



EMP Networking Toolkit

Welcome, fellow EMPs!

Thank you for volunteering to host an EMP event. Your help is integral to spreading the word about EMPs. We hope that through the events you organize, our fellow EMPs will have the opportunity to make connections and meet others in the field with whom they might not otherwise come into contact.

This toolkit is intended to give you ideas for projects, help you plan and run a successful event, connect with partners, promote your project to the media and the public and report your experiences back to the AAM EMP group.

Enclosed you will find information on:

- organizing your event
- creating a contact list
- communications
- follow-up

Also included are samples for you to work from, such as:

- a model press release
- a sample check list
- business card templates to collect information from your participants

Please let us know what exciting events you have planned by emailing us at emergingprofessionals@aam-us.org or by posting details on our MySpace or Facebook page.

ORGANIZING YOUR EMP EVENT

First decide what type of event would be most relevant to the need in your area and the easiest for you to put together. Do you want to meet up over cocktails or start off with a formal conversation to define your area's needs? Listed below are some possible ideas, but feel free to use your imagination. Whatever your group decides, start early and set realistic goals for the event.

Types of Events

Networking

- Happy Hour
- Guided tour of a new exhibit (hosted by an EMP at a local museum)
- Cookout / picnic

Formal

- Lecture / lecture series
- Résumé Review
- Discussion of an EMP/museum-relevant issue

Other

- Arts & culture festival
- Community service project
- Book club
- Focus group

Possible Venues

Once you have compiled your list of invitees, assume that about 25-40% will show up, and use that number to determine the size of establishment you will need to secure. The venue is obviously somewhat dictated by the type of event you choose to host, but be creative and use your connections to find the most appropriate space:

- Museum
- Gallery
- Bar / restaurant / lounge
- Park
- University auditorium / classroom / common area
- Library
- Artists' space
- Other EMP place of business

Bars / Restaurants

If EMPs helping to organize the event have any connections with local restaurants or bars, have them make a request to use the venue for your event (they could always make a more informal request and someone else in

the group could follow up with a more formal meeting). Make an appointment to speak with the owner or manager of the bar or show up at an off-peak time (2–4 p.m.) when s/he might be free to discuss the issue with you. Emailing or calling in advance is a good way to brief the establishment about the group and your event ideas before you show up. It helps you maximize your planning as well and helps the venue's representative prepare questions. Inquire whether the bar/restaurant will offer a happy hour, special happy hour cocktail and/or food concessions for the group.

Museums

If you currently work at a museum and are considering using a portion of it for the event, set up a meeting with the staff member who has decision-making power over use of museum space and resources (director, head of security, special events manager, etc.). Explain the purpose of the EMP event and why it is worthwhile to the museum to host it.

As there are typically rental fees associated with use of a museum space, investigate evening programs the museum might be hosting and organize an EMP gathering to tag onto these prearranged events.

Picking a Date

Remember to take into account any holidays or special events that surround the date of your event so you don't have too much competition.

Prepping

Depending on the event, a few calls or emails may be necessary to secure an event date and work out details. Ask if the bar/restaurant/museum has photos and/or logos that you could use for the event invitation. The week of the event, follow up with the owner, manager or museum contact to confirm details and let them know how many people you expect will attend.

Getting Partners or Donors

It would be nice to have a budget with which to put together an EMP event, but we suspect that you will be working with little or no funding, and therefore offer the following suggestions.

Familiarize yourself with the EMP mission. This is your case statement for soliciting donations of space or time from proprietors and professionals:

Mission

To empower emerging museum professionals in the pursuit of excellence in their museums and communities*

Related Goal

To equip and motivate the next generation of museum professionals

Related Activity

To provide a forum for emerging professionals to network and create connections

Who do you know who might be willing to support the EMP mission? Will they make a donation of money, food or a space? Do they also have a mailing list that might include EMPs? Consider partnering with other groups or venues that have similar goals. This can be a great way to help cover the costs of the event, share the work of planning, make new connections and get more people to attend.

It's important to thank your local donors when they contribute money, space or food to your event, but try to keep it simple. Keep in mind that tangible benefits (signs, ads, etc.) turn a simple donation into a complicated sponsorship that may have legal implications. If you are planning a very large event and are considering the possibility of soliciting actual sponsorships, contact us at emergingprofessionals@aam-us.org

* Those in the first ten years of their museum career or in a new position within the field

CREATING A CONTACT LIST FOR NETWORKING EVENTS

Think about who you should invite to the event. Are you limiting this list to EMPs or will you also include other local groups with similar ideals? See if someone in the group is willing to take on the job of compiling contacts so you can keep adding to your invite list with each event. Make sure to invite any partners and include their contacts in your invite list.

When compiling your contact list, consider the following sources:

- Does your local university, college or continuing education program have museum studies or museum education programs? Send an invitation to be posted on their listservs. http://www.gradschools.com/programs/museum_studies.html, <http://www.museum-employment.com/deeglis.html>, and <http://museumstudies.si.edu/TrainDirect.htm> have lists of many museum studies programs. Don't forget former classmates or alums working in your field.
- Does your state have a museum association? Check the AAM website for information about your state museum <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm#state> to get information about local museums.
- Contact your regional museum association to forward your invitation to people in your area. <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm#state> includes links to the regional museum associations. There might be members of a neighboring regional association that also want to be included.
- Reach out to your personal network: colleagues from current and former jobs and internships. Encourage them to pass the word on to EMPs in their networks.
- Don't forget to include galleries, auction houses, libraries, zoos, consulting firms, design and technology firms and other nonprofit organizations that work with museums.
- Reach out to colleagues from different types of museums and organizations that work with museums. <http://www.aam-us.org/aboutmuseums/abc.cfm#types> includes organizations representing many different types of museums.
- Contact AAM for a list of members in your area that might be interested in participating.

