

Getting Started Presenting Symposiums

What Size Symposium Should You Start With?

Make your first Symposium fun and easy. (In fact, make all of them that way!) Consider starting small—present one for just a few close friends or family members in someone’s living room, using a television connected to your computer.

Number of Presenters

Whenever possible, have two presenters working together. The teamwork and shared commitment that you can embody with at least two presenters may communicate a “new dream” to the participants as much as anything said in the Symposium. And the content is more engaging to the participants when it comes in different voices and with different perspectives.

Materials You’ll Need

Most of these materials are free to download from the Facilitator Hub at hub.pachamama.org. Simply create an account and you can access a host of useful resources.

The essential materials are the following:

- The Symposium Presenter’s Manual
- The Symposium AV content downloaded and tested (either the SlideRocket format, PowerPoint, or Keynote—all downloadable from the Facilitator Hub)
- Handouts; one per person of whichever you choose—we recommend at least a Declaration Card and the “What’s Next For Me?” card
- A computer to play the AV content, and either a television or a projector and sound system

Good to have, but not essential:

- Outline of audiovisual content for your AV person to use
- Copy of the Background References (a comprehensive document citing all the sources for all the facts referenced in the Symposium)
- Purpose of the Symposium and Four Questions written on a flipchart-sized paper (for display and reference during the Symposium)
- Paper and pens for participants
- Nametags (if appropriate)
- Day of Symposium Checklist (below)
- If you want to distribute hand woven cotton bracelets from Ecuador at the end of your Symposium, you can order them from the “Symposium Materials” page under “Resources” on the Facilitator Hub.

Day Of Symposium Checklist

This checklist is written with larger Symposiums in mind, so pay attention only to the items relevant to the size of event you are creating.

I. Room setup

For Presenters:

- Chair/stool for each presenter
- Music stands (if used)
- Small table between chairs or to side of each, with water, clock, bell or similar for announcing times to the group.

Front of room:

- Table for altar (sight line to altar clear for all participants)
- Candle on plate and lit (if your venue permits it)
- Purpose of Symposium and the four “Flow of the Day” questions on flip chart to be posted once discussed
- Flip charts and marker pens in place

Also:

- Chairs set the right distance from Facilitators and between rows
- 10% fewer chairs set up than expected, extra chairs ready
- Any clutter removed from sight lines of audience
- Do windows need to be darkened/shades drawn to see video?
- Cords to projector taped to carpet?

II. Investigate

- Any impact of other groups meeting nearby?
- Necessary signs posted to direct participants to Symposium room and bathroom
- Handicap accessible entrance/ramp clearly marked (if any)
- Room thermostat—know how to operate and set at desired level
- How to adjust lights and what level is best for videos compare to presenters
- Microphones tested (if used)

III. Materials in place

- Current Presenter’s Manual and AV file

Registration table:

- Participant roster indicating who paid, scholarship info, etc.

- Name tags for participants and team (pre-made and alphabetized)
- Cash receipt book and cash box for change
- Pad and pens

Production table (or front of room for small Symposiums):

- Pens and paper for participants
- Declaration Cards, “What’s Next for Me?” cards
- Feedback Forms (if used)
- Bracelets (out of sight)
- (optional) Info flyer about upcoming Facilitator Trainings
- (optional) Pachamama Alliance pledge cards

Materials table (if used):

- Pachamama Alliance brochures, Rainforest Journey brochures
- Brochures from local organizations, related events
- Related books, magazines, etc.
- (optional) “Community Bulletin Board” (see Manual)

IV. Logistics

- Venue contact name and number?
- Who communicates times for snacks (& lunch)?
- What setup the room should be left in is clarified?
- Close up/lock up time and procedure clear?
- Opening ritual and/or meeting with team
- Who will act as greeter?
- Who will setup extra chairs, if needed?
- Who manages lights, signals?
- Who manages handouts and how?
- Who collects nametags at end? (if nametag shields used)
- Who will manage pack up/supply check at end?
- Ending ritual for the team (to share acknowledgement of event)

V. Follow-up

- Who takes care of proceeds from the Symposium?
- Who will return extra materials to where they belong?
- Who has responsibility for seeing that follow-up emails and calls are completed?
- Other _____

The Pachamama Alliance is a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco. Its mission is to empower indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest to preserve their lands and culture and, using insights gained from that work, to educate and inspire individuals everywhere to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable world. Learn more at pachamama.org

Pachamama Alliance

Presidio Bldg #1009, 2nd Floor P.O. Box 29191 San Francisco, CA 94129 +1 415 561 4522