ARE YOU READY TO

PLAN A

PARTY?

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Cadette Troop 288
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Preface

Planning an event or fundraiser can be challenging, but with guidance, planning an event can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. At some point in your life, you may have an opportunity or be required to help plan and run an event (e.g., school project, scouting organization, youth group). Through our real life experience gained from the conceptualizing, brainstorming, advertising, promoting, procurement, networking, planning, strategizing, organizing, reporting, and financial planning for an event for younger girls, we have created this book to share ideas about different things that you should be thinking about. This book will help keep you more organized throughout your event planning process, make this process a positive and fun experience, and improve the chances of your event being successful!

1. Knowing Your Audience

Introduction

One of the most important skills needed to run any event is knowing your audience. Below is information about why this skill is important, how to find out your audience's likes and dislikes and more.

Why It's Important to Know Your Audience

Knowing your audience gives you the knowledge that you will need to run your event successfully. For example, it will give you information about how to decorate, what food to have and more. If you don't consider your guests' likes and dislikes, your event won't be as successful as it could potentially be. Many times, people get themselves into difficult situations because they don't consider the audience's opinion.

Important Things to Know About Your Audience

There are a few key things to know about your audience while planning an event. First of all, you should know the general age of your guests. You're going to plan your event differently if the guests are six years old than if the guests are 25 years old. You should also know the gender of your guests. This is important, especially for decorating your event. If you're planning a little girl's event, you will most likely want to use brightly colored/ pink decorations. Another thing that's important to know is if any of your guests have any allergies. If you have a guest with a nut allergy and they consume food with peanuts or tree nuts in it, their life could be at risk. Lastly, it's important to know your audience's likes and dislikes. This can show you what food to provide and what music and games to play.

2. Brainstorming

Introduction

When planning an event, a good place to start is to brainstorm. This is a creative process where you and others take ideas and think of things to do with them.

How to Start Brainstorming

A great way to start brainstorming is to gather a group of people, and make a rule that everyone's ideas are welcome and appreciated. You should write down the things that everyone thinks of to make sure that all concepts are remembered for consideration. Brainstorming with others provides an environment where different perspectives, interests and backgrounds are shared! Everyone should toss out as many ideas as they have, as soon as something comes into their mind, no matter how abstract. These abstract thoughts may ultimately be scrapped, due to budget related or timing limitations, but boost morale and may very well lead to aspects that really work! It's important to remember that there are NO bad ideas!

Why Use Brainstorming?

Brainstorming provides a free and open environment that encourages everyone to participate. All ideas are welcomed and built upon, developing a large array of creative solutions. Brainstorming brings together people's different backgrounds and experiences to help with the planning process, since everyone has different things to go off of. With everyone joining in, you will be able to plan your event in a rich and creative environment. It also helps with people being more involved in the project. If one person comes up with all of the ideas herself/ himself and hands them to the team to work on, the team will not be as interested because they had no part in the creation. If they are working on the ideas themselves, they become more interested in the project. Also, as brainstorming is fun, it brings the group of people closer together.

Steps to Brainstorming

1. Get the group ready.
   Get everyone together in a comfortable environment. Make sure that everyone is prepared. However, having too much preparation (for example, having several articles about party planning or the theme of the event) may interfere with the creative brainstorming process.
2. Show the ideas clearly, i.e., on an easel, so they can be worked off of easily.
3. Keep the discussion focused, and try to avoid being distracted, to stay on topic.

Individual Brainstorming

When brainstorming for an event, it’s best to brainstorm with the group of people who will be working on putting the event together. That way anyone who is working on the project has the opportunity to get their ideas thrown in and considered. Of course, sometimes there is only one person working on the event. While some people may think that working alone is quicker and more efficient than brainstorming with a group, because other ideas may be prioritized over your own, group brainstorming is still preferable as you get different perspectives on things. If you are working alone, get someone else to review your ideas afterwards, to hear another mindset that may have some additional insight.

3. Finding Inspiration

Introduction

Deciding on a theme and choosing decorations can be one of the hardest things to do when planning an event. Finding inspiration for your event can help you with everything from the decorations to the food. You can find inspiration in previous events you or someone you know has planned or from social media sites and the internet. The internet is a great place to find ideas for your event or party. Simply type your theme into the search box and you will have thousands of results right at your fingertips. You can save pictures and articles that inspire you and then use them later on in planning future events.

