

Local Team Event Planning Checklist!

So you want to plan an event for your local community? Awesome! Please use this document to help you organize and maximize attendance. Although we recognize many of our events are reactive, we suggest for pro-active 2-3 months of planning time (if possible). If you are on a shorter time limit, I suggest using the same steps, but doing them faster! Please take this sheet and write out a step-by-step event plan using these prompts.

Step 1: Identify the Objectives

- Are you trying to educate your community about an issue? Are you trying to recruit more members? Want to protest something? Pressure your elected officials? Facilitate Team Bonding? Trying to get massive media coverage on an issue?
- These are all important questions to ask, create an objective statement that is 1-2 sentences long.
- Talk with your team members, does this make sense, does it align with our current campaigns or movement building goals?
- Check to see if there are any other groups doing similar events

Step 2: Identify Goals

- Are there specific goals within your objective? What is the desired outcome of the event?
 - How many people would you like to attend?
 - Who do you want to attend? (**See more at Step 3 Target Audiences**)
 - What do you want them to leave with? (education, resources, toolkits, inspiration?)

Step 3: Identifying and Expanding on your Target Audiences

- Deciding who you want to attend is crucial for picking a time and location of your event along with other details and should be done as early as possible! This step is crucial if you are trying to reach people “outside the choir”. For this exercise, don’t feel uncomfortable using some stereotypes, they are necessary for building a persona.
- For each target audience, be as specific as possible (ex. young business professionals, CU boulder students, latino populations in Weld county)
- Three important questions to ask for each of these audiences: “What are their priorities/values? How do they get their information? What would prevent them from attending?”
- Once you have brainstormed multiple points for each of these questions, take a look at the priorities and what would prevent them from attending. Use these to help you plan a location and time for your event. For example, if you are trying to engage young business professionals you might want to plan an event outside of work hours that has a professional development aspect. Please be sure to consider any accessibility needs, child care, proximity to public transportation, etc.
- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/segment-your-event-audience-ds0c/>

Step 4: Identify Date, Time and Venue

- Do your research! Is the location near public transportation? Is it accessible to your target audience? How much does it cost? What is the capacity? Does it have the necessary materials for your event or would you need to provide those (i.e. projector, PA system, chairs, etc.) If it is outside, is there a back-up option for rain or snow?
- Check local event calendars and reach out to other groups to ensure your event does not conflict with others if possible!
- Book it early! Venues fill up quick!

Step 5: Create Timeline (This should be done at least 1-2 months in advance if possible)

- Timelines help us check things off the to-do list so we don't forget and rush last minute
- Leave at least one month to market your event to maximize attendance
- Stick to your timeline! Being proactive will make this a much less stressful experience and allow you to delegate to others!

EXAMPLE TIMELINE: (This is purely meant as an example, you may identify more/less steps for your event)

2 months in advance

- Write out full event plan (Objective, goal(s), tactics, timeline)
- Choose date/time based on event plan
- Book venue
- research and select potential speakers/panel members or choose documentary
- Create Facebook event (just basic details, you can add more details later)
- Create Action Network Page
- Put event on 350 Colorado website (just basic details, you can add more details later)
- Create check list for needed materials and budget
- Begin recruitment of volunteers to help you run the event
- Outreach to potential sponsors or donors

1 month in advance

- Create an eventbrite or other ticketing website if you have limited capacity and expect large amount of interest
- Begin social media marketing (1-2 posts a week)
- Put up flyers in local coffee shops
- Add to community calendars send to newspapers and radio stations
- Use identified communication strategies from Target Audience exercise
- Create a press list and identify a few reporters to send direct pitches to (Do not send yet)
- Send info about event to other local groups and leaders

2 Weeks

- Obtain materials (projector, PA system, etc.) make sure they work
- Tour event venue and check for outlets, seats, tables, etc. make sure you have everything you need and troubleshoot any issues
- Put together info and share about how to get to event (public transport, bikeways, driving directions, etc.)
- Social media (2-3 Posts a week)

- Attend other local group's meetings and talk about the event
- Send invitation email to members

1 Week

- Social media countdown to event (if small event cut down to 4 posts during the week with 3 right before event)
- Send reminder email to attendees
- Continue marketing such as radio, local calendars, etc.
- Ask members
- Create post-event survey for attendees
- Create and send media alert (also referred to as media advisory), send direct pitches to few select members of the press
- Prep press release (details can be completed following event)

Day-Of

- Re-send media alert early in the morning and do press calls
- Message attendees via Facebook or post in event page with updates and reminders
- Get there early! Make sure everything works and set up venue
- Have fun and relax!
- Introduce yourself to as many attendees as possible. Have volunteers ready to chat it up with attendees and tell them about 350 Colorado.
- Take pictures and video! Maybe Facebook live video
- Live tweet the event

Post Event:

- Send press release as soon after the event as possible
- Distribute survey and review answers
- Send thank you email and follow up (perhaps video of event or slides from presentation)
- Inventory any leftover supplies
- Debrief with your team
- Create a blog post or post press release on website
- Post photos and updates on social media

PRO TIPS:

- People love free food! Try and get some donations from local restaurants or grocery stores
- Make the event unique, why should they attend this event and not something else?
- What can they leave your event with, that they won't get elsewhere?
- How will this event benefit you?
- Make it convenient!
- Stay within your budget! Keep it cheap
- Keep it simple. Depending on the size of your event, too many great ideas can lead to the necessary steps being forgotten. Identify necessary aspects, lock those down, then you can expand.

MORE TIPS:

<https://www.wildapricot.com/articles/event-checklist>