Small Business Month
1 - 31 October 2023

Event organiser toolkit

NSW GOVERNMENT

Contents

Introduction

NSW Small Business Month 2023

Organisations volunteering their time and resources have made and continue to make NSW Small Business Month possible. With your help, we hope to provide all small businesses in New South Wales with the opportunity to work on their business this October.

The theme for NSW Small Business Month 2023 is **My Small Business**. This theme encompasses seven key areas of need within the small business community of New South Wales. Each NSW Small Business Month event must align to one or more of the seven key areas:

My Small Business Brand

My Small Business Cyber Security

My Small Business Health

My Small Business Online

My Small Business Resilience

My Small Business Team

My Small Business Trade.

This document has been designed to help you prepare for and deliver your NSW Small Business Month event. Covering topics such as determining the best format for your event, securing speakers and facilitators for your event, and promoting your event.

We look forward to working with you this NSW Small Business Month to support and celebrate the small business community of New South Wales!

Things to consider

There are many factors to consider when planning your NSW Small Business Month event. You will need to decide whether to conduct the event face-to-face or virtually, what the topic of your event will be, and whether your event will be delivered in the form of a workshop, training program or seminar.

What type of event would you like to host?

Face-to-face or virtual?
This NSW Small Business Month, organisations have the option of hosting their event(s) in either a face-to-face or virtual format. Both formats have their own advantages and disadvantages. Some NSW Small Business Month attendees might find it easier to learn and network in a face-to-face setting whilst virtual events have the potential to reach a wider audience and can be more cost effective. When planning your event, consider the following:

- the advantages and disadvantages of each format
- the needs of your target audience, and;
- the time and resources your organisation can allocate to your event(s).

After considering the above, your organisation should have a clearer understanding of whether your NSW Small Business Month event(s) should be delivered face-to-face or virtually.

Workshop, training program or seminar?
Organisations holding an event for NSW Small Business Month 2023 are asked to host a seminar, workshop or training program.

NSW Small Business Month workshops aim to help small businesses learn a new or specific skill. The workshops are usually interactive and hands on. The workshops usually have a 'teacher', or an expert provide guidance and advice on a specific topic. Workshops are intended for smaller groups.

NSW Small Business Month training programs are similar to NSW Small Business Month workshops as they help businesses to learn a new or specific skill. However, they can be more flexible in their format and are not limited to smaller groups. They can also be run over multiple sessions or across a few days/weeks.

NSW Small Business Month seminars are lecture style events that can be delivered to a large audience. The seminars typically feature a speaker or panel of experts who talk on a specific topic. Seminars may also include a panel discussion or forum. If the event is taking place virtually, the seminar might take the shape of a podcast, video, or webinar.

Who is your target audience?

Consider who you are trying to influence and your messaging. Remember to factor in the appropriate event format to engage your audience. For example, do you want to teach them a new skill? Then an in-person or digital workshop would be the best option. Do you want to inspire new ideas and innovation? Then a seminar or conference with a key speaker would be better suited.

The theme of NSW Small Business Month 2023

The theme of NSW Small Business Month October 2023 is **My Small Business** which focuses on different elements of being a small business owner in New South Wales. Proposed event(s) should align to one or more of the following categories: brand, cyber security, health, online, resilience, team, and trade. With a range of events focused on different categories, small business owners will have the opportunity to select events that align to their own individual business needs.

Below are examples of events that align to the **My Small Business** theme:

My Small Business Brand:

a face-to-face training program on how small businesses can expand their customer base and how best to tell the story behind their company to reach new audiences.

My Small Business Cyber Security:

a seminar on how small businesses can increase the cyber security of their digital platforms.

My Small Business Health:

a face-to-face workshop providing mental health tools and resources that attendees can implement into their small businesses.

My Small Business Online:

an online panel discussion on how to best promote a small business on social media including looking at the most popular format of online content, different social media channels and how best to implement for your business.

My Small Business Resilience:

A face-to-face workshop on how small business operators can de-risk operations and have plans to deal with the unexpected such as natural disasters or sudden changes in economic conditions or competition.

My Small Business Team:

A podcast providing advice on how small business owners can retain and develop employees through professional development best practices across specific industries.

My Small Business Trade:

An online training program on how small business owners can grow their business through expanding on or creating new products and services by looking at the needs of their current customer base.

For examples of past events, please visit the About page on the website.

Speakers and facilitators

Secure a fabulous speaker or trainer

Your speaker or trainer needs to drive your message and engage your audience. They should be an expert in their field, understand your audience demographic and be able to attract people to your event.