Pinterest

Pinterest is an excellent application if you are looking for inspiration for anything. You will first need to open a Pinterest account. Make sure you have your parents' permission and assistance. (There is no cost to open an account on Pinterest.) After making an account you can easily search any topic no matter how specific or broad it is. You can then "pin" whatever you like on to boards that you make that organize your ideas. Pinterest also recommends pins to you based on what you have searched previously. Pins are constantly being added to the site, so you are always supplied with fresh ideas. On Pinterest you can find many DIY'S for decorations and food. Most DIYs give step by step instructions on how to make mostly anything, and with a little research you can find a DIY for anything you need. You can get inspiration for your event while learning how to make awesome decorations. While you might not end up using all of the DIYs that you find, they can give you ideas for your event.

It's all in the details!

When you are looking for inspiration, take note of the color scheme, decorations, layout, food, and venue. The color scheme might seem small but it is one of the first things you notice when you walk into an event and can really pull everything together. Decorations are also a very important part of your event. Decorations can set the mood and should go along with the color scheme and theme. Although decorations are necessary as well as pleasing to the eye, too many can feel overpowering. When planning you need to figure out a general schedule. Usually events don't have strict schedules, but instead a basic idea of when certain things should happen such as when the food gets put out and when games should be played.

Blogs

Many bloggers post about parties or events they've run in the past, including the schedule of what they did and when they did it. Blogs can be another good source for inspiration. They are updated regularly with new ideas and projects for you to try. Bloggers frequently post recipes and how to's that can be used to make food and decorations. A favorite blog for event planning is http://www.eventmanagerblog.com/. This link has many different articles from how to advertise your event to how to plan an event for someone with a special diet. Another link that we like is http://www.thoughtfullysimple.com/. This blog has different sections, the best ones being the food and drink and entertainment sections. It has ideas for all occasions and recipes for drinks, party foods, and desserts.

4. Goal Setting

Introduction

Goal setting is a very important aspect of planning and successfully executing an event. It is a process that allows you to determine what exactly you want to accomplish, resulting in increased satisfaction when your goals are met. When you have decided what you would like to get done, you can concentrate your efforts and focus on making sure it happens. You can know precisely what you need to do, manage your time, avoid distractions, and minimize the amount of mistakes that may lead you to diverge from your desired outcome. Goal setting also serves as motivation. By knowing that a lot of hard work and effort were put into the completion of your goals, you will feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. Morale and self-confidence will also be boosted.

Steps

Following this set of steps and precautions is highly advised:

Step 1. Create a “large-scale” goal of what you want to accomplish overall. This should not be specific.

Step 2. Break your “large-scale” goal down into smaller, clearly defined goals. These will help you to reach your overall goal.

Step 3. Form a To-Do List that compiles all of your goals into an organized list. Make sure to include *how* you will meet the listed goals.

Step 4. Begin to work on completing your goals. Remember to make sure your goal is:

- Smart
- Helpful
- Progressive
- Relevant
- Specific
- Meaningful
- Realistic

Other Tips

- Think positively
- Place your goals in order of importance
- It is important to not stray from your path. Review your goal(s) frequently to make sure that they are still appropriate and relevant.
- Document your goals and your progress towards them, making sure to include dates, times, people involved, etc.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help or discuss any obstacles you may face

When your goal is completed, analyze and assess what you did that resulted in your desired outcome. Reevaluate your actions; take note of what worked well and what you could have done better. Make sure to practice this method whenever you need to set a goal. Also, enlighten others with your knowledge and you will be doing them a great service. The skills you learn from goal setting will help you to accomplish things bigger than you could have ever imagined.

5. Research

Introduction

You have already started researching for your event by reading this book, but you also have other things that you need to do. If you have a theme, research your theme. You need to think about whether you should get your decorations or to make them (DIY). You will also need to find a venue, or a place to hold the event. To do all of this, you need to know this vital information: there is always a cheaper way! However, you also need to think about quality. Always do a test run of your ideas, or make a demo to see the item in person before the event. Additionally, you will need to have a backup plan or two just in case something goes wrong. It is also critical to buy extra supplies just in case you run out. You will find other advice at http://entertaining.about.com/od/generalpartyplanning. This website has articles about anything you need to know about party planning. It is also advisable to have a paper and electronic copy of anything important for the party so you can't lose it. You may want to reach out to people who have experience planning events so you know what went wrong and to not do that. Much like a school project, it is important to have more than one source of information, and to keep track of where you got your information so you can go back and find it again. Also, as previously stated, it is crucial that you find out if your guests have allergies, and if they do, you must identify brands and types of food that they can eat. You also need to determine what types of party favors, and games your guests would like. Some entertainment for your event could be, for a younger party, games, and for an older party, maybe a D.J. If your event is going to be held outside, you will also need to know how the weather is going to be and plan around the weather so your party isn't ruined because of some rain. If you follow this and the rest of the book your party will be a success!

