

15 Simple Steps for Organizing an N²Women Event

The organization of an N²Women Meeting at a networking conference is relatively easy. Benefits gained from organizing a meeting include (1) the opportunity to connect with the organizers of the conference who are, typically, leaders in the research field, and (2) the opportunity to network with both peers and more senior role models (i.e., other female networking researchers) who may not exist at one's own institution. The following list details the tasks needed to organize an N² Women meeting:

1. **Determine the conference** where you would like to hold the meeting. Then, before proceeding, email n2women-info@acm.org (not the main N²Women list) to verify that no one else is currently planning an event at this conference. (N²Women Fellows can skip this step.)
2. **Email the conference organizers** (i.e., General Chair and Local Arrangements Chair, if one exists) to propose an N²Women meeting and verify that they would be happy to have this type of meeting at their conference. Typically conference organizers are very supportive of having an N²Women meeting included in the program.
3. **Determine the best day/time** for the meeting during the conference (e.g., do NOT have the meeting during a paid-for conference lunch with a keynote speaker). In general, it is best to avoid overlaps with all conference activities so people do not need to choose between a conference event and the N²Women event. N²Women recommends a 1 – 1.5 hour event prior to the main conference. Suggested options are breakfast on the first day of the conference, or right after the opening reception if it is held the evening before the main conference begins. This would not require a hard stop thus allowing discussions to proceed without stringent time constraints. Meetings held before the first day of the conference enable networking opportunities among the attendees throughout the rest of the conference, as well as opportunities for the mentors to provide advice as to how to successfully navigate through the main conference. Many past N²Women events have been held during lunch on the first day and the conference organizers may try to push you in that direction. Please inform them that N²Women is moving away from that format/time.
4. **Work with the conference local organizers** to choose the location for the meeting. Ensure that adequate facilities are available for the expected number of attendees and any guest speakers. Plan for extra attendees, since some people make last minute decisions to join.
5. If the meeting will be held over breakfast or lunch, there are several **options for financing the event**: (1) the conference organizers may be willing to fund the event out of their budget, (2) conference patrons (i.e., company sponsors) may be interested in sponsoring the event as part of their contribution to the conference, (3) attendees can be asked to pay a fixed amount to attend. Note that (3) works best when the event is held at a restaurant or cafe near the conference where each person can order and pay for whatever they choose to eat. If (1) or (2) are used to finance the event, make sure all publicity acknowledge this financial support, and be sure to publicly thank the sponsor at the meeting. Note that

N²Women may also have funds to support the meeting, so if options (1) and (2) are not viable options, contact n2women-info@acm.org to see if we can provide financial support.

6. **Determine** whether to have an **informal meeting** (e.g., that focuses on networking and mentoring), **or something more formal** (e.g., with a speaker or panel). If the preferred format is a panel, have a mix of senior and junior researchers, with the focus being on topical issues faced by women researchers today. Topic suggestions are: 'how to handle explicit bias against women in the workplace', 'how to make the conference experience more productive', 'how to network effectively', 'how to obtain research funding', 'how to build a strong research group' or perhaps just have a senior researcher discuss her life and how she got to be where she is today. If the meeting will be more formal, determine whether to invite someone to speak and lead the discussion. If an early list of registered attendees is available, consider polling the attendees for possible topics/suggestions/questions to be discussed at the event. Consider authors in the advanced program, sponsors of the conference, and local companies for ideas on who to invite to speak/lead the discussion. Make sure that the invited speaker(s) are either registered as conference attendee(s) or have permission from the conference organizers to attend the meeting prior to the event. Conference registration/permission is also required for anyone attending the meeting.
7. Once the details (date, location, speaker, cost, sponsors, etc.) are confirmed, **advertise the meeting** on the main N²Women mailing list (by emailing n2women@acm.org), on the N²Women web site (by emailing n2women-web@acm.org), and on the N²Women social media sites (by emailing n2women-social@acm.org). When sending such emails, set the 'Reply-To' field to your email address, in order to avoid accidental group replies. Ask the conference organizers to advertise the meeting via email to all pre-registered conference attendees. Ask the general chair of the conference to announce the meeting during the opening remarks, if the event will be held after the opening session.
8. **Please include the following in all event announcements:** "N² Women is supported by [ACM SIGMOBILE](#), [ACM SIGCOMM](#), [IEEE Communications Society](#), [IEEE Computer Society \(CS\) Technical Committee on Computer Communications \(TCCC\)](#), [CRA-W](#),". Also, please be sure to include information about any financial supporters for the event, e.g., Funding for this meeting has been generously provided by Microsoft Research.
9. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** when you email n2women@acm.org, you will receive an automatic bounce back from ACM LISTSERV Server (15.0) , asking you to click on a link to actually send the email. Your email has not been sent until you click this link! If you do not receive the automatic bounce, check your spam filter and make sure the email address above is not blocked for some reason. Once your email has been successfully sent, you will receive a confirmation email from ACM LISTSERV Server.
10. **Place a sign-up sheet and fliers** for the meeting at the registration desk. Ask the personnel at the registration desk to hand-out the fliers to all women collecting their name-tags, and to point them to the sign-up sheet. The sign-up sheet will help you get an idea on the number of people planning to attend the meeting. The flier will help the people that sign-up to remember the event (date, time, location).

Organizers in the past have created gorgeous flyers for N²Women events. A nice looking flyer will help advertise your event and, therefore, increase the attendance at the event. See example copies of flyers for previous events [here](#). Feel free to email organizers of an event for the source file of their flyer. Remember that most conferences have workshops the day before the main conference, so ensure that the fliers, signs, and sign-up sheets are setup on those days as well.

11. As you meet women at the conference (esp. students), encourage them to attend the N²Women meeting.

12. ****

IMPORTANT

At the event, (1) **pass around a sign-up sheet** requesting the following information for those who would like to join the N²Women list: name, email address, position, institution, url, (2) **thank the conference organizers** and the N²Women sponsors (listed in point 8) who helped make the meeting possible, and (3) **take a group picture** of the attendees.

13. At the event, have the panelists/speakers encourage the attendees to (1) ask questions during the main conference and workshop talks; (2) engage in conversations with at least a couple of experienced researchers, other than those at the N²Women event; and (3) network among the attendees at the N²Women event.

14. On the last day of the conference, send an email polling all those who attended the event, asking them for their perspectives on the overall conference, if attending the N²Women event helped them during the conference, and if they had any inputs on how to improve the N²Women event. **Collect** such **feedback** via a simple polling tool (Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, etc.).

15. **After the event**, (1) email n2women-membership@acm.org (not the main N²Women list) the list of people to be added to N²Women, (2) email the picture to n2women-web@acm.org for placement on the N²Women website, (3) email n2women-social@acm.org a summary of the event, including an assessment of the feedback collected via the poll, so that our social media chairs can post the event write-up on our social media sites for those who could not attend, and (4) as a nice gesture, send a thank you email to the conference organizers (and possibly others) who helped make the meeting happen.