*Event Planning

CREATED FOR **ARTREACH TORONTO** BY **NADIA ALAM, NORMAN ALCONCEL, NAYANI THIYAGARAJAH & ANDREA ZAMMIT**

GOAL Youth Workshop Series

The Grassroots Organizing and Leadership (GOAL) Youth Capacity Building Workshop Series was developed in 2007 by youth-led organizations, funders and other partners to provide access to learning opportunities that can enhance the work of young people, artists and youth-led groups. Through different strategies and in different spaces, young people are working to make change and to have an impact on communities across the city of Toronto. To take this passion and commitment and channel it into a project, individuals or organizations often require training, tools and supports that are not always available to emerging, youth-led groups.

This workshop series provides facilitators (many of whom are young people, or those that have been involved in grassroots organizing and project development) to share their insights and resources. Many groups have struggled to find financial templates that works for them, decode grant guidelines or define what structure works for them as an organization. Accordingly, past topics have included financial management for nonprofits, fundraising, grant-writing, and models of youth work. These free sessions provide an accessible and safe learning space for young people and groups to ask questions, receive support and demystify process.

The workshops are developed based on needs identified by young people in Toronto. Participants who attend 5 or more workshops in the series receive a certificate.

The GOAL Youth Workshop Series is implemented by ArtReach Toronto, in partnership with various organizations and youth groups including; Grassroots Youth Collaborative, Laidlaw Foundation, City of Toronto, Schools without Borders, For Youth Initiative and Toronto Community Foundation.

Special thanks go to the facilitators for sharing their knowledge and expertise, as well as the following partners that have provided funding for the workshops, resource guides and online toolkit:

Canadian Heritage

City of Toronto Cultural Services

Laidlaw Foundation

The Lawson Foundation

Toronto Community Foundation

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Nadia Alam

Nadia is a recent graduate of the Event Management program at George Brown College. She has worked in the youth sector, the arts sector and, of course, the events sector in Toronto. Right now, she is working at Schools Without Borders. She also really loves wearing hats. This summer she's starting an affordable female sports league for young women in marginalized communities, planning the travel logistics for the Manifesto Festival in Jamaica, sitting on the Community Outreach Committee for TEDxTO, and continuing to collaborate with creative minds in this wonderful city.

Norman Alconcel

Norman Alconcel wears many hats, but is well-known as the Executive Director of YOUnited, a youth-led organization that uses event planning to engage youth and build their capacity. After dabbling with Music, Culinary Arts, and entertainment, Norman began working in event planning when he started his own Monthly Comedy Variety Showcase self-titled "the Big Norm Show". After a few successful shows, Norman moved on and joined forces with some friends from his old neighbourhood to create YOUnited. It originally began as a movement of local block parties, and then it eventually graduated to the popular "Scarborough Fresh Fair", a sister festival to the Manifesto Festival. Aside from his works with YOUnited, Norman can be found facilitating workshops, hosting events, catering events, making people laugh, and doing his part to keep people "edu-tained".

Andrea Zammit

Andrea is the coordinator of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYc), which is a collective of youth-led/driven organizations located across the Greater Toronto Area who have come together to network and support capacity-building with one another and to advocate for young people in low-income/racialized communities. Andrea recently left a position working for Yorktown child and Family services as a Youth Outreach worker (funded by the Ministry of children and Youth services) in the priority neighbouhood of Weston Mount-Dennis, and has been working with youth in this community since 2002.

Andrea is also currently a co-manager of rated inc. one of Toronto's most well-known and successful youth-led arts (dance), entertainment and promotion companies. Andrea started supporting Rated Inc. when she was an outreach worker and was so impressed with their promotion that she joined the team. Since then Rated Inc. has managed groups.

Nayani Thiyagarajah

Nayani Thiyagarajah is a storyteller. She uses film, photography, theatre, and writing, as tools to document and share stories. She's a recent graduate of the Ryerson School of Journalism, where she specialized in broadcast journalism, with a minor in politics. Currently, Nayani works with a number of organizations in the city including Manifesto Community Projects, ArtReach Toronto, and TEDxTO. She is also an artist-in-training with the rCurrentz program at bcurrent performing arts, a theatre company based out of Toronto. As well, Nayani is the co-founder of Kaleid, an organization aimed at creating a network of South Asian artists and changemakers in the city of Toronto (www.letskaleid.com).

Event Types

↘ **Civic (e.g. Beautifulcity Town Hall Forum, Arts Vote)**

↘ **Expos/Exhibitions/Shows**

↘ **Fairs/Festivals**

↘ **Meetings/Conferences**

↘ **Sporting Events**

↘ **Periodic/Cyclic Events
(monthly, quarterly, be-weekly, annual, etc.)**

Event Process

1. RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

↘ *Event Research and Development*

There are a few things to keep in mind when researching and planning an event. These considerations should include finances, resources, partnerships, political climate, environment, and timing. Also, once you have established the type and purpose of your event, an important aspect of event planning is catering to your target audience/demographic. If the event you are planning is reoccurring, then an important step of your research and development phase would be to use the evaluation from your last event to help to make the next one as successful as possible.

