



HOSTING A RETREAT



Leading a retreat can be a deeply rewarding experience, even designing the agenda and marketing it. Can you visualise what a successful retreat would look like? How are you going to create an experience that your delegates will remember for the rest of their lives?

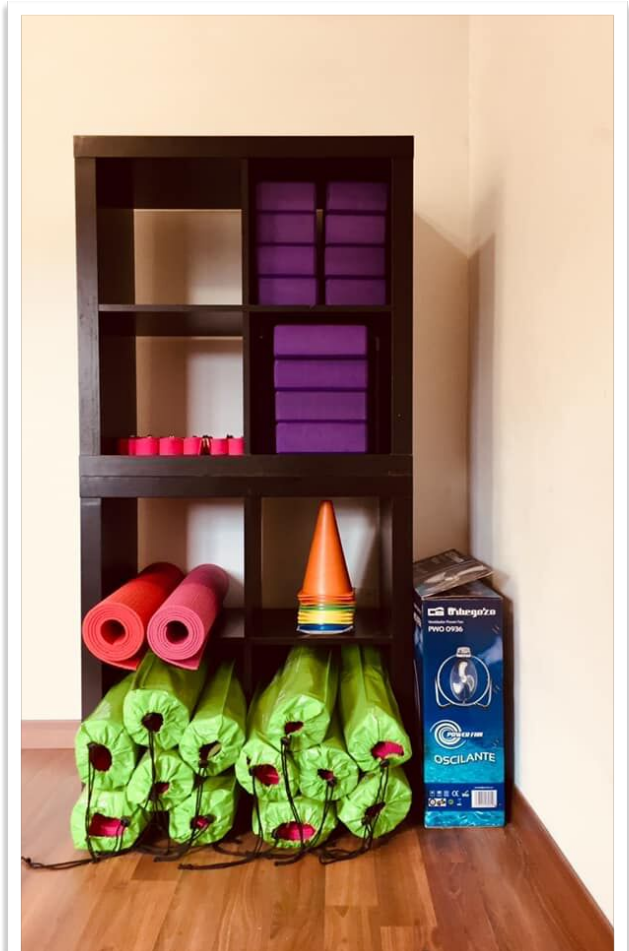
Things to consider:

- Ask questions of others who have run retreats, your potential clients, and other movers and shakers.
- Come up with a catchy title that intrigues people to find out more. Be clear about the purpose. Define a clear and specific goal.
- Design an agenda that includes your chosen personal development, suitable food for your group, time for personal reflection/space, trips

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that help bonding, ground rules and how you will involve your guests (those who want involvement). Make it clear how time will be spent. Give thought to how you will get the balance right between your “work” sessions, time for reflection, fun stuff, group bonding, etc. Consider asking the clients who are coming for their input regarding the agenda.

- Think about how you will market it – please ask me if you need help with this. Know exactly who your target audience is. Put yourself in their shoes and sell the benefits of how their life will be different - and better - as a result of attending your retreat. Marketing is about creating familiarity through consistency. Remember the 7 P's: proper prior planning prevents pathetically poor performance!
- Plan for people. Consider interviewing people, laying out clear expectations (even about standards of behaviour) - one “rogue” client could ruin it for everyone.
- Have a clear value proposition. Know your big promise. Here's a suggested formula:
 - i. **Headline:** a very short attention grabber describing what you offer, when and where.
 - ii. **Sub-headline** or a 2 to 3-sentence paragraph. This is where you elaborate *a bit* on details.
 - iii. **Three bullet points:** key benefits or features.
 - iv. **Visual:** a video is the best; pictures are a close second. Images speak much louder than words. This is *extremely* relevant for a retreat business where you are trying to sell paradise or a particular state of mind. I post either a picture with a few words or a video daily on my FaceBook page.



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- Regard running a retreat as a sustainable business and develop a plan that you can refine, improve on and roll out year after year. By creating an **outstanding** experience, you have created the foundation. In addition, have a word-of-mouth strategy attached to your marketing so people who attend your first one can provide referrals for your future retreats. Once again, ask me if you want guidance on this.
- Guarantee satisfaction: really zero in on something you can deliver and then make sure you deliver that. It will make it easier for people to book with you, be loyal and refer people.
- Plan for how you might scale it up in the future, so you can run more than one profitable retreat a year. Think big and bold and work on your business as well as in it. Plan, plan, plan and then... leap.
- Spend money wisely. Be good at forecasting and thinking about everything you need (not necessarily want). Do, however, focus on quality and what you can do best.
- Decide how you will resolve any disputes/conflict.
- Consider if you need airport transfers.
- Give thought as to whether you want all catering provided or do your own on a rota basis, and whether you will be buying food locally and eating local cuisine as part of the experience.
- Consider if you want to book excursions.
- Price up everything, including your classes, and build in a profit for your business.
- Plan your classes. Will you use any other teachers?
- Think about visiting the venue first, so you can speak first-hand about it.
- Consider a contract/terms and conditions for your guests and include cancellations/no refunds, payment terms, how to pay, children/pets, alcohol, etc.
- Give thought to how you will get to know everyone well and create an environment where people bond. This can be what people remember most: the friends they made and the stories shared.
- Find out what insurance you might need.
- Manage expectations. In your marketing materials, emails and verbal communications leading up to the retreat, provide disclaimers that, although there is an intended schedule, all activities and time frames

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are subject to change. Reiterate this once you are at your retreat so that when “Plan B” needs to be executed, your clients will be at ease with the changes.

- Keep in mind that the little things are often the big things - small acts of kindness go a long way.
- As well as remembering the importance of “first impressions,” finish with impact. Consider having a final full-group event in which everyone not only contemplates how they will build on the experience and where they will go from there, but also concludes their experience of the event. Possibly invite every attendee to share something that changed for them or that they accomplished during the retreat.
- Ask for feedback.
- Enjoy it – it is a (re)treat!



If you would like help with marketing and planning a retreat, please contact me:

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If you are planning on coming to the Old Spanish Mill, my support in helping you make it an outstanding success is free. However, if my venue is not suitable for what you are intending, I am happy to provide my experience and coaching at £35/hour.

In addition to yoga, pilates, zumba, meditation and other relaxation retreats, the venue and local area are absolutely ideal for walking, climbing, running, cycling (road and mountain) and triathlon training, as well as canoeing and paddleboarding. There is a huge lake within reach.

At the nearby Mount Jabalcon you can also even participate in paragliding and gliding.

Andalucía is well known for its stunning scenery and extensive variety of birds, so painting and bird watching can be done as well.