6. Budgeting

Introduction

Budgeting is an estimate, often itemized, of expected income and expenses for a given event, or period of time. Budgeting is an important part of any event. When thinking about the type of event you want to host, you need to consider how you will raise money to cover the costs associated with your event. Running an event takes a long time, and a lot of work, but if you use your money wisely, it will be a success!

Income

A common way to raise funds is through the sale of tickets. For our event, we had to think about how many guests we could have and how much each guest would comfortably be willing to pay. Because our event was for small girls and each girl would bring a special lady with them, we needed to keep in mind that the ticket price for our event would be doubled, for each family. Based on our estimate of expenses (e.g., entertainment, food, decorations), we decided to charge people $13 per person and that was about the total amount spent per person.

The Menu

Very often, a well thought out menu affects a guest's general satisfaction with the event. The food, beverages, desserts and snacks that will be offered often take up a large portion of the event's overall budget. When making decisions about what to serve, you need to know the amount of people coming to the event, and you need to know your audience's likes and dislikes. Very importantly, as previously stated, you need to know which guests, if any, have dietary restrictions (e.g., allergies, vegetarians, possible religious restrictions). You want to make sure that there are agreeable menu options for all guests.

When thinking about how much food and beverages you may need, you can come up with an estimate based on the number of guests that you have registered for the event, and the types of guests you expect to have (e.g., adults vs. children, ages of children). Understanding that half of our guests were girls aged 5 to 7 years old, and that the other half of our guests were special ladies to these young girls, helped us estimate how much food, beverages and dessert we might need.

For our event, which was held during lunchtime, we bought large platters of assorted croissant sandwiches, cut into thirds. This helped us decide how many platters we needed to order. Also, offering a variety of sandwiches provided choices to our guests, and buying the large platters was a great cost savings. We also provided a tossed salad with a choice of popular salad dressings (e.g., Italian, Ranch), to go with the sandwiches. Again, by buying in bulk, we were able to keep our food budget costs down.

To go with our meal, we decided to offer a variety of beverages as well (e.g., iced tea, lemonade, bottled waters, coffee and tea). By offering a variety of beverages, we provided choices to our guests. Additionally, instead of placing the beverages on each person's table, we put the drinks on one large centrally located table. This required our guests to get the drinks themselves, which ended up reducing the amount of beverages consumed or wasted. By reducing the amount of beverages that we needed for our event, we saved money.

You may also want to offer dessert after your meal. Again, think about types of desserts that may appeal to many people, and that are also priced reasonably. Sheet cakes serve a lot of people, and can be customized as an additional decoration for your event. You may also want to think about offering fruit as a lighter option for your guests, and brownies seem to be very popular across all age groups!

