

The 7 Biggest Mistakes in Special Event Planning - and How to Avoid

Them.

By Matt Cherry

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Ever hear the expression: “You can never be too rich or too thin?” In the case of special events planning, you can never be too organized.

Events are critical in providing outreach and exposure for an organization, and some can often be an excellent fund- and friend-raising tool. However, it’s easy to make a mistake when there are so many details. And those mistakes could cost you your reputation and customers if you’re not on top of every detail.

Here are the most common mistakes made – and the solutions – to help avoid such problems:

Mistake #1: Failing to identify meeting objectives. Be sure to know one hundred percent what your management expects from this event. Examples: education, recruiting, awards presentations, new product roll-out, executive installation, etc.

Mistake #2: Failing to budget properly. Many planners make this mistake by overlooking some very costly items. Specifically speaker travel, audio/visual, program handouts, shipping charges, decorations, security, and afternoon breaks. Don’t overlook these costs!

Mistake #3: Failing to have a plan. This is probably the most common error that hurts an event. Many planners try to run an event without a plan and detailed checklist – missing important details that could make or break the event. Lighting, seating, room temperature, music, decorations, audio/visual, and location of the bathrooms and telephones are just some of the details that are often forgotten.

Mistake #4: Failing to select the right facility. It’s location, location, location! Depending on the locale of your attendees, proximity to the airport, sleeping room costs, freeways, major thoroughfares and traffic patterns are critical. Meeting room location, meeting room size, and parking fees all affect your attendance.

Mistake #5: Failing to work out who should be coming and how to reach them. I can’t tell you how many times I have seen events fail because of this one factor. Secure your entire list before securing your date in writing. Be sure your list has all names, titles, mailing addresses, fax numbers,

and e-mail addresses. Your attendees can't register if you can't reach them.

Mistake #6: Failing to secure contracts. Here's where you can really run into trouble. Do NOT promote your event without legible, signed contracts for everything including your speaker, facility, and other contractors.

Mistake #7: Failing to market the event properly. Once you've created your marketing plan, stick to it! Once your event is booked it's critical all of your marketing contacts go as planned. Remember to use every means to reach your attendees. One method alone doesn't reach everyone because we are all different.

About the author:

Matt Cherry helps businesses and nonprofit organizations to be heard. He's a marketing communications and event planning expert with more than 10 years experience and the vice president of Cherry Communications. For more tips and tricks – or information, visit www.cherrycommunications.com . Contact him at matt@cherrycommunications.com.

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