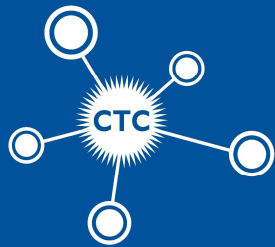


Best Practices and Hard Lessons from the Professional Development Trenches

League of Innovations March 2023



NATIONAL
CONVERGENCE
TECHNOLOGY CENTER



AGENDA

TODAY'S TOPICS

Introduction and background

Our PD events

Planning and preparing

Hosting

Wrapping it all up

WHO WE ARE

NATIONAL CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Background

Collin College – Frisco TX

Funded by a grant from the
National Science Foundation

Regional ATE Center starting fall
2004

National ATE Center starting fall
2012

Mission

Support IT infrastructure/
cybersecurity programs across the
country and align curriculum with
employer need

Community of practice – 96
colleges

All work is co-led by IT business
leaders

Free professional development for
IT faculty (20th anniversary year)

DIFFERENT FLAVORS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORMATS

- 30-minute “Brown Bag” online webinars
- Two-day in-person “summit” meetings
- Friday online workshops (five Fridays on single topic)
- Working Connections

These strategies work for any size event



WORKING CONNECTIONS



Cutting-edge IT topics for faculty to teach an entire new course
Free tuition – plus some travel expense reimbursements
Immediate classroom implementation
Attendee networking and collaboration

