

EVENT TIMELINE

Keep in mind that your event may not require this much time to set up. Use it as a tool to help you plan ahead, and adapt it to meet the needs of your particular event.

START 6-12 MONTHS BEFORE

- Determine the purpose or objectives of your event.
- Identify key elements. Contact provider of each element to find out how far in advance you need to make arrangements.
- Pick a theme/content.
- Establish your budget. Estimate the number of attendees you can accommodate.
- Choose and book your location.
- Make a concrete plan. Define all action items and deadlines.
- Define your team. Delegate and make your team accountable.
- Research vendors.
- Create a timeline.
- Choose/book your entertainment/activities, if applicable.
- Create back-up plans. Be prepared for the unexpected such as bad weather, entertainment no shows, equipment problems, and medical emergencies. Draw up a list of alternate locations.
- Make sure you receive confirmation of your facility arrangements and confirmation from any speaker(s)/guest(s), if applicable.
- Recruit volunteers.
- Seek out key decision makers whose approval or involvement will be needed to make this event happen.
- Obtain liability insurance and other required licenses/permits.
- Create your contact list and keep developing this list.
- Find the best way to communicate. Communicate clearly and often.

3-6 MONTHS BEFORE

- Order equipment, tables, chairs, platforms, audio-visual/electrical needs, props/staging, and food/catering.
- Make arrangements for transportation, parking, security, and public toilets, when applicable.
- Contact printers if you are professionally printing your agenda/invitations.
- Mail invitations or announcements for those folks requiring significant advance notice.
- Create your publicity plan. Develop press materials. Contact media requiring long leads. You may need to start contacting some media even earlier, e.g. magazines or annual/bi-annual publications.
- Order any giveaways.
- Communicate clearly and often.

1-2 MONTHS BEFORE

- Reconfirm all speaker/entertainer/activity requirements.
- Print and mail invitations or announcements, if not done already.
- Print or create any signs/banners/posters needed.
- Confirm all food and beverage selections/delivery dates/requirements.
- Continue follow-up with any outside suppliers/vendors.
- Communicate clearly and often. You may want to meet once a week with your team.

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Reconfirm all outside supplier/vendor/entertainer logistics.
- Prepare badges/name tags if needed.
- Call attendees/guests if follow-up is necessary.
- Confirm transportation/security/parking/sanitation facilities arrangements.
- Confirm special needs arrangements with event facility, e.g. audio-visual, furniture rental, and access for the disabled.
- Confirm/prepare other props/decorations.
- Communicate clearly and often. You may want to touch base with your team once a day at this point.

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Conduct on-site check. You may want to meet with vendors/ suppliers on site to finalize deliverables/set-up/time of delivery.
- Finalize time and agenda for facilities and suppliers.
- Create on-site team/staff meeting schedule, assigned tasks, and required attendance list. Meet with team to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Schedule any transportation pick-ups for VIPs, entertainers, and other guests as needed.
- Contact local media for publicity.
- Communicate clearly and often.

DAY BEFORE AND DAY OF EVENT

- Complete set-up at location.
- Check that all your back-up plans are ready to go, too.
- Touch base with team one more time, if needed.
- Follow up with local media for publicity. Continue pitch calls.
- Mobilize and energize your team, and keep cool!

AFTER EVENT

- Pack and conduct inventory of materials.
- Conduct post-event review, lessons learned, and reconcile budget.
- Send thank you letters to team and others, as needed.