

## 10 things you learn about events

1. An event is rarely “just” an event – it’s important to first understand what your event is actually expected to accomplish.
2. The event is not “real” until you have:
  - a draft of your event’s program,
  - a budget that shows how it will be paid for, and
  - a schedule that lists all the things that have to be done – when and by whom – in the days leading up to the event.
3. Never try to work on an event all by yourself. Form a committee – even one other person! – even if you don’t feel you need a committee or have the time to manage a committee, even if no one can promise to help you very much.
4. Make sure you are always replaceable, and that committee members understand their relationships with each other, and not just to you.
5. If a well-meaning committee member doesn’t know exactly what s/he is expected to do, s/he will naturally try to run the entire event.
6. Communicate everything, but each person does not need to know everything – respect an individual’s time, interests, abilities, and responses to you.
7. Never plan anything for yourself to do during the event. There will always be something unexpected – good or bad – that completely commands your attention.
8. Guests need to feel they are members of the event “cast”, and need to be welcomed and engaged when they arrive. They should:
  - see their name somewhere (on a badge, in the program, on a place card),
  - be given complete information about the event, sponsors, and the venue – never assume “Well, everyone knows that!”,
  - and receive a small hospitality gift of some kind.
9. The event planning process itself needs to have a clearly defined end after the event. This can be a report, celebration, and/or hand-off to the next event planner.
10. Before, during, and after the event, thank everyone profusely for everything they’ve done – even for seemingly inapplicable or insignificant bits of help.