

Event Planning Checklist

To accomplish any task successfully, it is vital that there is orderliness. Imagine going shopping for groceries without a list; you are sure to forget something or the other. While shopping for grocery is not such a crucial activity, an event that you host, no matter how small the gathering, has to be executed with precision. Merely hiring an event planner is not the end of your responsibility; it is only a means to an end. An event-planning checklist will assist you in keeping things under control and successfully planning any event.

To prepare a checklist you take hold of a good material to prepare the checklist on. It could be a hardbound diary or a few sheets of paper clipped together, but it should be sturdy enough to last a few weeks, and for future reference as well.

Checklist

Before the Event

1. Initial Estimates:

- Focus on the purpose of the event and decide the theme.
- Determine the number and age groups of the guests expected, keeping a margin for entries to be made later on.

2. Search for Event Managers:

- Check the profiles of various event planning sites and event planners.
- Negotiate with the event planners and obtain details about their facilities, budget estimates, vendors, arrangements of food, drinks, entertainment, lodging, sound and light, licensing, decorations, photographers, designing, hotel bookings, transportation etc.
- Make checks to satisfy yourself before finalizing any event manager. Hold auditions for the entertainment events, obtain portfolios of vendors, try out the dishes, visit the recommended venue etc.
- Shortlist the event planners according to your priorities. Some of you might have a tight budget while the others could have other priorities.

3. Hiring Event Managers:

- Finalize the event planner and make all final agreements and contracts in writing.
- Cross-check the dates and timings of the events planned, make the initial payments and keep a track of all the receipts of the payments made.
- Make arrangements for alternative sites or event planners. Keep the list of event - planners handy for future reference in case of emergency.

4. Invitations:

- Prepare a list of guests along with their contact details.
- Decide the sequence of events keeping in mind the speeches, the meals, entertainment items, special events etc. Make a rough estimate of the time required keeping in mind the delays in arrival of special guests and other minor delays.
- Obtain a suitable invitation. You could hire a designer for the task or you could go in for custom-made invitations that are easily available.
- Send out the invitations to the guests in time. Ask them to follow up with an acceptance or declining of invitation. For a small party also this is useful as it will allow you to estimate the final count of guests.
- Keep a count of the accepted invitations.

5. Marketing

- Decide the way of marketing and publishing about the event, if need be, through press releases, advertisements, calendar listings etc. Co-ordinate with the event manager for

this.

6. Review:

- Check the menu with the event planner and arrange a meeting with the caterers.
- Monitor the arrangements for the materials required.
- Check the arrangements, follow up on phone, and visit the site for monitoring progress.
- Fix up the traveling timings and routes with the transportation services.
- Confirm security arrangements.
- Confirm and schedule deliveries of special equipment, rentals, party decorators, caterers etc.

Two-Three Days before the Event

1. Finish seating, stage and table arrangements.
2. Finalize duties to various persons involved. Arrange for seconds or standbys.
3. Give a briefing to the hosts explaining the sequence of events, assign the duties, distribute lists etc.
4. Reconfirm all bookings: delivery of any rented equipment, arrival time and delivery times, transportation, deliver final details and timelines, photographers, caterers, flight schedules etc.
5. Sign cheques for payments to be made immediately before or on the day of the event. Keep some money handy for emergencies.

On the Day of the Event

1. Arrive early.
2. Check the arrangements.
3. Be sure all VIPs are welcomed and seated properly.
4. Monitor the service of snacks and refreshments.
5. Monitor the sequence of events.
6. See that the food is laid in time.
7. See that the guests leave through the transportation arranged.
8. Make the required payments and obtain the signatures.

After the Event

1. Pay the bills only after obtaining full details.
 2. Get the signatures for all bills paid.
 3. Check that the rented equipment is sent back in time; else, you will be charged for the extra rental time.
-