

The 3 P's of Event Planning
PURPOSE ~ PREPARATION ~ PROMOTION



So you want to hold an event. Now what?

Along with the three P's of event planning, comes a crucial 4th P – **PASSION**. Having passion for what you are doing and why you are doing it will carry you through the hours and hour of work planning, promoting, hosting and closing out your event. People will be drawn to your passion, so start there.

I've been planning, managing and producing events for over a decade and have learned that every event has its own nuances and yet every event goes through the same process of purpose, preparation and promotion. Below are some tips and suggestions that I hope help you host an inspiring, impactful, fun and successful event.

Passionately and Purposefully,

CC

***About Carol CC Miller:** A positivity consultant, smile creator and hugger, CC has touched millions to live life with maximum joy and passion through personal coaching, writing, speaking and running her nonprofit organization Positive Focus. Prior to taking the stage, CC was an event manager in the corporate world sending her team to national tradeshow and managing in-house events. Once she embarked on her own, CC has produced and managed events from 75 to 1,500 people with Mishka Productions – Celebrate Your Life, Gregg Braden, Lynne Twist, Gabby Bernstein, Panache Desai and others.*

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PURPOSE

Know YOUR purpose. Know the purpose of the event

By knowing your purpose, your why are you doing what you do with this event, it will guide you through the process. A video of knowing your why by Simon Sinek is a great resource to watch. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch.

Build it & they will come

You have figured out your budget, breakeven point and padded it 10% with those 'I didn't think of that happening' experiences. You know how many people you need to cover your costs. Now it's time to vision the event being a success. Visually walk through the entire process from beginning to end and see it going smoothly. Feel how excited you are every time you get a new registered attendee in. See and feel the energy of the room with a room full of people ready, willing and able to absorb the information you are about to share with them. Feel every AHA moment that you get to experience knowing you are helping create happier tomorrows for your attendees. When you get nervous as you move closer to the date and registrations are lower than you expected, get right back into the feeling place. I remind myself often – I am at the right place, at the right time, with the right people for the right reasons.

PREPARATION

Know your audience

Knowing your audience allows you to better plan to market and promote the event along with completing onsite event details.

- What is the age range you are targeting?
- Is it a female only audience? Male? Mixed audience?
- Is it geared for a particular industry?

The more you know about your audience, the better you can serve them.

What does the event look like?

- How long is the event? Half day? All day? Weekend? Depending on the length of the event, food, accommodations and travel involved.
- Where is the event held?
- What is your breakeven point?
- Do you need staffing/volunteers?

Put your attendees at ease

Provide as much upfront details as you can for your attendees. Pamper your guests so they know they are in a safe environment to sit back and really absorb what you are teaching them. Manage their expectations upfront with basic information so they have an idea what their experience is going to be like and then over deliver so it's even better!

- Have an event schedule posted so they have a basic idea of the flow of the event.
- If travel is required to get there, let them know the best airport to fly into. Remember YOU are familiar with the area; your attendees probably aren't. Give them some options on how to get to you. The easier you make it for them, the more they will want to come.

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- Is food included or is it on their own? If it's on their own, offer some nearby suggestions with an idea of price points for them.
- Provide accommodation suggestions nearby too, even if it's just a day event as people may be traveling from afar and want to stay overnight. A few options in price ranges is great and if your event is big enough, you can get a discount by booking a group of rooms.
 - Let them know if there are room share opportunities and how they can connect with others sharing.
- Provide an overview on what the weather is like the time of year they will be with you and the attire for the event. Always encourage bringing a sweater for hotel based events.
- Keep in mind that your attendees may be out of their comfort zone traveling and/or attending an event, especially if they are attending alone. The more you can put them at ease before they even get there, the easier they will be to manage onsite.
- Let them know where to park and costs of parking, especially if you are in a large city. But keep in mind, even if you aren't, those traveling have no idea what they are getting into, so assure them you've thought of everything.

