

Session Designer Guide

> So You're a Session Designer. Now What?

First, thanks for agreeing to design a session for the 2010 Nonprofit Technology Conference. This is a great opportunity for you to share your knowledge with the nonprofit technology community. As a session designer, you have the following duties:

- Decide on the format for your session (i.e. panel, workshop, etc.)
- Set the agenda for your session
- Recruit speakers (if you choose to work with speakers)
- Share the format and agenda with your speakers – have at least one conference call with them to talk about how you will all work together
- Help the speakers understand their role in the session
- Help the speakers with the development of any of their session materials
- Collect session materials in time for inclusion on the conference website and thumb drive.

Our job is to help you put on the best session possible. To that end, we require that all session designers agree to the following:

- **Session Setup Forms Complete: 1/20/10**
- **Session Materials Turned In: 2/24/10**

We're excited you're on board. If you have any questions, ideas, commentary, or technology related jokes you'd like to share, feel free to contact Anna Richter, Program Manager, NTCN, at anna@nten.org.

> General Information

- **Registration:** Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, we can not offer financial compensation or free registration. All speakers and session designers will be volunteers.
- **Session length:** 90 minutes for breakouts.
- **AV/IT:** All sessions will have wireless internet access, one LCD projector and one screen. You are responsible for bringing a laptop for your session along with a dongle if you are a MAC user. If you have other AV needs, please contact Anna at anna@nten.org.

Session Designer Guide

- **Recruiting Speakers:** We'll provide you with a list of people who have expressed interest in speaking at your session. You are not obligated to use these volunteers. You may choose to speak at your session in addition to organizing it. If you have trouble identifying speakers, please contact Anna at anna@nten.org for assistance.
- **Handouts:** We ask for your handouts in advance of the conference because we include them in the conference USB thumb drive. This is important for two reasons. First, attendees LOVE having the handouts in advance because they can take notes during the session, and they often complain about sessions that don't have handouts available. (We're serious, and have the evaluations to prove it!) Secondly, it means your materials get into the hands of EVERY conference attendee, not just the folks who go to your session.
- **NO PRODUCT PITCHES WILL BE TOLERATED.** We want this conference to be an exchange of ideas, not an exchange of product information. Please make sure your speakers know that product pitches will not be tolerated. If we get feedback on the evaluations that you or your speakers were "pitchy," we may not ask you back again.
- **Evaluations:** Every session will be evaluated by the audience and the aggregate session score will be shared with the NTEN community.

> Session Design Suggestions

You are free to design the content of your session as you see fit, but we do have some guidelines around format. We ask that you respect the following principles:

- The best offense is lots of preparation. Please do not wait until the week before your session to get started. Like anything in life, the quality will be directly related to the effort you put in. Set the goals and tone for the session and work with your speakers to realize your vision. You should have at least one conference call with your speakers before the big day.
- Ample time for Q&A. The single biggest complaint on our session evaluations is that there wasn't enough time for questions and answers. We recommend that you plan for half of your session to be devoted to Q&A or discussion, though it doesn't have to be relegated to the end of the session.

Session Designer Guide

- Have a point. Your session should be more than two or three presentation about your topic randomly strung together. Decide what point you want to make and help your speakers address topics that will explore various aspects of this thesis. Start your session by introducing this thesis and indicating how the speakers will address it.
- Provide handouts. Many people are both auditory and visual learners and handouts help with information absorption during the session, as well as retention after the session.
- Be creative with your session. Break our of the "Three presentations followed by Q&A" mold!
- Respect your audience by involving them in the session, and allowing them to share their experiences and knowledge. The best sessions allow for audience interaction of some sort. Ask them questions, break them into groups to brainstorm. Just get them involved!
- Be firm. You are organizing this session, and while you want input from your speakers, it's ultimately your call. In particular, don't be afraid to cut a speaker off who's gone over time during the session, or drop a speaker from your session who isn't responding to your requests for meetings or info during the planning phase.
- Keep your audience on track. It's not just your speakers you have to watch out for. Make sure you moderate the audience as well by preventing one audience member from monopolizing the Q&A time and keeping audience questions on topic. Remember this phrase: "That's interesting but a little off topic. Why don't you and I talk about it after the session ends?"

> Be social at the NTC!

We know that, in the course of thinking through your session, you'll be blogging, taking photos, and tagging the materials you find useful. Share your brainpower! Contribute to the NTC experience before, during and after the conference:

- Join the NTC Facebook Event at

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=home#/event.php?eid=292946105083&ref=ts>

- Add the tag "010NTC" to your Flickr photos, Delicious, Twitter, and anywhere you can tag!



Session Designer Guide

* Add the following to your blog: `10NTC`

We hope this helps you pull together an outstanding session for the 10NTC! If you have any questions, any at all, please don't hesitate to contact Anna at 415.397.9000 or at anna@nten.org.