WORKING CONNECTIONS



SUMMER

Five days in July
First hosted 2002
Online 2020 and 2021
Hybrid 2022



WINTER

Three days in December
First hosted 2010
Online since 2015

WORKING CONNECTIONS

IMPACTS SINCE 2008



900+ faculty
members have
attended



161,774 students
impacted in the
classroom by WC
content



14,224 sections
taught based on
WC content



462 new degrees
(or certs)
developed based
on WC content

THIS DATA COMES FROM LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS

PLANNING AND PREPARING

TOPIC SELECTION - align with workforce needs

INSTRUCTORS and GUEST SPEAKERS – choose wisely

REGISTRATION – Google and Constant Contact are your friends

COMMUNICATION – few read their email carefully

TECHNICAL SUPPORT – do as much as you can before it starts

DISCOURAGE NO-SHOWS – explain the consequences

PLANNING AND PREPARING

TOPIC SELECTION

Make sure offering topics that will support emerging workforce skills

- Faculty leadership team
- BILT (employer) suggestions
- Past attendee surveys



PLANNING AND PREPARING

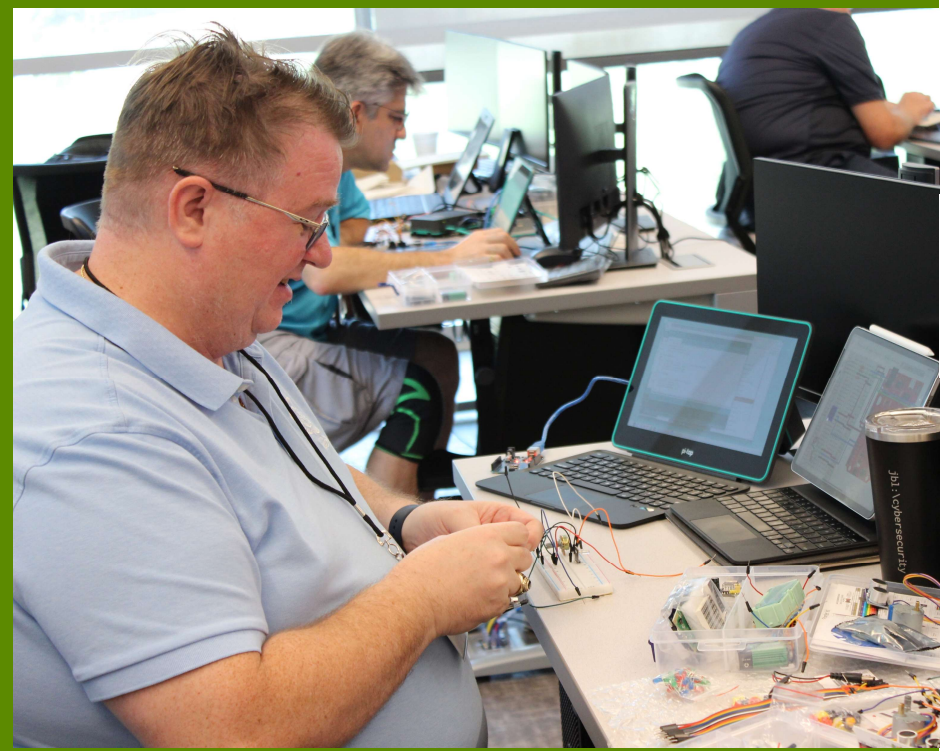
INSTRUCTORS and GUEST SPEAKERS

Finding them

- Word of mouth
- Vendor donation

Arranging payment – no two are ever alike

- Contractors
- Faculty at a college
- Faculty at your college



PLANNING AND PREPARING

REGISTRATION

Organization is essential

- Drops
- Wait lists
- Switching tracks
- Per-school limits

Excel sheet is the living record

Include detailed notes

Constant Contact subscription

- Allows for customized form
- “Non-responder” emails
- Export that to Excel



PLANNING AND PREPARING

REGISTRATION

Close registration early so you have time to prep

Use free Google Forms to acknowledge advanced pre-reqs



WHAT DO YOU DO?

How do you effectively communicate event details to registered attendees?



PLANNING AND PREPARING

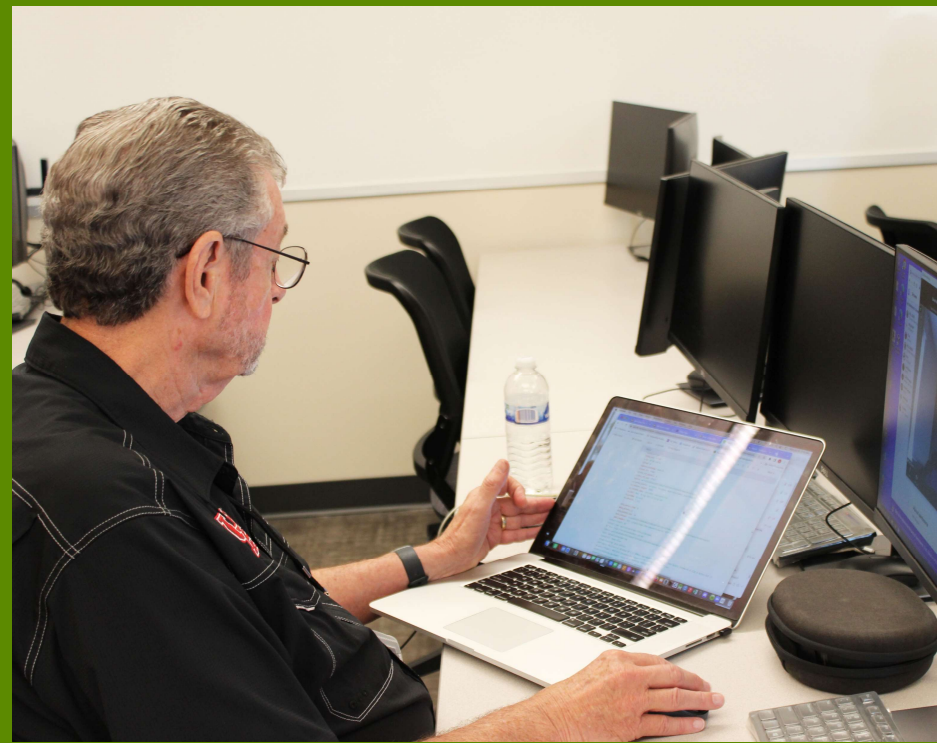
COMMUNICATION

Few read emails carefully

Be a pest – proactive reminders

- Initial confirmation email
- Hotel block deadline reminder
- Cancellation deadline reminder
- Final check-in one week out
- For online, reminder on first morning

