

SPECIAL EVENT CHECKLIST

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Creating a special event can be a challenge so it is important to be organised and follow through. Although each event is unique, the following checklist will provide you with the basics for success.

BEFORE YOU START

- **Define your objectives** as this will determine the type of event you hold.
- **Define the criteria** on which the event will be evaluated- what does success look like?

BUILDING A THEME

- Determine key messages to be conveyed.
- Tailor a theme to your audience.
- Interpret the theme through the event's components.

PLANNING THE EVENT

Ensure you include projected deadlines with each step:

- **Develop and set a budget**, breaking down the component costs.
- **Estimate your staffing resources** by breaking down each section of your event and deciding how many hours, people or what budget you have.
- **Select the date and place**, checking for event clashes and ensuring you've allocated enough time for a proper event set up and pack down.
- **Develop a timeline** by working backwards from the event date and discussing timings with suppliers. Make sure you include all tasks (the timeline become's a function checklist with each task assigned a deadline and person responsible. Have regular meetings to review whether deadlines are being met.
- **Secure a venue**, asking yourself:
 - Will the venue be suitable for the character of the event and guest numbers;
 - Is it a suitable room layout;
 - If outdoors, consider a bad weather contingency plan, what permits are required, will AV be possible, etc, and
 - If possible, always undertake a site inspection. Otherwise, ask for detailed photos and a room plan to scale.
- **Secure venue event services** including:
 - Catering – decide the type of food and beverage's required, request menus and discuss minimum numbers and when the venue requires confirmed numbers.
 - Décor – flowers or suitable decorations.
 - Signage – brand and directional (eg. hotel foyer).
 - Photographer or video recording.
 - Entertainment.
 - Audio visual equipment – microphone, lectern, projector, laptop, AV system.
 - Displays.
 - Take home gift.
 - Reserved parking.
 - Transport for VIPs.
 - Welcome table and name tags.
- **Compile an invitation list**
 - Set up an RSVP mechanism.
 - Decide whether you will be mailing the invitations or sending them electronically.
 - Follow up invitees a week before to confirm numbers.
- **Book Talent and VIPs**
 - Confirmations/bookings (and any contracts).
 - Transport.
 - Gifts.
 - Other staging requirements.
 - Speeches.
 - Security.
 - Talent release forms.
- **Set the agenda/communications** checking whether there are any protocols involved:
 - MC.
 - Guest speakers.
 - Presentations.
 - Running sheet.
 - Speech notes.
 - Briefing notes for each speaker (their role, how long they speak, other guests, etc).
 - Greeters.
 - Briefing and Rehearsal.
- **Develop a staffing plan**
 - Staffing requirements and resources.
 - Assign responsibilities.
 - Brief staff.
- **Consider risk management**
 - Insurance requirements coverage.
 - Emergency plans.
 - First aid needs.

Writing for Media Success

- Crowd or traffic management considerations.
- **Event visibility and promotions**
 - Flyers and posters.
 - Publicity (eg. media releases).

AFTER THE EVENT

- **Debrief**
 - Identify what worked/what didn't and take notes to help with your evaluation report.
- **Follow up**
 - Letters or phone calls to significant guests who were unable to attend.
 - Remember to thank everyone who participated.
- **Conduct an evaluation**
 - Did the event fulfill its goals? Why or why not?
 - Write up an evaluation report for future reference.
 - Was it well attended?
 - Was feedback positive?
 - Was it worth doing?

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Include any reviews, post-event surveys or information, and any review or reporting procedures.

About The Reputation Group

The Reputation Group is a boutique public relations agency based in Melbourne, Australia. We are a strategic communications and public relations consultancy with particular expertise in brand and reputation building, marketing communications and corporate responsibility and sustainability. We are passionate professionals, offering the one-to-one service of a boutique agency with deep experience gained working with major corporations, industry associations, government, and not-for-profits. We strive to provide clients with the highest level of service backed by total accountability and value for money.

If you would like us to help translate your communication challenges into opportunities to enhance your organisation's reputation, our contact details are below.

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