

**MYEVENT
BOSS**



TOP MISTAKES THAT HAPPEN

When Planning Events
& Possible Solutions

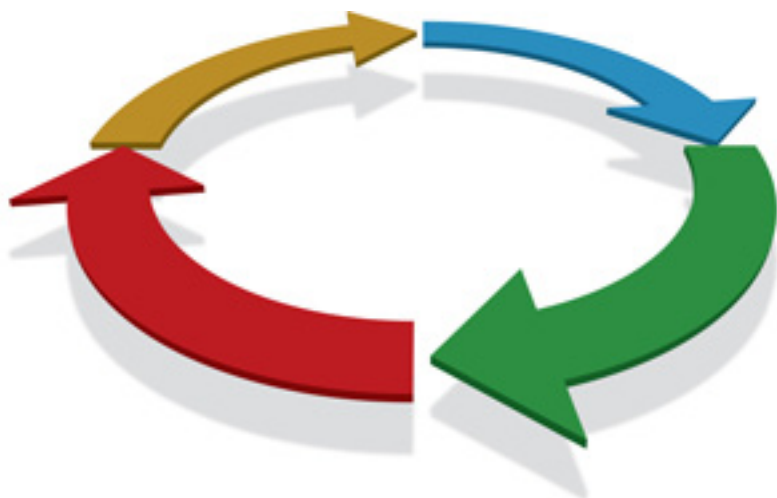
Solu

Most Common Mistakes When Planning Events and Possible Solutions

Nobody wants to make mistakes, especially if a huge amount of money and your reputation is riding on what you are doing. Not only does it make you look bad in front of your client and in front of the people you are serving, but it also makes you appear incompetent in the eyes of those you work with.

When planning an event, it's very possible that unforeseen circumstances, which could cause some form of inconvenience, can occur. This is most especially true when you're just starting out in this industry. However, as long as you are aware that there are certain elements that you are in total control of, then it should be too hard to find a solution or workaround to these mistakes.

Mistake no. 1 - Giving Your Event a Short Marketing Cycle:



This is one mistake quite a few people make when it comes to planning events. It usually occurs when people don't realize what their clients want. But what exactly is a "short marketing cycle" and why does this mistake even occur?

Let us begin by explaining what a marketing cycle is and what an ideal marketing cycle should be for an event to succeed. A marketing cycle is the amount of time you give yourself to put together AND to promote your event.

This involves advertising the event, as well as promoting it to people and companies you know might be interested in these events. Attendance is also a must. Make sure to pre-book attendance and to have your attendees confirm and pay for these reservations as well.

As long as you have the right suppliers and connections, the right skills and the right people to work with, putting together an event can actually take very little time to accomplish. Promoting and marketing an event on the other hand requires a bit more of time and effort in order for you to really profit from it.

People who find themselves working on an event with very little time to promote and market it properly are those who do not know that what they are doing is wrong. Another reason behind this is that those who are being pressured by their clients find themselves with very little time to properly pitch the event to possible attendees.

If the client brings in his or her own attendees, then the latter case shouldn't be too much of a problem. However, it can be a huge headache if your client tells you to put together an event AND bring in the number of attendees they expect for such an event. Putting a time constraint on this condition makes the event even more difficult.

When these things happen, you can either let your client know that you cannot do it (which can work against you in this industry, should the client decide to badmouth you) or you can be firm about what needs to be done and stand your ground regarding your marketing and planning time-frames.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: This dilemma is actually avoidable, if you are in total control of your event. If you are told by your client that you have autonomy over the entire plan and marketing cycle of the event, then this can work in your favor. You can run with the proper planning and marketing cycle of most events, which is between 90 days and 120 days for medium sized events that are expected to bring in a little under-100 people. This means that the bigger the event you are to put together, the more time you may need to market your event.

If your dilemma is brought about by a client that insists on giving you less than the proper amount of time needed for a good event marketing cycle, you can go about this problem two ways – you can insist that what they want will only lower the possible earning capability of their event and that it will make them only lose a lot of money, or you can go with what they want AND try to put together the event as best as you can while trying to keep your head above the water.