Many community organizations/ organizers that have successful events usually represent their target demographic.

↘ *Is my idea feasible?*

Have you looked at the event design objectively (e.g. budget, volunteers, potential sponsors, grant eligibility, in-kind partner resources) to see if what you propose is practical, given all of the resources you will need? This is the last checkpoint before you start the actual event planning. However, it is a critical phase in ensuring the success of your event.

Many community events rely on funding that comes from one or both of the following places: grants from public institutions (government, private foundations) or sponsorship from private companies. Acquiring funds through grants may be possible if your event has a social mission cause. However, there are eligibility requirements for each grant (e.g. you may need to be an incorporated non-profit, charity, you may need to find a financial trustee to manage your funds). Private companies will sponsor based on two main principles: the first is your ability to prove to the potential donor that your event attracts the same demographic that they are in fact trying to appeal to, and secondly, that you will ensure their company is recognized for supporting through logos, banners, and/or special mention at the event. Another strategy for generating revenue for an event is by charging your attendees an enterance fee. However, keep in mind that events are expensive and it is very hard to generate enough income through charging an entrance fee.

People do not realize how much the government of the day can impact the success of an event. If that government tends not to recognize the value of community work and funding is cut to the arts and youth programming, your organization may have to find alternative fundraising strategies. Consider working with partner organizations/organizers, who have access to resources that will compliment your own and fill the gaps where they exist.

It isn't all about the money. Many community groups and organizers can organize successful events just by pulling together key partners and maximizing each others' resources, depending on the scope of the event.

⬊ *Private/Corporate Sponsorship & Fundraising*

Aside from writing grants and maximizing partner resources, there are two other important ways to make money for your event. However, for the purpose of this toolkit we will only be discussing Sponsorship. See the ArtReach tool kit entitled, Fundraising 101, for information on raising funds through donors and events.

Private/Corporate Sponsorship: The first step in this process is identifying partner organizations. This is important for many reasons, especially if you are just starting out. Perhaps these partners have more experience, or they may have status as a registered non-profit or charity, which will also give them more credibility in the eyes of sponsors. They may also have skills or services they can contribute (in-kind) to creating the sponsorship packages (e.g. graphic design or printing). Lastly, sometimes simply showing sponsors that your group/organization works with others is seen as a strength.

The details to include in your Sponsor Package:

1. *Event Details.*
Type of event, date, venue, capacity of venue, location, how many people you expect.

2. *Any details about the crowd that your event will attract.*
If this is a re-occuring event, you will likely be able to provide an analysis of the demographic that will attend your show. This allows the sponsor to make a conscious decision on whether the event is reaching the target market that they want to promote their goods and services to.

3. *How will the sponsor be recognized?*
Often, this is dependent on how much they contribute. For example, if a sponsor contributes $100 compared to $1000, they may only be recognized on the flyer and not be able to display a promotional banner with their contacts on the day of the event. If a sponsor gives $500, they may be able to have their logo on the flyer and the program guide. So you can have your sponsorship package reflect different levels of support, which would merit different levels of sponsor recognition.

4. Past event photos or photos of your group.

The sponsor should be able to see examples of photos from past events. Even if it is not the same exact event, but it was one put on by your group, this will help to demonstrate that you have experience.

5. Your logos, your group/organization's and partner's contact info.

Ideally, there should be one main contact for the whole event and this is usually the head of sponsorship or the lead organizer. Having one main contact helps to make the process of acquiring sponsorship easier and more effective.

6. If your event has a social mission attached to it, you want the sponsor to know exactly what their money is being used for.

For example, if your event is intended to award youth with scholarships to access post-secondary education, you want to let the sponsor know the value of one scholarship and that all the proceeds will be going towards this cause. Be very honest if their money is in fact going toward planning the event, paying for the venue, or for the awards, you cannot say it is going toward sending someone to school.

⬊ Event Development

Environment and timing of the proposed event is also essential to consider before the planning gets under way. Selecting a time of year that is appropriate for the type of event you want to throw. For example, you might not want to throw a fundraiser during the December holiday season because many people are experiencing financial burdens. Or maybe you may not want to hold an outdoors event in the rainy season. The environment could also relate to the political context or climate, especially if the purpose behind your event is to address a social issue. For example, if you are concerned with the spike in violent crime in your community, because it is all over the media this week, it makes most sense to respond immediately, if one of your goals is to get media attention. Also, in terms of timing, when you are planning your event and know who your audience will be, you must ensure that there are no other events going on at the same time that your potential attendees would want to attend (e.g. holding a local urban talent showcase on the same day as a Hip Hop concert).

