THE ULTIMATE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

5 essentials every professional organizer needs to follow

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Did you know that in marketing, most expenses are attributed to event planning? According to research, business events are considered the most effective B2B marketing tactics, used by as many as 81 % of all marketers. Why are business events such an important part of marketing?

EVENTS HELP BUILD LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP

Out of all marketing communication types, an event has the highest memory and emotional value. If well-planned and targeting the right audience, business events can have an overwhelmingly positive influence on people's openness to debate.

CONNECTIONS ARE MADE WITHING A BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Planning an event creates an opportunity to find your place among the right people and to make the first personal contacts, which in the digital era are becoming rarer and less personal. Right after the educational aspect and the destination of the event, networking is the paramount purpose for participation.

EVENTS BUILD BRAND PUBLICITY

A well-planned event contributes to a brand's recognizability and reputation because through it, key messages can be communicated.

EVENTS MAKE COMMUNICATION EASIER

A business event can be a small breakfast for 10 people or a conference for hundreds; in either case, it is targeted at a certain audience. Spreading information at such events with our target audience in one place, saves time and money. Planning an event provides a different and more efficient access to our target audience.

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IDEA

The 3 key questions to ask ourselves before planning an event

Before planning your event, it is recommended to ask and answer three key questions. Build a statement which will later help you reach decisions about location selection, event programme design and about communication with your participants.

1. WHAT TYPE OF AN EVENT ARE WE PLANNING?

There are many different types of events, distinguished from one another by how they are planned. The most common event types are:

Meetings, conventions, seminars, workshops, fairs, conferences, ceremonies, parties, banquets, promotional events, weddings, other: _____.

2. WHO ARE WE PLANNING THE EVENT FOR

It is of equal importance to know who the event is being planned for. Who is our target audience? The target audience are the people the event is intended for and should benefit the most out of it. The bigger challenge is convincing our target audience why the event is intended for them exactly. For this reason, we must fully understand our target audience. It is best if we can draw upon analyses of previous events to find information about our participants.
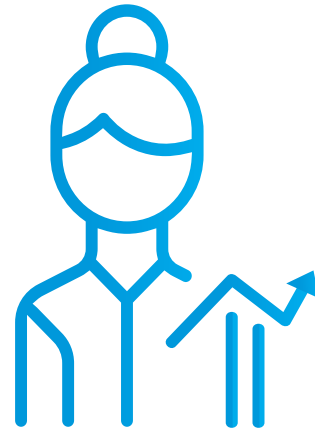
Our company employees, potential buyers, the media, business partners, candidates (at regulated conferences), association members, other: _____.

EXACT **PARTICIPANT PROFILING**
MAKES GOAL-ORIENTATION OF THE EVENT POSSBLE

MANAGER SALESPERSON ACCOUNTANT PURCHASER

3. WHY SHOULD OUR TARGET AUDIENCE CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR EVENT

If we want to attract a suitable number of participants and reach the objectives of our event, we must know exactly what the target audience is to benefit from the event (the so-called WHY of the event).

Motivation, education, increase of sales, lobbying, information exchange, socializing of experts in the same field, other:_____.

Example: WE ARE PLANNING A CONFERENCE FOR BUSINESS PARTNERS WITH THE PURPOSE OF **NETWORKING** AND EDUCATION OF SALESPARTNERS IN THE FIELD OF **NEW TECHNOLOGIES**
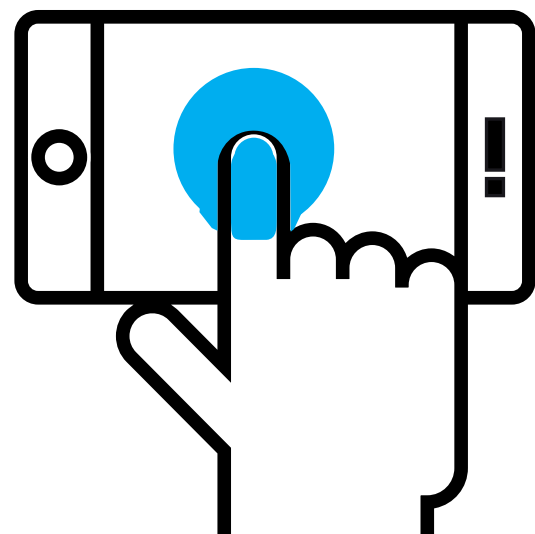
The first and most important stage

PLANNING

During the planning stage, define the objectives and the way to reach them and estimate the budget for the event. The planning function ensures cost minimizing and a better control over the success of the event.

Who is planning the event?

The company planning and organizing an event is the event organizer but not necessarily also the event owner. The event owner can decide whether to plan the event on their own or to hire a subcontractor, a professional event planner. The ID.Conference online platform helps event owners plan the event themselves or allows them to depend to a lesser extent on professional planners.