It is best if you try to convince your client that a longer lead time for marketing is needed and to get them to understand that in order for them (and you) to make money from this venture, ensuring that you have most of the seats pre-sold and booked before the event is the best way to go. You will need to convince them that the only way you can get this done is to give you enough time to promote and advertise the event.

Mistake No. 2 – Failing to Have a Detailed Event Plan:

Some people have this mistaken notion that putting together an event is a piece of cake. What they do not know is that most of the events that run smoothly and almost flawlessly are the result of careful and meticulous planning. Planning events requires a person to be a bit of a control freak, a PR expert, a negotiations maverick, a whiz at setting things up, and a genius at budgeting.



You will also need to be constantly on top of things. To do this, you have to keep constant track of the tasks that need to be done as well as the tasks that have been accomplished. Some planners find their events falling apart even before the day of the event itself. This is because of a lot of small but essential things that fall through the cracks. This often happens when there is no detailed plan in place for the event planner and their staff to follow and keep track of.

Sometimes, not knowing what is needed is the reason behind not having a very detailed plan. Other times, it is in neglecting to note down what your event needs and thinking that you have it all “in your head.” The former is often the result of lack of experience or research on how to properly put together events and the latter is often the result of cockiness and overconfidence.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: This is similar to the first point discussed, where there is a certain degree of control involved with the situation. A detailed plan is something a great event planner always puts together for every event that they have. These plans do more than simply list down what needs to be done, what should be arranged, who to hire and what to buy. The plans that a great event planner often puts together consists of a number of checklists that have to contain every single detail of the event and what needs to be done in order to accomplish the tasks written on these lists.

There are quite a few checklists that you will need to put together for your event and the first one often consists of the things you need to do and the amount of time you set for these to be done. Called a Planning Timeline, this list should carry details like when to visit suppliers and which suppliers to prioritize; when to check out venues and what to ask proprietors about these venues; when to meet with speakers and what to offer them in terms of compensation and incentives, and a whole lot more.

This Planning Timeline should cover the start of the planning process. Also consider whether this is your own event or one contracted for you to do by a client. Finally, you should also end the list with what needs to be done after the event. Another useful detail that should be included is a sub-list of personnel with specific task designations. If you need to specify how something should be done, you can also include this in your detailed event plan.

Always remember, it is better to be prepared for everything and to have your plans in order than to have an event fall apart simply because you forgot to list a few important things down from the very beginning.

Mistake No. 3. – Failing to Put Together an Itemized Budget:



This is probably one of the worst things that you can do when you plan an event. Not having a budget listed down according to what needs to be done can be disastrous, both to your reputation and your checkbook.

This mistake goes hand in hand with not having a detailed plan to work with. If you do not have a detailed plan, how can you create an itemized budget for your event? This is why it is imperative to always start any event with a step-by-step event plan. Ironically, most of the people who neglect to put together an itemized budget actually

have a budget planned and laid out for their events. The big difference here is that they don't have a detailed budget plan that takes into account every expense the event has and will incur. They oftentimes forget that small expenditures over time, when added up, can amount to quite a huge sum of money and this sum can often bring huge problems with it.

Others also forget to take into consideration any variable changes to the budget that accrue over time, especially when it's finally time to settle the payments. Some of the items on their list may become more expensive when the time comes for them to shell out the money. This is another prob-

lem that can be easily addressed and can be avoided.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: Coming up with a budget that is detailed and itemized is basically the solution for this one. Although, you should be prepared for those times when even a well-planned out budget is not followed to the very last decimal point. And, truth be told, it rarely is. There are a number of things that can go wrong even with a well-planned and detailed budget. Some of these include sudden price increases in the materials needed for your event, unexpected budget cuts enacted by your client, emergencies that can cause a speaker to cancel at the last minute and the need to hire someone costlier to fill in – the list can go on.

So what can an itemized budget do then when these things happen? Well, an itemized budget will help you keep your expenses within a set range. While this cannot prevent such emergencies from occurring, you can slightly increase the amount you put beside each item on your list to account for possible changes in prices. These allowances can help you keep within or close to your original budget even if some emergencies and accidents do occur.