Send a copy of the invitation to the AAM Emerging Professionals Group at emergingprofessionals@aam-us.org so we know what great networking events are planned: we will share them with EMP members in your area and list them on the EMP website.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOUR EMP EVENT

Now that you have a location, date/time, description and a contact list, you need to get the word out! Here are a few guidelines and suggestions for communicating about your EMP event:

...With EMPs

- Give the invite a casual, fun tone – be sure to include date, time, location and contact information. Consider using a website like Evite (www.evite.com) which allows you to monitor when invitees view and respond to the invitation, export and print RSVP lists for yourself, stores email addresses for future invitations and archives invitations for future reference.
- If you're having the event at a bar or restaurant, it may have specials to include – and of course, it doesn't hurt to give them some free advertising.
- Include general information about EMPs – take a look at our website www.aam-us.org/emp, or email us if you need more information.
- The invite shouldn't be *too* informal – make sure you don't cross the line between having fun and having manners.

...With Established Leaders

- Forward your EMP message to your institution's leaders or other stakeholders (state museum association, regional association, other museum colleagues, advocacy network etc.).
- Be sure to preface your message with an invitation to attend and additional information about why this is important to you professionally and to your community.

...With the Media

- Decide if the event is newsworthy. A happy hour is not worth notifying the media, but a discussion on hot topics in museums or a community service project might be.
- When communicating with the media it is important to remember the five W's: who, what, where, when, why. The details are necessary, but the WHY is most important. Explain why the public should be interested in your group or event.
- Press releases can be written before the event to attract advance notice or attention or after the event to inform the media about the event's accomplishments. Include quotes from organizers and participants, details of the project's goals and activities, background about your organization and your contact information.
- If you're stuck, take a look at a sample press release (see next page) or talk to your PR colleagues.

- Create a distribution list (coordinate this with your PR colleagues!) of local reporters who write about museums. You might also explore local blogs, entertainment guides, professional association publications, etc.
 - If you do choose to alert the media about your event, be prepared that they may actually show up. If this is the case, don't give them anything bad to write about.
 - If any media cover your event, remember to thank them. Also remember to share the press coverage with AAM by emailing emergingprofessionals@aam-us.org.
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SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Contact

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Local Emerging Museum Professionals Group to Meet Discussions will Focus on the Future of Museum Leadership

City, State (Date) –

Local emerging museum professionals will meet at *[time, place]* to discuss *[more information on issue...]*

Mentoring and encouraging emerging museum professionals is a priority for the American Association of Museums (AAM). The energy and vitality that emerging professionals bring to the museum field is seen by AAM as essential to enhancing museums' vital role in their communities.

“Museums are always looking for fresh ideas, new ways to reach new audiences and novel perspectives on the issues and challenges we face,” said Ford Bell, president of AAM. “That is why we view events such as this as critical to the future of museums.”

The EMP group was started by a handful of AAM's emerging staffers who recognized that people new to the museum field needed a better road map for career development and networking. The group is dedicated to empowering museum professionals who are in the first 10 years of their museum careers in the pursuit of excellence in their museums and communities.

About your EMP group...

CHECKLIST

Below is a list of things that might be useful to remember for a successful event. Organize a meeting in advance of the event and put each person who is attending in charge of a few items.

Contact the media – if applicable.

Send a reminder to anyone who RSVPed and to all invitees a week in advance. Print out the RSVP list for the event.

Touch base with the contact person of the space you're using to make sure all details are firm, and to give them an estimated attendee count.

Compile any supplies that you'll need for the event, including:

- Container where participants can leave a business card
- Blank business cards for participants to fill out (see next page)
- Writing utensils
- Any literature about your local EMP group
- Table tent, or some other way of identifying the group (this is especially important if tagging on to a larger event)
- Easel and easel paper, if necessary, to record discussions for conversation-related event
- Camera for documentation

Have fun!

At the Event

Introduce yourself to the staff working that evening. Jot down names or ask for business cards for thank you notes and other follow up correspondence after the event.

Arrive in advance to make sure reserved tables or sections are in place; and if need be, locate a table or space to collect business cards and display brochures. It is a good idea to find out where the coat check and bathrooms are.



name: _____

title: _____

place: _____

email: _____

phone: _____



name: _____

title: _____

place: _____

email: _____

phone: _____



name: _____

title: _____

place: _____

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name: _____

title: _____

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AFTER THE EVENT

Your event was fantastic, you collected 50 business cards, so what do you do next?

Debrief

If you worked with other people, convene your group to evaluate what went well and what you could do differently next time. Have group members ask their friends and colleagues for feedback. Be sure to seek input from the host site, any partners and any evaluations you receive. This feedback will help you plan your next event.

Write Thank-You Notes

Be sure to show your appreciation by writing thank-you notes to partners, volunteers, members of the media and any others who may have contributed time, goods or money to your project.

Update Your Contact List

Enter all those business cards you collected at the event into your contact list so you have an updated list for your next event. Send us a copy, or use the event report form on the next page. Use this list to keep in touch with new EMPs, partners throughout the year. Send copies of news stories, video coverage, interesting EMP-related articles, future event invites and any other information that might be useful for your group, but be sure to respect their time and privacy, and include an unsubscribe option.

Spread the Word

Submit press releases, articles, photos and other information about your completed event to your local newspaper and to the AAM EMP group. Be sure to post the information on the EMP MySpace and Facebook pages and have it available for other EMP groups. Fill out the brief report form and send to emergingprofessionals@aam-us.org.

Ongoing Event Planning

As your EMP group develops, staggering events may make sense – perhaps monthly or bi-monthly happy hours or casual get-togethers mixed with subject-based events like tours.