One week out, also confirm instructors and guest speakers



PLANNING AND PREPARING

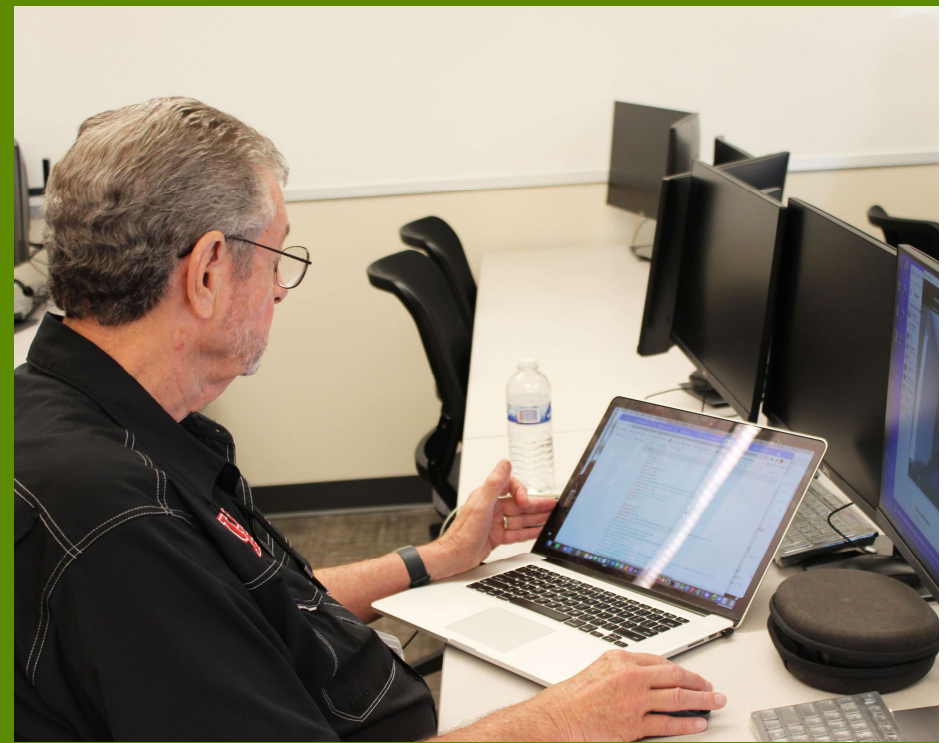
COMMUNICATION

Final check-in email a week out

- Welcome letter
- Class URL
- Campus map
- Building floor plan
- Week agenda
- Survey reminder
- Orientation video link
- Lunch menu
- Optional happy hour notice

Anticipate questions

What would you want to know?