Another thing you can do to avoid going over your set event budget is to prepare alternatives to your choices. The alternatives you need to prepare should be for those things that can be easily replaced without having to worry about contracts and other similar problems. Examples of things you can replace or substitute with lower costing items include materials needed for printing flyers, meal tickets and programs.

Mistake no. 4 – Paying More Than You Should:

This mistake often stems from two things – laziness and poor judgment. Whatever the reason may be, paying more than is necessary for items, services and venues, when there are other cheaper and more cost-effective options is a mistake that you can do without.

Of course, this mistake may be unavoidable if a client insists on certain venues, items and services that cost more than the alternatives that you have considered. When this happens, you can either show them the difference between the prices of the options you have prepared, or you can let them have their way, provided that they cover the extra cost.

Another reason why you may find yourself paying more than you should is when you go over your scheduled time for the use of certain services or venues. Going over your scheduled time often means you will have to pay for the extra time of the equipment, venue and services that you have commissioned.

Overstaffing is another reason why event planners find themselves paying more than they should for their events. Increased costs can also be blamed on too many people working on an event when less could have sufficed.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: For this dilemma, the money you can save is often dependent on the scope of the planned activities. Paying more than what you should is always avoidable if you keep yourself updated with regards to the costs of most everything needed for an event. The cost



of venues, services and materials needed for putting together an event rarely change overnight. It is therefore suggested that the amount you are quoted when you research for an event that you are planning should hold up for at least 6 months.

It would also be a good idea to ask for updates regarding these essentials for events every six months. This will help you keep your event budget in check and keep you from shelling out more money than you should when the bill payments arrive.

If your client insists on a venue, a particular service or materials for their event, you will need to include the increase in cost into your budget. You will also need to inform your client of the higher amount needed for what they want and don't forget to show them other options that can help lower costs.

When paying for a particular service, like audio/visual services or when you hire outside catering services, you will need to make sure that you do not get these contracted parties to go over the time agreed upon in the contract. Most contracts with these services often state that going over the allotted time for your usage is equivalent to an overtime fee and these fees are significantly higher than what you would regularly pay.

For staffing issues, it is often best that you retain only a few permanent staff members and hire temporary employees when the need arises. A lot of event planners often do this primarily to cut costs. The people they hire on a temporary basis often understand why they are not retained for all of the events a planner puts together.

Mistake no. 5 – Program Scheduling Problems:

There are a couple of types of program scheduling issues that you will want to avoid. One involves how your program is set up for your event and another involves the actual running of your scheduled program. Some event planners commit the mistake of not plotting a program well enough to fully capitalize on their event. Others find that their event is not running on time, which will translate to either extending the hours of the program or having to move some of the day's events for another day.

Any of these will cost you time, money, undue stress and even unsatisfied attendees. Making this mistake can also tarnish your reputation, which can translate to lower sales and bookings in the future. This is why it is important for you to be careful when you schedule your events and your programs.

Sometimes, these scheduling problems occur not because of what you do but because of what some of your speakers do. For example, a program can run behind schedule if a speaker uses more than his allotted time on stage and starts eating into the time that is supposed reserved for the next speaker. Scheduling problems can also happen when your speaker does not arrive on time for his part of your program or if they forget something they need for their stage time and have to run back to their room to get it.



Another issue you might find yourself facing is not in getting things to run on time. but in making the most profit from the program you put together. Selling from the stage is one of the key moneymakers in these events and not being able to profit from the time your speakers spend onstage can mean thousands of dollars down the drain.

This mistake often arises when event planners don't know how to arrange the order of their speakers in such a way that profit is maximized. Sometimes, the mistake lies in not telling these presenters to try and sell from the stage in order to increase your event revenues. Still another reason why this mistake happens is when you actually do not prepare anything to sell at your event.

Other reasons why these events may not run according to your set time and schedule include not being strict with starting your next speakers on time after breaks, not imposing the time allotted for breaks and not starting your program according to what is mentioned in your schedule simply because some of your attendees are late.

Any of these reasons can cost you money, your reputation as an event planner, possible revenues and even future bookings that may not push through.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: There are a lot of things that you can do to avoid the mistakes that come with program scheduling. You will need to remember that research plays a vital role in putting together a lucrative and smooth running program. You will also need to make sure that you arrange your program according to the importance of what the speaker has to say and according to how much their products cost.

