

Meg's Cool Tips for Attractive Panels

What's this about panels?

Hi! I'm Meg, and I'm one of the people who watches and reviews as many panels and events as possible throughout each weekend at Anime Weekend Atlanta. Along the way, I've picked up some handy tips for the what, where, why, and how of putting on stuff in a hotel or convention center room. These opinions are purely my own, and I've definitely broken my own "rules" on many occasions, but I hope you'll find these useful as you try to create your own submission masterpiece. Positive examples are real life panels from AWA, and negative examples are my own work to protect the innocent.



I'm passionate about something! How do I share this with everyone else?

Hooray! Enthusiasm is the best first step! You can pretty much do anything you want if you have enough energy and excitement! That being said, here are some pointers when choosing the format of your presentation or activity:



It's a relatively obscure topic that I did a lot of research on.

This is what a good ol' traditional panel is made of! I'd suggest making a nice powerpoint or video presentation to go along with it, since everyone loves visuals and newbies to your topic would definitely appreciate an example or two. Feel free to go deep into the topic, but don't expect your audience to carry the panel for you with college-level discussion and questions.

It's really popular. Like, really popular! Everyone loves it!

A 101-level panel is NOT what you're looking for here, since your audience is most likely going to be fans and know all the characters and lore by heart. They're just waiting for the next manga release! This is a great opportunity for a fan discussion/meetup, fun and games, crafts, interpretive dance, or whatever you want to do to take the topic to the next level. If your heart is set on a purely informative panel, you can do a deeper dive that's beyond just googling the characters: say, a panel on the philosophy and politics behind Spirited Away, or a feminist interpretation of Kill la Kill.

What should I title this thing?

The title can make or break your panel, event, get-together, or shindig! So keep it simple, easy to grasp, and catchy-- easier said than done, but so worth it. Remember, when looking at a room sign or paper schedule, the title might be the only thing someone sees about your panel. So make it super clear as to what your event is about!

Great Titles

Totally Lame Anime

I instantly know that there's going to be some anime clips played, and it's going to be very funny!

Introduction to Asian Horror

I like horror, and I'd like to learn more about Asian horror concepts. I'm going to tap on this in the app to learn more!

Pokémon Yoga

Exactly what it says on the box!

Needs Work

The Japan Files

What is this about? Japan stuff, maybe? I don't know? Let's check out the dealer's room...

It's Aoi's World, and We're Just Living In It

Fun title, but Aoi is one of the most popular names in Japan, and I have no idea what character this is supposed to reference. You might have an audience expecting Danganronpa's Asahina Aoi, and here you are stuck with a presentation on Ai Yori Aoshi's Sakuraba Aoi.

Asteroid Blues

It's the name of a Cowboy Bebop episode, but without any context I might not get that while scrolling through hundreds of things in the app. I love Cowboy Bebop, but I'm only human, and I might not catch the reference with all the distractions around me.



Aw, but I wanted to use a clever reference or funny title...

You still can! Double up your title so that you can make your fun reference and make it clear what your panel is about. Don't go too crazy and write an essay in your title, it still has to fit on a piece of paper somewhere, but you have a little wiggle room.



Great Titles

Itadakimasu! Japanese Cooking for Americans

Separate, the first part might be too vague, and the second part might be too boring. But together, they make a catchy title!

This Panel, It Was Made For Me: Junji Ito Showcase

Includes both a clever reference for the fans, and a clarification as to what the panel actually is: it's a Junji Ito showcase, vs. a Junji Ito party, Junji Ito trivia, Junji Ito analysis, or Junji Ito fan meetup. A++ title

Needs Work

Anime on VHS: Watching Anime on Tape

Not bad at all, but it's a little redundant. Plus, it doesn't really say what the thing is about. Are we reminiscing about anime in the 80s and 90s? Are we talking about the literal tapes and boxes? Is this a primer on how a VCR works? The second part of the title could have cleared this up!

Now I've got to write a description? Help!

So, you've hooked your audience with a catchy title. Now's your opportunity to show why your panel is worth waiting in that line! Clarify any last-minute questions left by your title and reel them in with tantalizing details. Feel free to use a little mystery and intrigue to make sure they don't want to miss out!



