



# BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY MEETUPS

## COMMUNITY > CONTENT

Marketing today doesn't just involve building content. It involves building **community**.

This goes double for technology products, developer platforms, and crypto projects.

Your users want to connect with other users.

Community building is grass-roots marketing. But *how do you plant the seeds?*

In this report, we'll share with you **best practices for running community meetups**: local gatherings (or online gatherings) of like-minded people. We'll include the most valuable lessons learned by community meetup organizers, over many years and hundreds of meetups.

Here's how to plant the seeds for growing strong, active communities.

# In-Person vs. Online

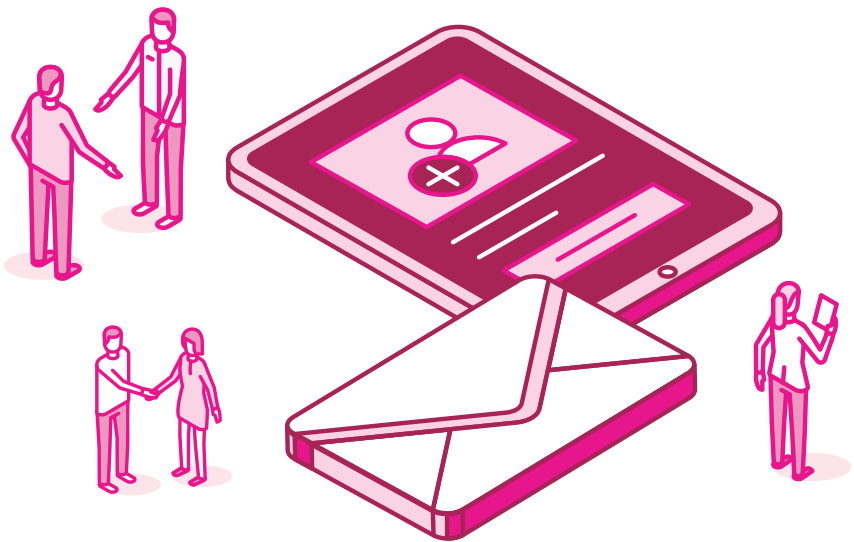
Meetups can be held in person or virtually. After the pandemic, people are trying to figure out the right mix.

**The best practice is to alternate your meetups between in person and online,** because each serves a different audience.

	Pros	Cons
<b>In-person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More effective for networking</li> <li>• More effective for building local communities</li> <li>• More fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More work to put together</li> <li>• More expensive</li> <li>• Limited to local crowd</li> </ul>
<b>Virtual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to set up and run</li> <li>• Inexpensive</li> <li>• Open to global audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to network</li> <li>• Difficult to make an “experience”</li> <li>• Most attendees will multitask</li> </ul>

Local meetups are good for establishing meaningful relationships and establishing grass-roots support. Online events are good at building a national or international community. Alternating the two gets you the best of both worlds.

A note about hybrid events: they are difficult to do well. We recommend choosing either in-person or online, which lets you focus on making a great experience for your community members.



*“There is a certain X factor in knowing someone that only comes from meeting them in person. I’ve found myself having stronger relationships with the people I’ve met in real life.”*

**- Patrick Collins**

Developer Advocate,  
Chainlink Labs

# Find the Right Location

For an in-person event, densely-populated areas (like cities and urban locations) are best to draw the biggest turnout. Co-working spaces work well for meetups, but there may be a cost to rent them for the evening (usually a few hundred dollars).

Those on a limited budget can use a room in a public library, school, or church. If you wish to have an afterparty (more on this in a moment), choose a location near a restaurant or bar.

You can vary or rotate your locations, so long as locations are well-communicated to the group. Best practice is to establish a rhythm, so people get used to meeting at the “same time, same place.”

# Get the Word Out

[Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) is the best way to promote your meetup. The platform does a good job of finding members in related groups, and recommending your group to them (e.g., members of “Crypto Investor Club” will be recommended to also join your “Bitcoin Believers” group).