To make the most from what your speakers are pitching, you should arrange your speakers with the ones selling the cheaper products going first and the ones with the more expensive items going last. You can also make sure that you make more money from your programs by having your presenters sell from the stage.

ing over its allotted time and keeping speakers from going over their time onstage is also important. To do this, you will need to take care of a number of things that can stop these things from happening in the first place. One of the things you will need is a checklist for each speaker. Having each speaker go over their respective checklists before heading to the meeting hall or room helps ensure that your speakers have everything they need before they even get to the stage.

Aside from these, you will also need to have measures in place to make sure that your presenters do not go beyond their speaking times onstage. You will need to inform your host to step in as soon as the speaker's time for closing their talk is on hand. You will also need to have placards that carry time warnings and wind-down messages that your speakers can read from all the way to the back of the room to remind them that they should close their talk soon.

Another thing you can do to ensure that your events run on schedule is to strictly follow your program. Breaks should be strictly followed, and starting times adhered to. All questions for your speakers should either be thrown at them at an allotted time after their talks or during a separate forum where your attendees can actually mingle with them and get a chance to learn more from these presenters in a more casual atmosphere. These will help you keep your programs flowing smoothly without fear of going over your program schedule and without having your attendees miss out on anything from your speakers as well.

Mismanaging the time is not the worst thing that can happen during these events. Loss of revenue

is also another dilemma you face when you don't know how to plan your program schedules properly. To avoid losing a lot of income from lost sales and future bookings, you will need to have a program that not only gives your presenters and yourself the opportunity to sell your wares, but also gives your attendees everything they need in terms of information and learning.

Always try to have set snack times when you hold your events. This will encourage your attendees to focus on what is being said onstage instead of getting distracted by what they are eating or drinking. Coffee and water breaks should be scheduled along with bathroom breaks in order for your speakers and your attendees to get the most out of your event. Sticking to a set schedule and trying to get everyone to adhere to it will help you avoid any of the program scheduling snafus that are mentioned above.

Mistake no. 6– Not Fulfilling Your Event's Promise:

This is one of the worst mistakes that you could make from a reputation standpoint. Imagine telling attendees that they will learn how to read a book from cover to cover in one hour if they attend your event and they end up learning very little about the event's supposed goal.

Meeting the expectations of your attendees and delivering on what you promise when you put together an event is crucial to building a solid reputation as an event planner. Anything you do that does not deliver will mean a point against your event planning career.

Never make promises you do not intend to keep, or you will find it difficult to follow through on your next event. When you market your event, always keep in mind that what you tell your attendees is what they will expect. If you fail to deliver, they will feel like they were cheated, especially since these attendees do pay for what you tell them you will be giving them.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: If some of the things you told your clientele won't be presented during the event for some reason or another, always inform your attendees of the changes. Always have an alternative ready in case one of your presenters or your speakers fails to make it to your event. Try to make sure that what you replace these presentations and talks with are either equivalent to or better than them.

If for some reason you cannot replace any of the presenters that cannot make it to your event with something similar, you may need to inform your attendees of this and tell them of the changes in the program. Try to replace the emptied spots in your program with worthwhile alternatives that will still have something to do with the goal of the event.

Another thing you can do to prevent something like this from happening is to ensure that everything



you tell your attendees will indeed happen. Never make assurances and claims that are too good to be true unless you can support these claims. For example, if you promise your attendees that they can learn to write a book in two weeks by attending your event, make sure that what is taught to them during the event can indeed help them do just that. Do not guarantee that they will be able to write the book in two weeks, but instead tell them that they will learn skills that will aid them in doing just that.

Mistake no. 7 – Penny Pinching and Not Spending Enough:

If you do not want to be called cheap and if you do not want people to think you are not giving them their money's worth, you better be sure that you are spending enough on your events. This mistake is the exact opposite of spending too much on an event and can also create event and career problems for you.