PLANNING AND PREPARING

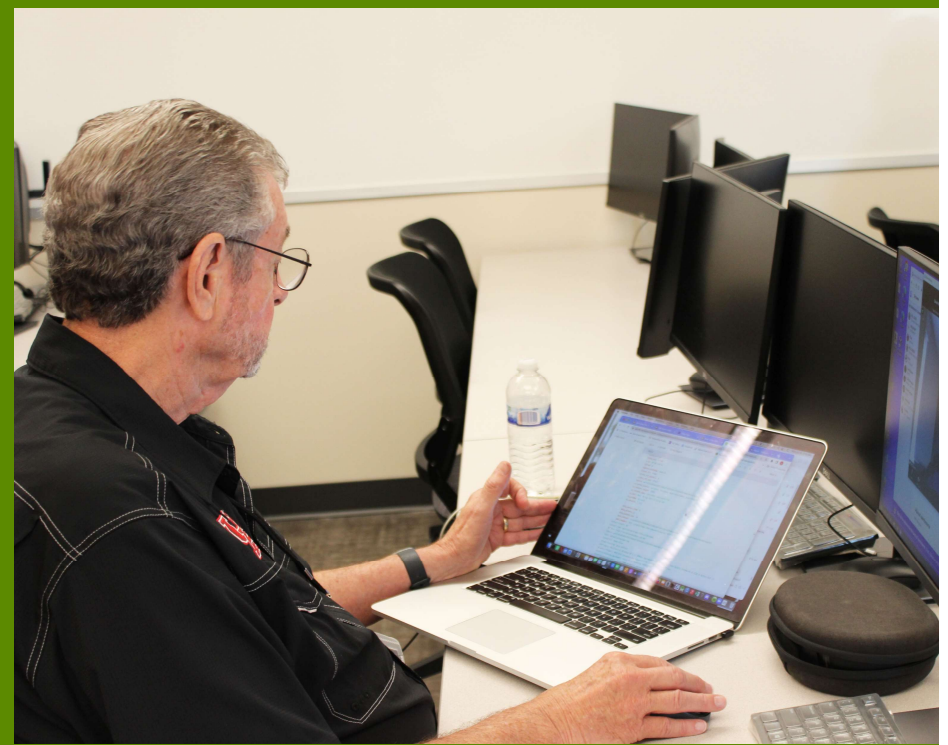
COMMUNICATION

Orientation webinar

- General overview – 9 min
- Travel expense reimbursements – 7 min

From July 2022 survey (n=93)

- 43% found the webinar helpful
- 36% didn't watch
- 9% didn't know about it

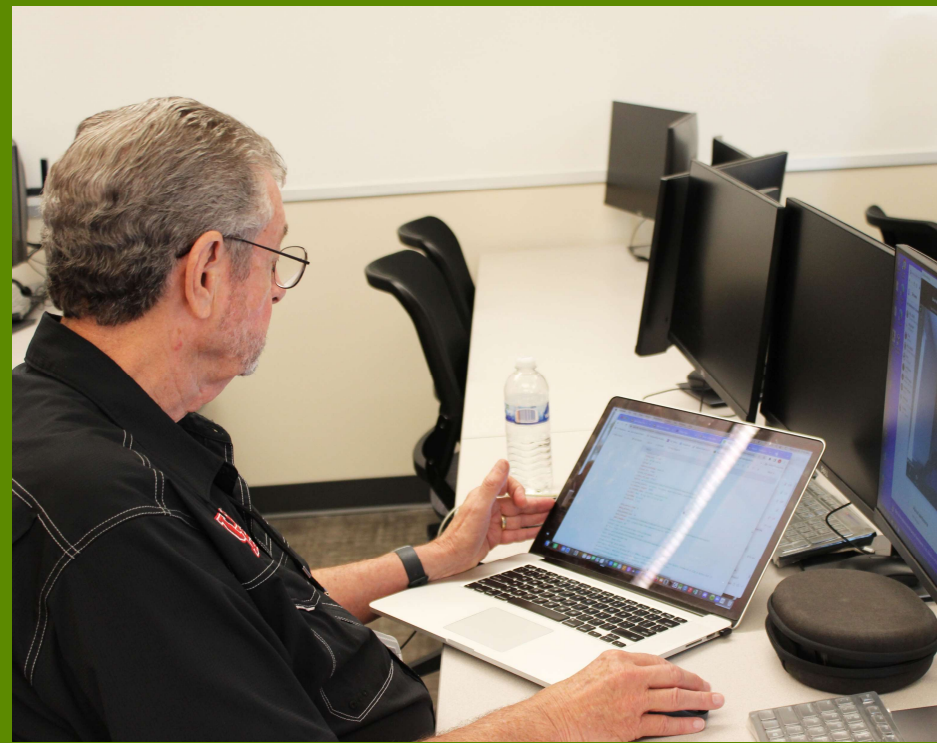


PLANNING AND PREPARING

COMMUNICATION

Also build event wikis

- Overview page
- Track descriptions
- Lunch speakers
- Schedule
- Menu
- Travel reimbursement specifics
- Hotel suggestions