For those who have joined your group, **your meetup description is the most important tool in your marketing toolkit**: invest time and care into making every event sound amazing.

Sharing your page on social media and asking others to do the same can help more people find out about your event and decide to attend. If you tag the speaker or panelists, it can also go to their social feeds and draw more interest.



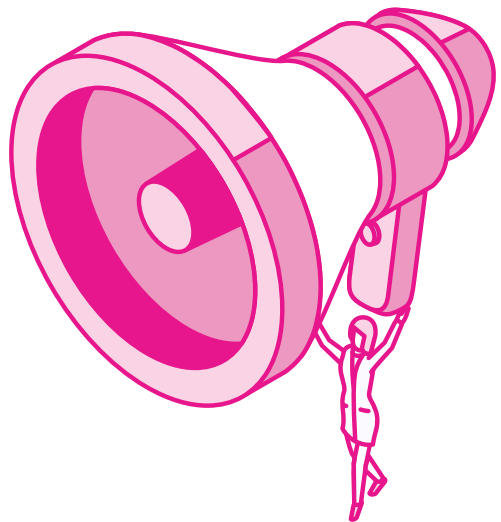
We recommend two resources for helping you promote your meetup:

- **The Ultimate Guide to Starting a Group on Meetup**, featuring tips from Meetup.com:

<https://bit.ly/meetup-guide-official>

- **Guide to a Successful Meetup Group and Events**, by Meetup superuser William Petz:

<https://bit.ly/meetup-guide-petz>



*“I find the Meetup platform ideal for event marketing and hosting. I have no interest in an email list, so I love how Meetup provides a neutral territory for folks to RSVP to the show and scope out upcoming guests. Meanwhile, I have a non-intrusive way to alert folks about new shows and send out reminders.”*

**- Ande Lyons**

Host, Startup Life LIVE

# Set the Structure

Having a structure for your meetup will ensure things go well and stay on time. The typical meetup includes informal time for food at the beginning, a presentation by a speaker or panel, then Q&A, networking, and an afterparty for those that want to get drinks or a meal together at a nearby bar or restaurant.

Here is a sample timeline:

- 6:30 pm: Arrival and food
- 7:00 pm: Speaker/Panel
- 7:30 pm: Q&A
- 8:00 pm: Networking
- 8:30 pm: Afterparty  
(at different venue)

Times can vary depending on how long you have the venue rented and the needs of the group. Regardless, post the schedule to the Meetup page, then stick to it.

*“Chain Reaction, our angel investment group, was born out of a Meetup originally created to connect people with an interest in blockchain. The group started with just 16 people and quickly grew to 60 people and later to 125 people – including academics, students, startups, investors and curious members of the public. We quickly identified a group within a group – people interested in investing in blockchain startups – and formed a parallel but separate angel investor group.*”

*Had we skipped the Meetup stage and the community building that came along with it, we never would have found enough members to form our angel group. It was the organic relationship building that took place at the Meetups that led to the creation of Chain Reaction.”*

**- Eliza Petrow**

Managing Director,  
Chain Reaction

# Food and Arrival

It's important to have food at the beginning of your in-person meetup.

**If you feed your attendees, they will come!** Good food may bring more people, but even basic food will be a draw. (Think pizza and sodas.)

If possible, ask for RSVPs and have nametags printed beforehand. (You'll always get last-minute attendees, so have some blank nametags handy as well.)

Good help is essential: it's tough to run a meetup by yourself. Get a helper to prepare the space and food beforehand, and be sure someone is ready to greet each arrival with a warm handshake and "hello."

For larger groups, have both a greeter at the door and a person to help with nametags. This gives attendees an

immediate feeling of welcome, letting them know this scary new adventure is friendly and warm.

Greeters need to be personable and help participants feel comfortable, especially if they're new. Everyone is nervous about attending a new event; make sure their first impression is a great one.



