

Guide to Creating a Swap Event

Contents

- Checklist..... 1
- Plan the Swap! 2
 - Pick a Venue..... 2
 - Choose a Date and Time 2
 - Determine When Clothing Can be Dropped Off..... 2
 - Determine Acceptable Items 3
 - Determine What Equipment You Will Need and Source It..... 3
 - Advertise..... 3
 - Other Things to Consider 4
- The Day of the Swap 4
- After the Event..... 5
 - Determine Where Leftover Items Will Go 5
 - If Planning Another Swap 5
 - Lastly, Remember to..... 5
- Swap Systems 6
 - Token Systems..... 6
 - 1st Come; 1st Served..... 6
 - Lottery 6
 - Other Notes about Systems..... 7
- Liability..... 7
 - Disclaimer 7
 - Waiver..... 7
- Hosting a Swap Event at U of T 8

Checklist

- Planning
 - Decide date and time
 - Organize helpers
 - Source Equipment

- Decide Swap System
- Determine Eligible Goods
- Post Rules
- Spread the word!
- Collect items
- During the Event
 - Determine Organizational System
 - Set up Clothing and Sign In Table
 - Confirm details of event with helpers
- After
 - Clean Up
 - Thank your helpers!
 - Return Equipment
 - Save/Donate Leftover Clothing
 - Read Comment Cards and Debrief

Plan the Swap!

Pick a Venue

Find a venue suitable for your swap.

Consider the amount of people you expect, if the venue is open or closed, costs (if any).

Choose a Date and Time

Determine a date and time that works for everyone involved.

Consider the availability of those running the event and participants.

Be aware of how things like holidays or exam schedules might impact the attendance of your event.

The date and time can also help you decide if there are any themes you might want. Themes might include September back to school, Halloween costumes in October, winter gear before or during the colder months, a St. Patrick's Day green themed swap, Earth Day swaps or a May/September moving swap (as most students move around the end or beginning of the school year)

Determine When Clothing can be Dropped Off

Decide if events will be dropped off the day of or if there will be periods before the event where people can drop off their items.

If allowing people to drop off items prior to the event date remember to:

- Determine what swap system you are using so you can provide tokens/tickets if necessary
- Have a place to store items until the swap
 - And know how you will be transporting items to the venue!

For both types of collection remember to:

- Have a list of accepted/non-accepted goods as well as a minimum quality before collection starts
- Emphasize or incentivize what you want most.
- Check the quality of the clothing before it is collected

- Remove or refuse clothing which is ripped, stained, has offensive language/images, or is unclean
- Check for common signs of pests which could contaminate other donations - these include lice, mites, moths and bedbugs
- Let people know how much each item is worth if using a tiered system

Determine Acceptable Items

- Foremost, determine the items you would like to include most and decide if it is worth adding additional incentives to ensure those goods are traded into the swap
- Determine if you will be accepting any non-clothing items such as school supplies, housewares or jewelry
- Be clear about unacceptable items – undergarments, socks, insertable jewelry like earrings, nightwear, swimwear, opened make up

Determine What Equipment You Will Need and Source It

Think about the event and what exactly will be necessary to ensure it goes successfully and the feasibility in acquiring the items. If working with a limited budget see if its possible to partner with an outside group. Some organizations may allow free use of their equipment because your event is promoting sustainable causes. If not, see if they may be willing to provide the equipment in return for social media shout outs or in exchange for donating the leftover clothing to them (particularly if you're partnering with a thrift store). Be aware of potential avenues for funding through the school or other initiatives.

Generally Necessary Equipment Includes

- Tables
- Racks
- Hangars
- Items to Swap! (If this is the first time organizing a swap it is recommended to have some 'seed' items if not collecting in advance to help motivate people to join in)

Other Possible Equipment May Include

- Mirrors
- Tokens
- Something to draw from if using the lottery system
- Storage containers for tokens to give/collect and cash, if allowing buy-ins
- Temporary changing rooms
- A feedback sheet to gauge community interest in other items or preferential swap systems
- Extra reusable bags in case people forget to bring them
- Nametags or other ways to easily identify helpers

Advertise

Use whatever you typically would to let people know about your event!