Good speakers, and trainers usually need quite a bit of notice, so make sure that you book them in early. It's usually good practice to have a conference call briefing them a few weeks prior to the event. Here you will be able to refine the messaging and go over important event details such as online platform facilitation and logistics.

Have a relevant facilitator

When considering a facilitator to host your event, factor in things such as budget, experience and relevance. Having a professional MC or facilitator is always advantageous if budget allows. Other options could include approaching a senior manager within your organisation that has public speaking experience and is also well versed in the topic of the event.

It's always good practice to include your facilitator in any conversations that you have with other speakers or trainers. Make any introductions prior to the event so that all parties are familiar with each other, have the same understanding of the topic and can craft their narrative to complement each other's presentations.

Speech writing tips

We've summarised some of the most common information and data that you may want to include in any opening addresses when hosting your event.

Acknowledgement of Country

Consider drafting an Acknowledgement of Country to be read out by your facilitator at the beginning of the event. An Acknowledgement of Country recognises that the gathering is on Aboriginal land, pays respects to Traditional Custodians, particularly past, present and future, and to Aboriginal peoples in attendance. It's usually delivered as part of Welcome and Housekeeping. Below are some words you could use to deliver an Acknowledgement of Country at your event:

> *"I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and future. I would like to extend that respect to Aboriginal peoples present today."*

Welcome notes

As partners of NSW Small Business Month, we ask that you include an acknowledgement of the program in all branding as well as in any opening remarks. Below are some words you could use as part of your opening address:

> *"We are proud to be hosting this {insert your event name} as part of the 2023 NSW Small Business Month program in partnership with the NSW Government."*

Housekeeping and social media

It's also a good idea to draft some housekeeping notes for your facilitator. For virtual events this could include asking attendees to put their microphone on mute, sending any questions through in the chat during the event and what to do if you have technical difficulties. For face-to-face events this could include where the exits and facilities are, when to ask questions and any other notes on the order of proceedings.

You should encourage your audience to use your hashtag and share their experience on social media. The official NSW Small Business Month 2023 social media tag is **#NSWSmallBizMonth**.

Setting up your event

Whether you are filming a virtual webinar or hosting a live event, you need to consider several critical elements when setting up your event, such as location, type of event and timings. We've listed some of the top things to consider as critical parts of the entire narrative and what is suitable for your audience.

Hosting a virtual event

An important factor to virtual events is where they are being held or recorded. Make sure you consider the internet connection for both speakers and delegates. Things to remember when recording your virtual event:

- Find a quiet, private and well-lit place where you won't be interrupted by other people, pets or noises

- Set out a glass or bottle of water for yourself

- Check that both your webcam and audio is working

- Close any windows, tabs or applications on your computer that you are not using

- Check your internet connection and make sure you are not downloading anything in the background

- Set your phone to silent

- Check that the background behind you is neutral and free from clutter

- Adjust the lights in the room. If things appear dark or dim, you may want to bring in an extra desk lamp to brighten the space.

- Articulate your words clearly and speak with enthusiasm

- Speak slightly quicker than normal without too many pauses or silent moments

- Keep your tone positive with open body language, e.g., smiling, relaxed arms that are uncrossed etc

When hosting a live virtual event, it's good practice for the host to go through some housekeeping rules at the beginning such as asking all participants to:

- Put their microphone on mute

- Tell the audience how long the session will be going for and run through the agenda

- Go through any technical requirements such as dialogue boxes, how to ask a question either verbally or through a chat feature, and what to do if there's a technical glitch.

Dates and times

Remember that your event must fall on a date between the **1st and 31st of October 2023**. When picking your date, you should also consider the day of the week and time of day that would best suit your target audience.

Be sure to check with local community schedules so that you are not clashing or competing with any regular or similar activities in the area. Be mindful of any public holidays or school holiday schedules that may affect your attendance levels.

Given the demands on your target audience and their work schedule, the time of day, day of the week and length of time are key considerations in delivering a virtual or face-to-face event.

Technical requirements

Consider any equipment you'll need

You will need to think about any audio and/or visual

technology for your speakers so that the audience can hear and see them clearly. Consider any speaker presentations and how they are likely to convey their message to the audience. Will they require laptops or specialised AV equipment? Will you record your presentation or live stream? If the budget allows, we strongly recommend engaging an AV technician to ensure a professional presentation and to resolve any technical issues that may arise.

Consider what platform you will use

There are many different platforms that you can use to host your virtual event, some free or low-cost platforms include YouTube, Slido and Microsoft Teams.

