

# 8 Simple Steps to Successful Program Planning

Planning a program doesn't have to be overwhelming when you give attention to the big AND small details. Not only is it fun to coordinate an event that others will enjoy, you will enjoy the leadership journey that you experience along the way!

## ❑ Step 1 – Assessment

Who is your audience? What do they want? What resources do you have available to you? These are the questions you need answers to before you start planning a program...that is if you want anyone to come to it!

## ❑ Step 2 – Goals

What is the budget? What is the program theme or topic? What type of format will you use; a speaker, entertainment, educational, etc.? When will you have the program and who will be invited to attend? Goals will help you and your committee determine the vision for the program.

## ❑ Step 3 – Collaboration

Involve others in the process. Spread the wealth of leadership by inviting others to join you in coordinating the program.

Collaboration ensures that you have a diversity of talents, ideas, and lots of "human power" for the day of the event. And remember, people support what they help create!

### Ask If You're Unsure

Not sure what direction to take a program? Unsure about liability and risk management concerns? Run things by your advisor—you don't need to do it all alone!

## ❑ Step 4 – Preplan

Take the time now and save time later.

- Determine and reserve venue
- Request and complete contracts
- Finalize budget—remember emergency fund for the unknowns
- Consider co-sponsorship if necessary

## What Exactly is Backwards Planning?

Start with where you see yourself finishing and work backwards. You are less likely to forget the details this way.

- ▲ Develop a list of tasks that need to occur before, during, and after the event.
- ▲ Determine who is responsible for each of those tasks.
- ▲ Begin at the end of the event and determine the amount of time needed for each task and work backwards.
- ▲ Write each of the tasks and timeline on a common calendar and provide copies to every responsible party.

- Create a programming checklist that includes specific tasks, deadlines, and responsible parties
- Conduct a backwards planning session

## ❑ Step 5 – Promotion

If no one knows about the program, no one will show up! Brainstorm types of publicity. Spread the word through mediums that students tap into, whether it's social networks, posters, word-of-mouth, or a guy in a gorilla suit passing out flyers in the student center. Consider a budget for each promotional endeavor and establish a timeline.

### Survey

Want to know what your target audience is looking for when it comes to programming on campus? Take an informal poll when talking with them. Put together a brief online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Ask students to fill out a list of topics at a table set up outside the dining hall or during another event. Then you'll know how to focus your efforts.