

Program Checklist

Programs just don't happen overnight. Planning, thought, and resources must be dedicated to achieve the best possible program. The following is a checklist of items you may need to accomplish your programming needs.

1. Needs Assessment –The process for finding out what programs are wanted, needed, or useful. There are several ways to assess the needs and interest of the audiences.
 - Listen to what people around you are talking about.
 - Survey the students.
 - Put suggestion boxes up in the residence halls, or at your events.
 - Assess:
 - What are your organizational goals and how does each idea help you meet them?
 - What activity or program will satisfy organizational or target audience needs?
 - Do we have enough time, financial and personnel resources to produce the activity or program?
 - Are your members enthusiastic about organizing this event?
2. Pre-Planning
 - Brainstorm: One way to formulate ideas is through brainstorming. After you have a list of ideas, begin expanding from them and evaluate them as possible program ideas. Some ideas will need to be eliminated when you consider these factors:
 - Identify all possible activities and programs.
 - List available resources
 - Time involved.
 - Money involved.
 - Supplies needed.
 - Scheduling conflicts.
 - Lack of resources of facilities.
 - Check:
 - Is there an appropriate space or venue available on the date you have chosen?
 - Is the talent or speaker available on the date you have selected?
 - Are there activities or programs already planned that could conflict with your program?
 - Select:
 - Why are we interested in doing it?
 - Who are we doing it for?
 - What will be gained by the implementation of our program or activity?
 - Assess students 'needs
3. Covering the Basics
 - Register as a student Organization
 - Reserve possible room (Student Center Reservations, 257-5781)
 - Program Funding (Student Government, 257-3191)
 - Gain support
 - Create committees
4. Planning the Program – What needs to be done and who is going to do it.
 - Give ownership to the person who had the idea to increase motivation.

- Give equal importance to each part of the program.
 - Set up subcommittees, with specific responsibilities and timelines.
 - Use program checklists and backward calendars.
 - Be aware of other on-campus activities to prevent conflicts in scheduling.
 - Utilize campus resources as program presenters.
 - Check all arrangements the day prior to and after the program.
 - Give specific directions when delegating responsibility.
 - Outline event format.
 - Setup a marketing/promotional plan.
 - Determine setup and/or catering details.
 - Develop a budget and create staffing plan.
 - Establish a contingency plan. (What if?)
5. Setting Course
- Equipment needed – projector, cash box, tickets, PA system, etc.
 - Make technical requirements – projectionist, electrician, custodial
 - Task sheet for volunteers
 - Contracts – negotiate well in advance of program date
 - Reserve transportation
 - Reserve Hotel/Rooming arrangements
 - Marketing Plan – Fliers, posters, banners, etc.
 - Food Arrangements – (Catering Services, 257-1741)
 - Confirm all arrangements 1 week before event
 - Purchase supplies –Keep all receipts
 - Worker/Volunteer Sign-up sheets
 - Plan hospitality
 - Plan introduction
 - Create an itinerary and brief volunteers
6. Secure Funding and Co-sponsorship
- Organizational funds
 - Ticket sales
 - Co-sponsorship
 - Fundraising activities
 - Donations/corporate sponsorships
7. Adjust Event Production Plan
- Adjust plans & budget and make sure you have enough funds to pay for the event.
8. Spending Your Money
- Outside Bank Account.
 - Always keep receipts.
9. Marketing –Develop good publicity and promotional techniques to ensure a successful program. Suggestions to keep in mind when publicizing events are:
- Identify who will be interested in your program. Target your audience! Different aspects may attract different groups for co-sponsorship – not just for money, but also for a larger audience pull.

