

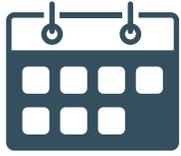
Tips for Hosting a Queen's Park Reception



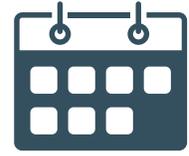
Planning the Reception...



- Book the date with the Legislative Assembly — make sure nothing major is competing with your event and that will dissuade MPPs from attending. Complete the application.
- Book the QP caterer (or an external caterer) to ensure they are available on the date.
- Contact an MPP to "sponsor" the event (this is part of the process at QP) — hopefully one that you have built a relationship with, or a Minister that represents your business sector.
- Develop a consistent brand or image for your event that you use in your invitations, briefs, signage, etc. This makes your event more professional and organized.
- Send invitations to MPPs, Ministers and staffers (consider sending both hard and electronic copies of the invitations to both their QP and constituency offices).
- Encourage your members to contact the MPPs in their own ridings and invite them personally — MPPs respond well when they know their own constituents are attending.
- Set-up a registration system (online or via a spreadsheet on Excel).
- Send invitations to your Board, staff and members.
- Promote the event in your newsletters and on social media.
- Consider asking an MPP to make an announcement in the legislature either the morning or afternoon of the Reception.
- Plan an agenda so that your staff knows what to expect (this is mostly for internal purposes, as your delegates do not need a formal agenda for this event).
- Determine your catering needs and communicate this with your chosen supplier. Pay the deposit as required.
- Consider not having speeches and making it more about networking. MPPs often use speeches as a good time to duck out of the Reception unnoticed. Your goal is to engage them in conversations. If you are going to have speeches, make them very brief!
- Seek sponsors and donations among your membership — a Reception can get pricey, so any additional support is appreciated.
- Plan how you are going to recognize any sponsors/donors before, during and after the Reception (e.g., social media, newsletters, media releases, verbally, signage, etc.).
- Consider having small giftbags to showcase you and your members' products and services (if applicable).
- Invite your members to bring organizational literature or corporate swag for the literature table — a great way to share information about your co-operative and business sector!
- Consider hiring a photographer, or a dedicated staff person to take photos during the Reception — MPPs love a good photo opportunity, and this is a great way to highlight the event through your communication channels afterwards.
- Consider adding a strategic "lobby day" component (i.e., pre-planned meetings between select advocates and MPPs/Ministers at QP) either before or after your Reception.



1 - 2 weeks before the Reception...



- Finalize your catering and equipment needs with the Legislative Assembly.
- Develop an "Advocacy package" to share with your registrants in advance, that includes: your Advocacy Brief (one-page outline of your key ask, and the messaging around it that you want your delegates to convey to legislators); advocacy tips (to make them more comfortable with the process); a list of all the MPPs registered (so your delegates can google and learn more about them if they choose).
- Consider hosting a brief "Advocacy 101" webinar or in-person session prior to the event (you can use the cafeteria in the basement of the main building to hold this session) — this is a great way to put your delegates at ease with the advocacy process and reinforce your key message/ask.
- About a week before the event, call all the MPP QP offices as a personal reminder.
- Develop name tags for all your registered delegates and one for all MPPs — you should have a nametag ready for every MPP, as you will have some drop in unexpectedly who haven'tt registered. Consider different colours for MPP nametags so they are easily distinguishable.
- Meet with your staff to run through the event agenda, roles and expectations.
- If possible, consider having a "greeter" who can connect people in the room with their MPPs — this isn't necessary, but a great asset to have.
- Plan for at least two staff people on registration, and third person to assist if things get too busy. Consider one person dedicated to registering your members, and another individual (or two) dedicated to registering legislators.
- Create a registration sheet to track all delegates and MPPs who attend, and a separate sign-in sheet for any government staffers who may attend — this is a great way to follow-up with them after the event!
- Consider drafting a media release to send out at a week prior to the event.
- A few days prior, send a confirmation email to all your registered delegates — you can include the Advocacy Package in this email, along with a reminder of the date, time, location, a map along with parking instructions, and a reminder to bring along ID as they will need it to enter the main building.
- Confirm what time your meeting space will be available for set-up.
- In the days prior to the Reception, send the Legislative Assembly a complete list of all your (co-op sector) delegates, including their first and last names.



Day of the Reception...



- Bring along a cart for loading/unloading. This will come in handy as the loading dock is quite a distance from the meeting rooms.
- Arrive at QP at least a couple of hours prior to your Reception start time (for an evening event), or an hour prior (for a breakfast or lunch). You will need this time for unloading, parking and set-up.
- Give yourself at least 1 - 2 hours for set-up, if possible.



After the Reception...



- Hold a debrief with your staff as soon as possible after the event and while everything is fresh in your minds. This is a great way to flag any required changes or improvements for future events; what worked, what didn't, etc.
- Send a thank you email to all the MPPs and Ministers who attended. Include a summary of the key ask or message(s) that was shared.
- Consider sending a letter to all the MPPs that didn't attend, to let them know what they missed!
- Send thank you emails to all your delegates, as well as your sponsors and any external suppliers you may have used.
- Draft a post-event media release.
- Write a summary for your newsletter and/or website.
- Pay all your invoices in a timely manner.

Need help? Contact us!