



TEN TOP TIPS

FOR PLANNING YOUR EVENT

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

1

Start off by understanding exactly what your requirements and wishes are, if you can ask the right questions you'll become more efficient and focused in your approach to the planning. Being open-minded and creative is a huge asset in any event preparation.

Remember to manage your ideas - trying to proceed with unachievable plans, as any professional will tell you, will be the downfall of the event. If in doubt always refer to the five 'Ws':

Who? Who are you inviting? Who is a priority?

Why? Why are they hosting this event?

What? What are you trying to achieve?

Where? Location/Venue?

When? Consider the demands of the seasons, weather, venue location and logistics.

And last but not least: stay on track, stay focused.

2

'FAILING TO PREPARE IS PREPARING TO FAIL'

Research is vital. It will be the driving force of any project, giving you the confidence and knowledge to proceed - seventy five per cent of event planning is all in administration, efficiency and organisation.

Be organized from the offset, get yourself a folder and create an 'Event Bible'. Categorize and document *all* information - no matter how trivial it seems at the time - and order it in whatever way works for you. Source a variety of suppliers and contractors that may be able to help you out, and list these in your 'bible' -you never know when you will need them.

Remember to avoid booking your event on the same date as a big sporting event - nothing is worse than your guests checking their phones during your speeches.

When planning, begin with the essentials - venue, food/drink, guests, health and safety, insurance, entertainment. The rest should fall into place.

MONEY MONEY MONEY

3

Be realistic with your budgeting from the start. Give yourself a contingency plan of 10% to allow for any unforeseen costs. Be strict with yourself and others, always try to source the best price for what you need and don't be afraid to do some polite negotiation. Remember to do what is financially right for your event - don't feel pressured into making a sudden decision. Snap purchases are often expensive ones.

Make sure you document all purchasing/hiring of items – keep every receipt and put them away safe in your 'event bible'.



EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

5

Many venues come with their own standard packages, frequently including caterers and entertainment. Despite how convenient it might seem at the time, this may not be the best choice for you. Don't be afraid to negotiate and tailor your menu to fit with your event, theme and requirements. Ask for a sample menu or tasting and discuss with the caterer all the different options available – it is great to be able to offer something far more personal or specialised for your guests. This is where all your research and financial planning should come in handy.

4

LOCATION

Most people are intimidated by the pressure of sourcing the best location, don't be. Finding the perfect venue is rare often coming at the cost of other priorities; be prepared to compromise during this process.

Don't let the location limit your inspiration or vision. Get creative and with a little bit of elbow grease, enthusiasm and attention to detail you can transform the most unlikely of spaces, no matter your budget.

Don't forget to consider the smaller details when selecting a venue, for example, capacity, accessibility, local transport and accommodation and Health & Safety regulations.

'TO THEME OR NOT TO THEME'

Depending on your choices the food, decoration, location, entertainment and invites may all be dictated by the event theme - though the extent that you choose to take this is your decision. In theory there is no limit, however it is worth constantly critiquing your ideas and justifying your choices along the way. Be careful not to let your budget disappear on this, as its very easy get swept up and distracted.

It's here that your continuing research should help you develop ideas and determine what you want as a theme, if any. There are plenty of inexpensive and fun ideas to work with that don't break the bank. It is often the little attentions to details that create a big impression, making the event more memorable with your guests.

6



7

LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU

If you've done the right research, you can find a huge variety of entertainment options; from casinos to caricaturists, performers to photo booths and fireworks to face paintings. Ask around, see what other people are talking about and subsequently recommend. Checking reviews and other people's feedback will help you make an opinion when you're stuck for ideas. If carefully considered and selected you can use the entertainment to reinforce and highlight your theme very successfully. Be careful not to your budget go flying out the window at this stage. You need to be able to justify every spending – particularly when it comes to entertainment!

Stuck for ideas? Check out our suggestions on:

<https://www.oxfordeventhire.co.uk/content/20-styling-entertainment-links>

Once the main essentials have been decided on and booked, it's time to consider the finer details. These often get overlooked in the mayhem of planning however without them your event will not function efficiently.

There are several questions you need to ask yourself at this point: Is the caterer/venue supplying equipment? Is it more desirable to involve an external supplier? Do we need any additional outside space (such as a marquee/gazebo)? Is there enough furniture for everyone?

We would recommend checking that the equipment suppliers have a SAFE Hire Certificate, are fully risk assessed and have a 24 hour emergency hotline – it's better to be safe than sorry!



8

EQUIPMENT

9

ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN B

Remember to have back-up plans for the event, they do not have to be particularly complex or detailed, something simple and accessible is all you need. These should include and consider suppliers, caterers, staffing, transport, entertainment, venues, changes in weather and how this would affect you event.

For many having a 'Plan B' may include asking for help. Don't be afraid to call in the cavalry, be it friends, family or even a professional event planner. Despite your best attempts and no matter how much you plan, some changes may occur. Embrace the alterations and don't panic; any good business should offer you a resolution rather than a problem. This may mean that you have to compromise, but referring back to your research and event bible may inspire you and guide you through the problem.



10

BE NICE, PLAY NICE.

It's a simple tip: treat people nicely and everything will fall into place. Building good, polite relationships with your contacts is vital for a smooth pre-event production - you never know when you might need them. Be prepared, clear and concise with all your communication and you will be able to create an efficient partnership.