

# **The Ultimate Cheat Sheet on How to Run an ODTUG Meetup**

**By Kirby Lunger, Performance Architects**

ODTUG recently published a blog post of an interview I conducted with ODTUG EPM Volunteer Community Committee lead Neviana Zhgaba on her top three secrets for a successful meetup. Many of you contacted me to say that you appreciated the content, but that you also wanted the “official” ODTUG tips and tricks on how to organize a meetup. This gave me a reason to have more interesting conversations, so I was game!

To get you the scoop, I worked with ODTUG’s intrepid meetup expert and Speaker Relations and Communities Manager, Haleigh Hughes, to get the ultimate cheat sheet on what ODTUG can do to help you to run a smashingly successful meetup.

## **What’s a Meetup, Anyway?**

So...what is a “meetup?” As I mentioned in my last blog post on this topic, it’s an informal meeting or gathering. ODTUG volunteers have been successfully using the meetup format in various geographies as a way to get together in person to network, compare notes on various work issues, and to have fun.

It may seem as simple as just shooting out an invite to a few professional colleagues and friends and getting together for some adult beverages...and that’s certainly part of the process...but don’t hit “Send” yet! There are some important things you should do well in advance of inviting people to make sure that the meetup turns out great – not just okay.

## **Stuff to Do BEFORE You Invite Folks**

### **1. Create an Agenda for Both Networking AND Education**

Most folks join ODTUG to learn and network, so make sure there’s time for teaching and having fun on the agenda. A standard agenda usually includes one or more learning sessions, followed by snacks and drinks and time to network. Some meetups run the educational content concurrent with a meal, and then hold a reception after.

### **2. Focus the Event**

Do you want this to be a regional event for professionals who cover a bunch of technologies, or do you want to focus on certain topics and solutions? Is there already an event or group of folks who you can partner with? It’s pretty easy to see what’s out there on <https://www.meetup.com/odtugers/>. Ask some pals who share the same interests to help you coordinate (it’s that “many hands make light work” principle at work).

### **3. Get Some Funding / Donations!**

Chalk this up to...no one likes to pay for their adult beverages if they don't have to. ODTUG will pay your meetup organizer fee, and Haleigh will help you to identify ODTUG vendor/partner companies in your region and focus area who might be interested in sponsoring your educational sessions...and, ahem, adult beverages.

Also, one of the biggest cost items is a location. Companies are often willing to donate space as a "barter" for sponsorship credit. Take advantage of this as long as you have the appropriate audio-visual and capacity in the facilities offered to you. Make sure you work with Haleigh to execute the appropriate contracts with the facility owner and ODTUG to avoid liability issues.

## **Stuff to Do After You've Invited Folks**

### **1. Promote the Event**

I'm sure you know a ton of people, but you'd be amazed at how busy people are these days with family, work, travel and other commitments. You need to invite a lot more people than you'd expect (almost 6:1 invitees to attendees) to get an appropriately-sized audience. ODTUG staff offer many channels to promote the meetup, and ODTUG volunteers and social networking influencers, including ODTUG Board members, are generally willing to repost your mentions of the event if you let them know you need help.

### **2. Make Sure Content is Appropriate and Complete**

At this point, you probably have sponsors who are possibly exhibiting and speaking, or maybe your pals are going to share the latest and greatest on what they're up to at their jobs. Even if they know and like you, people tend to procrastinate. Make sure that they have created a draft of what they're going to present that you can review to make sure it's done and that it's not too "sales-y."

## **Stuff to Do at the Event and Afterwards**

### **1. Document the Event**

Pictures and videos are key to getting people excited to participate in the future and to learn if they're not able to attend. Make sure someone is assigned to snap photos and to take video – and that you work with ODTUG to make sure you get the appropriate permissions from the presenters and the audience to do this.

### **2. Have a Blast!**

You've definitely earned those adult beverages! Relax and have a blast.

### **Want to learn more?**

If you'd like to organize your own meetup, review the meetup content on the ODTUG web site. You can also contact Haleigh Hughes, Speaker Relations and Community Manager at ODTUG, at [haleigh@odtug.com](mailto:haleigh@odtug.com) for more information.

**About the Interviewee**

Haleigh Hughes is the Speaker Relations and Community Manager at ODTUG.

**About the Author**

Kirby Lunger is a Partner at ODTUG member firm and sponsor Performance Architects, with a focus on the Oracle enterprise performance management (EPM) and analytics (BI) arenas. Kirby is an active volunteer in the analytics and EPM communities; she sits on the ODTUG's BI Volunteer Community Committee; co-chairs the OAUG's Analytics, BI and Big Data Special Interest Group (SIG); and sits on the Board of the BIWA User Community / Analytics and Data Summit.