



## How to run an environmental event

So you want to raise awareness about environment and energy issues in your department or college? Why not set up a stall where you can speak to colleagues and students as they pass by?

This can help you:

- Reach a wider audience
- Have a two-way conversation
- Recruit volunteers

The following document provides you with a few pointers to think about before running an environment stall, but is relevant to other events you wish to hold, such as a film showing, or a talk.



Figure 1 The Computer Lab launched Green Impact in 2014 and invited staff and students to their stall to find out about what they are doing on environment and energy issues in their department.





Figure 2 The University Library held an environment and energy awareness day in 2014.

### Before the event

- *Get your messages clear* – People are only able to take three messages away from any presentation, so be clear about what you want yours to be, e.g. “This department is working to reduce its environmental impacts”, “As staff and students you have a role to play”, “We would like you to.....”
- *Pick the right location* – You want a place that’s easy to find and gets a lot of foot fall. Consider using a canteen, reception or tea area.
- *Timing is everything:*
  - Avoid Mondays – people are likely to forget.
  - Maximise footfall by running your stall when people are taking a break, think morning, lunch or afternoon tea time .
  - Less is more – sometimes a shorter more concentrated event is better. Although you may miss some people, there may be more of a buzz about it.
- *Get the word out:*





- Advertise early! Send an early email out to introduce the event, and stick up a few posters.
- Send a reminder email the day before and on the day.
- Spread the word in person – word of mouth is most effective. “By the way, I’m running a...”
- Food and drink! Did we mention that offering free coffee and cakes is proven to increase attendance at such events. Include this in your advert (‘There will also be coffee and cake...’, ‘Come talk to us over some coffee...’ etc.)

### How to get people’s attention

- *Make it interactive* - Having something interactive breaks down that initial barrier. Are there any activities that you could include, e.g. having guests sign pledges promising specific behaviour changes or a short quiz? This makes it easier to call people over.
- *Killer facts!* Do you have some catchy one-liners? Arm yourself with some facts and figures from our resource bank online.
- *Freebies* – Can you offer any freebies? Offering free coffee and cakes is proven to increase attendance at such events. Include this in your advert (‘There will also be coffee and cake..’, ‘Come talk to us over some coffee...’ etc.)
- *Special guests* – Do you want to invite a member of the Environment and Energy Section to attend to give some connection to the wider University?

### During the Event

- *Photos* – take plenty! People are much more likely to get engaged or stay engaged when they have been pictured being engaged.
- *Be accessible.* Stay on your feet and avoid barriers such as tables between you and your audience.
- *Sign-up sheets.* Prepare sheets to collect email addresses and make a mailing list. This gives you an opportunity for further dialogue with those interested.

### After the Event

- Send a follow-up email after the event, e.g. thanking people for their attendance and providing further information or opportunities for engagement.

For further information on what the University is doing to reduce its environmental footprint and promote sustainability visit: <http://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/> .

For resources such as posters, see <http://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/resource-bank/materials>.