How does an event planner end up becoming a penny pincher and how can one avoid doing this? When you try to look for venues, caterers, hotels and everything else that is needed for putting together an event, you will want to look for the most reasonable choices. That does not mean however that you should choose the cheapest ones around and have quality suffer simply because you want to save a few dollars.

Some event planners may think that they can help their attendees save more by giving them cheaper alternatives so they can lower the fees

that their attendees have to shell out. Others think that these things won't really matter that much as long as they deliver what they promise their attendees in terms of what they will learn from the event.

This kind of a mistake will brand you as an event planner without finesse or someone who does not put their attendees in the forefront of their event plans. Always plan for your attendees as well as for yourself and that means giving them a decent event while giving yourself the kind of profit you are looking for.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: The main solution to this dilemma can be summed up in one word – compromise. Compromise is a good thing because it helps you meet your goals as well as satisfy your attendees and clients. You need to understand that when people pay to learn something from you with the help of your event, you do not just tell them what to do and leave them to sit on uncomfortable seats, drink nasty tasting coffee and eat tasteless meals.

You will need to see to the comfort of your attendees while at the same time, not spend more than what you plan to spend on your event in the first place. The trick to doing this is in how you negotiate with good quality venues and catering companies, or in finding reasonably priced venues and food providers that will give you the kind of quality you need without having to haggle over prices. You can actually find high quality venues and catering companies that are willing to lower their prices for you, provided that you choose them for your next few events as well. Some of these companies and venues can also be had for reasonably low costs during off-peak or off-season months. Try to book good venues and caterers for your events ahead of time as well in order to avail of

lower prices and have whatever you agree upon put down in writing so as to avoid sudden changes in what was agreed upon when the day of your event comes around.

Try to find venues and caterers that can give you good deals by asking about who each one recommends. Most venues and caterers have businesses that they have exchange deals with or are more comfortable working with and pairing these two together can prove to be a good idea, if you are working with a quality caterer who wants to work only with established locales or venues who do not want sub-par caterers in their establishments.

If you want to find venues that are reasonably priced, presentable enough and can cater your events themselves, you might want to check out local nightclubs and bars that double as events locations during the day. You can also try to check out restaurants and wedding halls that can do the same thing as well. These locales can help you with small to medium sized corporate and business events without your having to worry about the quality of the food or the appearance of the venue. Always keep in mind that you will need to be able to make your attendees feel that they are indeed getting their money's worth and not just in what you give them in terms of learning and products but in what they eat, drink and sit in during the event itself.

Mistake no. 8 – Not Giving Yourself Enough Time to Plan Your Event Properly:

This is another mistake that can create numerous problems for event planners. Not giving yourself enough time to put together an event may bring about attendee issues, venue dilemmas, catering problems and many more. The most reasonable timeline for a small to medium event to be properly set-up and planned is 90 days to 120 days, which is essentially the same amount of time needed to market such an event.

Giving yourself less than this amount of time to put together and pull-off an event is basically asking for trouble, especially if you are a neophyte in the business. A lot of important factors can end up forgotten and this can result in an event that can fail miserably. This often means losing money, losing credibility and losing clients. While some planners may be able to pull-off putting together an event in a short amount of time and succeed at doing so, not everyone can be so gifted, or so lucky.

Sometimes this problem is brought about by a client who does not realize that it actually takes a bit of time to pull together a successful event or one who is pressed for time and needs help to organize an event that they find themselves having difficulty in doing so. When this happens, you will need to tell your client that they are not giving you enough time to properly plan for such an event.

If the number of attendees is not to be your concern but is that of your client, then you don't have a problem. If you are tasked with marketing and sell-



ing the event to attendees that you are not sure will attend, inform your client that you will do your best but with very little time to market AND put together an event, they should not expect to have 100% attendance or success when it comes to such an event.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES – This mistake can be easily avoided if you make all the decisions for when and how the event is to unfold. If you are commissioned by a client to put together an event in less time than is often normal, you will need to inform them of this and let them know the possible consequences of such a short lead time.

You need to convince them that giving you a longer timeline to put together the event will be beneficial to both parties and the attendees. You will need to show them that with a longer prep time for the event, you will be able to market it properly, get more attendees to confirm and make more money from it.