Planning objectives

Planning objectives is essential for event planning. Why is it anyway that we are organizing this event? What is our objective? Set one main objective and the goals supporting the main objective. Be careful that all these goals:

- **are time-defined** (set a time frame when the goal should be achieved. With long-term goals, also set short-term goals);

- **are specific and measurable** (if possible, the goals should be set quantitatively);

- **cover the key areas** (it is reasonable to set such goals that contribute most to business achievements);

- **are challenging and stimulating at the same time** (goals set too high have poor influence on motivation);

- **are linked to an awards system** (individuals who know exactly what the award is for a goal achieved will be better motivated to achieve it).

Example:

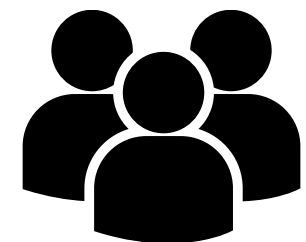OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO RECIEVE 20 OFFER REQUESTS FOR OUR NEW PRODUCT WITHIN A WEEK AFTER THE EVENT. OUR ASSESMENT IS THAT WE CAN REACH THIS OBJECTIVE BY REGISTERING AT LEAST 250 PARTICIPANTS.

Planning the path to achieving the goals

At this stage, based on the individual goals, set up a work plan to help with achieving the goals. Define work groups and their leaders, and create a chart that answers the following questions:

- What needs to be done?
- How must it be done?
- Who must do it?
- How long will it take?
- How much will it cost us?

HINT no. 1: As event organizer or event owner, you are not the only constituent of the event. Think about the objectives of the following constituents in the event organization:

- sponsors;
- the media;
- co-workers;
- participants.

Example:

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?	HOW MUST IT BE DONE?	PERSON IN CHARGE	DUE DATE	BUDGET
4–6 MONTHS BEFORE EVENT				
Set the date of the event	The workgroup suggests speakers, the group leader confirms them.	Jennifer	12. 6. 2018	/
Choose and rent the venue	Receive at least 3 offers and confirm with group leader.	John	20. 6. 2018	2.000 €
Choose and confirm the speakers	Hand in a suggestion by 19. 6. and confirm with group leader by due date	Mark	25. 6. 2018	6.000 €
Choose and confirm the sponsors				
Receiving offers for technical execution and catering				
3–4 MONTHS BEFORE EVENT				
Receive the speakers bios and photos				
Book accommodation for the speakers				
Open online registration				

HINT no. 2: When planning your budget, calculate:

25%	for speakers and performers
21%	for catering
16%	for the venue
15%	for event advertising
15%	for equipment renting
8%	for event organizing
10%	for unforseen costs

Budget planning

Once the goals have been set, it is time to plan the event budget. All activities to achieve the goals must be cost-estimated and the company's benefits should exceed their costs.

The expected fixed and variable costs should be estimated.

FIXED COSTS
are not dependent on the number of participants and may include:

- renting the venue;
- renting the technical and audio-visual equipment;
- translation and interpretation;
- author's fees (moderators, speakers, other performers);
- graphic design: advertisements, labels, panels, signs, etc.;
- public relations;
- expert organizers;
- room equipment;
- print;
- transport;
- event insurance.

VARIABLE COSTS
are dependent on the number of participants and include:

- making copies of the handouts and other materials;
- ID accessories (accreditations, lanyards, badges, tickets...);
- promotional gifts;
- catering (food and beverages)
- conference materials (bags, pens, promotional material, gifts, etc).

ORGANIZATION

The beginning of realization of everything planned

Follow the ten steps to the organization of a successful event.

1. STEP | DEFINE THE BASICS:
a.   Date of the event;
b.   Time of the event start;
c.   Duration of the event.

2. STEP | ORGANIZE THE VENUE
a.   Receive the offers;
b.   Research and select of the venue;
c.   Book or rent the venue.

3. STEP | SET UP THE PROGRAMME AND COORDINATE THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS/PERFORMERS
a.   Confirm the speakers;
b.   Give guidelines to the speakers for content preparation;
c.   Receive the speakers' bios and photos;
d.   Book transport and accommodation for the speakers;
e.   Receive the speakers' presentations;
f.   Set up the programme.

HINT no. 3: Check to see if the venue's Wi-Fi allows access for the estimated number of participants. If participants have access to the Internet, you can encourage them to stream live from the event and thus contribute to advertising the event.

BREAKS FOR EVENTS

FOR SNACKS ALLOCATE
30 - 40 MINUTES
AND **45-60 MINUTES** FOR LUNCH.

100 PEOPLE
15 MIN

1000 PEOPLE
30 MIN

OVER 1000 PEOPLE
45 MIN

4. STEP | TAKE CARE OF THE EVENT FINANCES

a.   Set the entrance fees (including early-bird registrations, group fees, member fees);

b.   Define the terms of cooperation for sponsors.

