The Programming Pie

“How to plan an effective event”
1. What type of program do the students want? How will you figure this out? (Survey, word of mouth, suggestion box…)

2. What type of program do you want to offer? Educational, social, cultural, community service, fundraising…?

3. What kind of event: lecture, comedy, theater, concert, carnival, dance, dinner, display, participatory (talent show, poetry jam, etc…)

4. Who is the target audience and what is their previous experience and knowledge of this kind of event?

5. Why are you putting on the event?

6. What do you want to achieve by having this program?

7. What are your organization’s goals and how does this event help you achieve them?

8. What do you (as planners) want to get out of this experience?

9. Is there a current need or interest in this program area? Are there other similar programs being offered? Does this matter?

10. Has a similar event been held in the past? If so, what was the response?

11. Are your members enthusiastic about organizing this event?

12. How big do you want this event to be?

13. Does the type of program you’re planning limit audience size?

14. Is there enough time to thoroughly organize the event and for publicity to be created and distributed effectively?

15. Do you have enough people to successfully organize this event?
1. Which of the needs you’ve identified are the most important to your audience?

2. Of these needs, which ones do you want to have at your event?

3. Based on the type of event you are offering, what are your goals?

4. Define your primary purpose: this is a brief and concise statement of what you want to achieve.

5. Define your specific goals: what are the goals to be accomplished by this project?

6. Define how you will measure meeting those goals: what criteria will you use to determine if you have met your specific goals?
**Timeline & Tasks**
What will need to be done, by when and who will be responsible? Make a timeline working in reverse; start at the day of the event and fill in deadlines and task completion dates. BE THOROUGH. List every possible task. Delegate. Use your committee or board and encourage volunteering.

It takes between eight (8) and fifteen (15) weeks, from planning to implementation, to execute a WELL PLANNED event. The timeline varies, depending on the size and scope of the event.

Planning well means you are being respectful of the time commitments of everyone involved in the program: artist/talent, committee members, volunteers, support services staff and YOURSELF. Remember the saying: “An emergency on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.” Appropriately set your timeline and tasks, so no one is operating in “emergency mode.”

**Approval**
Is approval required? By whom? Learn to identify and craft the message for request. Who has influence? Who can help you get your request through?

**Contracts & Negotiation**
What is the artist requesting? Load-in time, rehearsal time, food/drink, comp tickets, staff to sell merchandise, tech requirements, special equipment? Remember everything is negotiable. Know what is reasonable and what it is worth. Know what you can and can’t get. Aim for all inclusive and flat fee contracts and allow the artist to take care of it all. Complete contracts at least six weeks before the event.

Have you specified EVERYTHING? Be thorough: double check details and read the fine print. Know the law and institutional policy and set up expectations in advance in writing. Get a second opinion if necessary.
Day, Date & Time
When is a good daytime to hold the event? Consider academic schedules, campus events, athletic games, holidays, etc. Do you have enough time to plan the event well?

Place & Space
Remember to officially reserve space for the event. If it is an outdoor event, be sure to have an indoor option or an alternate date in case of rain/bad weather. Once reserved, confirm, confirm and re-confirm you reservation to make sure there are no problems!

1. How large of a venue do you need? Always establish a high side to ensure adequate space. Remember facilities can determine audience size and set the mood.

2. What is access to the venue like? Can equipment be loaded in/out easily? Are their multiple entrances that will require multiple greeters or can you funnel guest traffic?

3. What are the limitations in using a certain venue?
Furniture cannot be rearranged, room cannot be darkened, venue cannot be used during a certain time, etc.

4. Do you need staging? If so, is your staging fixed or portable?

5. Are there any liabilities involved in using the facility/venue? Think risk management.

6. Are there any competing events in nearby facilities?

7. Can you hold your event outside instead of inside?

Safety & Security
1. Will the venue require security?

2. Will there be any issues with parking?

3. Will you be selling tickets?

4. Will you be serving alcohol?

Setup, Sound & Lights
1. How will you need it set up? Lecture, theatre, classroom, long tables, round tables, etc…?

2. Will you need the room set-up or will volunteers be responsible for setting the venue?

3. Will you need sound equipment? Will you require special equipment? Will you require special lighting?

4. Are there certain contract requirements with the artist?
Food & Drink
1. Will you be providing food/drink for the guests? What kinds of food/drink? How much will you need?

2. Do you need to provide the artist/talent with food/drink? What kind, how much and is it reasonable? (See Contracts and Negotiations.)

3. Will you use campus food service, contract outside or purchase on own?

4. Where will you store perishable items?

5. How will you keep hot items hot and cold items cold?

6. Will you need any special licenses?

7. Don’t forget food/drink requires plate, cups, utensils and napkins AND serving implements.

8. What will you do with leftovers?

Materials & Supplies
1. What kinds of materials and supplies will you need? (Paper product, food supplies, decorations, etc.)

2. How much will you need?

3. Where will you need to purchase them from?

4. Who will be responsible for ordering and pick-up (or making sure they are delivered)?

Housekeeping
1. Will you need access to a kitchen?

2. Will you need special power outlets?

3. Will you need garbage cans, recycling units?

4. Will you need cleaning supplies: rags, cleaners, brooms/mops?

5. Will you need linens? Or will you use tossables?

6. Will you need to clean the venue when you are finished? What will you do with tables and chairs?
“Make the budget fit the plan, not the plan fit the budget”

1. How will the program be financed? Budget, ticket sales, fundraising?

2. What kind of resources do you have at your disposal to raise money and/or cover costs?

3. How much money do you have to work with? How much is allocated for this event? Are funds adequate to cover expenses?

4. Are additional sources of funding required (ticket sales, co-sponsorship and fundraising)? If you are looking at co-sponsorships and fundraising, what is the hook (inclusion in promotion and publicity, free ads, dinner with free admission to event, special recognition, etc.)? What are the natural links and who would be natural community partners? Are any ‘in-kind’ contributions available?

