

HOW TO PLAN YOUR NEXT EVENT

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your occasion! There's always something to celebrate in life and having an event is the perfect expression of it. The pandemic has made us all hesitant, to say the least, about planning or even having events at all. This paper breaks down how to get started planning your event and will help you make the right decisions, according to you and your life, to ensure your next event is a success.

WHEN SHOULD I PLAN MY EVENT?

The rule of thumb for planning events is, the bigger the event, the earlier you should start planning. Of course, the question would be, how early is too early? Professional event planners say that event lead times can be as little as 90 – 180 days for certain types of events. And this is the time frame for professionals who have all the resources at their disposal, if you are planning to plan an event yourself you will definitely need more time.



EVENT MARKET

I think we can all say that the pandemic has made us all hesitant, to say the least, about planning our events too far in advance. We don't know what world-changing occurrence will happen next, and planning ahead seems to just lead to disappointment. The event market however, still seems to be thriving in the midst of it all. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "job growth for meeting and event planners is expected to grow at a rate of 11% from 2016 to 2026. Compared to the total expected growth of 7%, event planners appear to have a bright future ahead of them on the job market." The demand for events is still high, therefore if you want to have an event in these times, you should start planning now! Plus, ensuring you plan early gives you more flexibility to change venue dates, catering options, etc. It leaves room for you to have the best possible event despite any changes that could come along.

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BUDGETING YOUR EVENT

The first step when diving into planning your event should be budgeting the event itself. Look at your finances and decide what you can afford to invest into your event and then see what you can get for that amount. Of course, it's easier said than done. Start by planning your budget according to the most common expenses. It all depends on the event you are planning, but typically the most expensive event elements are food, venue & decor.

Most expensive event elements:

- Food
- Venue
- Decor



PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Now, we have all been guilty to browsing Pinterest to look at the newest trends and ideas, in hopes of finding inspiration and savings when planning our events. However, this may hinder the planning process rather than benefit it. Experts say that planning your event yourself can lead to more stress and even more spending on your event as a whole. Buying quality ingredients and decor can get pricey, especially if you don't know where to get them. As mentioned before, event planners have resources and connections to make the planning process easier. They have their caterers, the venues they're familiar with, and decor supplies and ideas right at their disposal. Depending on how quickly your event date is, DIY'ing can be even more expensive and more of a headache, and honestly, it might not even provide you with the results that you expected. According to event planners, when it comes to catering especially, it is easier and more budget-friendly to hire professionals.

DOING IT YOURSELF (DIY)

DIY'ing your event, at first thought, is the easiest and most affordable option. You control every aspect, do the research, read all the blogs, pin on Pinterest, decide your menu, cook the food, find a venue, decorate the venue, and organize the event the day of. Planning the event and executing the event are two very different things. Most don't think about the time and effort it takes to fully organize an event, and though you may save nickels and dimes, it will take a lot of time and effort to fully execute your event. The main thing to consider into your decision is if you have the time to commit. If the event is small and you have the resources, then DIY'ing your event is feasible. If you have a full time job, are in school, have a family or all of the above, planning your event without any help may not give you the results you are hoping for.

PRO's

- Easy to make last minute changes
- Full control

CON's

- Unexpected expenses
- Takes time
- Takes skill

EVENT PROFESSIONALS


Paying for event professionals is more than just paying for food and decor. Depending on your budget, you could decide to either plan the event yourself and find different professionals to do your event, or hire an event planner to plan your event from A to Z and consult with you for your decisions. It all depends on the time you have available. Hiring professionals is more convenient for those with busy schedules. The event will be set up by experts and will generally have higher quality food, decor, etc. However, higher quality comes with a higher price point. However, as mentioned before, the world is unpredictable right now and having professionals by your side who can help you with any changes to your event may have is a very good thing.

PRO's

- Convenient
- Quality guaranteed
- Help in planning process & event execution

CON's

- Higher price point



As you can see, the main difference between planning your event yourself and hiring professionals is quality, cost, and overall availability on your part. No matter how you choose to plan your event, both options will give you an event that is in your control and customized to your specifications. It all depends on the size of your event, your overall availability, and when you start planning.

WHO DO I HIRE?

Now it's time to decide who to hire. As was mentioned before, you should leave the three most expensive elements (food, decor, and venue) to the professionals.

Professionals will not only make it easy in planning your event, it is their job is to execute it flawlessly. Find professionals that will help you decide what you want for your event and how to best present it. Also make sure to check they align with your budget, compare prices and get quotes from multiple companies. Do your homework and also look at reviews and social media for examples of their previous work. Make sure they all align and then hire them early on in the event planning process.



WHO DO I HIRE?

When it comes to catering, for example, the menu of your event must be planned early on to ensure it meets you and your guests' meal specifications. Catering companies like Signature Catering, located in San Antonio, TX, make sure to provide you with a customized menu built of the freshest ingredients for a truly personalized menu for your event. Plus, they have connections with people - from rental tables and chairs to China, linens, florals, even ice sculptures or DJ's. They'll provide you with anything and everything for your event so you don't have to worry about a thing. They will help to make sure menus flow, and that all guests enjoy- while practicing safe and sanitary practices to give everyone peace of mind. A professional's job is to ensure every detail is met, from the place settings, to dietary restrictions and safe food practices. Finding professionals that will work with you, are vital to the success and enjoyment of your event.



CONCLUSION

Your event should be a celebration of your achievements and be a reflection of your personality. So it is understandable that you would want to control every aspect, and handle all the elements of your event yourself, but there are more options for you. So how can you best plan your event?

- Plan your event early
 - Planning early allows for more flexibility to changes, especially in the world we are living in today.
- Deciding on who is planning your event
 - Event planners say that the most expensive aspects of an event are the food, venue, and decor, therefore you should consider leaving the planning to the professionals. When comparing DIY'ing your event and hiring professionals, the difference is in the quality, the price, and the amount of effort you put in.
- When choosing who to hire, it is important to consider your budget. Make sure to do your research to find the professionals that are right for you.
 - Businesses like Signature Catering, can provide elegant catering and decor for your event, and will ensure your event dreams are met.

Despite the world being the way it is, people still look to events as a celebration of life. Just because the future is uncertain, does not mean we can't plan ahead! Plan your event early, leave the important things to the professionals, and go on celebrating!