- Post on Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook to let people know about your event
 - Consider creating a buzz by including a raffle or draw via social media to help spread the word

- Send out e-mails through your club, college, student union or in suitable mailing lists to connect with target demographics
- Make sure to link to an event page which has all the details about the event. This includes not just the time and date but rules on acceptable clothing, the system, buy-in prices and contact information for those with questions. Remind people to bring a reusable bag

Other Things to Consider

- Decide if there will be a limit to how much time a person can browse after being allowed in; especially important in areas where there might be overcrowding
- If using a non-1 Token to Item system, determine the maximum number of items a person can take and if the person can re-enter later for more items
- Decide if you would like to include a disclaimer notice which lets people know items cannot be returned after being traded in to the swap
- Determine if you would like an entry fee to help cover the costs of the swap event; especially if a venue must be rented out or equipment costs were higher than expected. An entry fee can be applied to everyone, only those who did not trade items in or a people you didn't intend to participate (for example requiring a fee if someone wants to join the swap but is not a University of Toronto student)
 - Be aware that this may disincentivize people to come, especially if clothing swaps are new to your demographic
- If worried about attendance think about including, and advertising, that there will also be snacks or that the first 5-10 people will get a free item/token.

The Day of the Swap

- Decide on an organizational system
 - Will clothing be organized by size, type or token 'price'?
- Decide on what will happen in the case of a dispute.
 - Let helpers know when to escalate the situation (if ever) and the method used to determine how disputes will be handled
- Brief your helpers
 - Include swap system, entry and donation requirements, organizational system, item or time limits, how to check people in and out and any other necessary information
 - Determine who will be responsible for managing the sign in table, organizing and reorganizing the racks, cleaning up, returning equipment, setting out new items and returning hangers.
- Set up your swap!
- Post on social media to remind people of your swap and recommend bringing reusable bags to bring their hauls home
- Have a system in place for accepting day of donations
 - Both to make sure they are checked for suitability and that there is designated person(s) who are putting the items out on display
- Document Your Swap

- Swaps can be new, exciting and educational. Take pictures of your displays, people with their hauls and your helpers! Especially if planning another swap in the future. These pictures will be useful in generating hype!

After the Event

Determine Where Leftover Items Will Go

- Saving them for the next swap
 - This can be a great way to ensure great quality items are available even if not chosen this time. This is particularly true for clothes traded in out of season when people are less likely to think about them, for example, winter coats being donated in summer.
 - Be sure to arrange a suitable space beforehand.
 - Decide who will be responsible for the clothing in storage
 - Ensure items are checked on and stored properly (free of pests, direct sunlight, moisture, etc)
- Donating Leftovers
 - Another great way to ensure none of the items go to waste! Be sure to research the donation centres near you to ensure the items can be donated and they are being donated to a reputable source.
 - When finding suitable donation centre(s) keep the following in mind:
 - Some centres only allow donations on specific days
 - Some may limit what items can be donated
 - You may need to call ahead if there is a particularly large number of items to donate
- Giving unclaimed items back to donators
 - This is not a recommended avenue for several reasons
 - People may be more likely to have second thoughts after trading items in and want them back
 - Keeping record will be labour intensive
 - Some items will inevitably be left unclaimed and those will still need to be dealt with

If Planning Another Swap

- Keep track of which items were most popular and which were least popular
- Compile comments from feedback cards about future improvements to the system and items of interest
- Get feedback from helpers about anything they noticed during the day

Lastly, Remember to...

- Do a good job cleaning the venue and leave it as you found it
- Thank all those involved in making the swap a possibility
- Share pictures on social media and reach out via other avenues to let people know about your swap's success

Swap Systems

Token Systems

This is likely the easiest to manage system; especially in an open space with unrestricted traffic. The system also allows for a fair amount of variety so that an event can be customized to the aims of the organizers.