Event Forms

Timeline Form

- Work backwards from event date
- What should go on timeline form? All details needed prior to the event (graphics, event copy, bios, creation of marketing materials, marketing/promo timeline, booking space, catering, ticketing needs, etc.

Production Schedule

- Timeline details of the actual event – arrival, breaks, AV needs, who does what when

Checklist

- Everything you need to have available with you at the event – paper, pens/pencils, scissors, tape, registration needs, small first aid kit.

*See appendix for form templates

PROMOTION

You can have the greatest event imaginable, but if people haven't heard about it, it could go unnoticed. That is where visioning for a happy, enlightening and successful event is crucial as is turning over every stone on letting people know who you are and why you are so they know they HAVE to be there. Remember, knowing your audience allows you to know the best ways to market to them.

Get help promoting

- Get buy-in from your stakeholders. Who are your stakeholders? They are the advertisers, vendors, sponsors, venue and most importantly your speakers. Everyone who is vested in the event should have signed an agreement on social media outreach as well as direct emails or inclusion in their newsletters. The events I have personally produced, the speaker brought in at least 50% of the audience.

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- You can offer an affiliate link. This allows others to help support your event while making some money. If you know of someone whose audience is a perfect target for your event, offer them a higher affiliate program. Affiliate pricing can be anywhere from 10% up to 50% and beyond – YOU determine that. *Think about this when determining ticket pricing and your breakeven point. (Eventbrite has a built in system for affiliates).
- Check for free calendar listings in our area to post the event

Ticket Enticements

- Early bird pricing can be effective if it's a really great offer, especially on high ticket events
- Offer buy one and a second half price. Encourage them to bring a friend that will help hold them accountable to all the invaluable information they will be taking home.
- Raise the price and offer buy one get one free (they split the cost and it seems less expensive)
- Offer a money back guarantee. That can sound scary, and yes, you might get a person or two who takes advantage even if they loved the event, but more times than not, you are going to build trust in people and they will sign up. This is helpful if the ticket price is high and the event leaders aren't well known. Ask yourself how much you are willing to spend on people you've never heard of?
- Offer contests and give aways
- Offer a scholarship contest – have people write in who they believe should be in attendance. (You can figure out in the costs per person and roll in into the paying ticket cost...large events are easier to do this with).

When to start promoting

- As soon as you know that you are holding an event. You can put out a notice just to get it on people's radar. Once the who, what, where, why, how much are established, then you can determine your promotion schedule.
- How determine how far out to start promoting?
 - Key is ticket pricing. If they ticket is a high price point, you will want to give your attendee's the opportunity to save or do whatever is needed to prepare. (six months to a year start light promotion)
 - Event timing is also key. If your event is a weekend or week long, then you want to give your attendees time to plan to be off the grid during that time. (six months to a year start light promotion)
 - An afternoon, all day event, ticket pricing reasonable – announce it as soon as the event comes online. (3 to six months' promotion with the heavier promoting six weeks until event as that is when I have found most of my tickets are purchased – especially the last 10 days).

Marketing Materials

- Keep your copy SIMPLE. Have a catchy opening line with three bullet points on what they are going to take away by attending and a SHORT overall description of event and bio of speaker(s). Then provide a learn more where they can get the full details on the event.
- Avoid heavy sales promos. Give away some of what they will be getting at the event as it will entice them to want to learn more. Educational marketing gets you to become their trusted advisor.
- Create graphics in a few different sizes to be able to share with your stakeholders and affiliates for promotion. Imagery with less text – basic info with url for more info
- Keep copy EASY TO READ – bullet points. Think from the perspective of the reader not the writer.
- Physical marketing materials - offer discount code so you can track if it was effective for future events

