The MC's checklist: every question to ask the organiser

Get the answers in writing before you agree to host, and check them the week before.

Hosting goes wrong most often before the first word is spoken. This is the list of questions to send before you agree a date.

Before you say yes

- [ ] **Can I have the brief in writing?**
  So you have something to check on the day.
- [ ] **When will you know the answers you do not have yet?**

The event itself

- [ ] **Where is it, and is it live, online or hybrid?**
  In a hybrid event, who is watching on screen, and can the online audience ask questions?
- [ ] **When does it start and finish, and where do the breaks fall?**
  Take the times from the timed running order.
- [ ] **What is the event for, and what should the audience leave with?**
- [ ] **Who is in the room, how many are expected, and how much do they already know?**

The speakers and the running order

- [ ] **Who is speaking, in what order, and for how long?**
  Ask for the timed running order and the name of anyone likely to run over.
- [ ] **Does each speaker want an introduction from me?**
  If so, ask for their job title, one or two facts you can use and who approves the wording.
- [ ] **What is the plan if a speaker is late, runs over or drops out?**
  Agree it with the organiser now.

The room, the sound and the staging

- [ ] **Is there a microphone for me, and for each speaker? Who fits it?**
- [ ] **Where do I stand or sit, and where are the lectern, the screens and the exits?**
- [ ] **How is the stage lit, and is the event being filmed?**
  If it is, does the camera operator have the running order?

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The technology and things going wrong

- [ ] **Who runs the slides and the playback, and what is the cue for each one?**
  Ask for the cues in writing.
- [ ] **Who is the named technical contact on the day, and how do I reach them without leaving the stage?**
  Get a mobile number before the event.
- [ ] **What happens if the video fails, the stream drops or the power cuts out?**
  Agree the line you will use to fill the gap.

How the event ends

- [ ] **How does the event close, who speaks last, and what should the audience do next?**

The week before

- [ ] **Every fact in each introduction checked with that speaker**
- [ ] **Running order and timings confirmed**
- [ ] **Cues in writing, and the technical contact has a mobile number**
- [ ] **Stage layout seen, or photographs asked for**

Notes

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