Successful Event Planning

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Event Planning

Does Anybody Care?

1. Don’t assume because you and your organization are excited about a program that everyone else will be. A quick survey could be obtained by asking a cross section of people whether they would attend or think that other students would attend. The trick here is to get a true cross section and not just from members of your group or your friends, but also acquaintances in class, faculty, staff, and the NE community.

2. Check with others who plan events on a more frequent basis and solicit their opinions. The Student Life staff, and the Student Programming Board all plan events on a frequent basis and have developed some expertise.

3. Finally, consider the costs. For example, would people be more interested in hearing one big-name speaker or would participation be as great for several smaller lectures and panels spaced over the course of a year?

The Basics for Event Planners

1. Begin planning as early as possible. Two or three months is not too early and is probably a good minimum. If you are being early enough, you will have time to pay attention to all the details and many even come up with details you hadn’t thought of before!

2. Determine areas of responsibility. Think through the program from start to finish. In what areas are you going to need key people to coordinate aspects of an event or program? Some suggestions are:

   - An individual to work with facilities and catering
   - A person to sell and collect tickets
   - A promotions coordinator
   - An entertainment coordinator
   - Decorations
   - Budget

   It is usually best to break up the jobs to be done into areas of expertise rather than just assign tasks. In this way, you can develop “experts” in each aspect of program production, as they will have the full picture for that area (it is easier to coordinate). Your job is to coordinate these areas and be a representative to the performer, facility, the college and the community. Be sure to know the decisions and final plans made by your committee.

3. Organize your committee to work on production details. Don’t attempt to do all the work yourself. If you don’t have a committee to work with, organize one. Keep the work committee small enough to facilitate communication, but large enough to do the job without overburdening individuals. If you already have a committee, identify or select reliable people to put in charge of each area.
4. A written checklist should be drawn up for each area of responsibility. Deadlines and important items should be noted clearly. In setting deadlines, work backwards from the day of the program, and allow for time for posters to be designed/printed, etc. Allow some extra time for delays that sometimes happen. Stick to the checklist and deadlines.

5. Spend some time planning for contingencies. Try to think of what could possibly go wrong, and then think of ways to handle problems when the “what if” becomes a reality. Know in advance where to go to get something fast or if your basic program plans change.

6. Plan for the day of the event. Plan for all the activities that must happen on the day of the program and who will be available to assist with them. Make a list. Plan to keep yourself free of detail work so that you can be available to communicate with your workers and performers and to coordinate everyone’s efforts. Try to have one or two people who can act as “gophers” or “runners” so you will not have to be absent taking care of small details.

Program planning takes a lot of work, but it does make the program flow more smoothly. You should remember, advance planning will not eliminate all the headaches but results in fewer and smaller ones!

When to DO and NOT DO an Event

1. Avoid weeks when there are large numbers of tests and exams in classes. People may be too concerned with academics to attend an event.
2. Check with the Student Life Office and the facilities office for other events that may interfere with yours.
3. Avoid times when lots of other events are planned. Especially avoid coinciding with other popular events.
4. If your event involves an admission fee or sale of an item, remember the times students may have more money at their disposal. The beginning of the quarter is a good time. Last weeks of a semester and immediately after spring break are times when money is tight.
5. Avoid days just before a three-day weekend or holiday. Students’ concentration and time is divided between preparations for going home or away, finishing up last minute projects or assignments and last minute socializing.
6. Choose a time of day to present the program that will be “right” or convenient for your audience. Take into account night classes and times of day that are popular for taking classes.

Where to Do an Event

1. What facility is best matched to the purpose of the event? A theater production or a speaker is suited for the TH 122. A dance would be best in the cafeteria or the gym. Think of the requirements of what you are sponsoring and then match them to the proper facility.
2. When scheduling an event you must first go to the Facilities office to reserve the space. Never confirm a speaker until you have confirmed the space. Be sure to ask the following questions when booking space:

- Can you have food in the facility?
- What is the cost (if any) of the facility?
- What is the cost (if any) of room set up?
- Who do I call if there is an emergency or the room is not set up correctly?
- Who do I call if I need audio/visual equipment?

