"Hosting a Successful Event

Consider the following details when planning your Event:

Objectives	*Technology and sound*
Audience	*Speakers*
Content	*Agenda*
Title	*Timeframe*
Budget	*Follow-up*

Objective of the event:

When hosting a successful event it is important to outline the objectives of the meeting or conference. Are you trying to?

- Increase sales
- Train employees on new skills
- Inspire and motivate people and reward them for a successful year.

Audience:

Who is your target audience?

Being specific on this will allow you to tailor your content and marketing activities to attract the right audience. It is important to target an audience that is receptive to the objectives of the event. Knowing your audience will allow you to target specific attendees using tools such as social media.

Content:

Content is critical. Although companies often hold conferences so they can achieve a specific outcome it is very important that the audience gleans benefit from the event. An event is more likely to be successful if the audience is looking forward to receiving the content. When creating the agenda it is important to look at the content and the inspiration and the motivational message. When organizing events we often try and fill the day with content but the most talked about aspects of a conference or event is often the inspirational or motivational messages.

Title:
When creating a title it is important to capture the theme of the event and the reason for the conference or meeting. In today's conferences it is also important to look at the ability to include the title in social media. Make sure the title can be included in such things as hash tags, twitter feeds and other social media promotions.

Budget:
It is important to have a good understanding of your budget when planning your event. Many events go over budget due to the fact the proper homework wasn't done in advance regarding all of the related cost. It's also important to understand your budget when looking for sponsors to help share the expense of the event.

Be sure to look at such things as:

- Registration fees and data collection
- Venue, including meals and related cost
- Travel cost
- Speakers Fees
- Sound and AV cost
- Advertising and marketing
- Web hosting and related technology cost
- Gifts for participants and speakers

Technology and sound:
This is an area of a conference that is often overlooked by organizers. The quality of sound and visual presentation can make or break an event. Poor sound quality is one of the number one reasons proper messages are not conveyed to the participants. When planning your event use a reputable AV company and if using a hotel sound system make sure the quality is adequate for the size of your audience. I cannot stress this one enough!

Speakers
When choosing a speaker make sure their content is relevant to the theme of your event. it is also important to have the content flow smoothly throughout the day. Build some extra time between sessions in the event one speaker goes over their time limit. To be fair to the other speakers it is hard for them to remove content on the fly to help get your event back on time. Be sure to check the references of the speaker because your keynote speakers can make or break an event.

Agenda:
Create a logical flow in your content for the agenda. Be sure to add lighter material between content rich sessions. It is often a good idea to end your day on a high note and do more content rich material during morning sessions. Build some extra time into your agenda to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Timeframe:

When it comes to running successful events timing is everything.

- Be sure to check and see what other events that may be occurring in the same timeframe as your planned event. Running a business session at the same time your local chamber is running a tradeshow can really impact your attendance.
- Holding a one-day event Tuesday's to Thursdays have a higher turnout.
- Don't run events just before or after a holiday.

Incentives:

Create incentives to encourage people to register for your events early. With the increase in web traffic it is important to market and advertise consistently and frequently leading up to your event. The first incentive should be for early registration. That can include a free giveaway or early bird pricing. A second incentive can be built around scarcity. That can include a limited number of VIP seats or special products given to a limited number of people. If you are giving product away at the event be mindful of people traveling with gifts.

Follow-up:

Follow-up is often overlooked at conferences. This can be one of the most important steps. Proper follow-up will ensure a good turnout for future events. Organizers often wonder why the turnout at a current event is less than the year before. They often blame it on the marketing for their current event, the speaker lineup or the agenda, but it actually may have been something done wrong the year before that discouraged participants from coming back. Some great ways to follow up may include:

- Online evaluations
- Sending participants content from the event
- Follow-up newsletter outlining the highlights of the event
- Social media pages created specific to the event

Wishing you a successful event

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