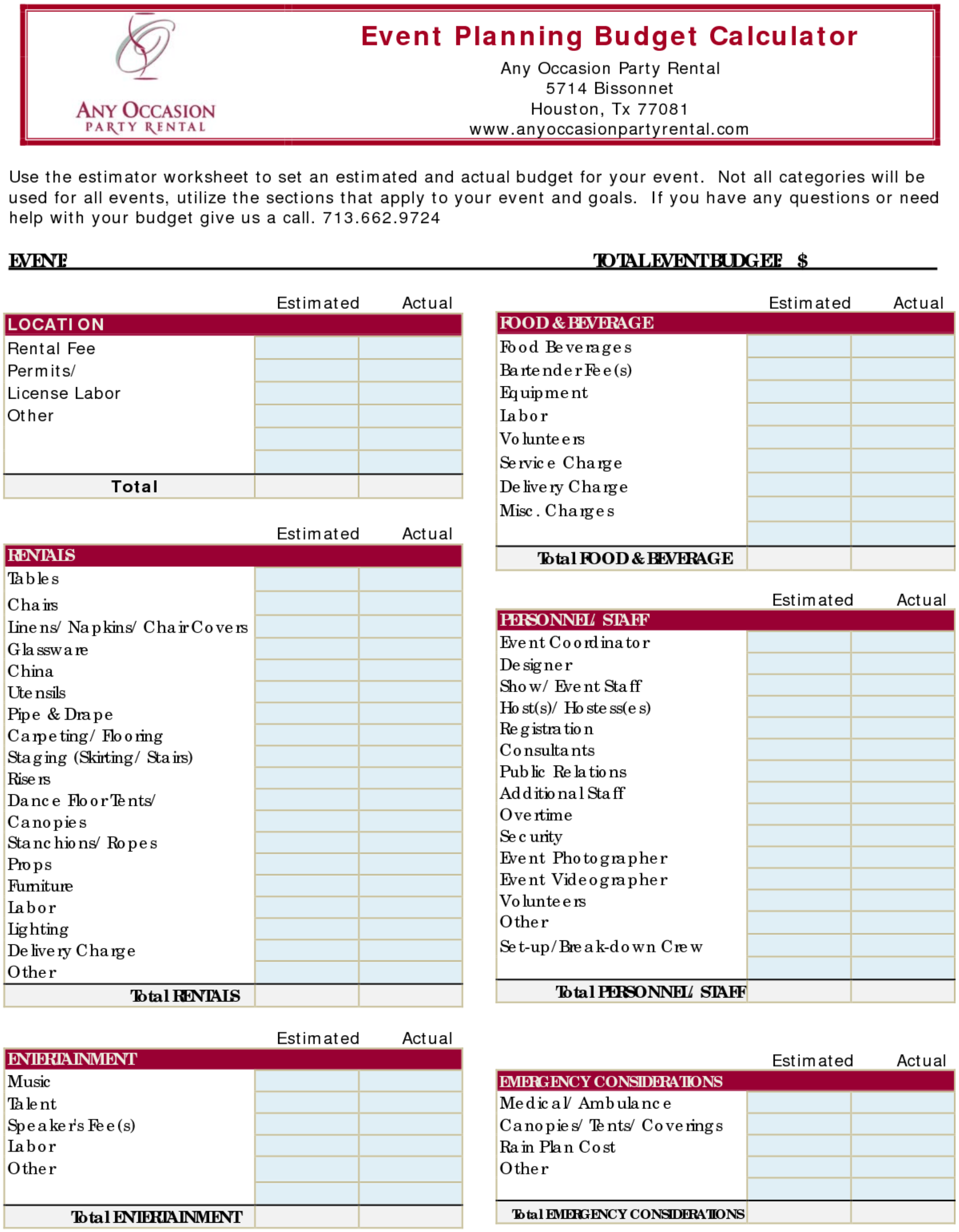
Wants vs. Needs

You also need to realize that there are going to be many things that you want, but may not have the budget for and that are not necessary. After you have identified major items/ costs that you feel are necessary and a priority, you need to consider how much of your budget is left to spend on nice-to-haves. For example, for our event, we decided to have a DJ. Although it was a big expense, during our event our guests were playing, and dancing to the music the entire time. It was most definitely money well spent. You may also want to brainstorm additional ways to reduce the cost of the necessary items as much as possible, to free up more funds for the items that you want. For example, we originally wanted to have a dessert table with many small individual cakes of different varieties. After we researched the costs for the individual cakes, based on how much dessert we had estimated that we would need, we determined that this plan would cost too much money. We bought two sheet cakes instead, which the guests enjoyed.

Tracking Expenses

Throughout the event planning and preparation process, it is critical that you keep track of the amount of funds that you have to work with and subtract expenses associated with your event, to make sure that your event’s costs are not greater than the amount of funds that you have available to spend. An easy way to do this is by creating a simple spreadsheet itemizing your sources of funding (i.e., ticket sales) and expenses such as the costs for entertainment, food, beverages, dessert and decorations. Remember that small expenses can add up very quickly. By tracking all expenses, as you know about them or have to pay out funds, you will always know where you stand. This will help you quickly identify if you are getting close to going over your budget, and can provide enough advance warning for you to adjust other costs (i.e., wants vs. needs) well before the event date.

Example of a simple worksheet to keep track of your Expenses



ANY OCCASION
PARTY RENTAL

Event Planning Budget Calculator

Any Occasion Party Rental
5714 Bissonnet
Houston, Tx 77081
www.anyoccasionpartyrental.com

Use the estimator worksheet to set an estimated and actual budget for your event. Not all categories will be used for all events, utilize the sections that apply to your event and goals. If you have any questions or need help with your budget give us a call. 713.662.9724

EVENT: ______________________ TOTAL EVENT BUDGET: $ ____________

LOCATION	Estimated	Actual
Rental Fee		
Permits/		
License Labor		
Other		
Total		

RENTALS	Estimated	Actual
Tables		
Chairs		
Linens/ Napkins/ Chair Covers		
Glassware		
China		
Utensils		
Pipe & Drape		
Carpeting/ Flooring		
Staging (Skirting/ Stairs)		
Risers		
Dance Floor Tents/		
Canopies		
Stanchions/ Ropes		
Props		
Furniture		
Labor		
Lighting		
Delivery Charge		
Other		
Total RENTALS		

