

Event Management Checklist

By Kimberly French

Evaluate

- Get your marching orders** Meet with people you are managing the event for, and discern what type of event it will be, as well as their needs and expectations.
- Head count** Find out how many guests to expect.
- Budget** You should be able to work out a budget and have it approved and funded.
- Venue** How much space do you need, and what type? A hotel conference room could work for small seminars, or you may need to book dining venue for a fundraising dinner.
- Travel** Will guests need to travel to get to your event? Price travel information.
- Lodging** If the event is more than one day or lasts well into the night, guests may need to stay over. Price hotels and motels in the area.
- Transportation** Coordinate your venue and guest arrival so you can secure shuttle service if possible.
- Catering** Price caterers in the area, and ask for a discount for a large event. Make sure the caterer you hire can handle it.

Innovate

- Sponsors** You'd be surprised at how much stuff you can get for free if you offer to let local businesses sponsor the event.
- Entertainment** A good band or DJ can bring a feeling of energy to your event.
- Celebrity** Try to get someone famous or semi-famous to make an appearance - even if it is just a brief one. A local dignitary can often be prevailed upon to say a few words.
- Security** You can book local security, or contact the local PD to see if any officers are up for moonlighting at your event.
- Theme** Coming up with a great theme doesn't have to mean holding a luau or an '80s night'. For high power business events, find a way to promote the corporate vision in a fun, engaging way.
- Decorations** You can't go wrong with flowers, and a local florist may give you a discount in exchange for displaying advertising. Don't overdo on decor - keep it simple and elegant.

Delegate

- Contact person** There should be an extremely available contact who can field calls from invitees about the event.
- Marketing** You may have a marketing guru ready to hand. Otherwise, hire a advertising or marketing firm to promote large events.
- Staff training** Hold a short introductory session, then set up leaders for different groups to carry on training.
- Set-up** You should have plenty of help setting up for the event; your job as event manager should be supervisory.

The Event

- Get there first** You want to be in control of every step of the event, from hanging signage to overseeing equipment set-up and seating.
- Assign ushers** If not ushers, then greeters - there should be a few appropriately dressed and recognizable staffers to mingle and answer questions.
- Be reachable** Carry your cell phone and consider using a handset on a set frequency to communicate with key staff.
- Clean up** You are ultimately responsible, so delegate, supervise and double check.
- Report** Pay any outstanding invoices, balance the budget, and summarize for the powers that be.