



# TOP 10 MISTAKES WHEN HOSTING A COMPANY EVENT

FROM MBD MARKETING & EVENTS

## 1. No defined event goal.

*What are you trying to accomplish with your event? Are you looking to host a training event that will educate and motivate your team? Or are you hoping to build team camaraderie and rapport? Celebrate a milestone accomplishment or empower your sales team? Having a clear direction and goals will help drive your planning vision and let you know when you've been successful.*

## 2. Unclear decision makers.

*Who is accountable for your event? What elements of your event need approved? This is especially important to define if your event is being planned by a committee - will you need to achieve consensus? It's best to understand who your decision maker is before you get too far along into your planning.*

## 3. Undetermined budget.

*The first step to maintaining a budget is knowing what it is. Once you've defined your decision maker, ensure that you are in agreement about the budget. Then set up a tracking tool - even a quick list - to project and then carefully track your expenses.*

## 4. Not considering audience experience.

*Hosting a formal evening event for employees that have families may not be what they're looking for. The cost of formal attire, child care, etc. can add up quickly, and you want to plan an event that results in a quick "yes" RSVP. Maybe a casual picnic where employees and their families would be a better fit. Revisit your event goal and consider the audience perspective when making your event plans.*

## 5. Poor or irregular communication.

*Like with most undertakings, communication is key - both internally and externally. Communicate clearly and often with your planning team so that everyone is on the same page in terms of responsibilities and deadlines. Let your event attendees know what to expect in terms of the event format, attire, arrival time, parking, etc. If you host multiple events, consider creating a standard communication plan for consistency across the board.*

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## 6. Poor vendor management.

*If you decide to use a caterer, DJ, florist or other type of vendor, you will want to select and manage your relationships carefully. Use companies that are familiar with the type of event you are hosting and communicate your needs thoroughly. Put things in writing about costs, what will be provided and what won't, arrival times, etc. Will your caterer provide linens? Does the DJ have his own table? Are you purchasing or borrowing the centerpiece vases? Asking questions and setting clear expectations can help ensure that you aren't let down.*

## 7. Not using a packing list.

*Any seasoned event planner will tell you the importance of a packing list. How else are you supposed to remember everything? Tablecloths, name tags, banners, giveaways, etc. - make your list and check it twice so you're not wasting valuable time running back to the office or to the store for something you've missed. Have a standard list of things for every event like scissors, tape, zip ties, clipboards and permanent markers, and then add in specific items per event.*

## 8. Too little set up time.

*Even if you've been in clear communication with your vendors and brought everything you need, without enough time to set up, your guests will be arriving before you're ready. Consider all your set up tasks and how much help you will have and then add a little buffer. It's never a bad thing to have a few extra minutes to take a deep breath and use the restroom! Making a set-up list or timeline can also help your team know what to do so they can work more independently.*

## 9. Inadequate back up plans.

*Let's face it. Not everything goes according to plan. Having an indoor option or a pre-planned secondary date are a must for outdoor events. Anticipate technology snafus and make alternate arrangements. Consider what you will do if a speaker cancels at the last minute. Hopefully, you won't need to respond to any such emergencies, but you'll be grateful for your back up planning if you do.*

## 10. No event debrief or attendee survey.

*How do you know if your event was successful? If you accomplished your event goal, then give yourself a pat on the back! However, debriefing with your team or even conducting an event participant satisfaction survey are key to continued success. What went wrong? How can you avoid that in the future? What went well? How can you replicate that experience? Thank you messages are another important aspect of event follow up.*

