

Please mind the details

If you've been to London and ridden the Underground, you are familiar with the phrase "please mind the gap." It's a repeated warning for people to watch their step getting on and off the trains as there is a space between the train and the platform. It is posted everywhere inside the stations because people need to be reminded and London's transportation authority certainly doesn't want accidents.



Mind the Gap by nikoretro
on Flickr

I wish we had a similar reminder for communications managers, especially those who deal with event publicity and marketing. Instead of "mind the gap" it would say "mind the details." Because it's all about the details: the where, when, how, who, why and how much.

Common mistakes, which I have seen just these past few days:

Sending an email blast announcing an event and neglecting to include the date and time (or location).

Announcing an event and getting the dates mixed up (saying it is Tuesday, February 12 instead of Wednesday, February 12).

Website page about an event including a "more information"

button for an event, but not providing any information about what the cost will be.

Details matter and they matter more when you are doing any type of event planning. Please mind the details. Double check them. Have somebody else check them. Don't assume that people will figure things out.

Finally, realize that if you don't provide the proper details or you provide the wrong details you are making it very hard for people to attend your event.

Are your events drawing fewer people?

Last week, I attended an event and the complaint from the organizers is that fewer and fewer people are attending. Now part of this particular group's situation has to do with poor publicity. In fact, their attendance has dwindled to such an extent that they have had to change venues. Today I attended another event (different group), same problem: fewer people.

If you are organizing an event that has been losing audience, you may want to ask yourself these questions:

Is your publicity reaching new/bigger audiences?

Obviously, if few people know you are having an event, few people will attend. As a communicator, you have to evaluate where you are publicizing your event, and whether you are

attracting enough people. Moreover, if you are trying to expand the amount of people at your events, you are going to have to experiment with new ways of publicizing the event. If you can only count on your core group, you don't have a recipe for growth.

Is your program good?

There are just so many times I can go to a social media event. I have heard lots of it before. Nothing new there. **Programming content counts.** Doing a boring event or having the same speakers is not going to draw a new or bigger crowd.

What else is going on that day?

This is about the importance of timing. If you are having an event, and there is a presidential debate going on that evening, you are forcing people to choose, and you may lose. Also, what time of day is your event? Have you experimented with other times?

How good was your last event?

You know the saying, *you are only as good as your last success*. How successful was your last event? Were people interested, motivated, energized? Or did you receive complaints? Was the speaker entertaining or boring? Unfortunately, you do not have too much control over circumstances (speaker was grumpy, people were late due to mass transit problems, etc.), but it matters anyhow. If you had a crappy event, people aren't going to want to attend another event that you put on.

Do you know who your audience is? Do you know why they attend your events?

You don't survey you attendees? Big mistake! If you don't even know why the people who are there attended, how are you going to figure out why people aren't attending? **YOU MUST**

SURVEY...even informally. As an organizer, ask people on the way in how they found out about the event and on their way out whether they enjoyed the event. Have forms people can fill out. Send out an electronic survey. Do what it takes to find out more about your audience.

What are you up against and how are you fixing it? Let me know in the comments.