



Event Planning Tips

A great event takes time to plan. In fact, most events take at least six months to a year to plan. Use your “down time” between events to evaluate their effectiveness and explore fresh ideas for events and retail activities that keep people coming downtown and cash registers ringing. Some things to think about as you plan:

Examine your existing events. Evaluate the success and challenges of your current events. Use the NMMS Event Evaluation form to review each event with the planning team. Use large sticky back posters and list the workload, production pieces and impact of each event. Some things to consider:

- Do you have a balance of special events and retail activities across the calendar?
- Do your events reflect the mission, Economic Transformation Strategies, and goals of your program?
- Do the events make money, break even, or carry a loss?
- Do you have adequate sponsorships and are your sponsors a “good fit” for the event?
- Are you doing a lot of work and making minimal profit? If so, is there one place you can make a change that will increase profit in the coming year?
- Does the workload and expense of the event have a good payout? (i.e. financial, community good will, exposure, etc.)
- Do you need to take a break from an event or possibly discontinue it altogether?
- Are you doing too many events? (A program with one full time staff person should not hold more than four events a year.)
- Should you be doing more events?
- Are you maximizing impact by partnering with other groups or piggy-backing events?
- Are you effectively targeting at least one market segment for each event?
- Do you have a master contact list for each event listing cell numbers and contact name of vendors, sponsors, entertainment, security, etc.?
- Do you have a timeline and work plan for each event?
- Are you holding a wrap-up meeting within two weeks of the event to document event successes, challenges, and ideas for the next year?
- Are you keeping an event file or notebook to document the history of the event? If you are not, start now!

Change is good. Events eventually have to be modified and updated or they become stagnant. If you want to make big changes to an existing event, think incrementally. Look at incorporating one or two new ideas at a time.

Good event evaluation and planning can help you make your events more successful and less stressful. Take what is working with your events, incorporate fresh ideas and get ready for greater success in the coming year.