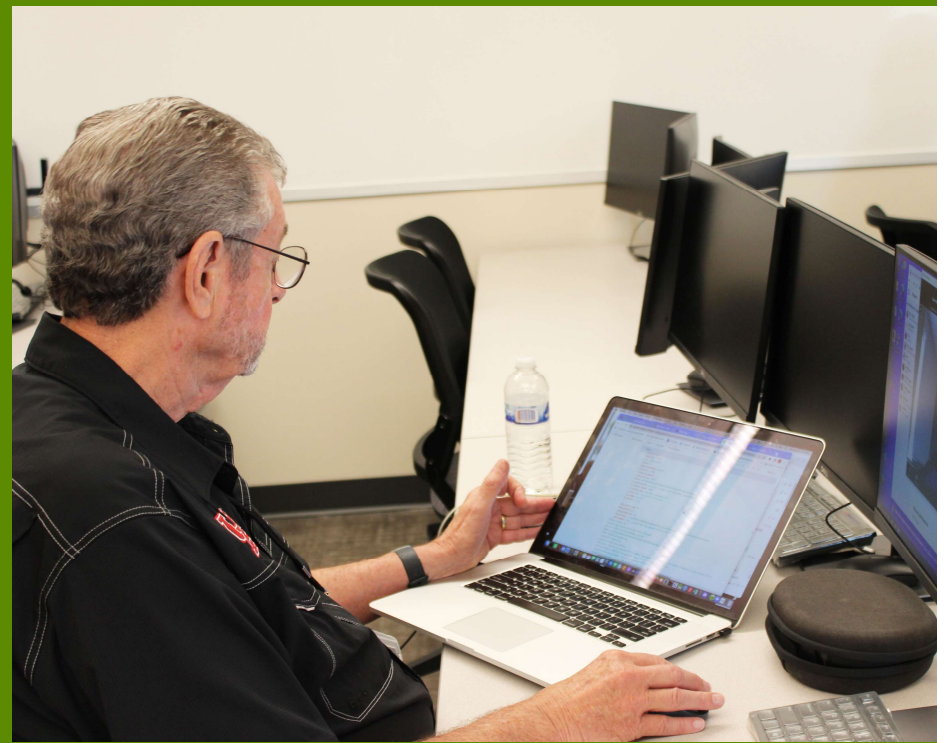


PLANNING AND PREPARING

COMMUNICATION

For Zooms, put the dial-in details on your auto-reply during the event

Also... send information via Outlook appointment invite



PLANNING AND PREPARING

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Be ready for Monday morning

In-person

- Classroom PCs set-up
- College support staff helps
- Double check with instructor

Online

- Zoom or other platform
- Slack support
- Insist attendees be proactive with technical requirements



WHAT DO YOU DO?

How do you get people who have committed to actually show up?



PLANNING AND PREPARING

DISCOURAGE NO-SHOWS

Firm deadline to drop or switch tracks

- Notify supervisor they've signed up
- If they no-show we'll take them off the invite list for 12 months

A similar program makes everyone pay \$50 – “skin in the game”



HOSTING

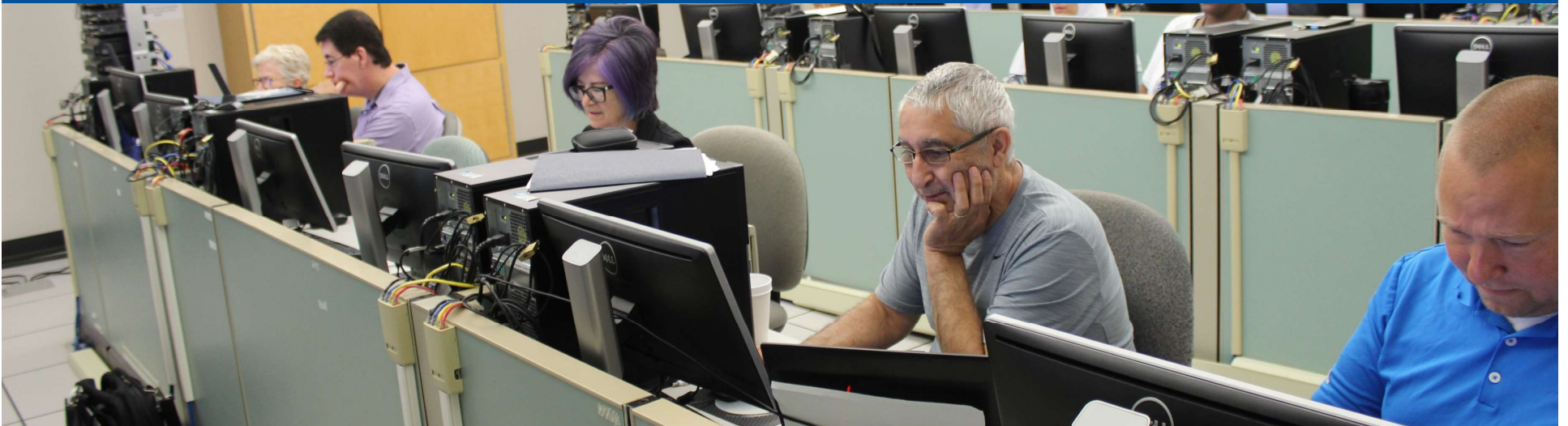
REGISTRATION PACKETS – everything they need for the event

