Open Doors

Organizer guide

What Open Doors does, how to set up your event, and what to check before you open booking.

Open Doors turns the busiest hour of an event into a booked schedule instead of a scramble. Each host sits at one round table with a stated reason to be there — hiring, lending, admissions, procurement, technical help. Everyone who registered picks the tables worth their time and claims a seat in a round, first come, first served.

Before the doors open, every attendee has their own agenda and every host has their seat list. Nobody works the room hoping to get lucky.

Open Doors does not sell tickets and does not replace your registration system. You bring the attendee list you already have, and it handles the part those tools leave undone: who sits with whom, and when.

THE TWO SIDES

The console — your staff

Where you set up hosts and tables, import the attendee list, decide when booking opens, and print tent cards and host briefings.

`opendoorstoday.com/console`

The event page — your attendees

Where an attendee signs in, says in one line what they are looking for, books their seats, and gets their schedule by email or calendar file.

`opendoorstoday.com/e/your-event`

Nobody has a password. Both sides work by emailing a one-time link that expires in 30 minutes. That is deliberate: there is no password for an attendee to forget on the morning of your event.

SETTING UP YOUR EVENT

1. Sign in

Go to the console and enter your work email address. A one-time link arrives by email, works once, and expires in 30 minutes. If it does not arrive within a minute or two, check junk mail. Only addresses your organization has been given console access can sign in, and the form gives the same answer either way so it cannot be used to find out who has access.

2. Start in the sample event

Your account starts with a sample event — invented hosts, made-up attendees, already filled in, marked sample in your event list. It does not count toward your plan and it is not linked from anywhere, so add tables, import people and book seats in it freely. Booking is already open in it, because trying the attendee side is the point: put your own address on the People tab and sign in as yourself. The invented people cannot receive mail, so nothing arrives if you sign in as one of them. Half an hour in the sample event is enough to be comfortable with everything below.

3. Open your event

Opening an event gives you four tabs: Tables, People, Share and Settings. Add the venue address while you are there — it goes into the calendar file attendees add, which is what makes the entry tappable for directions. A venue name on its own rarely resolves in a maps app.

4. Add your tables

On the Tables tab, enter the host's name and organization, choose how many seats the table has, and write a short description of what that host does and is looking for. That description is what an attendee reads when deciding whether the table is worth a round, so make it concrete — at least 60 characters, and the field counts up to it as you type. Add the host's email so their briefing can reach them, tick which rounds they are sitting, and publish. The table appears to attendees immediately.

5. Add your people

On the People tab, drop in the spreadsheet you already have — Excel or CSV — or paste the rows straight from it. An email address is the only thing a row must have; a row without one is skipped and told to you. Name, company and what they do are optional, columns can be in any order, extra columns are ignored, and a name split across First Name and Last Name is joined for you. The columns are listed on the tab before you upload anything.

6. Nobody is emailed when you import

Adding people to the list only lets them sign in. Open Doors sends them nothing until they ask for a link themselves, so your attendees hear about the event when YOU tell them — from your own list, with the link from the Share tab. Nothing happens on its own.

7. **Check the preview before you commit**

   Nothing is added until you confirm. You are shown how many people are new, how many are already there and will be updated, which columns were recognized, and exactly which rows were skipped and why. Importing the same list twice updates people rather than duplicating them, so a corrected list is always safe to re-import.

8. **Share the link, in your own words**

   The Share tab holds your event link with a copy button, and four drafts you can edit: an announcement, a reminder, an invitation for someone to host a table, and a short post for a newsletter. They are filled in with your event details. Save your edits and they are shared with your team, so whoever handles communications finds your version rather than the generated one. Open Doors never sends these for you.

9. **Choose when booking opens**

   On the Settings tab an event can be Draft, Open or Closed. Draft means attendees cannot book at all, which is how you hold booking until the date you have announced. Open it when you are ready and close it when you want the schedule to settle.

10. **When someone says they never got their email**

    Open the message log in the console, under Deliverability. It lists every message sent for you, with whether their provider accepted it, and a button beside each one that sends that person a fresh sign-in link — the original expired thirty minutes after it was sent. If the log says delivered, it is in their junk mail. If nothing is listed for them, they never asked for a link and the address on your list may be wrong. It is on every plan.

11. **Sending as your own domain, if you need it**

    On Enterprise your mail can arrive signed as your own domain rather than from the shared Open Doors sender. It is a setup step rather than a switch: Open Doors gives you three CNAME records to publish wherever your DNS is hosted, and whoever manages your domain may need to add them. Use a subdomain you do not already send from, such as events.yourorg.org, so your existing mail is untouched. Until the records are visible nothing changes, so sending cannot break while you set it up.

12. **Add your colleagues**

    Team, in the console. An owner adds people by email and picks admin or staff; they get a sign-in link immediately. How many you can add depends on your plan, and the last owner can never be removed.

13. **Set your own wording**

    Also on Settings, you can change what the two kinds of seat are called. The defaults are host and attendee, but if your event calls them employers and candidates, colleges and students, or funders and applicants, the whole product follows your wording.

ON THE DAY

A QR code for the room

The Share tab has your event link as a scannable code — a print-ready sign, or the code on its own for a slide or table card. It is one code for the event, not one per person: scanning opens the event page and each attendee signs in as themselves.

Tent cards

Each table has a printable card for the table itself, so attendees can find the right one without asking.

Host briefings

Each host gets their own roster — who is sitting with them in each round, and what each person said they want to discuss. You can print one or email every host at once. Send them the morning of the event so nothing is stale.

Attendee schedules

Attendees can email themselves their schedule, download it, or add it to their calendar from the event page at any time.

RULES WORTH KNOWING

One seat per company, per round

Across the whole event, not just per table — two colleagues cannot both book in the same round, even at different tables. It stops one firm taking a disproportionate share of a round. They can book different rounds freely, and you can turn the rule off in Settings.

Staff never reassign anyone by hand

Withdrawing a table releases its booked seats and those attendees rebook themselves. It stays first come, first served, and nobody can claim a seat was given away.

A host can also attend

If a host's email matches someone on the attendee list they are linked, so they can book seats in the rounds they are not hosting, and never against themselves.

Attendees say two things before they book

What they do, and the one topic that matters most to them. A sentence each: at least 40 characters for the first and 30 for the second, up to 256 and 140. Both are required, because a host cannot prepare for a table of names but can prepare for a table of businesses with stated needs. If someone tells you a seat will not reserve, this is nearly always why: the page says so and takes them to the two fields, which sit at the top of the event page. You do not have to collect either in advance — a column describing what they do fills the first one in during the import.

Canceling is different from closing

Closing booking means the schedule has settled and the event is still happening — people can still sign in to see where they are sitting. Canceling tells anyone who opens the page or scans the printed code that the event is off. Bookings are kept as a record, and you can put it back to draft if it goes ahead after all.

Seats are held, not queued

A seat is yours the moment you take it. If a table is full you can join its waitlist, and you are offered the seat if someone releases one.

CHECK THESE BEFORE YOU ANNOUNCE

- Sign in with your own address and confirm the link arrives.
- Publish a table with your own name as the host, then open the event page and confirm it appears.
- Import two or three test people using addresses you control.
- Sign in as one of those people and book a seat.
- Book a different table in the same round and confirm the seat moves rather than doubling up.
- Email yourself the schedule and check it reads correctly.
- Withdraw the test table and confirm the booked seat is released.
- Delete your test people before you import the real list.

Testing before you announce is the whole point. Write down what you clicked and what happened, and send it to whoever set up your account. A screenshot is worth more than a description.