↘ *How can you ensure you know your demographic?*

Many community organizations/organizers that have successful events usually represent their target demographic. However, in some cases, this is not true. So how can you ensure that whether or not you represent your target market, that your event is relevant and attractive to your target audience? The answer is simple – you talk to and/or involve your target audience in the planning. There are many ways of doing this. The first way is to conduct a focus group and/or formal/informal interviews and ask questions relating to the purpose, type, and, the proposed activities of your event, and you solicit feedback and suggestions. The second strategy for researching the interests of potential attendees is to form a committee that can be consulted on the purpose, and type of activities you are planning. Lastly, you may want to involve people from your target audience or demographic in your planning work. This may be the best strategy because these individuals will most likely feel a sense of ownership and provide invaluable resources such as their time.

2. Design

↘ 5 Senses

At the end of the day, the success of your event is determined by those that attend, and wether or not the main objectives of the event were met. Ensuring the quality and success of your event is heavily dependant on the feeling left with the attendees. When taking that into consideration, you must also understand what compels a person to those conclusions. The human senses play a large part in this. It can be a starting point to how you measure the success of your event.

1. See: Is your event visually appealing to your target demographic? If it's a youth event, is the branding colourful, youthful, attractive to the young eye? Is the event setting appropriate for the visual perspective you are trying to attain? Do visual aspects of the event evoke or encourage any specific emotions from your attendees?
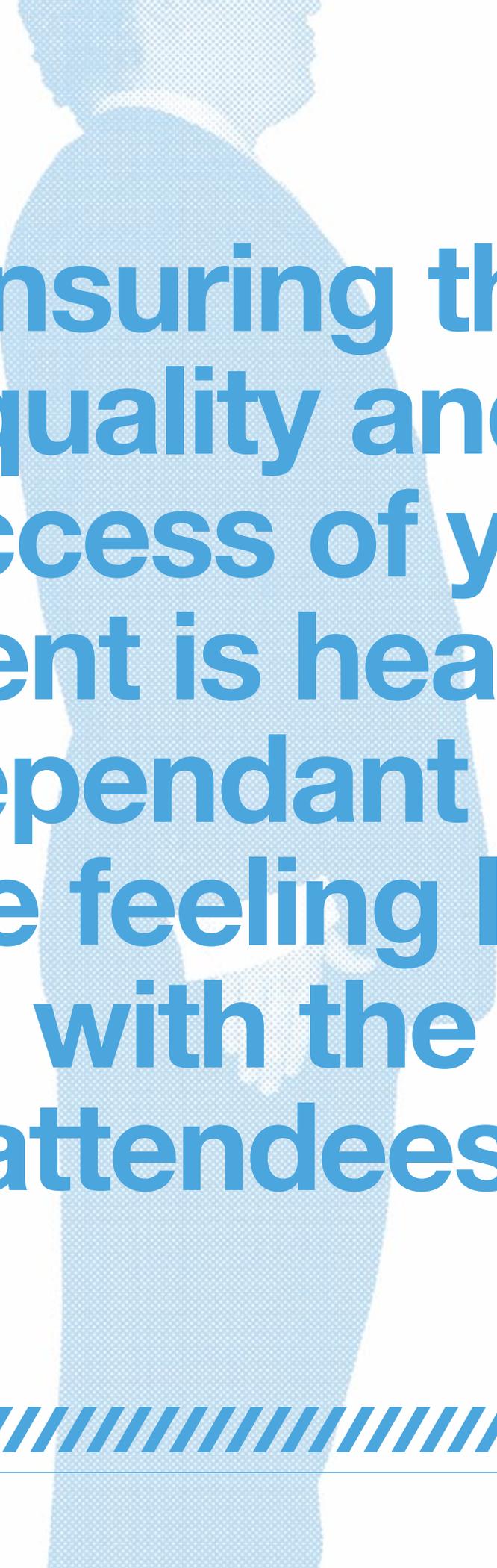
Ensuring the quality and success of your event is heavily dependant on the feeling left with the attendees.

2. Hear: If you are planning an event that includes music, or public speaking, it is imperative to provide sounds that will connect with and encourage attendees to come out, feel welcome, and have a good time. A good host, engaging musical acts, proper DJ music selections, and relevant speakers and other vocal or sound projectors, play an integral role in the success and quality of your event.

3. Smell: Smell plays a role in events mostly when food is being served, or if unwanted stenches seep into your event space. For example, during a garbage strike, a lot of events may be affected by the surrounding stench of garbage and rotting food. Smell can deter people from wanting to attend your event. If you are doing an indoor event, and the venue stinks, you might want to consider either finding a new venue or suggesting that the owners clean and freshen up the space.

4. Taste: It is known that taste can build fond memories, and if you properly align your event with the food you're serving, tasty memories left within the attendee can be a big part of the success of the event. Remember that what you serve at you your festival should be determined by what appeals to your target demographic.

