



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Event Planning Tips

The majority of people will be responsible for planning an event at least once in their lifetime. The word event is a broad term and encompasses everything from backyard BBQs to small birthday parties, festive holiday parties, family reunions, weddings, or even huge corporate events.

Of course way more preparation goes into planning an event like a wedding vs. a Labor Day party. Furthermore, each type of event has its own set of nuances and challenges. For example, if you are planning a fundraising event you will need to make sure you plan for how funds will be collected and disseminated, while for other events this is probably not a concern. If you are planning a child's birthday party you may want to plan games, book entertainment, and make goodie bags, but if you are just having a few friends over for a BBQ you may be able to skip this step in the planning process and simply focus on the food.

However, most events do have quite a few common planning elements. We invite you to use the tips below when planning your next event to make sure it goes off without a hitch and you are not left feeling stressed at the last minute.

One Month Before

Try to complete the following steps at least a month before your event and customize the timeline to fit your needs. For example, if you are planning a large wedding it is a good idea to create an invitation list and book a venue closer to 6 months before your event, or if you would like to host an event at a particularly popular location, you may have to book it a year in advance.

Make an invitation list. The first step to planning an event is deciding who you are going to invite. This can be very simple if you are planning something like a block party – just invite the neighbors, or if you host Thanksgiving every year and always invite the same family member. However, it can take quite a while and call for some negotiating if you are planning something like a wedding or corporate event. Remember, typically the more people you invite, the higher your costs will be.

Choose a Venue. Some events can be held at your home, which makes this simple. However, if you will be hosting an event outside of your home it's a really good idea to book the

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venue at least a month in advance to be sure there is availability. When choosing a venue, first consider how many people will be attending. Next, analyze the vision for your event and decide if you are looking for a casual, elegant, kid-friendly, indoor, outdoor, etc... type of venue.

Choose a theme. This is not a necessity, but can add a fun element to your event and provide cohesiveness. Parties can have fun themes, like costume parties, disco era parties, or white elephant parties. However, more often than not, themes refer to more subtle elements such as color schemes, décor, style of cuisine and beverage, dress code, etc.

Plan a menu. First decide if you are cooking, having a pot-luck style event, hiring a caterer, or utilizing onsite food and beverage services at an exterior venue. Remember, it is always better to have too much food rather than not enough.

Select and hire vendors and/or entertainment. Again, this is not applicable to every event; however, if you do need outside help with your event it is advised to book this at least one month in advance. This applies to catering, professional event planners, magicians for kids' birthday parties, bands, DJs, tent and chair rentals, etc.

Send invitations soon after you finalize your list. If you are having a formal event, it is best to send invitations by mail and request a response. For more casual events e-vites and/or phone calls are perfectly acceptable.

Two Weeks Before

This is usually the least stressful time

period of event planning. You have already completed the major planning; now it's time to focus on things like developing a music play list if you are providing the music, shopping for food, beverages, and décor, and receiving all the RSVPs.

One Week to One Day Before

It's time to put all the finishing touches on your event during this time period. If the event is at your home, thoroughly clean the house, take inventory of cookware and serving dishes, stock the bar, and decorate. Try to prepare/cook any food the day before so you can prepare as little as possible on the day of the event. If your event is at an outside venue, be sure to do a walk-through to make sure everything is up to your standards. Finally, be sure to check in with all of your vendors (if applicable) to be sure everything is on track for the big day.

The Day Of

If the event is at your home, finish any last minute cooking, tidying, and decorating, and display the food. If the event is at an outside venue arrive early to make sure everything is set up. Regardless of location, be sure to greet your guests. Finally, enjoy your event; you have worked hard to plan it!

Remember, eni's Personal Assistants are available to provide additional tips, resources, and referrals to help make your next event magnificent!

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