

# Conference Planning Checklist

By Jake R Brady

- 9 Months Before
  - Seek co-sponsorship.
  - Prepare a planning calendar.
  - Recruit volunteers.
  - Check budget and provide a cost projection sheet.
  - Determine publicity/advertising schedule and call for papers.
  - Determine which hotel your guests will be staying during the conference.
  - Create a website for your conference.
  - Set-up the registration link on the conference website.
  - Create advertising brochures and call for papers.
  - Advertise conference to potential exhibitors of interest.
- 6 Months Before
  - Begin to finalize the Program Schedule.
  - Determine number of brochures needed for handouts and mailing.
  - Contact speakers and request vita, address and phone number, biography and head shot photo for publicity of.
- 4 Months Before
  - Meet with catering, facilities, media services, and conference services to go over the final details.
  - Consider hiring students to staff your events.
  - Finalize the Program Schedule.
  - Draft Conference Program.
  - Update budget.
  - Finalize A/V equipment needs with media services.
  - Announce the conference.
  - Go live for online registration and payment.
  - Determine the types of giveaways if any.
  - Order your gifts.
- 2 Months Before
  - Finalize guest list.

- Confirm needs for registered exhibitors.
- Produce printed program and get schedule to PR.
- Produce conference poster, if appropriate.
- Schedule all table and chairs needed.
- 1 Month Before
  - Finalize details and administrative responsibilities for the conference.
  - Obtain local maps and information.
  - Confirm catering, facilities, and media.
  - Request honorarium for speakers.
- 2 Weeks Before
  - For main speakers - email/letter should include complete, specific schedule of the speaker(s).
  - For registered participants - include map, shuttle schedule, and registration times for the participant's arrival at the conference.
  - For session chairs/introducers - include time of session, CV of presenter(s).
- 1 Week Before
  - Assemble name tags.
  - Assemble registration listing of participants.
  - Consider sending welcome letters and agenda to the hotel for distribution upon check-in.
  - Double check arrangements: confirm room reservations, particularly for afterhours or weekend times.
- After the Conference
  - Send thank you notes to all who helped with the conference.
  - Finalize financial settlements for all speakers.