

ACM Meetup Organizing Guide

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Intro

The ACM Local Program helps activate city tech communities at the forefront of computing, city event organizers in their areas of technical interest and exploration, and support for beginner attendees to Turing award winning speakers. To get started with growing your ACM Meetup group, please continue through to our main points below.

The Main Points

1. Why Organize events?
2. Getting Started
3. The Work That Lies Ahead
4. Building the Audience

Why Organize Events?

The answer is two fold. The first answer is anchored on concepts in the book, “How to Win Friends and Influence People.” By helping others, through the setup of community tech events, people want to help you. You would be helping a technical leader to become a speaker of your audience. You are helping attendees to connect with each other. You have a co-organizer or two that you enjoy catching up with outside of work hours. Perhaps you’re looking for your next research project, your next job, a side hobby project, or advice on professional development. Your community will start to know you and help you as well. The second answer is a sense of non-profit for-purpose giving. ACM is a unique organization, in that it anchors the computing fields with amazing researchers, senior leaders, technical entrepreneurs, professors, students, and practicing professionals in diverse paths in the marketplace. As a result, you can benefit from this network by giving to it. The name carries a prestigious weight and often leads to warm relationships and positive outcomes that would otherwise be difficult to attain.

Getting Started

- Find a friend by meeting people for a coffee, lunch, scheduled call, and so forth, and partner with someone who shares some of the same enthusiasm you have.
- You can get a head start on compelling speakers with the [ACM DSP](#)
- Talk to good speakers at conferences and seminars to other groups and try to convince them to come speak to your group, follow up is easier if you already know them.
- When you meet a potential speaker at another event or conference, this also gives you a chance to casually screen them for both knowledgeability and presentation skills
- There are more topics and speakers than times available in a season
- Make the event presenter-oriented since it is harder to find a speaker than a topic
- Presentations are not expected to be academic presentations of papers
- Topics/speakers only need to be interesting
- Current technologies and subjects, in use but not necessarily new, still attract people
- Single speakers or a panel works better than two equal speakers in an event
- You can get also get a head start by recycling presentations from elsewhere

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- Speakers normally want multiple speaking opportunities on the same topic
- You are very likely to get a speaker when they already have a presentation prepped
- Your colleagues and other contacts are potential speakers
- Audience members are potential speakers
- Your academic contacts and former “profs” are potential speakers
- Getting a lofty/remote/potentially expensive expert as a presenter is great, but don’t “hold out” for only those people
- A good candidate as a speaker is someone who commits immediately to an invitation

The Work That Lies Ahead

- Getting speaker short bio and talk abstract
- Posting to community and partner channels (Meetup, Social Media, Friends & Colleagues, Business Lists)
- Share the event in advance through normal conversations, have colleagues do the same
- Staying in touch with the speakers especially those arranged far in advance
- Attempting to meet speakers special audio / visual needs
- Coordinating logistics with event venue
- Keeping in touch with attendees on who is doing what
- Keep tech talks, panel discussions, show and tells, and other casual events free
- Creating a manageable, steady, interesting schedule of events is an anchor for growing an engaged audience over time
- Having joint meetings with other groups is a good way to refresh peers

Sponsors

- It’s foundational to maintain a connection with at least one in-kind or low cost venue
- If money is needed, explore a friend’s employer who is actively hiring - ask for sponsorship and provide recognition
- Local businesses that show up to events often provide monetary sponsorship if asked
- Attendance goes up 40% if you advertise some food and drink

Building the Audience

Music, theater and ACM meetings are all performances. With any performing group there are four groups of persons who have to be equally happy about the performance outcome:

- Speaker / Performer,
- Emcee(s) (the Organizers)
- Sponsors and
- The Audience

The common denominator that makes all four of these groups happy is to have a good-sized attentive audience.