ENTERTAINMENT	Estimated	Actual
Music		
Talent		
Speaker's Fee(s)		
Labor		
Other		
Total ENTERTAINMENT		

FOOD & BEVERAGE	Estimated	Actual
Food Beverages		
Bartender Fee(s)		
Equipment		
Labor		
Volunteers		
Service Charge		
Delivery Charge		
Misc. Charges		
Total FOOD & BEVERAGE		

PERSONNEL/ STAFF	Estimated	Actual
Event Coordinator		
Designer		
Show/ Event Staff		
Host(s)/ Hostess(es)		
Registration		
Consultants		
Public Relations		
Additional Staff		
Overtime		
Security		
Event Photographer		
Event Videographer		
Volunteers		
Other		
Set-up/Break-down Crew		
Total PERSONNEL/ STAFF		

EMERGENCY CONSIDERATIONS	Estimated	Actual
Medical/ Ambulance		
Canopies/ Tents/ Coverings		
Rain Plan Cost		
Other		
Total EMERGENCY CONSIDERATIONS		

Use of Incentives

To help encourage guests to come to your event, and also register for your event as early as possible, you may want to use incentives (e.g., small prizes, discount on admission prices, premium seating). By getting your headcount earlier, you can start planning earlier!

Donations

Donations can significantly reduce the amount of money that you may have to spend. Several stores, large and small, are willing to donate goods and services, and even money, to help support events. If you are running an event for an established organization, ask about a donation request template that can be handed out to people or companies that you would like to get a donation from. Also, don’t forget to let family and friends know about items that you are looking for. Very often, people have items in their basement, collecting dust that they don’t need or want anymore that they would be happy to donate to you!

Sample of a basic Donation Request Letter

Insert your logo here

Organization name here

Dear Community Merchant:

The **organization name here** hosts several programs and events throughout the year for **______.** That being said, we simply could not offer the programs that we do without the support of our local community. We are asking that you consider making a donation to help off-set the costs associated with our programs/events, either in the form of new merchandise, services, or gift cards.
Any donations are greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions regarding this donation request, please feel free to contact us via e-mail.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Name here Email: _________
Name here Email: _________

Tax Exempt #______(if applicable)________

Tax Exempt Form

If you are running an event for an organization that holds a valid Form ST-119, *Exempt Organization Certificate*, and is exempt from New York State and local sales and uses taxes on its purchases, remember to use an "Exempt Organization Exempt Purchase Certificate" (tax exempt form ST-119) when making purchases for your event, to save money! Check with the stores that you are buying items/materials from to find out what they require. Different stores have different requirements, and some stores require memberships or advance registration of the organization's tax exempt form before they will waive the collection of sales tax on your purchase.

Examples of local stores that accept tax exempt forms are:

Michael's (Stony Brook)	Upon presentation of the tax exempt form, they will Issue you a card that is signed by a store Manager that you will have to present every time you make a purchase.
Party City (Centereach)	Present the tax exempt form at the time of purchase.
Office Max (Bohemia)	You will have to fill out a form and submit the form to the address indicated on the form, and they will send you a card that will have to be presented every time you make a purchase.
Costco (Nesconset)	You have to have a membership in the name of the exempt organization.

Example of Tax Exempt Form ST-119

New York State
Department of
Taxation
and Finance

New York State and Local Sales and Use Tax

Exempt Organization Certification

ST-119.1
(5/95)

This certification is not valid unless all entries have been completed.

Name of seller	Name of exempt organization making purchases
Mailing address	Exempt organization number *(from Form ST-119)*
City, village or post office	Mailing address
State ZIP code	City, village or post office
Substantial civil and/or criminal penalties will result from the misuse of this form.	State ZIP code

I certify that the organization named above holds a valid Form ST-119, *Exempt Organization Certificate,* and is exempt from state and local sales and compensating use taxes on its purchases.

Print or type name of officer of organization.	Title
Signature of officer of organization	Date prepared

Instructions

Seller

If all entries have been completed and an officer of the organization has signed the certification, you may accept it to exempt sales to the organization named. The exempt organization must be the direct purchaser **and** payer of record. Any bill, invoice or receipt you provide must show the organization as the purchaser. Payment must be from the funds of the exempt organization.

Do not accept this form to exempt sales of motor fuel or diesel motor fuel, including No. 2 heating oil (see *Purchaser* section).

