

Hacking Hackathon Organizing 101 - Notes

Event organised by MLH

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● How Hackathons Impact Communities

- Drive social impact
- Create voice for people to express on
- Focus on educating the community

● Components Of The Organizing Journey

○ Team Building

- Minimize intra team conflicts.
- Build a diversified team- in terms of background as well as skill sets.
- Respect within the team in spite of differences is crucial → work towards each other rather than against.
- All should have accountability. → It's not a one man show.
- Have formal structured communication; choose a medium where you can have channels and threads.
- Roles
 - Sponsor
 - Budgets
 - Marketing growth
 - Tech/ Dev
 - Write content
 - Community Manager
 - Graphic designer

○ Timeline planning

- Don't allocate too much time for trivial things.
- Create a structure, you don't need to do everything in the same day.

- Have an order of activities. ---> Know what is happening at which phase. This gives an estimate of how much time is needed.
- Try not to clash with major academic requirements.
- Break it into smaller components.

Safe time for organising a hackathon is 4-5 months.

○ Budgeting & Sponsorship

- More people you pitch to, the more people who might actually sponsor you.
- Make a budget balance.
- Put all the costs on paper (It might be easy to miss out on things)
- Respect limitations.
- Have an emergency fund.
- Tooling (Communication, hosting..), swags, Prizes, shipping, Emergency stash. { Maybe try starting with winners, judges then the participants}
- In-person components include Venue, Food, Bedding, misc tools(wifi, extension boards, power backup)
- What type of sponsorship you need → Monetary or in-kind.
- Quantify potential impact for your sponsors.
- Compromise where you can but don't go beyond your boundaries and space.
- ***Pitch Deck ---> About Hackathon, Aim to accomplish, prospective metrics, sponsorship tiers { The title sponsor should at least be 30% of the budget so start higher}, Call to action (CTA), Contact details.***
- Pitch not for what you are at, but talk about the aim and prospective pitch you are definitely more.

○ Marketing

- It's more than just posting. So create a marketing strategy.
- Active social media presence → twitter, facebook, tik tok, youtube, linkedin.
- Website is the important face of your hackathon.
- Use platforms such as Devpost, Devfolio that is where the community is already there and you can leverage the extra audience.
- Try to popularise the event with the sponsor → Cross promoting the event.
- Create Volunteer opportunities.

- **Webpage needs to have these ---> Dates, Registration and community links, About hackathon, Speaker, SPonsors, Schedules, FAQ, Tram(can be a separate page), Contact details.**

○ Hackathon Experience

- Two major components : Pre-hackathon and the day of hackathon.
- Keep constant communication with the teams.
- Have an emailing system ---> MailGrid, Mailchimp.
- Pre hackathon --->
 - use already established medium for live streams
 - Open registration forms early.
 - Track the metric continuously
 - Keep the feedback form open so we can figure out if something is going wrong
 - Have a check-in form.
- On the day
 - Open mentorship periods
 - Have proper eating and sleeping practices.
 - Be mindful of the judging period.
 - Have mini events for people to interact and it can be refreshing for them as well.
 - Adopt a proper strategy and open methodology for the judging process.

○ Post-Event logistics

- Avoid these scenarios ---> hackers didn't get certificates.
- Get post feedback form (anonymous)
- Get monetary verification process to transfer prizes
- Get more stuff that you can plan before the event (get sizes of all sizes for the event before the event)
- Quantity and document all the participation metrics for the future hackathons.
- This post event logistics can be used for the next hackathon.

● References

- MLH Hackathon Organizing Guide: <https://guide.mlh.io/>
- Community Voices: <https://bit.ly/tipsforhackcon>