LUNCH FORMATS – ways to engage during a working meal

FOOD – good meals make happy attendees

ACTIVITIES – fun outside of the classroom

SOCIAL MEDIA – promotion, dissemination, outreach



HOSTING

REGISTRATION PACKETS

- Receive these when they check in
- Emailed for online attendees

Most of it repeats what we sent in that one week out check-in email

Social distancing stickers – red, yellow, green



HOSTING

REGISTRATION PACKETS

- Welcome letter
- Week agenda
- Attendee directory (ask permission first)
- “Save the date” postcard for next event
- CEU request form
- Travel expense reimbursement forms
- Lunch menu
- Campus map and building floorplan
- Local restaurants map
- Happy hour mixer flyer
- Activities checklist



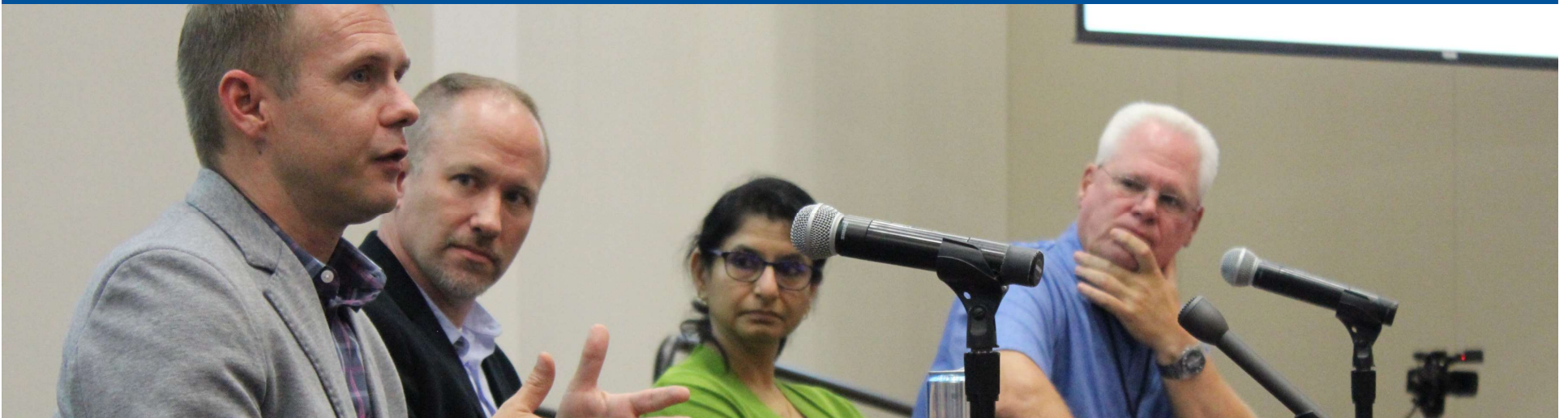
HOSTING

LUNCH FORMATS

NSF requires working lunch

- Keynote presentation – get their cell phone numbers
- Panel discussion
- Lightning round series of short presentations
- Birds of a Feather roundtables

Also always do housekeeping announcements before dismissal



HOSTING

FOOD

Confirm with caterers one week out
Beware letting them serve themselves
Two sides of buffet to move faster

Vegetarian option

- We ask this question on the registration form
- Special “V” icon on their badge, separate table in the lunch line



HOSTING

FOOD

Break room (which can be a classroom) – open all day, but coordinate break times for all tracks to encourage networking

- Coffee, iced water, and tea kettle all day
- Snacks in the afternoon (chips, fruit, popcorn)

Make use of the white board for further messaging – repeat the lunch announcements



WHAT DO YOU DO?

