, having three a month, over 13 weeks, is a solid number.
- 6) **Stacking will help your outreach.** With events in place, have someone start filling up your local community calendars with all of your upcoming events. Start creating Facebook events and Eventbrite free event pages for RSVPs.
- 7) **FOLLOW UP.** Booking in advance is wonderful, but follow up 2 weeks prior to ensure your spot and that nothing fell through the cracks. 2 weeks is enough time if you have to book a different venue to get the word out.
- 8) **Now that you’ve stacked, booked, and solidified installer attendance, it’s time to plan!**

EVENT HOW-TO

PLANNING AND DUTY CHECKLIST

At this point you have a map of upcoming events you’re hoping will be in your campaign, and you’re working your way through the list to book venues. Use the following chart as a guide to be prepared for each event. Feel free to print out this form and methodologically go through this checklist to ensure you are prepared for each separate event.

EVENT PLANNING

Task	Description	Deadline	Status
Confirm venue	Depending on when you started stacking, it may have been a while since your initial confirmation. Reach out to your venue contact to confirm you are good to go. If something happened, you haven’t done too much marketing for it yet so there is time to find a new venue. If you don’t have time to visit the venue, use this time to check if they have what you need (tables, chairs, room size, projector, screen)	2 weeks out	(check off if completed)



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Book or confirm guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have a guest speaker for this event, confirm they are coming, or use this time to book one • Identify any community influencers or generally interested people you might want to be at the event and get the word out personally so they can mark their calendars. 	2-3 weeks out	
Create flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With everything confirmed, update your event flyer template for this event and start sharing • Create and EventBrite free event and include the link on your flyer 	2 weeks out	
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media: Write a press release and send to local newspapers. • Media: Radio ads, underwriting, local listings. • Print: Print out flyers and leave them throughout town • Partners: Give your program partners a heads up to spread the word on your event. • Social Media: Create a Facebook event. Engage your followers, share on your page, community pages and pay for boosted ads. Encourage people to RSVP on an EventBrite link. • Email: Send out an email blast to people in the area on your interest list. • Cold calling: Day of or day before, cold call people who live nearby and personally invite them. 	2 weeks out	
Visit Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might be a good idea to know what you're getting into. Stop by the venue so you know what you'll be dealing with on event day • Note: technology, seating, tables, etc. 	Week of	
Gather materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this event require any special informational packets or documents? Get these resources ready to go • Update your solarize presentation • Now that you know what you are working with venue-wise, gather technology you need • Banners, stickers, flyers, etc 	Week of	



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EVENT IMPLEMENTATION

Task	Description	Status
Gather materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print out flyers, registration forms, sign in sheets to bring to your event• Promotional materials, banners, table cloths/stickers• Any technology needs, laptop, flash drive, dongle, screen, projector• Any food or beverages	
Show up early to set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up a sign in table right at the front for attendees• Lay out any event-specific materials• Technology test!	
Solarize presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present your basic 'Solarize' how-to slides at every event, answer any questions people might have, give a shout out to program partners and include updates	
Take photos for social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a friend or volunteer snap photos of the event for program tracking and social media	
Clean up, pay venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't forget your banner!	
Share the news of your successful event on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post a picture on your platform, engage your partners and followers. Share the success of your great event!	

FOLLOW UP

- 1) **Attendance tracking:** Keep your sign in sheets and make a note of how many people came to your event.
- 2) **Thank you:** Send out handwritten thank you notes to any guest speakers you had at your event.
- 3) **Follow ups :** Send an email out to anyone who signed in, thank them for coming and send a link to register. Add them to your **email list.**