

17. Planning



Good planning and organisation are key to putting on a successful event that is both safe and enjoyable.

In order to achieve this it is important to consider all aspects of the event from start to finish and write this down as a plan for action. This will not only help guide others working on the event but will also act as a timetable for action and checklist for the event organiser.

As an outline, the action plan should be broadly along the following lines:

Can it work

- Financial viability
- Venue suitability (e.g. road access, noise limits, site drainage etc.)
- Infrastructure suitability (e.g. access, parking, water, electricity etc.)
- Dates and competitive events
- Availability of key staff and contractors

Pre-Event Planning

- Budget
- Income sources
- Venue negotiation
- Timescales
- Layout and design of venue
- Infrastructure requirements
- Local authority and emergency services liaison
- Legal requirements (including licensing, planning, permits to work etc.)
- Supplier selection and identification
- Job descriptions and briefing notes for employees/volunteers etc.
- Management responsibilities – who does what?
- Marketing and press plan.

Risk Planning

- Risk assessment
- Provision of safety services (e.g. first aid, fire, structural engineer etc.)
- Emergency response plan as part of event management plan and local authority liaison

Detailed Planning

- Site management including organisation chart

- Develop production schedule, including build up and take down plan
- Organisation and maintenance of services (e.g. toilets, water points etc.)
- Develop access and security plan
- Develop communications plan (e.g. radios, phones, internet, emergency PA, media etc.)

The Event

- Management of the event
- Crowd control/management
- Provision of services
- Servicing of facilities (e.g. rubbish collection)
- Communications
- Prepare for people leaving the site.

Breakdown

- Site and safety management
- Safe removal of equipment/structures
- Cleaning up site

Debrief

- Obtaining and assessing debriefs from all involved in the event

As part of this process, there are a number of key issues that event organisers need to consider.

Stages of an Event

Every event has three key and separate stages which each need unique attention – the build; the event; and the breakdown

It is very easy not to give the breakdown the planning and care that they other two stages get.

The Management Team

Putting on events can involve a wide range of services and skills, from providing electricity to promotion. It is important that those responsible for the organisation have access to the knowledge and skills to manage this breadth of services safely and clearly defined areas of responsibility.

Contractors

Look for contractors who have specific experience of supplying services to events. Ask for references from work they have done on other events and check that they have insurance, method statements and a site specific risk assessment. Remember that as the organiser you have overall responsibility for the event and its safety.

Co-ordination

As many of the activities involved in organizing an event overlap, or may be dependent upon one another, the co-ordination of these is an important part of the organiser's role. Ideally one person should have a strategic, rather than operational, view over all areas.

Briefing and Event Management Plan

It is important to make sure that everyone involved in the event, whether employees, volunteers to contractors, is briefed about the event. This is best done in advance at the planning stage and then again verbally when they first come onto the site as this will allow them to ask any questions.

It is also advisable to provide everyone working on the site with a briefing document, or staff handbook, setting out key information about the event and the site. This might typically include:

- A site map with key areas marked on it (e.g. central control office, toilets, first aid etc.);
- An organizational chart showing clearly who they should report to if they need information etc.;
- A communications plan setting out how they should communicate on site;
- Reporting procedures for emergencies, accidents etc.
- Site specific instructions, such as speed limits for vehicles on the event site;
- Guidelines on shifts, staff catering etc.
- Key information for those dealing with the public, such as parking arrangements, opening times, toilets etc

Liaison with Local Authority

As each local authority tends to have different arrangements for dealing with events, it is important that organisers make contact with their local authority at an early stage to determine what needs to be done.

As most events require a licence, the local authority can generally advise on this and will may be able to provide advice on what information will be needed for the application.

Liaison with Emergency Services

It is also important to contact local emergency services – police, fire and ambulance services – so that they are aware of the event. In some cases these organisations may provide advice and may have an input into whether or not a licence is granted.

For larger or new events it is advisable to contact the local authority at least nine months in advance and to ask to meet monthly with the Safety Advisory Group, if there is one, to talk through the planning – see separate section on the Role of a Safety Advisory Group.

More detailed information about the above can be found in the Purple Guide at www.thepurpleguide.co.uk (<http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk>)