# GUIDE TO PLANNING A HACKATHON
# MENDIX | FALL 2017

**VISION** Decide the vision for the hackathon

- What is the purpose?
- Who are the key participants?
    - Attendees
    - Contributors, such as mentors, trainers, judges, sponsors, keynote speakers, motivational guest lecturers, end-users, business representatives
- What is the theme of the hackathon?

**GOALS** Specify the goal of the hackathon

- What date will you hold it?
- How many attendees?
- How many registrants are you targeting?
- Prizes
    - How many prizes?
    - What will the prizes be?
    - What is the judging criteria?

**LOGISTICS** & Planning a great experience

- Where will you hold the hackathon? Consider what type(s) of space you'll need:
    - main stage/space for kicking off the event, keynote speakers, presentations, and awards
    - breakout spaces for small group work – consider offices or classrooms with whiteboards, post-it notes, flipcharts, and other materials to make collaboration fun and easy
    - social spaces & amenities – make sure there's inviting space for all to eat, relax, and recharge, especially if your hackathon goes late into the night or is longer than a few hours. Give special thought to spaces and activities that foster meeting new people.
- What is the timeline?
    - Will this be a 1 day event that follows a typical workday or conference type schedule? (i.e. 8am – 6/7pm) – this is best if your target attendees are professionals or K-12 students
    - Multi-day event? – if your target audience is college students, you should consider feasibility of attendees being able to secure affordable accommodations nearby
    - Overnight? Some hackathon attendees enjoy the adrenaline rush that comes with pulling an all-nighter in order to hit a deadline. If your event is going to span into the wee hours of the night, consider structuring your agenda to allow business professionals, sponsors, and judges to attend during 'normal' working hours, reserving the nocturnal hours for 'hackers' to do work and collaborate.
- Amenities – what will you feed your attendees, where and how often? Will the food be sponsored by corporate underwriters? Delivered at specific times? What will you have available throughout? Water, snacks, red bull/energy drinks overnight?
- Materials –
    - Electricity - docking stations, tons of extension cords/power strips to make sure everyone has easy access to power,
    - wi-fi – make sure:
        - the network can handle the surge in users

- that everyone can gain access w/ a well-publicized network key and password,
- there's a strong signal in every part of the designated working space for the event, including breakout spaces, satellite work rooms, and hallways
- you have Ethernet cords at the ready in case of emergency

**AGENDA** What is the agenda? Although closely tied to the timeline, the agenda is the outline of the sessions and the content (as opposed to the timeline which simply specifies the start and end times throughout the day so everyone knows where they need to be at all times.)

- Intro & welcome – key players, rules of engagement, timeline overview
- Theme kick-off – introduce the theme of the hackathon, why it's important, why the attendees may care, and inspire the attendees to create a solution for this theme during the hackathon
- Challenge – explain the challenge, the rules, the requirements
- Teaching/workshops – in order for the attendees to successfully complete the challenge, will they require additional training or guidance on certain topics?
    - How to define a business problem
    - How to develop an app in Mendix
    - How to deliver a pitch
- Team formation –
    - provide some guardrails about which key players each team should have, but allow for flexibility (This can be done by specifying the roles. For example: each team needs 1 person who is able to pitch/present to judges, 1 person who represents the end-user, 1 person who can contribute business strategy, 1 person who can learn to develop in Mendix quickly, or 1 person who has programming skills already, etc.)
    - Allocate a specific social component for attendees to mingle, have fun, meet new people, and organically form their teams
    - Provide designated "match-makers" on staff at the hackathon to help attendees find teammates. The selection of teams should not feel like a popularity contest, it should be fun! So it is the role of the match-makers and all hackathon staff to network and mingle with all attendees and make the magic happen!

**PRE-REQUISITES**

- Do the attendees need to have any prior knowledge? i.e. they need to be Mendix certified when they show up
- If so, how do you give attendees access to the required material so they can prepare?

**SPONSORSHIPS**

- Secure the judges
- Secure the guest speakers
- Secure the funding for the prizes
- Secure sponsorships for any food, materials, swag, giveaways

**MARKETING**

- Get the word out to relevant target audiences to secure registrants
- Do Marketing to the registrants - get them excited to attend and provide logistics details to ensure a high attendance rate. Don't let poor communication deter those who registered from actually showing up to your event.
- Secure PR & media coverage
    - Have the media promote the event in advance and get a buzz to generate interest from potential attendees and sponsors
- During the hackathon –

    - create and publicize a hashtag for your event to encourage attendees to share their experience on social media.
    - Have a team of people (at least 1 person) dedicated to documenting the event in real-time on social media platforms
    - Record short video testimonials from attendees to capture their excitement and reactions as they actually happen
    - Record pitches, publish to youtube and/or slideshare, and share via social media
    - Consider having a mini-challenge during the hackathon to get people to post something specific on social media with a prize for the person with the most shares/retweets
    - Consider setting up a mini photo-booth or photo-station with theme-related props for attendees to take a fun break and take some fun photos – share all on social media
- Immediately following the hackathon (must begin next business day – strike while the iron is hot!)
    - Publish PR recapping the turnout at the event
    - Publish PR coverage of winners
    - PR & media coverage of stories of interest or innovative pitches
    - Do a writeup of each team's pitch
- Attendee follow-up
    - Send next-day thank you and follow-up communications to attendees and sponsors
    - Let them know where they can find the materials, recordings, promised resources from the hackathon
    - Give them a Call-To-Action: tell them how they can continue to engage (complete their Mendix Community Profile, follow Mendix on social media, add the hackathon to their resume and their LinkedIn profile, etc.)
    - Get them to take the next step:
        - Get Mendix Certified
        - Get them to register for the next event/hackathon
        - Apply for a job or internship at Mendix
        - Apply for a Mendix job or internship at a Mendix customer or Partner