The exempt organization must give you certification at the time of the organization's first purchase. A separate document is not necessary for each subsequent purchase, provided that the exempt organization's name, address, and certificate number appear on the sales slip or billing invoice. The certification is considered part of each order and remains in force unless revoked.

If a certification with all entries completed is not received within 90 days after the delivery of the property or service, you will share with the purchaser the burden of proving the sale was exempt.

You must keep this *Exempt Organization Certification* **for at least three years after the date of the last exempt sale substantiated by the certification.**

Purchaser

Complete this certification and give it to the seller. This form may be reproduced without prior permission from the Tax Department.

Your exemption from New York State and local sales and use tax does **not** extend to officers, members or employees of the exempt organization. Personal purchases made by these individuals are subject to sales and use tax. An organization's exemption does **not** extend to its subordinate or affiliated units. When making purchases, subordinate units may **not** use the exemption number assigned to the parent organization. Such misuse may result in the revocation of the parent organization's exemption.

You may not use this form to make tax exempt purchases of motor fuel or diesel motor fuel. Since No. 2 heating oil falls within the definition of diesel motor fuel, you may not use this form to purchase it tax exempt. You must use Form FT-1020, *Exemption Certificate for Certain Taxes Imposed on Diesel Motor Fuel and Propane* or Form FT-1025, *Certificate for Exemption from Certain Taxes Imposed on Diesel Motor Fuel,* to claim exemption on heating oil.

Hospitals that have been granted an exemption from sales and use tax pursuant to section 1116(a)(4) of the Tax Law may claim exemption on the purchase of motor fuel by using Form FT-937, *Certificate of Sales Tax and Motor Fuel Tax Exemption for Qualified Hospitals.*

Need Help?

For forms or publications, call toll free (from New York State only) 1 800 462-8100. From areasoutside New York State, call (518) 438-1073.

For information, call the Business Tax Information Center toll free (from the continental U.S.) 1 800 972-1233. You can also call toll free (from New York State only) 1 800 CALL TAX (1 800 225-5829). From areas outsideNew York State, call (518) 438-8581.

Telephone assistance is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:25 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Persons with Disabilities - In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will ensure that our lobbies, offices, meeting rooms and other facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have questions about special accommodations for persons with disabilities, please call the information and assistance numbers listed above.

Hotline for the Hearing and Speech Impaired - If you have a hearing or speech impairment and have access to a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you can get answers to your New York State tax questions bycalling toll free (from the continental U.S.) 1 800 634-2110. Hours of operation are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you do not own a TDD, check with independent living centers or community action programs to find out where machines are available for public use.

If you need to write, address your letter to: NYS Tax Department, Taxpayer Assistance Bureau, W AHarriman Campus, Albany NY 12227.

FT

8V35BA 3.000

Other Tips

For staying on budget and not going over, [eventmanagerblog.com] says to buy in bulk, and negotiate a low price (if possible). The more you buy, the less you pay, and that is great for having events with large amounts of people.

7. Preparation

Introduction

Preparation is a very important part of event planning. Below is information on why preparation is important, key things to remember while planning an event, and how to be prepared overall.

What is Preparation?

Preparation is the process of planning an event. This includes investing the time to decide on what decorations you're going to use, what food you're going to serve and what music you're going to play. Preparation can be a tedious and long process, but it will be worth it in the end!