- Identify what your program's main selling points are. What makes your program unique – “why should I come?”
 - Plan the timing, means, and locations of your promotion. Promote two weeks before the event. Promotion should build – just like excitement does.
 - When promoting, you should use a YOU approach – put ball in their court. Establish an identity for the program. Truth in advertising – don't mislead.
 - Effective points to remember:
 - Concentrate on one feature, not three or four
 - Maintain consistency in advertising to give a clear message
 - Take all advertising down after the event
 - KISS –Keep it short and simple
10. Work/Implement
- Schedule regular event production meetings.
 - Finalize contract arrangements on performer price, travel and any special requirements.
 - Arrange for setup, technical requirements, and catering details.
11. Produce the Event
- Follow Schedule
 - Arrive early to check the set-up, greet the performer, and do last minute preparations.
 - Welcoming Committee
 - Inspect your equipment, supplies, etc. early – have backups prepared.
 - Check on all items –hospitality, food, room set-up, etc.
 - Meet and escort performer
 - Be prepared to introduce the program and presenters.
 - Be ready to “go with the flow ” as the need arises.
 - Strive to impose a clear-cut opening and closing of the program.
 - If audience turnout isn't what the committee expected, don't give-up during or after the program.
 - Watch it happen and have fun; note what worked well and what did not.
 - Evaluate after the program is over.
12. Program Completion and Follow Up - This is one of the most important aspects of the program. Complete evaluations will help you and those to come in future planning.
- Escort Performer
 - Clean room/venue
 - Take down all advertisements
 - Evaluations/recommendations –audience/member surveys, round tables, etc. Always fill out a program evaluation form immediately. Encourage honest feedback from participants.
 - Discuss your evaluation with your advisor/organization.
 - Thank you's.
 - Pay performer
 - Did the event meet the expectations set in the original proposal?
 - Look for positive experiences gained by all.

- Send thank-you cards, pay remaining bills, and organize the paper work from the event.
13. Have fun. Programming is a great way to get the most from your education so enjoy it!

Typical Time Line

Two to Three Months Prior To The Event:

- Check availability of desired space and equipment.
- Establish budget and arrange the funding for the event.
- Review and develop an understanding of the ticket policy and any other relevant policies, regulations or laws.
- Establish a publicity plan.
- Negotiate with performer for date, time, place and compensation (do not make any promises at this point).

Eight Weeks Prior to Event:

- Arrange for advance ticket sales (if any).
- Begin implementing the publicity plan.
- Order promotional and other printed material that will be needed.

Six Weeks Prior to Event:

- Revise budget as actual costs become known.
- Send any promotional mailings for event.

Four Weeks Prior to Event:

- Review and change publicity plan as needed.
- Revise budget as actual costs become known.
- Confirm room and equipment needs of performer.
- Confirm (by phone and letter) performer's travel plans and setup needs.
- Check to insure that all University paperwork is being processed (room setup, equipment rentals, performer compensations, etc.).
- Send out press releases and public service announcements (if they are part of the publicity plan).

Two Weeks Prior to Event:

- Check advance ticket sales (if any).
- Confirm that the publicity plan is on time and within budget.
- Implement any last minute publicity that may be needed.
- "Walk through" the event and double check that everything has been arranged and requested.
- Confirm staffing needs.

Week of the Event:

- Publicity plan completed.
- Budget revision completed.
- Last minute publicity completed.
- Final arrangements and double checks on all aspects of the event completed.
- Make arrangements to meet the performer upon arrival.

Day of the Event:

- Check all arrangements early. If a change is needed you will need time to make or request the change.
- Be available for the unexpected.
- Meet and greet the performer upon arrival.

Follow Up - Within One Week After Event:

- Thank you letters to all involved groups and individuals.
- Clip and save any press coverage.
- Make final actual budget and pay all remaining bills.

Write an evaluation of the event outlining your process, recommendations for the future and final budget.

Backwards Planning

Backwards planning is an efficient way to ensure that all tasks get completed before your program. By working backwards before you ever start to go forward, you run less chance of overlooking an important component.

Here 's how it works!

1. Make a list of the tasks, which need to be completed before the program begins.
2. Using a calendar, start with the last task on your list to be completed before the program.
3. Write it on your planning calendar on the appropriate date, and then consider its components or sub-tasks. If there are component tasks which need to be completed, work backwards with them and plug them into the calendar.
4. Then proceed with the next to the last task to be completed, and so on.

For example, assume that your program date is October 1. As you look through the list of 25 tasks, which need to be completed between today and then, you decide that visitor 's schedules should be completed and in the hands of those involved by September 16. Since you know that there are 10 schedules, you decide that they must be ready for typing by September 15. That means that you need travel schedules, times, and places of activities, accommodations by that date. But the travel department requires two weeks notice. So this component task must be completed by September 1. Then continue forward until all the tasks are on your calendar and you are ready to start working on your program today!