How can you keep your attendees engaged outside of the event content?



HOSTING

ACTIVITIES

Monday evening happy hour

- Ideally, vendor sponsors
- Backup: we book the room, attendees pay their own way

Lunch prize drawings – donated items only (college, vendors)

Other activities



HOSTING

ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

- LOOK FOR THE DAILY HIDDEN COUGAR
- POSE FOR "I LOVE WORKING CONNECTIONS" PHOTO
- POST WITH HASHTAG #WHATILEARNEDATWC
- REQUEST A WORKING CONNECTIONS LUGGAGE TAG
- SIGN THE WORKING CONNECTIONS PHOTO MAT
- TAKE A SELFIE
- VOTE FOR "MOST SPIRITED" ATTENDEE

Complete five of the seven activities above and submit it for your prize.

Name _____

HOSTING

ACTIVITIES



HOSTING

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Promote hashtag use
- Many posed and candid photos
- Shoot video B-roll for future use
- Record lunch presentations and webinars, repurpose as YouTube clips



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

SURVEYS – The “so what?” factor

CERTIFICATES – something to remember you by

LESSONS LEARNED – what if you could do it all over again?



WHAT DO YOU DO?

How do you measure your event's success?



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

SURVEYS

First day anonymous – looking for quick fixes

“Taking the temperature”

- The learning goals and objectives of the track are clearly outlined.
- Track content includes relevant topics related to the subject.
- Instructor provides adequate opportunity for students to seek clarification.
- Instructor provides adequate opportunity to practice newly learned concepts, skills, and material.
- Instructor is adequately prepared.
- Instructor answers questions well.
- Instructor demonstrates adequate knowledge of the subject.



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

SURVEYS

Friday mandatory
Do our best to track all responses

Overall questions

- Was it relevant?
- Would you recommend it?
- How effective did you network with others?

Track questions

- Did you experience change in expertise across specific track goals?
- Rate instructor and content



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

SURVEYS

Longitudinals
Every January – last three cohorts

January 2023 we surveyed

- Summer 2022
- Summer 2021
- Summer 2020



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

CERTIFICATES

Used to print them out last day, now we email a PDF

For those who qualify we also offer CEUs

- Fill out a form, we enroll them

Ask attendees when they register what name they want to use

Don't forget your instructors and guest speakers



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

LESSONS LEARNED

Debrief and discuss as a team what you could have done differently

Reference that document next time

“Continuous improvement”



WRAPPING IT ALL UP

LESSONS LEARNED

“It's always something”

- Classroom door badges didn't work
- Attendee showed up who didn't register
- Instructor some disliked
- Attendee brought his grandson
- Instructor didn't specify what he needed until Monday
- Catering problems – late arrival or missing food



FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT...

You can never be too organized or meticulous with registration lists

It's okay to be an e-mail pest – multiple reminders and check-ins

Anticipate possible problems proactively so you have time to deal with the ones you didn't see coming

Serve good food

Discourage no-shows

Measure not just immediate event opinions, but long-term impact

Strive for continuous improvement – what could you have done differently?



RESOURCES

2022 Summer Working Connections wiki

<https://summerworkingconnections2022.nationalctcwiki.org/>

Working Connections 20th Anniversary retrospective (17 min)

<https://bit.ly/WC20thhistory>

"I Love Working Connections" montage (40 sec)

<https://bit.ly/iloveWC2022>

Working Connections longitudinal impact data report (2013-2019)

<http://bit.ly/WClong1319>

"Brown Bag" (30 minute webinar) YouTube playlist

<https://bit.ly/BrownBagplaylist>



CONTACT US

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

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