5. Feel: The feel of an event is affected by the themes you create and the audio/visual elements that support it. For instance, if you are going for a more mature vibe, you would ask attendees to dress in formal attire and have the event in a more upscale venue. If it is a youthful event, the activities, and the programming should have a youthful feel, and the venue should be accessible to youth.

↘ Answering the Five W's

1. Who: When planning your event, you must figure out your target demographic and whom your event is trying to cater to. If it is a youth event, what is the youth age range? If you are planning an event for an older demographic, more adult activities might apply. Race, culture, and religion are other factors that should be taken into consideration when figuring out who your event is for.

2. What: The "what" in event planning implies the type of event you want to throw. What type of event is it? Is it a fundraiser, cultural event, festival, community fair, gala or ball, a one time event, or reoccurring weekly, monthly, or yearly event? All these ideas must be factored into your event planning process,

because that will help determine the venue, the time of the event, the demographic, and other important aspects that need to be addressed.

3. When: Dates are key to the success of your event. Your choice of event date(s) should align with the main purpose of the event. If you are doing a youth event, take school schedules, curfews, and summer vacation into consideration. Seasons play a large part in selecting ideal event dates. If you are planning a summer festival, obviously you wouldn't plan it during the winter. Also, take general holidays, religious holidays, yearly events, and reoccurring celebrations/festivals into consideration when selecting your dates. Sometimes it's also good to align your event date with a specific holiday or with another event date, in order to gain leverage from what is already happening (e.g. back to school events in September, Christmas galas, New Years Celebrations, summer getaways).

4. Where: When planning an event, it's all about LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. Is your event location accessible to the public, or if it is a private event, is it secluded enough? Is your event TTC accessible? Is it in the downtown core, or in the surrounding GTA? These are questions you must ask yourself when planning the location of your event. Make sure that whatever you choose aligns with the main purpose, demographic, and date of your event(s). The venue you choose is also key in how successful your event can potentially be - night club vs. halls, park vs. city square, boat cruise vs. beach event, indoor theatre vs. outdoor theatre, etc. Venue costs can be high at times, but you can also leverage your organization's status or financial state, as a way of getting venue costs subsidized or completely waived. Some venues would rather work with your event and help build their venue's reputation instead of charging you a fee for using the space.

5. Why: This is one of the most important questions to ask, if not the most important when planning an event. **Why are you doing this event?** Is it for social change, for community, for youth, for arts and culture? Before you can begin to plan, you must have your purpose solidified. Your purpose will help determine your goals and jump-start the planning process.

A) Envision Walking into event
  ⭢ **i. Envision walking into the event**

B) Event Format/Structure
  ⭢ **i. Challenges/Tournaments/Contests**
    Creating proper formats for your contest is key to a successful event of that type. Too often, competitions have flawed judging systems and poorly timed programs. So when planning any type of event that has a judging system, make sure it is fair to the contestants and appealing to those that attend.

⇲ ii. Musical Programs

Your musical program depends on your demographic, the time of your event, and the acts that will be performing. You want to find out what time is best for you opening acts and headliners to go on, based on the overall time of your event(s) and the demographic you are catering too. If it is a youth event, it should be done earlier. If it is a 19+ event, you may want to create a build-up to the main attraction without going too late and potentially losing people.

⇲ iii. Dinner/Gala Programming

When putting together a dinner or gala event, you want to make sure that food is served in a timely manner, timely, and that it follows the program, which in some cases, are usually planned and distributed to the attendees in advance.

⇲ iv. Multi-Day Event Planning

C) Scope? Scale?

⇲ **i. Feasibility:** When event planning, you must always take into consideration how achievable your plan and event is. Do you have the staff, resources, money, etc. to pull it off? As an event planner, you must try your hardest to ensure that you don't put yourself or your team in a position to fail, which means providing them with quantifiable goals that they can actually be attained based on the resources and skill sets they process.

