

Event & Conference Design — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working method you apply to one event from start to finish. Choose your event now, a real or invented single-day conference for roughly 300 to 800 people, with a name, dates, city, and audience, and carry it through every exercise so you finish with a complete, portfolio-ready event identity rather than scattered samples. Each section maps to one course module, moving from brief and brand system, through print, into the physical and on-screen environment, and out to social, swag, and a vendor-ready handoff.

From Brief to Event Brand System

Turn a brief into a written concept and the four reusable system parts, logo, type, colour, and motif, that every later deliverable is built from.

Worksheet: Event Brief and Concept Sheet

Before opening any design tool, extract the brief and commit to a single creative direction. Fill this in for your event so every later choice can be checked against a written concept rather than your taste.

Event name, dates, city, and venue

Audience: who attends, what they wear, how design-literate they are

Purpose: learning, networking, selling, celebrating, or fundraising

Three adjectives the event should feel like (your north star)

Anchors: host brand, any fixed logos or colours, the theme

Constraints: budget tier, print-versus-digital weighting, accessibility needs, timeline

The concept in one sentence: what this event feels like and why it will look that way

Exercise: Build a Focused Visual Territory

Gather references deliberately instead of scrolling for inspiration. Build a tight mood board in Figma, Milanote, or Pinterest of ten to fifteen images that share a quality you can name, studying real event systems such as SXSW, Adobe MAX, Config, and OFFF, then answer the prompts.

- Which ten to fifteen references made the cut, and what single quality do they share?

- For three references, name exactly why each earns its place (type, palette, how a motif scales)?

- What rough colour and type direction is emerging from the board?

- Does the territory match your three adjectives, or are you drifting toward something off-brief?

Worksheet: The Four System Parts Spec

Design the kit before the comps. Define the logo behaviour, type pairing, colour roles, and motif once, on a single Figma page, so the rest of the event can be assembled from them. Record the decisions here. Logo variations built: primary lockup, stacked, horizontal, one-colour, reversed, icon

Clear-space and minimum-size rules for the logo

Display typeface and text typeface, with weights confirmed

Font licence checked for print, web, and embedding (yes / notes)

Colour roles: primary, secondary, neutral, and which is dominant

Each colour as HEX / CMYK / Pantone, and text-on-brand-colour contrast checked

The graphic motif, and proof it scales from a small sticker to a large banner

Checklist: Brand System Readiness Checklist

- A one-sentence concept and three adjectives are written down and visible
- The logo has primary, stacked, horizontal, one-colour, reversed, and icon versions
- Clear-space and minimum-size rules are defined for the logo
- Type is paired (display plus workhorse) and the licence covers print, web, and embedding
- Colour roles are set and recorded as HEX, CMYK, and Pantone
- A flexible motif exists and has been tested at sticker and banner scale
- All four parts sit on one source-of-truth page every deliverable will pull from

Print: Programmes, Badges, and the Print Process

Apply the system to physical print and lock in the production craft, bleed, margins, CMYK, and the print-shop conversation, that most often goes wrong.

Worksheet: Programme Layout Plan

The schedule is an information-design problem, so plan structure before styling. Decide the format and grid for your programme so the next session is findable in two seconds, and record the plan here. Format and page count (folded leaflet, A5 booklet, pocket card, saddle-stitched programme)

Document size and whether it uses facing pages

Grid: number of columns, margins, and the time-gutter approach for the schedule

Master-page elements: running header, page numbers, section dividers

Hierarchy plan: how time, session title, room, and speaker are visually separated

Sponsor tiers and the fixed logo size and clear space per tier

Who proofs the schedule and copy with you before it goes to print

Exercise: Badge Worst-Case Stress Test

A badge is a variable-data template, not a poster. Build your badge layout, then merge in real sample data, including the hardest cases, to prove the template survives contact with a ticketing export from Eventbrite or Tito.