Consider a platform that is easy for your audience to join and does not require passwords or for them to download additional programs or software.

Registrations

There are many ways you can manage registrations to your event. You can collect them manually or choose some well-known, easy to use and free online software programs. Suggestions for easy to use and low cost or free online programs are Eventbrite or the 100% NSW owned Humanitix. Either way, make sure that all registrations are captured for your event.

When setting up your booking systems, messaging needs to be clear and engaging to entice bookings for your event. Eye-catching imagery is also a great way to boost interest. Make sure you provide clear instructions to your audience including, how they access the event, when you will send through any links and how they can ask questions. Remember that you will need to upload any relevant information onto the NSW Small Business Month website when you are ready to launch.

Promotion and advertising

To ensure your event is well attended, it is important to consider how you will advertise and promote your event.

NSW Small Business Month Dropbox

All participating partners and grant recipients will have access to the NSW Small Business Month Dropbox which contains **branding guidelines** and a suite of **imagery**, **templates** and **social media assets**. Access to the Dropbox is sent to participating partners and grant recipients via email. Contact the NSW Small Business Month Team if you are having trouble accessing the Dropbox.

NSW Small Business Month website

As a collaboration partner or grant recipient, you must upload your event details to the NSW Small Business Month website. You will receive login details and instructions in an email. The website is a fantastic base to start promoting your event.

Clear messaging and information

You need to think about how to get the word out on your event. One option is to prepare a short blurb about your event with a link to the NSW Small Business Month website, then share this with your stakeholders. They can include your blurb in direct communications to their client base. Another option

is to write a media release and send to your local newspaper, radio and/or TV station. If you decide to issue a media release, be prepared for journalists to contact you wanting to find out more information about your event so be sure to include your contact details for both inside and outside business hours.

Use your social media channels

Make sure you also tap into all of your established social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Within the NSW Small Business Month Dropbox account you will find all the official NSW Small Business Month social media assets that you can use to help post content.

Consider inclusion of your event details in regular customer e-newsletters or include an eye-catching logo at the bottom of your email signature that people can click through to your event. You could also ask your keynote speaker to promote the event through their channels.

The official NSW Small Business Month hashtag is **#NSWSmallBizMonth,** so don't forget to use this and link your event to the NSW Small Business Month advertising campaign.

Checklist

We've put together a handy check list of things to consider in preparing, delivering and evaluating your event

Preparing your event

- ☐ Pick a date in October for your event
- ☐ Align your event to one or more of the categories under the **My Small Business** theme
- ☐ Decide the type of event you would like to host i.e. webinar, seminar, networking, etc. (and have a backup option if restrictions change)
- ☐ Identify and define your target audience
- ☐ Book a venue (if required)
- ☐ Draft an agenda or run sheet with timings and speaker details
- ☐ Engage and confirm both a facilitator and a keynote speaker or trainer
- ☐ Set up time with all involved parties to brief them
- ☐ Request catering quotes and decide what package works best for your target audience and budget (if required)
- ☐ Arrange a meeting with the Audio-Visual technician to discuss your event and equipment such as screens, microphones, data projectors etc.
- ☐ Set up your online event registration page i.e., Eventbrite, Humanitix
- ☐ List your event on the NSW Small Business Month website
- ☐ Promote your event through your social media channels and e-newsletters
- ☐ Send a reminder to your attendees at least two days prior to the event date

Delivering your event

- ☐ Print out a list of registered attendees (alphabetised by surname) so you can tick them off as they arrive (if required)

- ☐ If your budget permits, a personalised name badge with your logo provides a nice touch

- ☐ Print out several copies of your run sheet and/or agenda for the day (if required)

- ☐ Have a list of emergency contact numbers handy and include all staff, speakers, audio visual technician, catering supplier and venue managers

- ☐ Bring a backup of your PowerPoint presentations if using

- ☐ Take any advertising materials such as flyers, pop up banners etc, to give to your attendees or to help brand and decorate the room

Evaluating your event

- ☐ Send out a thank you email to all the people who participated in the event. Be sure to include any relevant materials that they may find useful.

- ☐ Send out the official online survey to participants for your NSW Small Business Month event. The survey will be provided to you prior to October.

- ☐ Fill out the online NSW Small Business Month report to help with the planning of next year's program.

Further information and contacts

For further Information or clarification, please contact:

NSW Small Business Month, Small Business Commission

Telephone: **1300 795 534**

Email: smallbusiness.month@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.smallbusinessmonth.nsw.gov.au