⇲ **ii. Scale:** If you are planning a large-scale event, be prepared for many of long hours, over-worked staff, and lots of stress. As an event planner, make sure you do everything you can to prepare yourself for the worst, which includes early planning and selective team recruiting.
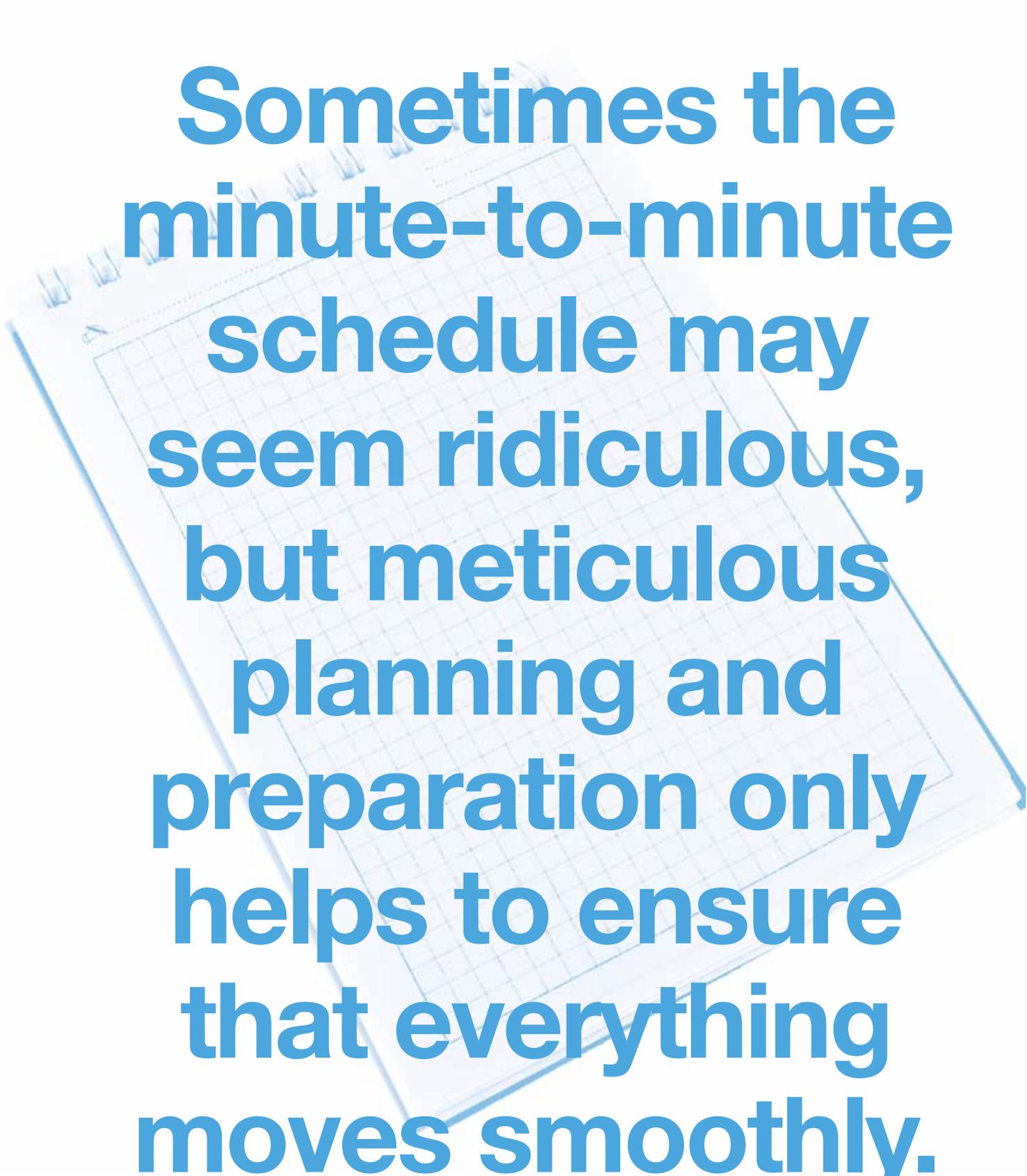
3. Planning

Contracts & Waivers

⇲ When planning an event, whether large-scale or at a community-level, it is helpful and, in many cases necessary, to use contracts and waivers.

Signing contracts with those you are working with, such as venue managers, food vendors, partnering

Sometimes the minute-to-minute schedule may seem ridiculous, but meticulous planning and preparation only helps to ensure that everything moves smoothly.

- organizations/groups/individuals, and possible participants (e.g. performing artists, youth performers), helps to ensure accountability from both parties involved.

- A waiver is a document signed by an individual, which relinquishes their power over a particular right or privilege. Where it concerns an event, it's especially important to have people sign waivers for the purposes of documentation. You want to be able to capture the event through photography and video, so having individuals sign a waiver allows you to share your documentation without stress or worry.

Critical Path/Work Plan/Timeline

- Your timeline/work plan is key in ensuring an effectively produced event. This can also be referred to as a critical path, as it outlines each critical step in preparation for, during, and following the event itself. How far in advance you complete the timeline depends on the scope of your event. You can start working on a timeline as soon as you get an idea for an event, knowing that the event is something that needs to and will happen. If time permits, having it completed at least 3 months in advance is ideal. The timeline is also affected by what type of event it is. For example, if you need to book a big venue, where this is a high demand, preparations must start early. However, please note that not all events allow a significant amount of time to prepare, which is okay.

- To create a timeline, which outlines all required tasks with start and end dates, and the names of those responsible, many events use Microsoft Excel. It serves as a strong tool, as it allows you to easily add and delete information throughout the process. Please remember that the timeline should include all major decisions in an event, from the research phase to evaluation.