Great Descriptions:

All About Otome: You have HOW MANY Boyfriends?!

Ever wondered what it would be like to have multiple boyfriends that exist only for you and expect nothing in return? Come venture into the land of otome, dating sims designed for girls, and find your perfect match! Includes a discussion of otome games available in English, anime based on otome, and the types of characters you're likely to fall in love with. (Ninjas, Demons, and Princes, oh my!)

>>Starts strong with a compelling question, clarifies what otome is (dating sims for a primarily female audience) and then tells us what's going to happen. Shows that it's beginner friendly with lots of examples given, but since there will be discussion, established fans of these games won't be left in the cold. <<

Absolutely No Laughing Panel: A Look Into Japanese Variety TV

From sadistic pranks to comedic battle royales, the world of Japanese comedy television is deep and vast. Join us as we showcase all the best batsu games, gaming blunders, and over-the-top pranks that Japan has to offer. Delve into Japan's unique world of humor with clips from shows such as Gamecenter CX, Gaki no Tsukai Ya Arahende, Documental, and more.

>>This description promises a lot of fun to be had (Blunders! Over-the-top pranks!) and also shows examples of the types of shows featured... while also adding an intriguing "and more" at the end. There's a little mystery there! What else are we going to be seeing? I want to find out!<<



Needs Work:

Samurai Movie Tropes in Anime

Wanna talk about samurai in anime? Well you've come to the right place! This is the thepanel for you.

>>Clearly this was written in about 10 seconds, with little or no thought put behind it. Not my best work, and sloppy. It's a cool topic, the description should let everyone know why! A lazy description doesn't exactly inspire confidence that the panelist is prepared. <<

Hot For Teacher: Anime's Sexiest Sensei

This panel will cover some of the teachers in anime throughout the years. We will talk about all things related to sexy, seductive teachers. Come ready to discuss your favorite waifus in the classroom!

>>The title is great if I do say so myself, but the whole thing falls flat in the description. There's nothing here to make me feel like this is a panel I can't miss. Are we just going through a list of attractive anime characters? Yawn. Plus, the topic just begs for a description full of winks and double-entendres. It's a missed opportunity!<<

I really, really want to present this at AWA. How can I impress the panel review committee?

Want to make sure your panel gets chosen out of all the submissions? While there are no guarantees, since someone might have already picked your topic and there are time and space constraints, here are some of the ways you can make your concept stand out:

Have your panel (mostly) ready to go!

While your panel might still need some tweaks here and there, a finished panel is always going to be more appealing than a vague concept that you haven't quite thought out the whole way through. Personally, I always submit my whole powerpoint presentation and outline, and then just add in the details throughout the year. Things get busy in the fall, and if I'm not ready with at least a rough draft at the time of submission, how will I know I'll be ready in time for the con? This is especially important for complicated or ambitious events. Want to do something really, really cool and elaborate? You can! (Please do!!) But the more work you put in ahead of time, the more likely you are to inspire confidence that you've got a plan and have what it takes to pull it off.

Think of something fun and unique

Easier said than done, I know. But the more common your panel submission, the more likely someone has already submitted a similar thing already. "The Genshin Impact Panel" might have to compete head-to-head with 10 other Genshin Impact panels. "Genshin Impact Trivia" is a little better, but might still have some similar entries already. However, "The Craziest Bugs and Bloopers in Genshin Impact"? Or "Cook Like a Traveler: Genshin Impact Inspired Recipes"? Or "The Genshin Impact Adventurer's Guild Camp Meetup" with games, crafts, and a makeshift tent? I'll be marking down all of those on my schedule for the weekend, guaranteed!

Proofread!

We aren't all professional writers and spelling bee champions, so if this is something you know you struggle with, let one of your friends (or enemies?) read over your title and description before hitting submit. Make sure it makes sense to them! And good writers, don't get complacent and think you didn't misspell or omit something, nobody's perfect and you might benefit from a few minutes to read everything over again. Oh, and make sure your email is typed in correctly