You may also need to convince your client that the event will run smoother and you can get better rates for venues and services if you book ahead of schedule rather than on a date that is near the event date itself, which is basically what will happen if you have very little time to get the event together.

If your client tells you that the event has guaranteed attendees since the event is for people in their company or people that they already confirmed will attend, you won't have much to worry about other than putting together the event properly.

Always remember that if you are staging the event to sell a product, sell an idea or to make money for your company or yourself, you will need to have this lead time in order to advertise and market your event properly. This will help ensure that you get enough confirmed attendees for you to make a profit from and for you to easily call your event a success.

Mistake no. 9 – Losing Control of the Room and of the Event:

This mistake only happens when you find yourself frazzled, confused and stressed by what is happening. Losing control of the room and of your event simply means that your event is not going according to plan and is either running longer than planned or your program started to unravel. In short, your event just became chaotic.

Losing control of your room or your event shows that you were not on top of everything that needed to be monitored. This includes the time speakers spend onstage, the behavior of your attendees, the attendance and tardiness of the people involved in the event and the lack of guidance by staff and speakers alike.

This can also happen when clients insist on rearranging programs, prolonging speaker talk times, and allowing interruptions to occur in the form of impromptu questions from the attendees. People getting up to get drinks or go to the bathroom, and even the lack of attention in your presenters are also considered disruptions that can make you lose any semblance of order in an event.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: The only way you can prevent this mistake from occurring is to be strict about your event rules. Start your talks on time, end presenter times onstage on schedule and start the next one on schedule as well. Do not allow interruptions to be made during the talks your presenters are making. Inform your speakers that they are not to entertain raised hands or shouted questions.

Instead of answering these questions or allowing people with raised hands to lobby questions at your speakers, tell your presenters to inform the audience that questions will be answered at the end of their talk or during a get together after the scheduled lectures in a casual setting, like a cocktail or coffee break.

Speaking of coffee breaks, you should also schedule these and not allow your attendees to get up anytime they want to grab a cup of coffee whenever they feel like it. One way to do this is to not have coffee service set up inside your lecture hall or meeting room. Instead, have another room set-up for coffee breaks and have attendees get coffee and drinks from this other room only during set break times.

Mistake no. 10 – Not Knowing Who to Market to and How:

One of the things an event planner should have is a list of people that they know will be interested in the seminar, convention, trade show or conference they will be putting together. Not knowing who to market to and not having a list of people to invite to participate in your event can easily mean low attendee numbers when the event rolls around.

Of course, if you are a neophyte, you won't have a list of people to send emails to when you put together your first event. In this case, you might want to consider having your event advertised. Failing to advertise and inform the general public about your event will surely mean low attendance numbers.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: Not knowing who to market to and how to do so is a mistake that is easily remedied by a lot of research and advertising. Do not underestimate the power of the Internet and the power of social networking. There are a lot of people out there that can be reached by the many mediums available to you on the Internet. Using these mediums can help increase not only awareness of your event but also awareness of your existence.



Use all of the available marketing avenues you have to inform people of your event, as long as it fits your budget. Flyers, posters, radio ads, newspaper ads, an event website, a social networking page, twitter, blogs, and other online avenues can be used to promote your event.

Always remember that when you put up a site or blog to advertise your event, you will need to have an opt-in page or another similar medium where people can sign-up if they are interested. The list of names and email address or contact details you get from any of these mediums will be the start of your mailing list. Once you have this list, you can then email or message these people regarding this event you are putting together as well as future events.

Never forget to follow up the people that show interest in your events but don't be pushy about it either. You will need to let them know what your event program is supposed to be for, how long it will run, the fees that they need to shell out, where it is to be held and other pertinent information.

You will also need to get confirmation from them and a deposit in order for you to be able to negotiate with venues for room blocks and meeting rooms that can accommodate the number of people who are expected to attend.

Always remember, you need to sell your events in order to make money from them. Not being able to reach the people who might be interested in what you are staging can mean not only loss of income but also loss of capital.

Mistake no. 11 – Not Putting Things Down in Writing:

How many times have you experienced having someone go against the terms of an agreement simply because there is no written evidence to prove that you agreed on those particular terms? Not putting down things in writing and having them signed can bring about a whole bevy of problems for event planners.



