



## Resources for Amazing Events



## Top 10 Tips for Planning a Successful Event

**Make your events shine with these  
tried-and-true ideas.**

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## 1. Assemble a Stellar Committee:

- As much as possible, choose people with diverse skills and contacts (graphic artists, PR gurus, event planners, community movers and shakers, etc.)
- Meet regularly—at least once a month to start—and more frequently as the event gets closer
- Create a planning calendar identifying all tasks associated with the event and the deadlines for each—and make sure committee members have easy access to it
- Assign each member a specific task or tasks
- Identify what additional volunteers you need and recruit them

**Note:** To find these superstars, ask your current volunteers for referrals, reach out on social media and use volunteer referral sites like Idealist.org or VolunteerMatch.org.



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## 2. Name & Prioritize Goals:

- Raise money (how much?)
- Attract a new audience (who is included?)
- Generate media attention (what's the message?)
- Inform about an issue (to supporters, general community, adults, children?)
- Change your organization's public image (how?)
- Thank/recognize people (donors, staff, volunteers, supporters)
- Celebrate (what's the occasion?)



**Note:** As you plan, weigh every major decision against your goals. If an idea doesn't address at least one goal, no matter how appealing it seems, save it for another time!

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## 3. Identify Target Audience:

- Age range
- Geographic area
- Economic level
- Previous involvement with your organization

**Note:** Make sure you capture the contact information for everyone who attends your event by having attendees check in with a staff person or volunteer.



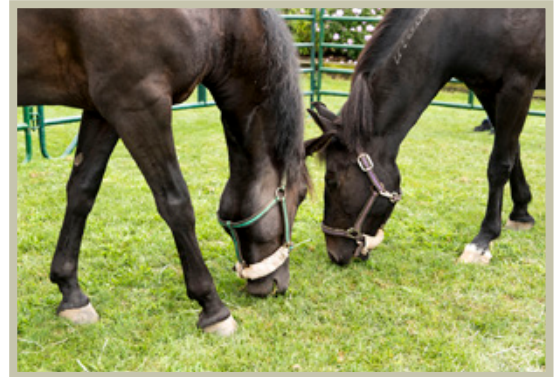


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## 4. Align Event to Goals & Audience:

- Where would your target audience be most comfortable?
- What would your target audience prefer to do?
- Is the venue accessible to all?

**Note:** If your organization's main goal is to recruit new volunteers to walk dogs, an inexpensive get-together or potluck may be more appropriate than an expensive gala.



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## 5. Have a Creative Theme:

- Spoof a successful TV show or movie
- Play on current events (political elections, local and national news, etc.)
- Fundraising challenges (ask the community to raise enough money for a needed item, like a new vehicle, or compete against another charity to see who can bring in more money)
- Piggyback on a holiday—or make up your own



**Note:** For example, the event pictured here was a Stars Wars-themed promotion one shelter held. The festival-like atmosphere attracted lots of families, and 33 pets were adopted out in four hours.

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## 6. Budget Wisely:

- Create a detailed budget, including expenses and revenues
- Note which items have up-front costs and make sure you have the cash to cover them
- Obtain event sponsorships from individuals and local businesses—these can be cash donations or in-kind donations or discounts on goods and services



**Note:** Don't list an item as donated until you are absolutely sure it's going to come through.

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## 7. Pick Your Date & Time Wisely:

- Consider the best time of day for an event—is lighting or temperature important?
- Match your event length with the activity—three or four hours is appropriate for a gala but too long for a fashion show
- Consider piggybacking on another organization's event—could you do a progressive where attendees go from one location to another?



**Note:** Check calendars to make sure your event doesn't conflict with other community events (with which you are not partnering).

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## 8. Use Clever Marketing Techniques:

- Create a separate event Facebook group and hashtag
- Bus ads
- Yard signs
- Inserts in utility bills
- Flyers on pizza delivery boxes
- Parades
- Engage local or national celebrities (if they can't be there in person, ask them to donate an item to be auctioned or give a written or video testimonial)
- Piggyback on other community events (blood drives, garage sales, etc.)



**Note:** Some organizations have found success with street teams or guerilla marketing, where volunteers or staff take to heavily trafficked areas to pass out flyers and freebies advertising their events or services. For example, you could pass out discount event coupons at a farmer's market.

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## 9. Show Appreciation:

- Give your volunteers tasks you have trained them on and that they can handle
- Provide a break room for volunteers during the event if it is longer than a few hours
- Offer volunteers food and drink before, during or after the event depending on what makes sense



**Note:** Be sure volunteers know how much money was raised and/or how many animals were adopted. They want to know how their service directly contributed to your mission.



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## 10. Share Thanks and Results:

- Let supporters and volunteers know how much you appreciate them through handwritten notes and email
- Social media
- Website
- Newsletter

**Note:** Thanking people is not only polite, it will help ensure their participation in future events. And again, be sure to include the good news of positive outcomes in your acknowledgements!