- The timeline is something that is managed by the Project Manager (PM). The person who fills this role is instrumental in developing the timeline, and setting out individual timelines within it for key organizers of the event. The PM always distributes a version of the timeline to key players and stakeholders, to get feedback and achieve consensus before it is finalized.

- Ultimately, the way you design your timeline will largely affect how effective it is in communicating tasks and deadlines to your team. It's good to think of the timeline "as a comprehensive map of sorts; it provides everyone with a defined too for managing the event."

> *NOTE: The timeline is subject to change at meetings along the way, as there will be moments when, for example, either time or money needs to be saved, in order to achieve the original goals and objectives set out by the team.

Venue Research

⬊ Once a venue has been selected, work can become either more easy or difficult. Because of this, it is a good idea to choose and confirm your venue as early as possible, as affects so many other decisions along the way.

⬊ When choosing a venue, it's important to remember that the location and resources available in the space can largely influence how you plan your event. The location and physical resources available will also influence how much additional time will be needed to plan your event. Other considerations to keep in mind when scoping a specific space are the age and type of audience you are trying to draw. For example, if you are hosting a business luncheon, you might not hold it a school gym. Likewise, if you were hosting a youth basketball tournament, you'd want to make sure that it's in a location that is accessible and easy to get to.

⬊ Two important things to note when selecting a venue are ingress and egress. Ingress refers to the entrances or access to the venue, and egress refers to the exists or evacuation routes. How people get into the venue and how they exit, especially in case of emergency, should be significant factors in determining which location you choose.

⬊ Also, please remember that when scouting all potential sites, you will need to look carefully at the following: accessibility and transportation. For those that are differently-abled, it's important that they be able to enter and exit the venue comfortably. Also, transport to and from the location should be carefully examined, to ensure that your guests don't have any trouble reaching the event. Is your event accessible by public transportation? Is there parking available for those who wish to drive? Are there any other forms of transportation that can help people get to where they need to go?

⬊ Lastly, please remember that upon securing your venue, it's helpful to map out the space. Consider important questions like: How can the space be best utilized? What exactly are we working with in the space? How might things be setup on the day of the event? If you are able to consider these questions and answer them early, this will only help to ensure a successful event.

Scope Revision

In the midst of planning for your event, it is entirely possible that you will be faced with completing a scope revision. What this means is that you'll have to re-examine the scope of your event, based on other factors. For example, you may not get the full funding or sponsorship you were expecting, which will undoubtedly affect your budget, your choice of venue, and the scale of your event. The important thing to keep note of is that things can shift at any time, and you should be ready and willing to make changes based on those uncontrollable factors. This does not mean your event will be any worse off, but simply, that you will have to re-develop your plan and execute your work in a different way.

Marketing

If you want people to come out and show up to your event, you have to make sure they know about it and make them feel like they need to be there. Sometimes, this is easy. Sometimes, not so much.

When promoting your event, here are a few guiding steps to follow:

1) *Identify all event elements that require promotion, from the time of proposal right through to the final evaluation process.*

2) *Develop strategies for allocating event promotion resources with efficient methods.*

3) *Identify promotion partners – to reach desired audience and share possible costs.*

4) *Target your promotion carefully to those market segments that will support and attend your event.*

5) *Measure and analyze your promotion efforts throughout the process to make changes as required.*

Also, we can't leave out the fact that traditional PR & communications aside, we now have the power of the internet on our side. Tools like social media websites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), email listserves, and blogging, are all ways to get the word out about your event and extend your reach. When used effectively and unobtrusively, these can be subtle ways in which you help support the success of your event. For community events, handing out flyers and informing local businesses is key to making people informed and included.

Production Schedule

↘ The production schedule is a primary tool used when planning and coordinating your event.
    This is something that should be ready 1-2 weeks prior to your event.

↘ In the basic framework of a production schedule, you should include everything from load-in, to setup, to event start time, to final tear down. Think of the production schedule as a living, breathing, fluid document, that outlines every detail of the event. This includes timings, tasks, point people, and locations.

↘ A good idea is to provide the final production schedule at least one day in advance to all key coordination staff. If possible, it is also important to schedule a meeting for everyone on the morning of or night before your event, to make sure that everything is clearly outlined and there are no questions going in. Things will undoubtedly come up along the way, but if your team is confident and ready going in, this is very helpful.

⬎ With the production schedule, the PM/event leader needs to create and implement a minute-by-minute plan of how the event will pan out. Sometimes, the minute-to-minute schedule may seem ridiculous, but meticulous planning and preparation only helps to ensure that everything moves smoothly. Please note that the PM/event leader is responsible for watching over all the outline tasks and making sure they get completed, keeping in time (as closely possible) with the outlined production schedule.

> ***TIP:** When first sharing the timeline with your team, include a version (even if rough) of the production schedule. This will help, in some ways, to get them prepared ahead of time.
> That way, when you had out a full, detailed version on-site the day of your event, your team already has an idea of how things will go.