5. What will your costs be (artist, venue, rentals, publicity, security, etc.)? Have you identified any ‘hidden’ costs? Remember, the fewer costs you have the more money you will make and/or the more money you will have available for other events.

6. If you are selling tickets, what can participants afford? Will students be charged the same as faculty, staff and community? What is your breakeven point? What is the capacity of the facility? Are there competing events affecting attendance?

7. What paperwork will be needed to pay expenses?

8. How long will it take for the paperwork to be completed? Approved? Funds available?

9. Who needs to be involved if it is a fundraising event? Contributions are being given? Tickets are being sold?
Postage
1. How does the document need to be prepared?
2. Is it going first class or bulk?
3. Who is going to help stuff and label? How long will this take?
4. Will it need to be sorted and how?
5. How long will it take to get there?

Printing
1. What kinds of paper media are available?
2. Can color be used? Is it worth the expense?
3. What are the limitations?
4. How long will it take?

Publicity and Promotion

What Kind? How Much? How Often?
2. What is your design? Do you have an idea in mind?
3. What items are needed (posters, flyers, ads)
4. How much time will it take to develop?
5. Budget (at least 10% of total event budget)
6. Provide pertinent information to campus switchboard.
7. What are some ways to advertise? What mechanisms will be used for distributing the information?
8. Link to other events in the community or on campus – timing is everything.
Implement the Program

Overstaff and Delegate

Get the entire organization involved. Spread responsibility around. Assign members and volunteers a reasonable portion of the total plan. Be sure to consider whether or not you have enough time to make all the necessary arrangement and members/volunteers have enough time to complete tasks.

People

1. Who on your team will be responsible for what element? Set clear expectations and guidelines.

2. How many volunteers will be needed?

3. Who will train the volunteers? Provide good training. Be clear about what you mean.

4. Who will the volunteers be responsible to?

5. What will you need help with:

   a. A few days before: Who will purchase supplies, help with publicity, pick up checks, cashboxes?

   b. A few hours before: Who will help set-up the venue (chairs, tables, food, drink, etc.), host the artist(s)/special guests, help with load-in, pick up any other supplies?

   c. During the event: Who will staff the doors/sell tickets/be responsible for the cash box, usher, provide food/drink, manage parking, provide security, oversee sale of merchandise?

   d. After the event: Who will bus tables, bag trash, stack chairs/tables, sweep/mop, clean up food, move supplies?

   e. A few days after the event: Who will take down publicity, put away supplies, return rentals/borrowed items, return invoices, submit receipts, return cash box?
A well thought out and thorough evaluation and assessment is an educational aspect of programming. It allows you to learn from the program's successes and failures. Evaluations can also serve as a historical file for the organization and can be a useful reference for future programmers.

The Evaluation Process is internal and external:
- The guest/audience's feedback;
- The planning committees' thoughts and recommendations;
- The support services' thoughts and recommendations; and
- The presenters/performers' experience and recommendations.

Each group should be asked whether it feels the program accomplished what was intended. In general, each group should be asked... What Went Well? and What Could Have Been Better?

Questions for GUESTS/AUDIENCE:
1. Were you pleased with the overall event?
2. How did you find out about this event?
3. Would you be interested in other events like this one in the future?
4. What would you like to see improve about this event?

Questions for PLANNING COMMITTEE:
1. Whether there was sufficient time allowed for planning and implementation of the event.
2. Did the program reach the goals and objectives set by the organization?
3. What should be done the next time that wasn’t this time?
4. Did the anticipated audience attend?
5. Were all of the logistics covered? (tables, room reservations, equipment needs, etc...)
Evaluate the Program

Praise or Pan

Questions for SUPPORT SERVICES:
1. Did the planning committee communicate the event needs well in advance?
2. Did the planning committee accurately communicate the event needs?
3. What should be done the next time that wasn’t this time?

Questions for PRESENTER/PERFORMER:
1. Did you feel that the program/event was organized and well prepared?
2. Did the setting (room, stage, etc.) meet your needs?
3. From your perspective, how would you rate the overall success of the program/event?

Would you be interested in working with this organization again in the future? If not, why?
Evaluate the Program

Praise or Pan

ASSESSMENT
1. Include basic information, such as who, what, where and when
2. How many people were used to carry out this program?
3. Explain how many committee members were needed to successfully plan this program. Why?
4. How long did it take to plan this program? Why?
5. When and how often did the committee meet?
6. Where did the program take place? Was the space adequate?
7. Approximately how many people attended this program? How many people did you expect to attend?
8. How much did the event cost? What was your actual budget?
9. Was the publicity sufficient? Why or why not?
10. What new publicity ideas were tried?
11. What new ideas were tried for the overall program?
12. What was the committee’s overall reaction to the program?
13. Were the committee’s responsibilities well defined?
14. Was the advisor helpful?
15. Continue this event? Yes Or No

FINALLY...THANKS!
1. Thank your committee
2. Thank your volunteers
3. Thank the support staff
4. Thank the artist

Thank you's should be both verbal and hand-written. Hand written thank-you's should be sent within three weeks.