Putting things down in writing, having it acknowledged with signatures and creating contracts are often forgotten or neglected when an event planner trusts everyone's word. Having signed agreements or contracts is a must in this industry since people can easily change their minds and without documents to support the agreement, you may find yourself in big trouble.

Another thing you will need to remember about “putting everything down in writing” is that it also means creating lists of things to accomplish and things that have already been accomplished. This basically means that you need to create checklists for your event. Not having checklists for every single detail of your event will leave you with gaping holes in what might have been a successful venture.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: You can easily avoid this problem by doing exactly what most event planners do, and that is to document EVERYTHING. Once you have agreements and acknowledgements for products, venues, services and such, you have to put these in writing as soon as possible and have the person you talked to (i.e. a person of authority) sign these contracts or agreements. Not doing so may leave you with huge problems regarding fees and schedules, as well as everything involved with your event.

Included in the list of things that need to be put down in writing and signed are speaker contracts, venue contracts, catering agreements, service agreements and hotel room block contracts, to name but a few. Everything that has something to do with your event should be signed by whoever needs to sign it in order for you to avoid getting the short end of the stick in the situation. This will also ensure for whatever you agreed upon in the first place to come to pass without any disputes. Always get your speakers, the venue and the other contractors to agree to your terms before you start marketing your event. This is especially important when your marketing pitch includes who will be speaking, where it is to be held and, of course, when. Getting people to sign your event contracts will help you market your event freely and without the fear of your event not running as planned and your attendees becoming disappointed in your event.

As for your checklists, you should be aware by now that without lists for everything, and with the huge number of tasks you need to accomplish before, during and after your event, you will find yourself missing out on a lot of key points for a successful event. Checklists are a MUST when it comes to event planning and should be part of your M.O. from the very day you decide to become an event planner.

Mistake no. 12. – Not Being Professional Enough During Negotiations:

A lot of events fall through simply because an event planner did not know how to properly negotiate or even talk to the people needed to make their event a success. Being “professional” when it comes to negotiating contracts for an event means a person has to know what to do and what to avoid when trying to close deals for their event.

Some people also make the mistake of letting personal issues cloud their judgment when it comes to negotiating for venues, speakers and other things involved in event planning. If you want to avoid these problems, you will need to be as professional as possible when dealing with people and companies that you will be working with in this industry.

Personal issues have no place in business and you should be able to remove any bias you have about certain companies and people in order to succeed in this industry. Declining deals and avoiding certain venues or service providers simply because you have something personal against the proprietor, a manager or an employee will not only make you unprofessional but it is also considered rather impractical.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: Always remember to separate your business life from your personal life. These two should never mix if you are serious about becoming one of the better event planners around.

Always keep in mind that some of these venues, caterers and service providers will be what your clients want or will be the best option for your event. Not even considering a hotel, conference hall, caterer, video/audio company or advertiser simply because you have a dislike for someone who works there or someone you need to deal with is getting on your nerves can mean that you are somewhat unprofessional.

You will need to rise above personal issues in order to avoid these event planning mistakes since clients will want to use these resources at one time or another and you cannot simply tell them that the venue, caterer or service provider is not right for them because you dislike the proprietor or the manager. Being professional about these things and about negotiations will show that you have mettle and you are someone who can be trusted and worth working with.

When negotiating with hotel managers, suppliers, caterers and other similar entities, you also need to be prepared. Do not appear to be nervous or scared of the encounter. Always present a profes-



sional façade and know what you have to say. Never hesitate to ask pertinent questions and get any concerns out of the way. If something about a service or the venue bothers you or does not sit well with you, ask about it.

Before signing anything, make sure your lawyer checks out all the legal clauses in your contracts. This is to ensure that nothing in what you are signing will cause you or your event planning business any trouble. Make sure that you are also authorized to sign anything once everything is in order. Not being in the seat of authority when negotiating and signing contracts can tarnish your event planning reputation.