- Is the first name readable from roughly a metre, with surname, org, and role clearly secondary?
 - What happened when you dropped in the longest name and the longest job title, did the layout hold?
 - What happened with an attendee who has no organisation, does the layout still look intentional?
 - How do attendee types (attendee, speaker, staff, press, sponsor) read at a glance, and is the badge double-sided?
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Worksheet: Print Production Spec Sheet

Fill this in for each print piece before exporting, then use it as the basis for the conversation with your printer. These are the settings that decide whether a beautiful file prints correctly.

Piece name and final trim size

Bleed set to 3mm on all edges (yes/no)

Safe margin of 3 to 5mm for text and logos (yes/no)

Colour mode is CMYK and images are 300dpi at final size (yes/no)

Rich black used for large solid black areas (yes / n/a)

Pantone spot colours specified for any colour that must match across pieces

Stock, weight, and finish (matte, gloss, soft-touch, spot UV) and binding discussed with printer

Press-ready PDF/X exported with fonts embedded or outlined and crop marks on; proof ordered

Checklist: Pre-Print Sign-Off Checklist

- Every background-to-edge piece has 3mm bleed and a 3 to 5mm safe margin
- All print files are CMYK, with placed images at 300dpi at final size
- Large solid blacks use a rich black mix, not 100 percent K alone
- Pantone spot colours are specified for any colour that must match exactly
- A press-ready PDF/X is exported with fonts embedded or outlined and crop marks included
- Stock, finish, and binding are confirmed with the printer in their vocabulary
- A physical proof is ordered and approved before the full run

Environment and Stage: Signage, Wayfinding, and Screens

Take the brand into physical space and onto large screens, where scale, viewing distance, and the back row rewrite every rule from print.

Exercise: Walk the Attendee Journey

Wayfinding is judged by whether a stranger finds the room without asking. Trace the attendee path on the venue floor plan from the street to every destination, and mark a sign at each decision point, then answer the prompts.

- What is the full path you traced, street to entrance to registration to halls, rooms, toilets, food, exits?

- At which forks could someone go the wrong way, and what sign goes at each?

- How does each sign classify, identification, directional, orientation, or regulatory, and is the set complete?

- Where does your signage have to coexist with the venue's own fire exits and room numbers?

Worksheet: Stage and Step-and-Repeat Spec

The backdrop is the photo everyone takes home, so design it for the camera and the back row. Record the constraints and decisions for your stage set and photo wall before building the large-format art. Backdrop dimensions and whether it is fabric print or an LED wall (and its pixel size)

Camera safe zone: where the logo and hero art sit, clear of lectern, screens, and heads

Type and logos kept as live vector; large-format resolution confirmed with the vendor

Side banners, lectern graphic, and any pole-pocket or grommet allowances for hanging

Step-and-repeat: logo width (around 9 to 12 inches) and the staggered offset spacing

Sponsor logo placement and sizing matched to agreed tiers

Worksheet: On-Screen Graphics Checklist Sheet

Screens run all day, so design the full set to the right pixel canvas for the back row. List your screen deliverables and confirm the specs the AV team will need.

Canvas size confirmed (1920 by 1080, or the venue's stated resolution)

Set produced: holding slides, session title slides, lower thirds, sponsor frames, countdown

Type is large, high-contrast, and sparse, one idea per slide

Critical content kept inside the title-safe central 90 percent of the frame

Motion plan: settling logo, gentle loops, smooth transitions, restrained not distracting

Export format the AV team requires (e.g. 1920 by 1080 MP4, plus static PDF or deck) and delivery date

Checklist: Environment and Screen Readiness Checklist

- A sign schedule lists every sign with size, substrate, and exact location for the install team
- Signage type is sized for distance, roughly 1 inch of height per 10 feet of viewing distance
- Wayfinding never relies on colour alone, colour is paired with icons and text
- Backdrop logo and hero art sit in the upper-centre camera safe zone, clear of furniture
- Step-and-repeat is spaced so at least one full logo always lands in frame behind a person
- All screen graphics are built at the correct resolution with content in the title-safe area
- AV files are exported in the requested format and delivered ahead of the show with a backup

Social, Swag, and the Handoff

Finish the system: build a templated social kit, design swag people keep within real production limits, and package everything into a brand guide and vendor-ready handoff.