Organizational Structure

When planning an event, creating and following a system of organization is effective. Not every structure works effectively for every person. Therefore, it is important to recognize what works best for you and your team and follow that accordingly.

In many cases, it's also a matter of using different systems and making them work together. There may be one structure that outlines how the team meets and works together, and a separate structure that you can follow for yourself and your own tasks. As long as there is no confusion and you find a way to effectively coordinate, there should be no major issues that arise.

A Project Management System provides your team with a "superstructure," which allows you to approach your event within a fixed framework. This helps provide a solid base from which to build up and rely on.

⬊ **Overall, a PM system:**

1) *Provides an objective review process during the development of your event.*

2) *Helps to facilitate clear communication.*

3) *Ensures accountability amongst your team members.*

4) *Increases visibility for the event leaders.*

5) *Simplifies and eases the training process.*

6) *Creates a sense of professionalism that that helps attract strong people.*

7) *Establishes a diverse body of knowledge.*

Sub-Committees

As there are many components to any event, it is beneficial to have different people managing each section. To have select individuals be responsible for each part allows you to better manage the event overall. As well, this practice ensures that each component is effectively carried out.

First, the project manager/event leader and core team must establish the various areas of work that need to be addressed. Then together you can begin to determine who will head up each section. Once this is complete, it's a good idea to develop a structure under which everyone will work. This is where sub-committees can work well.

Once you have established what needs to get done, creating subcommittees under each lead person will help to ensure that the work gets done. Within a committee, you can delegate tasks and responsibilities to committed workers and have the lead person micromanage their respective team. Along the way, it is important to maintain constant communication, via email, phone, or in-person meetings; it is up to your team to decide which form of communication works best. Overall, this will help to maintain accountability and ensure everything is completed in an effective and organized manner.

4. Coordination/ Implementation

Coordination and implementation must follow the planning stage, when the production schedule has been completed. The production schedule leads the way for effective coordination of all the tasks and activities that should be followed in order to get one step closer to the event day.

The production schedule leads the way for effective coordination of all the tasks and activities that should be followed through in order to get one step closer to the event day.

Detailed Production Schedule for the Day

Again, a production schedule outlines a detailed list of the event from event set-up to tear down. For example, if an event is scheduled from 6pm to 8pm, your organizing team may be setting the event from 2pm until 9pm. The production schedule includes when vendors, entertainers, equipment, food, volunteers, etc. enter and leave the venue. It's a skeleton of the background work that goes into an event that can only be seen by the organizers and volunteers of the event.

Team Care

⬂ As an event organizer, you will be responsible for maintaining care for your team. This means ensuring that volunteers and staff are respected as humans that have various needs. Respect the people working for you, because they are working towards the same goal of creating a successful event. Make sure to bring/order food and water, allow for breaks and rotations of volunteer shifts, make sure shifts are not too long, etc. Before the start of the event, you can remind all volunteers and staff to take momentary breathing breaks as a way of staying relaxed during the event. This simple act can create a sense of calmness and confidence amongst a strong event team.

Identify Point People

⬂ Relating back to your organizational structure, you may want to create a detailed list of who the primary on-site contact will be. Essentially, there should be one lead person, who can delegate tasks to other leaders in various departments (leaders involved in on-site volunteers, media, stage/entertainment direction, registration, catering, etc.) and advise as necessary in emergency situations. These key people are crucial in making good decisions under pressure, so make sure you have chosen the right leaders for these positions.

"Day of" Kit/Survival Kit for Main Day

All event organizers should have an event survival kit including things such as:

⬂ *Tape*

⬂ *Scissors*

⬂ *Papers, notepads*

⬂ *Pens/markers/highlighters*

⬂ *Walkie-talkies*

↘ *Money box*

↘ *Stapler*

↘ *USB*

↘ *Extension cord*

↘ *Nametags*

↘ *Receipt book*

↘ *Invoice Templates*

> ***NOTE:** The list can go on and is subject to change, depending on what type of event you are organizing.

Proper Signage

↪ Make sure you have adecuate signage for washrooms, entrances and exits, registration areas, and any other signage specific to the physical event space, which requires audience attention, participation, and awareness. You need to make sure that your signage is clear for attendees to be clearly informed.

Payments and Petty Cash

↪ If you have performers, guests or entertainers that should receive monetary incentive upon completion of their services at your event, it is vital that they are paid on the spot after their completion, and that this is done discreetly. You must prepare invoices in advance including your organization's name, invoice number, and the name of the person/group that you are making your payment out to. Once the invoice agreement has been signed, then you may hand over their payment that is either cash or cheque.When dealing with money, be sure to have enough petty cash and be prepared to provide receipts.

Safety/Security/Policing

The following are some very important considerations when securing your event.