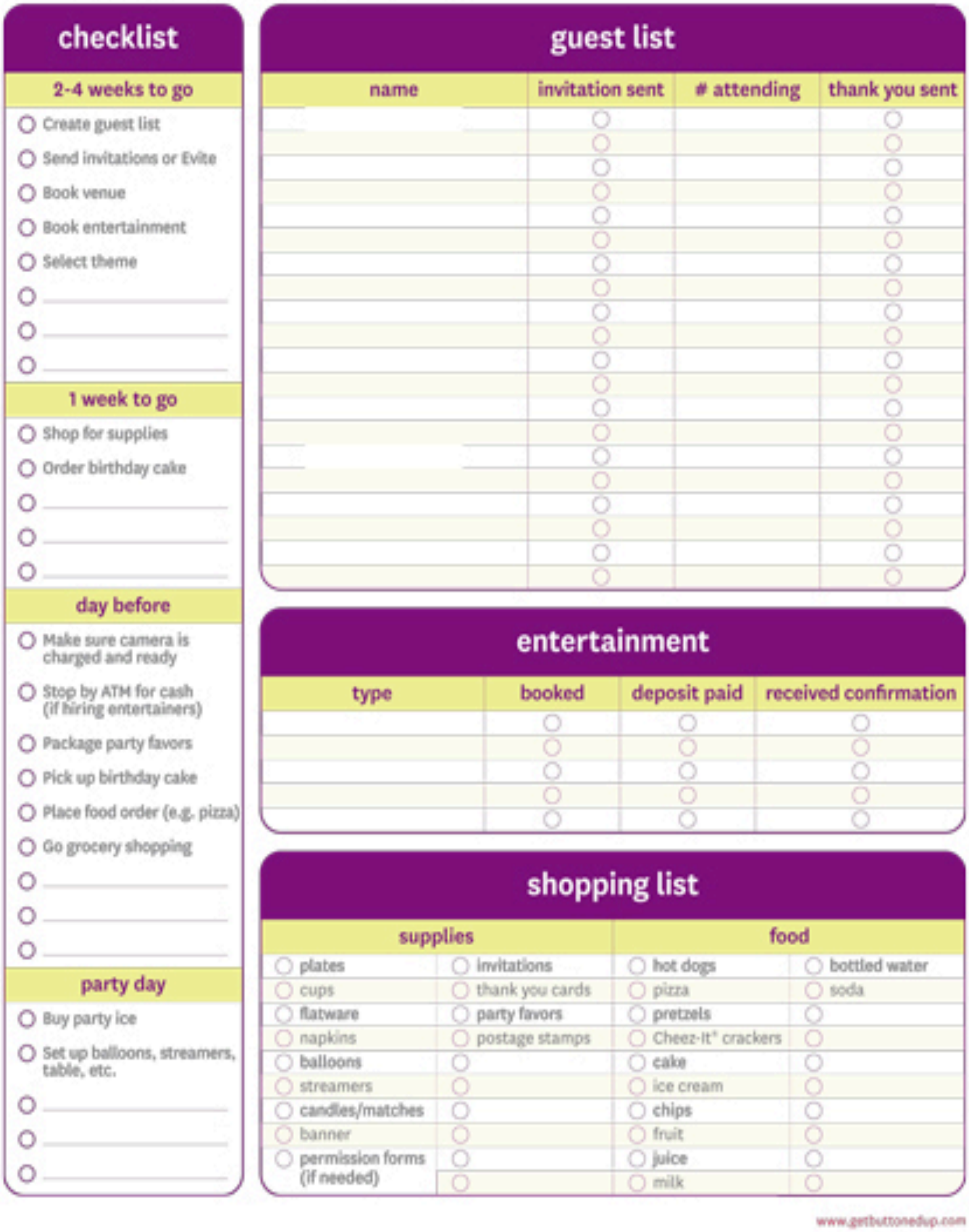
Why It's Important to Plan an Event

Preparation is important for many reasons. If you don't put time into planning the event, guests are going to know this. This can lead to a decrease in guests for your future events. If you put effort into your preparation, guests will be impressed with your planning skills. Also, your event will go smoother if you plan ahead of time. If you don't, you'll be more stressed leading up to and during the day of your event.

How to Prepare For an Event

There are a few things you need to know to be able to successfully prepare for your event. First of all, you have to identify your goals. Do you want to have a DJ or professional photography? If so, because these are expensive items, you should comparison shop and get multiple bids before hiring someone. You will also want to do this sooner than later, so that you can plan the rest of your event around it. Importantly, you want to advertise your event to spread the word and get people excited about attending. Do you want a certain theme? If so, you will need to prepare by buying supplies and making your decorations to complement and support your theme. In our case, we wanted an Alice in Wonderland theme for our tea party. We bought polka dot paper plates and colorful napkins, tablecloths and cups for our tables. The tables were used for two purposes: to decorate the room, and to be used for lunch. We even used ourselves as decorations by dressing up in character. After planning what we wanted to do, we started to make our other decorations by making prototypes. Prototypes are a great way to see if your decorations work out to be a good idea. We also made colorful paper flowers with painted wine bottles for vases. Every aspect of our theme and decorations had to be prepared, which included thinking about what materials we would need, and putting it all together, (e.g., how we wanted the table settings to look, what type of decorations we wanted for the table settings, and to make the room colorful and fun, what items we each needed for our costumes, etc.). A great way to stay organized is to make a timeline and/or a checklist! A timeline can be used as a quick and easy way to see if you're ahead or behind schedule, and the checklist makes sure that you are not forgetting something important. Check out the following link for checklist templates: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/cf/df/8b/cfdf8b42e728278bad9e80a8a0c3a96d.jpg

