

Event Planning Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

- 6 to 12 Months before the event
 - Decide event purpose (raise funds, visibility, celebration)
 - Choose a theme
 - Visit potential sites
 - Appoint an event coordinator/manager
 - Sselect committees/chairpersons
 - Get cost estimates
 - Get offers for entertainment
 - Get offers for decorations
 - Get offers from designers
 - Finalize budget
 - Create sponsorship amounts
 - Create mailing list
 - Decide on time and date
 - Get written contracts
 - Think of alternative site
 - Invite VIPs
 - Hire graphic designer
 - Create logo for event
 - Order hold-the-date cards
 - Set marketing schedule
 - Develop press release
 - Hire photographer
 - Investigate need for special permits
- 3 to 6 Months before the event
 - Send requests for sponsors
 - Review with graphic designer invitations, programs, posters, etc.
 - Prepare final copy for invitations, return card, posters
 - Prepare final copy for tickets
 - Complete mailing lists for invitations
 - Order invitations, posters, tickets, etc.

- Sign contract with entertainment company
- Make list of locations for posters
- Finalize mailing lists
- Set menu with caterer
- Secure permits and insurance
- Get written confirmation of celebrity participation/special needs
- Finalize audio/visual contract
- 2 Months before the event
 - Assemble/address invitations
 - Mail invitations
 - Distribute posters
 - Obtain contracts for decorations and rental items
 - Release press announcements about celebrities, VIPs, honorees
 - Follow up to confirm sponsorships and underwriting
 - Obtain logos from corporate sponsors for program printing
 - Review needs for signs at registration, directional, etc.
 - All major chairpersons to finalize plans
 - Hold walk-through of event with responsible committees
 - Review/finalize budget, task sheets and tentative timeline
 - Start phone follow-up for table sponsors (corporate, VIP, committee)
- 1 Month Ahead before the event
 - Phone follow-up of mailing list (ticket sales)
 - Place newspaper ads, follow up with news media, on-air announcements
 - Confirm staff for registration, hosting, other
 - Write to VIPs, celebrities, program participants, confirm participation
 - Complete list of contents for VIP welcome packets
 - Get enlarged site plan/room diagram, assign seats/tables
 - Give estimate of guests expected to caterer/food service
 - Meet with all outside vendors, consultants to coordinate event
 - Review script/timeline
 - Continue phone follow-ups for ticket/table sales
 - Continue assigning seats; set head table, speaker's platform

- Confirm transportation schedules: airlines, trains, buses, cars, limos
- Confirm hotel accommodations
- Prepare transportation and accommodations
- Confirm special security needed for VIPs, event
- Prepare welcome packet for VIPs, chairmen, and key staff
- Schedule deliveries of special equipment, rentals
- Confirm setup and tear down times with event site
- Finalize plans with party decorator
- Give caterer revised numbers
- Meet with chairpersons, key staff to finalize any of the above
- 1 Week Before the event
 - Meet with all committees for last-minute details
 - Finish phone follow-ups
 - Confirm number attending
 - Finish seating/table arrangements
 - Hold training session with volunteers; finalize assignments
 - Secure two or three volunteers to assist with emergencies
 - Finalize registration staff
 - Distribute seating chart, assignments to hosts/hostesses
 - Schedule pickup or delivery of any rented or loaned equipment
 - Double-check arrival time and delivery times with vendors
 - Reconfirm event site, hotel, transportation
 - Deliver final scripts/ timelines to all program participants
 - Finalize catering guarantee, refreshments
 - Confirm number of volunteers
 - Make follow-up calls to news media for advance and event coverage
 - Distribute additional fliers
 - Final walk-through with all personnel
 - Schedule rehearsals
 - Schedule volunteer assignments for day of event
 - Establish amount of petty cash needed for tips and emergencies
 - Write checks for payments to be made for the day of the event
- Day before the event

- Lay out all clothes that you will need the day of the event
- Recheck all equipment and supplies to be brought to the event
- Have petty cash and vendor checks prepared
- Event Day
 - Arrive early (with your change of clothes)
 - Unpack equipment, supplies and make sure nothing is missing
 - Be sure all VIPs are in place and have scripts
 - Reconfirm refreshments/meal schedule for volunteers
 - Go over all the final details with caterer and setup staff
 - Check with volunteers to make sure all tasks are covered
 - Setup registration area
 - Check sound/light equipment and staging before rehearsal
 - Hold final rehearsal