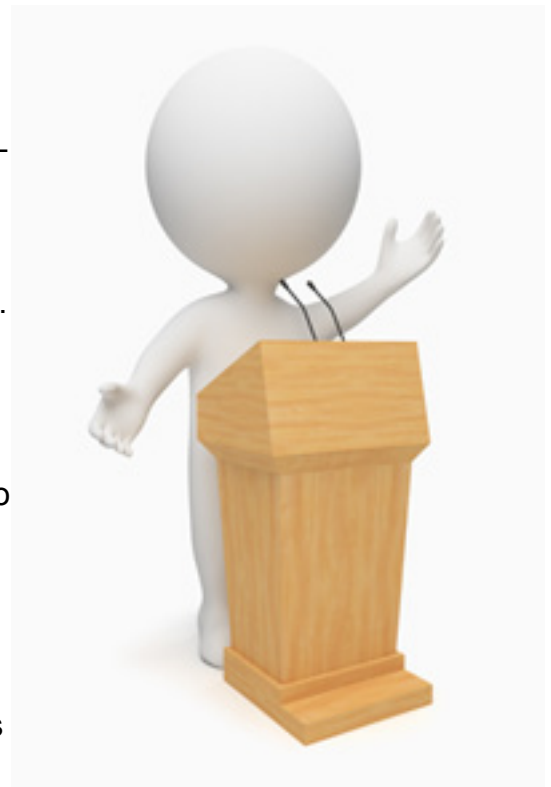
Mistake no. 13 – Not Selling from the Stage:

While some planners think that this move can be rather crass or tacky, some of the more realistic event planners know that labels and names won't make money. This is why not selling from the stage is a big mistake.

Having all of these people around and not even thinking about increasing revenues by selling them products that will help them cement what they learned from your event is a pretty unwise move. This can easily mean loss of up to thousands of dollars in potential, untapped revenues.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: Only one decision can help you avoid this mistake and that is to sell from the stage. Not selling from your stage will bring about huge revenue losses that may make you regret such a decision. While not everyone at your event may buy the products your speakers and presenters talk about onstage, a huge percentage possibly will. This is what you will be missing out on if you do not sell from the stage.

There are methods you can use to sell from the stage and these ways can get people to buy products from you after your event without the need for hard selling. All you need to do is to arm yourself, and your speakers, with the right tricks and attitude to get this done and to get you to earn more money from your event.



Mistake no. 14 – Being Too Optimistic About an Event:



While thinking positive is indeed a good thing, there are times when being too optimistic can be more of a bane than a boon. Event planners who think that they can bring in the number needed to make an event successful without thinking of attrition rates may find themselves in big trouble if they fail to actually come up with the numbers they first thought they can easily bring in.

Being too optimistic about an event not only puts you in

a dangerous spot professionally, it also puts you in a financially awkward position as well. Since most corporate events run for a few days and may require hotel and sleeping room bookings, some event planners make the mistake of blocking more rooms than is necessary due to being too optimistic about the possible success of their event. When you don't fill up the rooms you book, you end up having to pay for the unused rooms and may lose money instead of make it in the process.

Another reason why you might need to be more conservative when it comes to room blocking and your event's success is the fact that not all of your guaranteed attendees will be staying over. Some of your attendees may be locals who can easily go home to their houses after the day's events and can come back the next morning for the next day's events.

Others may opt for hotels of their own choosing, either because the hotels they choose are cheaper than the ones you choose or they prefer these other hotels because they are used to these. Another possible reason why some of your attendees may opt for other hotels and accommodations instead of the ones that come with your event is because these attendees want to bunk together.

SOLUTIONS and ALTERNATIVES: One of the biggest solutions to this dilemma is to be conservative when it comes to your event estimates without selling things too short. You might believe that you will rack up the necessary number for your event without any problems, and maybe you are right. But that does not guarantee that your attendees will indeed stay in the hotel or sleeping rooms you booked for them.

It may be easier for you to find rooms for people who will increase the number of attendees you have exponentially, but it is going to be costly to drop rooms that you book for people who will not show up for these accommodations. It is better for you to book just enough sleeping rooms and to ask for a reasonable attrition rate from these accommodations and then add more sleeping rooms when necessary rather than book more than is needed and have to pay for it.