



Generic Venues



Institute *of* **Physics**

Generic Venues

One of the best ways of gaining the interest of public audiences in science – particularly physics – is to go directly to them. Such audiences will generally feel intimidated by specialist events run at Universities or Research Institutes. A much more effective method is to run entertaining and insightful events in venues that are familiar to your audience, where they feel comfortable, and where they naturally spend significant amounts of their time. There are many possible 'generic venues', of which three are outlined in this Pack:

- Pubs
- Supermarkets
- Motorway service areas

Other generic venues could include locations such as summer fayres and festivals, garden centres, and sports centres.

The generic venue activities included in this Pack have been specially designed to fit with public expectations of what you might do in a particular venue type. So, for example, the Pub event has a quiz format while in the Supermarket it's a competition and in the Service Area there are goody bags for child travellers.

General Insights

The general features of suitable generic venues are:

- Public 'ownership' of the space – The surroundings are comfortable and familiar, and the public audience gathers at the venue naturally.
- Significant dwell times – Members of the audience are at the venue long enough to get involved in the proposed activity. If your audience is in a rush you will merely annoy them by trying to gain their attention.
- Sufficient space appropriately laid out – Don't try to perform your activity in a cramped location or a long distance from your audience.

One very important point with all generic venues is that you should **arrange permission in advance** to use the venue. This is especially true if you are arranging a series of events through a central office – make sure you contact the person in charge of each venue directly to confirm.

The three generic venue events outlined in this pack all include demonstrations of physical principles that are designed to draw a crowd. These eye-catching 'tricks' are intended to entertain your audience even in a distracting environment. Some of them are designed for use with a table or bench but others can easily be done in the hand – physics 'busking'. Use the more impressive tricks to capture the attention of passers-by, then explain the science behind the trick simply and clearly. Be enthusiastic and keep the age / education / background of your audience in mind. A good way to maintain enthusiasm is to ask your audience how THEY think it works. When enough people have gathered together you can direct them towards deeper involvement in your event – such as taking part in a quiz or competition, or handing out give-aways. See the 'Physics Tricks' section of this Pack for detailed instructions for performing 20 such 'tricks', all of which are based on physics-related principles.