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Social Media Promotion

- Remember, social media is just that SOCIAL. Yes, it's a great tool to help you market your business and when done in a friendly social tone, it's quite effective. Become the trusted friend that of course they'd want to spend the day, weekend, week with you.
- Create an event hashtag and share it with your stakeholders. (Facebook – the share must be public in order to be effective in you seeing everyone's use of the hashtag).
- Create an event on Facebook and have all your stakeholders invite their friends to it. Schedule someone on your team to check on the event page to respond to questions and keep dialogue going.
- Create a Facebook closed group specifically for your event (especially if it's a bigger event) so people can start to get to know each other. Remember to get in there and socialize, don't make it all about selling as if they are in this group, they should already have purchased their ticket. Now is the time to win them over and make them excited they are coming.
- I am assuming that you are doing other events and have a similar audience base for your events. I recommend closing down the specific event closed FB group a few days (or week) after the event and inviting them to your larger Facebook group of graduates from your program so they are now part of your bigger group (which you can market to later).
- Your friends and stakeholders may be on social media, but that doesn't mean they know how to use it as a marketing tool. Provide them with the copy (for whichever social outlets you are using Facebook, Twitter 140 characters) and images to use.
- Share some fun pictures, short videos etc. of you getting ready for the event. Show your PERSONALITY
- If you have video testimonials from previous events USE THEM. Let them know you are already trusted.

Closing the event

- You've just held a successful event with new friends who now trust that you will guide them to greater happiness and success. Please have another event or program to share with them and if they sign up during the weekend they get a BIG discount for being a loyal friend. I encourage you to give them 48 hours after the event to change their mind so it doesn't come off as a high pressure sale.

Post Event

- Send out Thank You letters, emails, etc. to attendees, staff, stakeholders
 - Include a survey on how to enhance their experience
 - Remind them what's next

Extra Credit – well known speaker events

If you are producing an event for an internationally recognized speaker/author, you will want to

- Put them at ease by providing details up front of the event expectations. Will they have breaks? Was it agreed upon for a book signing?
- Provide an itinerary of who is picking them up at airport, getting them to hotel, bringing them to event venue and back again.

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Last but not least

- HAVE FUN!!
- Know that live events are great marketing tools for future programs, products and events
- Know things will happen you didn't prepare for, but because you are so prepared it will be easy to manage
- You get what you give so
 - Be kind
 - Smile
 - Be who you want to hang out with
 - Be who you want in the audience
 - Be approachable
 - Be YOU!

I hope these tips help you feel comfortable and confident in creating the most amazing event.

In closing, it's your Passion and Purpose that is really going to shine through, so stay focused on that from beginning to end.

Passionately and purposefully,

Carol CC Miller

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Appendix

Timeline Form

*Note – I would have these tasks on individual lines for check off. I've just included them together as an example

When	Type	Owner	Task
Startup	Admin	Who is responsible	Create event copy, graphics, ticketing, website, post on other free calendars, send save the date, reach out for staffing, vendors, sponsors, etc.; determined breakeven point, make sure you have speaker bios/copy of their presentations
6 - 8 weeks out	Promotion		Stakeholders social promotion starts ramping up; emails; outreach; make sure printed materials are ready for marketing; make sure ticketing options ready;
4 – 6 weeks			Continued social marketing from stakeholders, friends, vendors, etc.; confirm event staffing, catering
2 - 4 weeks			Continue promoting, promoting, promoting, create event production schedule
0 – 1 week			Review production schedule, intros, review day of checklist and go over supplies; print registration list/badges
Day of			Make sure venue is ready; assign/train volunteer roles (do earlier for bigger event)
2 – 7 days post			Send out Thank You to attendees, staff, and vendors; survey on enhancement, gather with your team to talk about what went well and what could be enhanced for the future, update website to reflect upcoming events

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Production Schedule Template

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

The more detailed the better.

Note this differs from the agenda you give attendees as it's behind the scenes time frames.

TIME	TASK (what is going on, where)	ROLE (who is in charge)
8:00 – 8:30AM	Doors open - registration	Registration
8:30 – 8:40	Introduction of event	Host/Producer
8:40 – Noon	Morning session	Speaker
Noon – 1:30	Lunch Break (90 minutes recommended to allow time to eat, especially if you have a large audience and limited lunch options)	
1:30 – 5:00	Afternoon session	