Example of a Checklist



checklist

2-4 weeks to go

○ Create guest list
○ Send invitations or Evite
○ Book venue
○ Book entertainment
○ Select theme
○
○
○

1 week to go

○ Shop for supplies
○ Order birthday cake
○
○
○

day before

○ Make sure camera is charged and ready
○ Stop by ATM for cash (if hiring entertainers)
○ Package party favors
○ Pick up birthday cake
○ Place food order (e.g. pizza)
○ Go grocery shopping
○
○
○

party day

○ Buy party ice
○ Set up balloons, streamers, table, etc.
○
○
○

guest list

name	invitation sent	# attending	thank you sent
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
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	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○
	○		○

entertainment

type	booked	deposit paid	received confirmation
	○	○	○
	○	○	○
	○	○	○
	○	○	○
	○	○	○

shopping list

supplies		food	
○ plates	○ invitations	○ hot dogs	○ bottled water
○ cups	○ thank you cards	○ pizza	○ soda
○ flatware	○ party favors	○ pretzels	○
○ napkins	○ postage stamps	○ Cheez-It® crackers	○
○ balloons	○	○ cake	○
○ streamers	○	○ ice cream	○
○ candles/matches	○	○ chips	○
○ banner	○	○ fruit	○
○ permission forms (if needed)	○	○ juice	○
	○	○ milk	○

www.getbuttonedup.com

8. Execution

Introduction

Execution includes the actual delivery of all of the previous components of planning and preparing for your event. Now that the day is finally here, keep in mind that there is an important distinction between solid execution and poor execution.

Assigning Roles and Responsibilities

When working with a group of people, it’s important to assign specific roles and responsibilities so that on the day of the event, people know what they are supposed to do. When assigning the roles and responsibilities you should consider the preferences, interests and abilities of each person (i.e., do not assign a shy, soft-spoken person the task of making public announcements during the event if that would make them uncomfortable). Also, when allocating responsibilities, you should ensure that the work is fairly distributed amongst the event team members, and mutually agreed upon. Examples of roles and responsibilities may include: set-up, checking-in guests, escorting or directing guests to their tables, making announcements regarding the agenda of the event and navigating the activities of the day, serving the food, interacting with the guests, checking-out your guests and clean-up. It is important to remember that when greeting your guests, you should be enthusiastic, gracious and welcoming, and that throughout the event, you should touch base with your guests to make sure that they are enjoying themselves. By having these touch points; you can correct or adjust different aspects of the event as needed on a real-time basis.

Set-up

Typically, in advance of the event date, details such as the layout at the venue, decorating, seating arrangements, and food preparation are done. It is important to schedule time for set-up early, in addition to reserving and blocking people’s calendars for the event itself. As part of the planning, the event members should think about how much time is needed for the set-up and ensure they arrive early. Time allotted for set-up should also include time to fix unexpected problems. Additionally, there will always be details that cannot be set-up in the room in advance such as, entertainment, picking up food or flowers or balloons, and food preparation. Time will need to be set aside for these details as well.

9. Feedback

Reflecting on the Event

When your event is over, a good thing to do is to ask everyone who worked on the event, as well as yourselves, how it went. Discuss what worked well and what didn't. (This can include assessments around how much food was actually consumed vs. purchased.) Jot down ideas and changes you can make when planning your next event. Reflecting back and talking about what could've been better can help your next event be the best it can be, and possibly lead to a more efficient use of funds.

Asking the Guests

Another important thing to do after an event is to reach out to the people who attended your event and ask them for their opinion. This can be efficiently done by creating a small survey. The SurveyMonkey.com website is a useful resource which has many sample survey templates that can fit different types of events. A few sample questions are:

Please rate this event on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best:

1. How would you rate the venue?
2. How would you rate the food?
3. How would you rate the entertainment?
4. How would you rate the staff?
4. Overall, how would you rate this event?

You could also ask questions that require a more descriptive answer. A few sample questions are:

1. Was the event well organized? (Y/N)
2. Was the event length too long, too short, or about right?
3. Did you think there was a good amount of variety and/or quantity of the food, or should there have been more or less?
4. Was the event just as you expected, better or worse?
5. Did you have enough information before going to the event, or did you feel like you needed more/less information?
6. What did you think about the cost of the event? (Was it reasonable, overpriced or underpriced?)
7. Was the time of day the event was held good, or should it have been earlier or later?
8. Would you come to the event again or one like it? (Y/N)
9. Would you recommend this event to a friend? (Y/N)
10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

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