

EVENT TIMELINE

SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AHEAD

- Determine the purpose, format, and feasibility of the event
- Choose a theme
- Select committee / chairpersons
- Create an estimated budget
- Select the date, but before confirming it clear the date with important participants and double-check for conflicts with other major functions
- Draw up preliminary guest list categories. Begin collecting addresses for save-the-date mailing
- Visit potential sites
- Get cost estimates for site rental, food, drinks, sound, invitations, etc.
- Choose a site, caterer, etc.
- Decide on admission cost
- Create sponsorship amounts and levels
- Begin invitation design, create logo if desired
- Begin thinking about whether or not you want to incorporate a raffle or auction
- Set marketing / public relations schedule
- Investigate needs for permits, licenses, insurance, etc.
- Select and order recognition items (award, honor)
- Reserve rental equipment such as vans, buses, tables, chairs, tents, etc.
- Confirm a master of ceremonies and the program speakers
- Plan audio-visual presentations, if applicable
- Plan promotion and publicity

THREE TO SIX MONTHS AHEAD

- Begin monthly committee meetings
- Order invitations, posters, tickets, etc.
- Write/send requests for funding or underwriting to major donors, corporations, sponsors
- Write copy, design and get approval of printed invitations and all other printed materials
- Finalize the guest list
- Prepare mailing labels
- Request logos from corporate sponsors for printing
- Send save-the-date announcements to guests (3-5 months prior to the event)
- Select menus
- Decide on music, book entertainers and talent
- Contact local companies for in-kind donations for the auction and / or raffle
- Finalize the audiovisual presentations
- Obtain radio/TV sponsors, public service announcements, promos
- Plan the decorations and color scheme
- Choose and meet with the florist, if applicable
- Update security on your plans. Advise Special Events and Protocol if dignitaries will be invited.
- Select photographer
- Begin publicity
- Look for favors, souvenirs, printed folders, and other give-away items
- Begin creating a logistical outline to document all arrangements as they are decided on and confirmed.

TWO MONTHS AHEAD

- Prepare mailing labels for invitation mailing
- Send out invitations 4 - 6 weeks prior to event
- Distribute posters
- Follow up to confirm sponsorships and underwriting
- Finalize decor and facility arrangements
- Make hotel and transportation arrangements for out-of-town dignitaries and guests
- Mail an itinerary to dignitaries
- Hold walk-through of event with responsible committees, chairpersons and responsible site staff members at event site
- Review needs for signs at registration, directional, etc.
- Review/finalize budget, task sheets and tentative timeline
- Obtain logos from corporate sponsors for program printing
- Secure other university representatives to assist
- Double-check the extra help that will be needed including valets, checkroom attendants, and greeters
- Make direction and welcome signs
- Write and print the program and menu cards
- Order any ceremonial items needed such as flags, the university seal, ceremonial scissors
- Inspect the facility and request repairs to hazards, such as loose edges on stairs and upturned edges on carpeting
- Continue publicity on schedule
- Recruit volunteers to staff registration or assist as escorts and greeters, etc.

TWO TO FOUR WEEKS AHEAD

- Record and acknowledge RSVPs as they are received
- Mail out confirmations tickets, if necessary
- Create bid sheets for auction items
- Purchase raffle tickets for raffle
- Confirm staff for registration and other posts
- Give estimate of guests expected to caterer
- Meet / contact all outside vendors to coordinate
- Schedule deliveries of special equipment, rentals
- Meet with chairpersons, key staff to finalize any of the above
- Send detailed instructions to all program participants with parking information and any other pertinent information
- Finalize details with caterer, rental company, and all vendors
- Write speeches and introductions, and get them approved
- Take delivery on favors, mementos, novelty items and double-check for correct amount
- Get table numbers made, if applicable
- Enlarge a diagram of the room to be used as seating chart
- Create a production schedule outlining all deliveries, cues, and timing for the event

ONE WEEK AHEAD

- Print out the guest list in alphabetical order
- Finish place cards, table cards, and/or name tags
- Create the seating chart
- Brief the greeters, escorts and volunteers on their duties
- Complete all bid sheets for auction and organize auction item
- Gather all presentation items such as gifts, plaques, trophies. Collect ceremonial items. Designate one person to be in charge of transporting them to the event site
- Plan an arrival briefing for VIPs if necessary
- Hold training session with volunteers; finalize assignments
- Finalize registration staff
- Secure two or three volunteers to assist with emergencies
- Double-check arrival time and delivery times with vendors
- Finalize catering guarantee, refreshments
- Make follow-up calls to news media for advance and event coverage
- Deliver prepared introductions, citations, and speeches to those who will read them
- Make catering guarantees
- Final walk-through with all personnel
- Establish amount of petty cash needed for tips and emergencies
- Prepare your event box with any supplies, such as tape, string, zip ties, staplers, clip boards, baskets, etc. you may need

THE DAY BEFORE THE EVENT

- Recheck all equipment and supplies to be brought to event
- Have petty cash and checks prepared

THE BIG DAY

- Arrive early
- Bring the logistical outline, production schedule, instructions, directions, phone numbers, banquet orders, seating charts, name tags, table assignments, guest lists, and the event supply box with you
- Unpack equipment, supplies and make sure nothing is missing
- Go over all the final details with caterer and setup staff
- Check all facilities and grounds
- Check with volunteers to make sure all tasks are covered
- Set up registration area
- Set up auction area and auction check out area (often the same as registration)
- Set up event venue with place cards, signs, favors, awards, etc.
- Conduct sound and equipment checks
- Set up registration. Be sure it is ready no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of your event.
- Follow your production schedule
- Relax and smile

AFTER THE EVENT

- Send thank you notes to staff, volunteers and vendors

- ❑ Finalize billing and prepare final budget
- ❑ Conduct event debriefing to determine success or ways to improve in the future
- ❑ Survey attendees, if appropriate