



THE ULTIMATE

# NONPROFIT EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Smart planning is key to your success.  
This checklist will walk you through the process.



# PLAN

(4–6 months before your event)

**Plot your timeline.**

An event like a major annual fundraiser will realistically take four to six months to prepare.

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**Assemble your event planning team.**

Who's going to help? Gather staff, volunteers, board members, community members—every person who will be involved in the planning process.

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**Solidify your budget.**

Aim to spend no more than 16 cents per dollar raised. Give yourself a 5% cushion to allow for unexpected costs, and be realistic.

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**Name your BHAG.**

What's the one Big Hairy Audacious Goal you want to achieve? Write it down—this should guide your decision-making. Any other outcomes are icing on the cake.

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**Decide on a story and/or theme.**

This will bring cohesion to all the elements of your event. Under that umbrella, describe what you've done, who you've helped and how more resources will help you further your cause.

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**Choose your venue and date.**

Have your heart set on a specific place? Book it now. If it's an outdoor location, plan a back-up option in case of poor weather.

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**Book speakers.**

The right speakers can be a huge draw for your event—act early to get the ones you (and your audience) want.

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**Set up a registration page.**

Let your [nonprofit website](#) do the heavy lifting for you. With a single [online registration form](#), create interactive event pages with flexible ticket options, promo codes, payment processing for registration fees and more.

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# PREP

*(1–7 days before your event)*

**Follow up with registrants.**

People forget sometimes—or they get busy. Send a reminder at least once to everyone who said they'd attend.

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**Delegate tasks to your staff and volunteers.**

If you have a team, put 'em to work. Create a list of who does what at set-up, during the event and clean-up.

**Arrange the venue.**

Double check that everything is in order.

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# PULL IT OFF

*(on event day)*

**Go live with your event.**

You have planned your event, promoted it and now you're ready to host.

**Share on social.**

Encourage your attendees to post photos and videos to their social media accounts with your own personalized hashtag. Be sure to share them to your organization's accounts for a little User Generated Content.

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# PRAISE & POST

(1 week–3 months after your event)

**Say thank you.**

One of the biggest reasons people don't give a second time is they don't feel appreciated. Send a mass thank-you email the next day to recap the event, then express your gratitude more later with a personal phone call or handwritten note.

**Highlight your volunteers and donors.**

Give them the shout-outs they deserve! Use a [homepage spotlight](#) on your website and post on your social platforms with thanks and gratitude. A heartfelt video is a great way to do this.

**Cultivate your relationships.**

Keep the love going. Plan regular communication with your event attendees via newsletters, emails and direct mail campaigns.

**Learn from your results.**

Step back and evaluate: What went well? What could have been done differently? Your next event will be even better if you take the time to analyze.

**This checklist will help you with your event planning, but what about executing?**

*Firespring can help you with that too.*

**Our nonprofit websites offer interactive event pages with 24/7 online registration and integrated payments and tickets within a single registration form. [Firespring's Event Management](#).**

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