- 1 Token Per Person
 - In this system anyone who drops off the minimum number of items is given 1 token which entitles them to take up to the maximum amount of clothing
 - Variants: If the event space allows for restricted entry a time limit can be included to ensure no loitering
 - Pros: Easy to manage, ensures a lot of items are taken
 - Cons: People may take much more than they donate, may be unfair to those who come later if there are few quality items
- 1 Token Per Item
 - In this system each person is given a token for every item they give to the swap.
 - Pros: Fairer than 1 token per person, ensures people don't unfairly take items, relatively easy to manage
 - Cons: More clothing will be left over, doesn't account for the quality of items given
- Tiered Token System
 - In this system swap items are ranked by what is most wanted by the swap. This could mean giving more tokens for higher end clothing or clothing which is generally more expensive, like boots or coats. For example, a person who drops off a winter coat may be given 2 tokens which would entitle them to 1 premium item, like another coat, or 2 standard items, like 2 blouses.
 - Pros: Incentivizes bringing quality garments, allows swap organizers more influence in determining what items are given to the swap
 - Cons: More difficult to manage compared to simpler systems, requires clear signage or organization in terms of how much items are worth

1st Come; 1st Served

This system gives people a set amount of time to shop based on who has lined up first. Typically, about 10-15 minutes of browsing as well as a maximum limit to items which can be taken. If people would like to continue they would have to line up again.

Pros: This system is likely the easiest system to organize as one only needs to keep track of a small amount of people at once and it requires no additional equipment (as the token system does), helps alleviate overcrowding

Cons: Prioritizes based on who can show up rather than who has participated, people may not want to wait to browse, doesn't guarantee the people who are taking items have given them.

Lottery

This system works best in a closed environment as a side to other activities. Those who give item(s) are entered in a lottery which determines who can browse through the swap first. Typically, participants are given about 10-15 minutes of browsing as well as a maximum limit to items which can be taken.

Recommended for either very large or very small groups.

Pros: Creates some excitement about getting into the swap, doesn't prioritize people based on who came first, keeps people within an area if other activities are going on, helps limit the crowd in the swap area

Cons: The most difficult to organize as it necessitates a ticketing system and a way to announce who is drawn, people may leave before they are called.

Other Notes about Systems

- Consider a buy-in option
 - Allow people to purchase buy-in tokens or lottery entries if they would like to participate in the swap but have no clothing to trade in.
 - The money made through buy-in tokens can be used to offset the costs of the event or be donated to charity.
 - Allowing buy-in tokens can help encourage those who didn't plan on attending the event to participate; especially commuter students who can't leave campus to come back with items as easily as residence students can.
 - Helpful in token systems where there may be more leftover clothing than in other systems
 - Be sure to fairly price buy-in tickets, if they are too low people may opt to buy-in rather than trade.
 - Be aware that allowing a buy-in will necessitate procedures for handling money as well as a float if taking cash
- Be aware of venue and equipment restrictions
 - Systems like the lottery won't work in open spaces where movement can't be controlled
 - Some systems, like the lottery and token systems, need equipment. Make sure you have what you need prior to the swap and collection of items!

Liability

Include both a posted disclaimer and a waiver which those participating must sign in order to participate in the event to ensure reduced liability for yourself and others involved in the event

Disclaimer

An example of a suitable disclaimer:

Persons participating in the swap do so at their own risk. <<Organization name>> is in no way responsible for the condition, suitability or provenance of any items hosted at the swap. Nor does <<organization name>> give any warranty for the condition, suitability or provenance of any items taken from the swap.

It is up to participants to check the condition, suitability or provenance of any items they take from the swap. <<Organization name>> takes no liability for any losses incurred from participating in the swap nor any claims

Participants of the swap are required to sign a waiver acknowledging the above.

Waiver

An example of a suitable waiver:

By signing this document, you, the participant, acknowledge and agree that you take part in the clothing swap at your own risk and recognize <<Organization name>> is in no way responsible for the condition,

suitability or provenance of any items hosted at the swap. Nor does <<organization name>> give any warranty for the condition, suitability or provenance of any items taken from the swap.

It is up to participants to check the condition, suitability or provenance of any items they take from the swap. <<Organization name>> takes no liability for any losses incurred from participating in the swap nor any claims regarding transactions which occur at the clothing swap.

Signature

Date

Hosting a Swap Event at U of T

1. Book room
 - a. Find a space that is large and will get walk through traffic
 - b. At least 5 racks and 5 tables should be able to fit in the space
2. Book a space to store and sort the items in for the time that you are collecting items and for 1 days after the event
3. Order racks and hangers at least 1 week before
 - a. Send a service order – need a customer number to do so
 - b. Have racks dropped off at least 1.5 hours before event (2 hours before is recommended)
 - c. Have racks picked up 1 hour after event
4. Set up a place/group to send/give left over items
 - a. Look for groups doing clothing drives on campus to partner up with
- 5.