



# EVENTS NOVA SCOTIA

Inspiring times

## CHAPTER 1: FESTIVALS AND EVENTS TODAY

*This introductory chapter is all about the basics of festivals and events and setting yourself up for success.*

## What Are Festivals and Events?

Festivals are celebrations involving multiple activities that happen over several consecutive days. They are usually held annually and in the same general location each year. Festivals are centred on a theme, special interest, or some unique aspect of the community. They are usually community- and volunteer-driven, but there are festivals that are developed and operated by both for-profit and not-for-profit businesses. Festivals are, by their nature, fun!

The words “festival” and “event” are often used interchangeably, but not all events are festivals. These are more occasional events, focused around a specific activity. Examples of events that are not festivals include:

- business events, such as trade shows or conventions
- major sports and other events that involve a bid process
- one-time events, such as anniversary celebrations (Titanic 100, for example)
- events that happen on one day only, or regularly but not consecutively, such as weekly ceilidhs, concerts, or theatre performances

***Throughout this document, the words “festival” and “event” are used interchangeably.***

## The Nova Scotia Event Strategy

The Nova Scotia Event Strategy’s goal is to attract and develop authentic Nova Scotian major events, harnessing our natural assets and unique culture to create social and economic benefits for all Nova Scotians while leaving a legacy of growth for culture and sport. For more information, review the full strategy (<http://eventsnovascotia.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Events-Strategy-English.pdf>).

Festivals and events can have significant economic impacts, both directly and through spinoff benefits to the area. Major events can generate substantial economic impacts for Nova Scotia and garner extensive national and international media coverage, increasing awareness of the province as a place to visit, live, and do business.

Festivals and events can also achieve a variety of other positive outcomes:

- Build community pride, spirit, and self-esteem
- Educate the community, particularly its young people, about the special attributes of the community: its culture, its heritage, why it is good place to live and visit
- Provide an opportunity for community members to participate in a variety of activities together, strengthening community relationships
- Help build and develop volunteerism in the community
- Generate important social benefits, helping to develop a sense of community and to create an image of the community
- Support the development of community recreational facilities and enhance quality of life in the community
- Build awareness of the community and its appeal as a place to visit, live, or establish a business (this indirectly supports the community’s economic development efforts)
- Be a celebration and fun for the community and visitors





## Trends In Festivals and Events

Technological changes, together with changing demographics, lifestyle, and interests, are driving trends in festivals and events. The following are some noteworthy trends:

- The Internet and social media have fundamentally changed the way festivals and events are marketed, giving a more effective way to reach target audiences than traditional advertising.
- More niche festivals and events exist that celebrate special interests and hobbies, since it is easy to reach communities of interest through the Internet.
- Online ticketing is common, even for smaller events. Online ticketing can also provide information about your audiences and the effectiveness of your marketing.
- Many visitors and festival organizers now use mobile devices and apps to verify tickets at the gate, read credit cards, and provide information about the event.
- Festival goers are becoming more demanding. They expect more choice, more experiences, and authentic programming.
- There is more demand for personalized festival experiences, such as VIP passes, for both festival goers and sponsors. People are willing to spend money for a unique experience.
- Interest is strong and growing in anything to do with food, wine, and craft beer.
- “Local” is very important.
- Hybrid festivals — those that broaden the appeal of an event by adding complementary activities — are increasing in number. This helps to grow audiences, gives them more ways to spend money, and also helps to grow the sponsor pool.
- Competition for funding, partners, sponsors, and consumer dollars is increasing.

### 10 Things You Need to Know About Hosting a Festival or Event

1. Festivals and events can help bring new visitors to the province, creating economic impacts. But they require advance planning and work to convert vision into reality.
2. Do your research. Investigate other festivals to see what makes them successful. Research potential partners and sponsors to understand their missions and how they could align with your festival.
3. Your management team will need vision, leadership, passion, team building, communications/marketing skills, and expertise in several areas. You will need people that are detail-oriented because events are all about the details. Some are run totally by volunteers; others have paid staff as well.
4. Your choice of location and sites or venue(s) will set the tone and atmosphere for your festival. Choose carefully. Think about the logistics that will be involved, the type of event, possible weather impacts, and the regulations that will need to be addressed.
5. Volunteers are the backbone of every event. Recruit them carefully, provide training and guidance, recognize them, and thank them regularly.
6. Sponsors want to know what your festival or event can offer that is valuable to them. Sponsors are not giving you a gift; they are a partner and for ways to reach their objectives through your event. Treat your sponsors well and be sure to follow up with them.
7. You will need to have contingency plans in place, including detailed procedures to help you and your event team handle emergencies and communicate with your team when these happen.
8. Your event will need to follow regulations at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. Some regulations require inspections or licenses. Identify these early in your planning and work with the appropriate agencies as necessary.
9. Online and social media marketing will likely be the most effective promotional tactics for your festival. As with any marketing strategy, it requires careful planning, along with human and financial resources, to get right.
10. Keeping your festival fresh and exciting is a success factor. Expand in a controlled fashion by carefully considering, planning, and implementing each new step.

#### Key Takeaways

- Festivals are celebrations that involve multiple activities that happen over one or more days.
- The Nova Scotia Event Strategy's goal is to attract and develop authentic Nova Scotian events, creating social and economic benefits for all Nova Scotians.
- Trends in festivals and events include incorporating technology, a demand for more personalized experiences, and a focus on local products.
- A strong concept and budget, getting community or governmental support, and adequate funding are key requirements for success.





For more information, please contact our Events Nova Scotia staff  
at Communities, Culture and Heritage at [events.novascotia.ca/contact](https://events.novascotia.ca/contact)