5. STEP | SET YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN IN MOTION

a.   Create an event landing page;

b.   Start issuing the save-the-date announcements;

c.   See to the first public announcements of the event.

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HINT no. 4: The landing page for the event will literally take you minutes to set up through the IDC online event-planning platform. www.idconference.eu

6. STEP | START COLLECTING REGISTRATIONS

7. STEP | SET UP LOGISTICS

a.   Check to see if your event requires special permits or insurances;
b.   Set up parking space;
c.   Rent the necessary technical equipment;
d.   Estimate registration queues.

HINT no. 5: You can avoid queues by using many tables, alphabetized pre-prepared accreditations and by training your hostesses in optimizing the registration procedure. By using three IDE Conference scanners, you can register up to 210 participants within 15 minutes.

8. STEP | HIRING THE STAFF AND MENU SELECTION

HIRE STAFF BASED ON THE AVERAGE
STAFF : GUEST RATIO OF 1 : 78

1 BARMAN
50-75 GUESTS

1 WAITER
75-100 GUESTS

1 SECURITY GUARD
75-100 GUESTS

9. STEP | KEEP FOLLOWING YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN. THIS IS IT!

10. STEP | 1-2-3, ACTION!

a.   Sit down with your complete organization team.

b.   Set up a backup plan for any unforeseen situations.

c.   Give guidelines to the hired staff..

1-2-3, ACTION!

MANAGEMENT

The event will achieve its purpose only after reaching its objectives

In the last stage the project and any deviations from the plan are reviewed. Management pushes groups or individuals to achieving individual goals.

Reviewing the event does not only give us an overview of the final outcome but also serves as a motivator to better achievement of goals. If they know in advance that a review will follow which will show success of the achievements, the organizers will strive to be more consistent in the execution of the event.

HINT no. 6: Go digital. Mobile applications developed for the purpose of event planning improve productivity by at least 45 %. Review the data collected with the help of the IDC platform through pre-pre-pared or adjusted reports.

Set the goals for your next event based on the results. You can monitor:

- the times most registrations were logged;
- the times most participants arrived at the event;
- the registration : participation ratio;
- the events most and least attended;
- the profiles of the participants;
- at fairs: the stalls most visited;
- the time when participants left the event;
- the number of participants at lunch;
- the average duration of presence in the hall for all participants and the duration for each individual participant.

HINT no. 7: For the deviations from the plan not to endanger business success, they must be found in time. Even before the end of your event, review the IDC platform to see if your guests are deciding to leave early, and take appropriate measures.

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SUCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

is supported by communication strategies

For the event to attract public attention and create a path towards achieving the set goals, it must have proper communication support before, during and after the event.

HINT no. 8
Include your guests in co-creation of the event. Carry out a poll for, say, speaker or menu selection.

30 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT
Drum up interest in the event. Send out announcements and invitations.

7 BEFORE THE EVENT
Send out the last-call invitations.

DURING THE EVENT
Review the response, gather ideas. Invite the participants to fill in a satisfaction survey.

NO LATER THAN 3 DAYS AFTER THE EVENT
If you have the author's permission, send their presentation to the participants.

UP TO 60 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT
Set up a landing page and a Facebook page. Open online registrations. If this is an international event, do not hesitate and open online registrations as soon as possible.

14 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT
Increase the tension. Publish photos of past events.

HINT no. 9
Participation at free events averages at 35 % compared with registration numbers. Participation at paid events averages at 95 %.

1 DAY BEFORE THE EVENT
Send a reminder to all who registered; include directions to the venue and parking details.

HINT no. 10
A reminder sent out 1–2 days before the event increases participation by 8 %. Don't forget to invite the media to your event.

1 DAY AFTER THE EVENT
Continue communication with your participants, save memories and strengthen relationships (thank-you notes, final assessments, gifts and memories). You can take the opportunity to advertise your next event with possible advantages for regular participants.

HINT no. 11
A digital thank-you note sent within 24 hours after the event means a probability for further clicks greater by 150 % than a note sent 25 or more hours after the event.

1 WEEK AFTER THE EVENT
Publish the video content to remind the participants how much fun they had at the event and convince others to attend future events.

HINT no. 12
Send statistics with feedback collected through the IDC platform to the performers, speakers and exhibitors, about attendance at their talks and stalls.

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ID.Conference is all-around event managing platform solution for organizers and attendees.
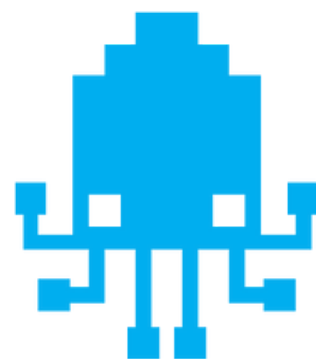
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