Worksheet: Social Template Kit Plan

You are designing a kit a marketing team will use for weeks, so plan reusable templates, not one-off posts. Map the campaign moments and the sizes each template needs, and set up the brand kit that keeps the team on brand.

Campaign moments: announce, schedule reveal, ticket reminder, live-day, recap

Templates to build: speaker card, schedule graphic, save-the-date, story frame, quote card

Core sizes per template: 1080 square, 1080 by 1920 vertical, 1200 by 630 link card

Where the type, colour, and motif are locked into every layout

Canva brand kit or Figma library set up with fonts, colours, and logo (yes / notes)

Key graphics state event, date, and city legibly even at thumbnail size (yes/no)

Exercise: Design Swag Within the Production Method

Merch is constrained by how each item is made, so confirm the method before you design. Choose three items people would actually keep, identify each item's production method, and adapt the artwork to its limits, then answer the prompts.

- Which three reusable items did you choose, and why would attendees keep and use them?
 - What is each item's production method, screen print, embroidery, sticker, or engraving?
 - How did you adapt the artwork to each method's limits (ink-colour count, no fine lines for embroidery)?
 - How did you use the full identity, especially the motif, so the swag feels designed, not logo-stamped?
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Worksheet: Brand Guide and Handoff Package

The handoff is the real deliverable, because you will not be in the room when it prints, hangs, or plays. Assemble the brand guide and the organised files each vendor needs, and record the package contents here. Brand guide sections: logo and clear space, type, colour, motif, example applications

Logo do-and-do-not examples and minimum sizes included

Colour recorded as HEX, CMYK, and Pantone with text-on-colour guidance

Folder structure and naming convention separating working files from final exports

Vendor files prepared: PDF/X for print, full-scale vector for signage, manufacturer art for swag, MP4 and decks for AV

Everything packaged as one handoff and framed as a portfolio case study

Checklist: Final Handoff Checklist

- Social templates exist for every campaign moment at all core sizes, with type, colour, and motif locked in
- A Canva brand kit or Figma library lets a non-designer team post on brand
- Swag items are chosen for reuse, designed within their production method, with a simplified one or two colour mark ready
- Manufacturer-ready files include placement and size, and a sample is approved before any bulk run
- A concise brand guide documents logo, type, colour, motif, and applications
- Files use a clear folder structure and naming convention with working files separated from final exports
- Each deliverable is exported in the exact format its vendor needs and packaged as one handoff and case study

Your Action Plan

1. Choose one event and write a one-sentence concept, three adjectives, and the extracted brief
2. Build a focused visual territory of ten to fifteen named references, then design the four system parts, logo, type, colour, motif, on one source-of-truth page
3. Lay out the conference programme on a grid, leading with the schedule, then fit speakers, map, and sponsors
4. Build a badge template with the first name dominant and stress-test it with real, worst-case ticketing data
5. Set up every print piece with 3mm bleed and CMYK, export a press-ready PDF/X, and order a proof
6. Walk the attendee journey on the floor plan and build a complete, classified signage set with a sign schedule
7. Design the stage backdrop and step-and-repeat for the camera safe zone, keeping type as live vector at large-format resolution
8. Produce the full on-screen set at 1920 by 1080 with title-safe, back-row-legible graphics and restrained motion
9. Build a templated social kit at all core sizes and package it as a Canva brand kit or Figma library
10. Design reusable swag within each production method, then assemble a brand guide and a clean vendor handoff as your portfolio case study