*“Humans are social creatures and with everything that social media, Web3, and the Metaverse have to offer, there’s still nothing like connecting face-to-face with someone you share something in common with and can learn from. Meetups serve this function: those chance conversations over a drink or piece of pizza are often where the intangible magic actually happens.”*

**- Shamir Ozery**

Head of Web3,  
Algorand Foundation



# Find Good Speakers

Finding great speakers who can offer people valuable information will boost attendance. Having a speaker that's recognized in your community, or who offers specific expertise, will usually result in higher turnout. If people think they'll learn something new from an expert, they'll be more likely to spend an evening with you.

Finding good speakers is one of the most time-consuming aspects of running an ongoing meetup. You'll need to find, schedule, and track speakers diverse in their knowledge and well-known enough to draw crowds.

Here, **LinkedIn is your secret weapon**: you can look up people you'd love to have, then send them a Connection Request with a brief note:

*I'm the organizer of the \_\_\_\_ Meetup, and we'd be honored to have you speak at an upcoming event, on a topic related to \_\_\_\_.*  
*We meet every other Thursday at 6:30 pm; would you be willing to join us, either in-person or online?*

Once you have your speaker confirmed, collaborate with them on the marketing and promotion, then confirm the details with them on the day or two before the meetup.

It helps to do a pre-meetup call to go over what the speaker plans to present, and provide coaching if necessary. Be sure to make them aware of time: tell them you'll give them signals when they have a few minutes left. This helps prevent runaway speakers.

*“Meetups for me have changed over the years, but one thing that has remained consistent is the community. A successful meetup group starts with a strong community where each individual has a chance to be heard, and the best speakers are community members sharing the projects they are working on.”*

**- Barbara (Bobbi) Muscara**  
 Director of Education,  
 Ledger Academy

# Q&A/Networking

Participants may have questions for the speaker, so allow some time for Q&A.

The questions should be well moderated, as sometimes attendees can ramble.

A moderator can gently cut in, and succinctly rephrase the question, which helps both the audience and the speaker.

For some meetups, Q&As and networking can be combined, thus giving participants more informal ways of talking to speakers and each other. In a virtual group, this may involve Zoom breakout rooms or the like. (Again, give it a time limit and stick to time.)

Although we recommend putting clear time boundaries around the meetup, at a good event, the conversation and ideas will be flowing. The afterparty is a useful way to clear attendees out of your meeting

space, while letting them continue the discussion in an organic way.

*“The best meetups create a place where different stakeholders, interests and points of view can gain insights from one another. At our meetup, we bring together regulators, startups, enterprise firms, service providers and academics. This accelerates understanding, and builds positive energy which ultimately fosters innovation.”*

**- Chuck Senatore**

Boston Regtech Meetup

# Meetup Costs

The main costs of a meetup are the venue and food. If the venue charges a fee, it's usually between \$125 and \$250. Food can cost \$150 to \$500 or more, depending on what you serve.

Other costs may include:

- **Nametags:** These can range from simple stick-ons to clip-on name badges. (\$10 to \$50)
- **Signs:** Invest in a professionally-printed sign and an easel, to let people know they're in the right place. (\$50 to \$100)
- **Printed materials:** Have some brochures or handouts ready to explain your group, product, or project. (\$10 to \$100)
- **Projector:** This is included with most professional venues, otherwise you can buy or rent. (\$150 to \$500)

- **Bluetooth speaker:** Be sure to have upbeat music playing during food and networking sessions (it's awkward to network in a quiet room). (\$15 to \$100)

**Total cost:** For a decent-sized event of decent quality, plan on spending around \$500. For smaller groups on a budget, you can get by with less. And of course you can spend much more, but bigger budgets do not necessarily mean better communities.

If cost is an issue, you can look for sponsors that can help foot the bill or pay the costs entirely. **We do not advise charging admission for your meetups**, as this will limit turnout, but QR codes for donations can be made available on your materials for those who want to contribute.

