

Avoiding the 10 Worst Event Planning Mistakes

By Karen M. Pina

As leaders planning more events than we care to think on in one year, either we are too busy to plan effectively or we just simply do not think it falls into the scope of our role. If you have not had to plan an event yet, do not be surprised if you find out you are planning the next big event. To prepare for a successful event and avoid the 10 worst event planning mistakes, apply the tips in this article.

Mistake #1 Lofty Speaker Expectations

Your speaker may be very popular and have a glowing one-sheet with stellar qualifications, but s/he may not be right for your audience. Conduct thorough research and level your expectations to avoid disappointment. Typically, my approach is to expect nothing other than God being God in every situation. I prayerfully communicate His/my desires and then I stay open to His will. This helps keep me stay balanced and no longer focus on people, roles, titles, etc.

Mistake #2 Poor Communication

The latest thing in conferences and special events is to avoid letting conference attendees know who is speaking on which day of the event. Not sure of the logic surrounding this strategy, but it fosters poor communication and stifles the ability to plan accordingly. Avoid it like the plague with the following suggestions in mind:

- Business and Church Leaders, when people register for the event, you capture information about them. Do something with the information besides printing out flimsy name tags.
- Distribute countdown communiqués leading up to the event.
- Recap the day with points to ponder version speaker highlights.
- Send complimentary information for out of area visitors (e.g. area demographics, nearby restaurants, local radio stations, peak hours of traffic, major points of interest, as well as a mini-map of the church/building of the event).

Never get so big you feel only God needs to know your every move. When you value people, you communicate with them and keep them in the loop of developing progress and changes in scheduling.

Mistake #3 Wrong Place, Wrong Person

Make sure you have the right people serving, greeting, ushering, selling products, etc. Keep Sister Frownie and Brother Sourpuss out of front and center positions. They may more appropriately serve behind the scenes making important calls, stuffing gift or lunch bags, or coordinating clean up. People who enjoy serving others make the best people for interacting and accommodating your guests. The best ushers and servers are those who are friendly, kind, and serve with genuine love. There is nothing worse than feeling like you are interrupting something or like an outside intruder attending a private special event. You walk away thinking, hmm...if you didn't want me here, why did you invite me?

Mistake #4 Host-itis

As the host of your event, engage and speak with those who have taken time out of their busy schedules and paid hefty fees to come to your special event. Make a special effort to go out of your way and speak to someone you do not know. Hey, take a few minutes to see how they are enjoying and benefiting from the conference. Most importantly, just get to know them and do not just engage and speak with leaders you already know.

Here is a suggestion to spark a conversation. Ask your guests if they are comfortable. There is nothing worse than sitting jam-packed in a small building in dead summer sweating bullets through your stockings, skirt, and well-pressed suit. When you know they are hot, you can crank up the air. Well, you know the scripture; you have no air because you did not ask if anyone was hot! Seriously, this may appear to be a no brainer, but how many people have ever asked you if you are comfortable/uncomfortable with the temperature in the building? Better yet, how many hosts have ever personally spoken with you? Make the extra effort to connect with others. Who knows what you will find out?

Mistake #5 Not Ditching The Titles

This is not the time to be role driven. Be servant driven. If a guest asks for something, serve them as you would serve Jesus as a guest!

Mistake # 6 Failing to Count up the Cost

When setting the price for your event, be sure to consider everything (for example, the price of food, handout materials, parking, etc.) This will enable those who are attending to be fully prepared with how much money they will need. As the event planner, be careful to count your costs meticulously. You can certainly be left with a bag full of bills for which you are responsible to pay once everyone has gone back home.

Mistake #7 Underestimating Time

Look at how long it takes to magnificently plan a wedding. Planning an event is not as easy as slapping something together in a flash. It takes ample time to thoroughly plan a successful event. Give yourself the gift of planning and overestimate the amount of time you will need to pull all the details together. Our recommendation is no less than 1 year for a small to mid-size event.

Mistake #8 Can't See the Big Picture

Don't just wallow like a pig in every muddy detail, but look up and see the vision of your event, seminar, or conference. Be sure to write out measurable goals and objectives. Having clear goals, objectives, and a vision determines a successful event.

Mistake #9 Going It Alone

Exercise a team approach and enlist the help of an event planner, family, friends, and other professionals instead of biting off more than you may be able to chew. You may want to consider co-sponsoring an event with another business or an established ministry or charity. Be realistic about what you can accomplish in your event planning.

Mistake #10 Poor Promotion

Once you are clear on your vision, goals, and objectives, you can begin to spread the word about your event. There is nothing worse than planning a spectacular event to which no one or the wrong people show up. Be unique and memorable in how you spread the word. We are all bombarded with invitations to events, classes, and seminars. Stand out, be bold, and say the same things we hear all the time in a fresh, new way. You may consider hiring a designer for your website and invitations.

Avoiding the 10 Worst Event Planning Mistakes

Page 3

One of the joys of our leadership calling is the opportunity to positively influence others in our meetings, conferences, and special events. As a leader planning and organizing an event, you are providing a service. I encourage you to see it as a labor of love. Yes, hosting a conference is a lot of work. If you implement the above suggestions and avoid these mistakes, you should end up with an event that brings God glory and blesses all who attend.

Many leaders overlook nitty gritty project details or simply give them no thought. If you found this article helpful, you can experience more support by hiring me to identify where you are most vulnerable in planning your special events. I can coach you through the details of every phase, from the project start to the very end-project implementation. I also support you through prayer and by bringing an open, unbiased ear to listen to all the ebbs and flows of the project. I literally mean every ebb and flow...from scope creep to budget constraints. I can help. Call me now before you start planning your next special event.

For additional support around planning an event, [click here](#).



Divinely wise,

Karen M. Pina
GOD's Coach