



## Event Planning Tips\*

(The following considerations will not apply to every event. However, they serve as basic guidelines for events as diverse as a wedding, fundraiser or professional conference.)

- 1. Know the purpose of the event.** This is obvious for personal events like birthday celebrations and weddings. However, if you are planning an event for a company or community organization, you will need to know why the event is being held and the desired outcome.
  - ⤴ Make sure the purpose for the special event is important enough to merit the time and expense needed to properly stage, publicize and evaluate the event.
  - ⤴ Target groups of attendees that have a special stake in the event.
  - ⤴ Start planning at least 3 months ahead, and in many cases, a year ahead of time.
- 2. Determine how many guests are expected to attend and what goals have been established for the event.** Goals could include funds to be raised for a non-profit organization, information to be presented to conference attendees, etc.
- 3. Establish the budget for your event.** Know how much you have to spend and if any of that cost will be offset by fee paid by the attendees.
- 4. Select the date and location.** If this is an event involving a committee or other decision makers, allow time to visit various sites and weight the assets and liabilities of each before making the final selection. Make sure the date chosen does not conflict with other community events that may take away from your attendee numbers should this be an event requiring a large community attendance.

### Factors to consider when evaluating a location include:

- ⤴ Is the space too large or too small? Based on the nature of the event, be sure to allow sufficient room for food service, audiovisual equipment, entertainment and a podium, dance floor or staging.
- ⤴ Is the lighting adequate for the purpose of the event?
- ⤴ Is there sufficient parking for your guests? Will they have to pay for parking? How far is the parking area from the event? What accommodations can be made for elderly or physically disabled guests.
- ⤴ What electrical supply is available in the space? What can be added to accommodate AV equipment, vendor displays and special lighting? Are generators an option?

- ⤴ What internet access is available? Are there any restrictions or limitations on wireless phone service in the event location?
- ⤴ If outdoors, what is the geographic set-up for the event. Will tents need to be used, and if so, is the ground level? What is the outdoor surface? Grass, dirt, gravel, etc? Are there trees and shrubs to work around?
- ⤴ What restroom facilities are available for the guests? Will portable restrooms be needed?
- ⤴ Is security needed for the event location?
- ⤴ How easy is it to move items (rental furniture, decorations, catering equipment, etc.) into the chosen site?

Once you have selected the location for the event:

**5. Set up a project timeline** with tasks that must be completed by specific dates. Some of the things you may want to include are:

- ⤴ When to make your first announcement of the event.
- ⤴ Prepare and print promotional materials (fliers, invitations, etc.)
- ⤴ For a public event, determine how it will be promoted
- ⤴ Select caterer/menu
- ⤴ Select entertainment
- ⤴ Select decorations/florist
- ⤴ Determine audio-visual needs
- ⤴ Select overnight accommodations, if needed
- ⤴ Secure transportation if necessary
- ⤴ Review and sign necessary contracts
- ⤴ Select and confirm speakers
- ⤴ Finalize your agenda/program
- ⤴ Confirm attendees
- ⤴ Prepare materials (hand-outs, give-aways) for the event
- ⤴ Prepare name badges
- ⤴ Prepare any necessary signage
- ⤴ Prepare materials to be shipped to event location
- ⤴ Prepare "on site set-up" time line
- ⤴ Re-confirm details

**6. Determine the vendors you need**, such as:

- ⤴ Party equipment provider (Arizona Party Rental)
- ⤴ Caterer
- ⤴ Entertainer
- ⤴ Florists
- ⤴ Photographer/Videographer
- ⤴ Printers
- ⤴ Registration Assistant
- ⤴ Audio-Visual equipment supplier

## 7. Plan publicity:

- ♣ Are you trying to inform, educate or entertain?
- ♣ What is your base support for attending the event? Churches, Schools, Clubs, etc.
- ♣ What media means will be used to promote the event? Public Service Announcements, Posters, Fliers, Billboards, Marques, Newspaper, etc.

## 8. Create a Personalized Checklist based on the needs for your event.

9. **Find out if you need any special licenses or permits to host your event.** This could include fire permits, alcohol permits, fees for using recorded music to having part of a major street blocked for traffic control.

10. **Evaluate the event.** Right after the event take time to evaluate the event's success while the details are still fresh:

- ♣ Did the event fulfill its goals and objects? Why or why not?
- ♣ Identify what worked and what needs fine-tuning.
- ♣ Which vendors would be used again.
- ♣ What items were missing on the check-off list?
- ♣ Was the event well attended?
- ♣ Was the informal and formal feedback about the event positive?
- ♣ Given all that went into staging and putting on the event, was it worth doing?

Finally, it is important to remember to celebrate you successes and to thank all those who contributed.

\*sections of this article taken from the American Library Association