*“It’s important to meet folks where they are. You can try pushing content or educational events that you want people to use, or you can provide what they are ready and searching for. Often, it’s simply talking to other community members that provides value.”*

**- Rae Payson**

Blockchain Community Manager,  
Fidelity Investments

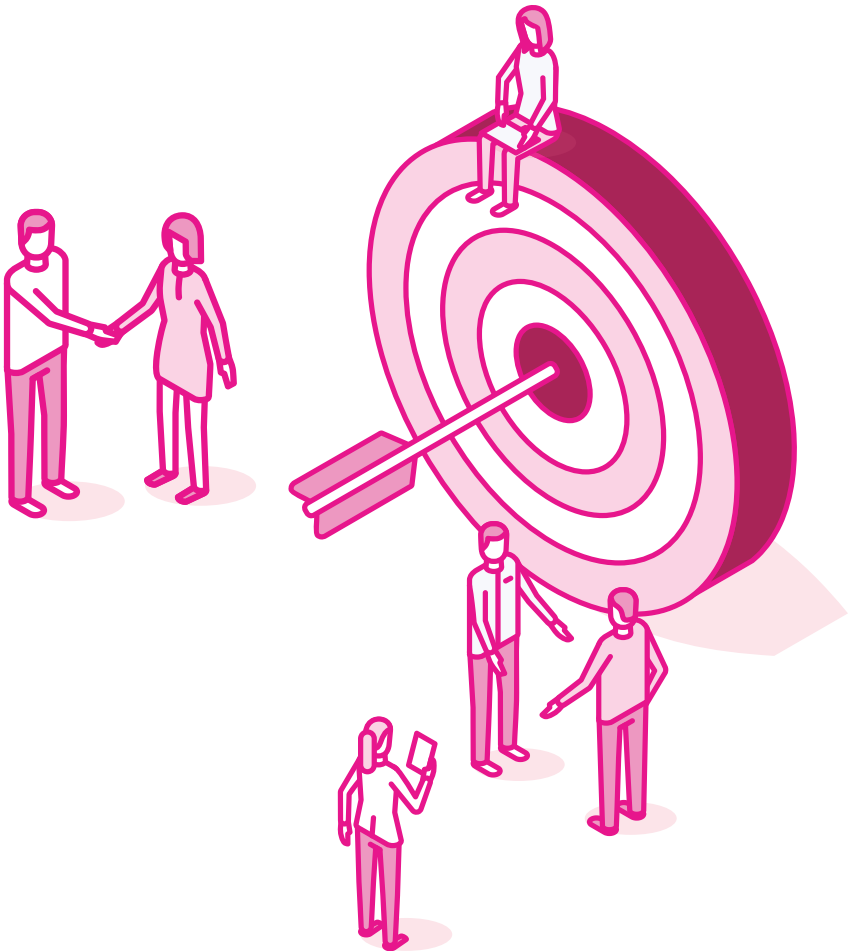


# Springboard to the Next Meetup

End each meetup with a slide covering your next meetup. This is called “springboarding,” and it harnesses the energy of the group — especially a good group — toward the next event. Have the next event already published on Meetup, and encourage people to RSVP on the spot.

Building a community is a long-term effort, and you’ll want to **commit to at least a year** in order to see meaningful results. But those results will be among the most precious and valuable of all your marketing efforts: a community of real people, who are so excited about your product or project that they’re bringing others.

Plant the seeds of your grass-roots community. Then water and feed them, carefully and consistently. Eventually, you will see the sprouts of new growth everywhere.



For more tips, check out our extended blog post on

**How to Create a  
Blockchain Meetup:**  
[https://bit.ly/meetup-  
guide-blockchain](https://bit.ly/meetup-guide-blockchain)

We also welcome you to join our Blockchain and Crypto Investors meetup, either in-person or online:

[https://www.meetup.com/  
crypto-investors/](https://www.meetup.com/crypto-investors/)



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