

DGN² Planning Timeline

6 weeks

- **Choose a “Networking Night” Chair.** Choose someone on your board to take the lead in planning your club’s Networking Night and provide them with this timeline along with the other Networking Night information you received during CAGOW (found online at <http://alumni.dartmouth.edu> – *Clubs, Tools for Club Leaders*).
- **Begin to research venue possibilities.** Keep in mind that accessibility, cost, and appeal are all factors which go into picking a successful venue. Holding an event on a weeknight means a location in the city would be ideal for those attending right after work. Consider whether you can find low-cost alternatives for more expensive venues. A great place to start is with your local Dartmouth or Ivy club office. Also, look to your club members as a resource for connections or consider public venues such as libraries and schools. Finally, look for locations such as historical sites or new hot-spots to boost your attendance.
- **Plan a budget.** Estimate your event attendance based upon participation in similar, past events held by your club. Decide what you are and are not willing to pay for (food, drink, a speaker, etc.). A sample budget is provided in your folder.

5 weeks

- **Choose a venue.** Begin to make final decisions about where you would like to hold your Net Night. Once you have secured a venue you should also research and decide on other vendors you may need to use (caterers, etc.). See a list of questions and details for venues in the “Catering and Venue Details” sheet under *Tools for Club Leaders*.
- **Determine cost.** Use your budget and choice of venue to determine a cost per head for your networking night. An average, reasonable amount to charge per person (if you plan to serve refreshments) would be between 10 and 20 dollars. *Note: All money is to be handled by your club, *not Alumni Relations*. If you choose to charge for your event please be prepared to collect payment at the door.
- **Decide on a speaker.** Decide what type of speaker you want to use for your particular event. Relevant presenters would include professional career advisors/coaches, CEO’s in the area, or alumni who are considered leaders in their respective fields. More information can be found on the alumni website under *Clubs, Tools for Club Leaders*.
- **Send Invitations.** Email is a great way to spread the word about your networking night at no cost. Social media sites, such as Facebook, can help you create an event page to advertise and get an idea of initial numbers. If you prefer to go with paper, consider sending out postcards asking alums to “Save the Date” for you networking event.

4 weeks

- **Secure contracts.** At this point you should make sure to at least be in the process of negotiating contracts (either with your venue or other vendors). Make sure to get all costs from vendors in writing.
- **Visit the venue.** If you haven't already, you should visit the venue you have chosen to get an idea of the event set-up and to detect and eliminate any problems you may have early on.
- **Advertise.** Contact Alumni Relations with information about your club's event to be advertised on the alumni website page. Prepare an advertisement for the event to be put in your spring newsletter or to be posted on your club website.

3 weeks

- **Track RSVPs.** When you register your event with Alumni Relations, we will be able to track your RSVPs through our online registration page on the alumni website. We will be able to update you with names and numbers per your request.
- **Secure necessary materials.** Purchase materials for creating name badges for your event. The "Do-It-Yourself Name Badges" sheet on the *Tools for Club Leaders* page provides you with information on how to do a mail merge using Microsoft Word and Excel to expedite this process.
- **Make venue arrangements.** Be sure that your event set-up plan matches the arrangements the venue can offer you in terms of tables, chairs, linens, etc. Also check the set-up of audio and visual equipment in the room and ask your speaker/presenter about their needs.
- **Make catering arrangements.** If your venue has its own catering arrangements then confirm menus and setup with them. If securing an outside caterer/vendor, make sure your venue has all the amenities they need to operate (tables, etc.).
- **Finalize speaker arrangements.** Make sure your speaker has finalized information about time, location, subject (if your event has a specific theme) and length of speech. Also be sure that the venue has everything necessary for their presentation. Purchase a small gift to give your presenter on the evening of your event.

2 weeks

- **Track RSVPs.**
- **Send out a reminder email.** People may have forgotten about the date and time of your event or simply have not had the chance to sign up yet. Sending out a reminder email provides that last push to ensure good attendance at your networking event.

1 week

- **Track RSVPs.**
- **Confirm orders with caterers/vendors.**
- **Confirm numbers.** Make final confirmations for attendance numbers with your venue (for possible changes in room setup) and with caterers/vendors.

Post event

- **Write thank you notes.** Write and send thank you notes to speakers, volunteers and any alumni who aided in the process of event planning (securing discounted venues, catering, etc.).
- **Evaluate.** Fill out the Alumni Relations post-event evaluation survey (online) and keep a club record of your network night for submission in club reports. If you wish to collect your own, more specific feedback on the event, consider using a [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) account to create your own evaluation survey.