**Promotion Basics**

1. **Keep in mind who the audience is** at all times. Answer the questions, “How will I reach them? What promotional avenues should we use?”
2. **Timing** – when should publicity be released? Should it all go out at once? Which days are best for newspaper ads? What are the time considerations for ad deadlines, posters, designing and printing?
3. **Location** – where on campus do lots of people congregate?
4. **Will flyers alone work?** – What other media would be useful and within our budget?
5. **Information** – who, what, when, where, and sponsor should be included on all advertisement? Rain location? Is the print perfectly clear? Are graphics needed?
6. **Distribution** – who will be responsible for doing the coordinating, printing, and hanging?
7. **Budget** – will the projected response be worth the amount of money expended? Is a sufficient amount of money being spent?

**Posters/Fliers**

- On campus: Student Activities bulletin boards, dining room table tents, hanging banners, hand out fliers personally, etc…
- Off campus: Put up fliers at coffee shops, community centers and other targeted locations.
- Distribute to organizations that might be interested in your event. For example, for family events you might want to contact local schools or churches, for health related events you might contact senior services or local clinics.
- Direct Mail. Use mailing lists for your targeted audience. Ask the Student Life office for help with this.

**Networking**

- Connect with other organizations and departments that might be interested in your activities. Many of these have newsletters, email lists, mail boxes, etc and will publicize your event for you.
- Look at campus and/or college web sites.
• Tie-ins – look for ways your event can be tied in with a community event, a seasonal theme, a national or international issue, another department’s activities, etc.

Publicity (within the college)

• The campus newsletter
• The college student newspaper, The Bridge
• Table in the Interior Street
• Campus calendar (sent out by facilities and information)
• Campus or college emails

Publicity (outside of the college)

• Press Releases – these must be approved by the college media relations department.
• Local newspaper like the Skanner, Asian Reporter etc.
• List events in media calendars.
• Public Service Announcements (PSAs) – mostly used for free events or benefits.
• Pitch ideas to specific reporters for print, radio or television.
• Radio/TV – ticket giveaways, live appearances on morning news shows (generally for bigger events with mass appeal)

Advertising

• Newspaper inserts
• Radio/TV – usually target specific programming or times of the day.
• Print – Oregonian, Skanner, Willamette Weekly, the Bridge

Solicitation, Fund Raising, and Publicity

• Solicitation and fundraising may take place only in designated FREE SPEECH ZONES that are assigned by the Student Life Office.
• Distribution, solicitation, or fund raising will not be allowed away from assignable spaces.
• Fund raising and/or solicitation for donations by student organizations requires approval from the Student Life Office. Fund raising and vendor approval forms are available in the Student Life Office.
• Marketing spaces are six feet wide, and will accommodate two individuals. Limited posting space is available.
• The Student Life Office, 503-978-5379, handles scheduling of the Free Speech Zone and the bulletin boards. A complete list of rules for each can be obtained in the Student Life Office.
Reserving Facilities

1. To reserve any campus facility you must work with the Facilities office. You can email carooms@pcc.edu or call 503-978-5377.
2. If your event requires a special set up it is necessary for you to call Plant Services at ext. 4800 and place a set up request. Be sure to order set ups at least two weeks in advance.
3. If your set-up requires additional staff or over time your group will be billed for those charges. Be sure this is included in your budget.

Food Service

1. In most cases if you want to have food served at any event you need to have PCC provide the food. This is because PCC has an exclusive food service contract with PCC. Sometimes there are exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Consult with the Facilities Office or the Student Life when you meet to go over event. Requests for catering must be made at least one week in advance.
2. In rare instances food can be brought in from off campus sources. Please check with the Student Life Office and/or the Facilities Office for more information.

Public Safety

1. The Public Safety Office is open whenever there are activities on campus. Whenever an accident or safety problem occurs, you need to call the Public Safety Office. For an emergency call ext. 4444, for general help call ext. 4902.
2. If the event your planning will be held outside of normal PCC hours there will be overtime charges. These charges must be included in your budget.
3. Be sure to make arrangements with Public Safety at least two weeks in advance of your event.