1. Venue Map: You want to have a full picture of the venue well before your event, to identify things such as emergency exits (if it is inside), fire alarms/extinguishers, vulnerable areas that you want security

or volunteers to monitor, a room or a locker to store valuables such as prizes and performers wallets/ hand bags, etc.

2. Security Guards: Are sometimes contracted by the venue, which can be very costly. However, in many cases they are not, and it is up to you to hire security guards. Guards are usually responsible for conducting searches before your guests/audience is allowed in and/or they are responsible for monitoring the venue (backstage, doors, entrances/exits, audience, etc.). It is a good idea to meet with the supervisor to explain to them your needs, show them your map, and discuss the crowd you are expecting (size, sensitivities, special needs).

3. Police: The police are required by some venues depending on the scale of your event or the crowd that is expected to attend. Even if the venue does not require police, the organizers may still feel that their presence is necessary. When you hire paid duty police officers, it is important to note that they charge a costly hourly rate, they only work in pairs, and they charge an administration fee on top of the hourly rate. Also, expect to have their cheque ready at the venue. Paid duty officers are known for not actually doing anything other than providing "presence" and will sometimes call other officers if they feel people in the crowd are "known to police".

4. Emergency Medical Services (EMS): Are usually good to have on sight, especially at an outdoors event, where attendees may need first aid or there is a chance of dehydration on a hot day. They will park their vehicle on the grounds and charge a reasonable price.

5. Insurance: Sometimes liability insurance is a built-in cost of your event through the venue. However, sometimes you have to purchase insurance through a third-party private company. The venue will usually have requirements in regards to the type and amount that needs to be covered. The insurance will also ask the organizer questions to gage the type and the amount of coverage you will need. There is a cost, however it is reasonable and well worth it, as you and your organization/partners should not take any chances.

Weather Planning

� If you are having an outdoor event, be sure to have an alternate plan in case it rains. If your outdoor event is cancelled, make sure it is properly communicated to your possible attendees.

Documentation

⬇ Photography and film documentation are key at any event. When you have photographs and video that

showcase your event, you have legitimate documentation to support your work. Also, photographs and video are ways to communicate the value or details of your event (i.e. attendance, audience participation, etc.). These numbers are important in securing funding and sponsorships, so you should make a note of the approximate numbers at the peak of the event and have footage (still or video) to document that.

Also, documentation can be helpful if any issues arise. Documentation helps to prove exactly what has happened at your event, and in some cases, it may be beneficial in difficult circumstances where accidents may have taken place.

> ***TIP:** If dignitaries and sponsors attend, try to take photos with them so you can share it with the broader public to increase the legitimacy or profile of your event.

Public Relations

⮊ Public relations can be important when introducing any person or group that is seeking media attention. Public relations are a major responsibility that takes the dedication of a leader who feels comfortable in effectively communicating (grammar and spelling is important!) a press release and marketing material in order to create a press kit. Often, you may need to look outside your core group to find an effective public relations contact.

Transport

⮊ Event transportation can be highly confusing to attendees. Be sure to attach clear readable maps on websites and posters including the full address. Show attendees that the event can be accessible via transit. Also show options of parking for those who choose to drive.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation

⮊ Evaluation should not just happen at the end or after an event; evaluation is a process that should take place through the planning and implementation phases of the event. The host organization/organizer who created the event is usually the one responsible for evaluating, as they are the most familiar with the purpose of the event. Evaluation is critical to assessing whether the event met its purpose and if it

Evaluation is critical to assessing whether the event met its purpose and if it was done effectively.

was done effectively. There are many ways of checking if your event and the planning was a success.

First, organizations/organizers may want to consider setting goals or objectives relating to the different phases throughout the event. When establishing goals and objectives, there are usually outcomes that groups want to achieve. For example, your goal may be to value the work of local artists, and therefore a potential outcome would be to acquire funds/sponsorship to pay local artists fee. The way in which you would measure this is to count the number of artists paid and to check in with the artist about what is an acceptable rate. Also, if you or your group members are artists yourselves, perhaps you may already have an idea of what is a reasonable rate to ensure that they feel valued.

Evaluation Methods

1) Surveys/Questionnaires (Qualitative/Quantitative)

⬂ This is a way to solicit information from the public about whether your event or a component within the event was a success. Surveys can serve as a means of collecting a lot of general and anonymous feedback from participants. Questions in the surveys should collect information relating to the desired outcomes of the activity within the event creation, planning or implementation phase.

2) Interviews (Formal/Informal)

⬂ Interviewing participants or attendees of your event is sometimes more accurate when it is a neutral person conducting these interviews. Sometimes the participant or attendee feels pressured to give the organization/organizer good feedback if they are on the spot. However, if it is a neutral person, it is likely that the participant/attendee will be honest about their experience. Interviews may be done in relation to different aspects or components of the event to gain different perspectives on anything from creation, to planning, to implementation

3) Focus Groups (formal/informal)

⬂ A focus group is when an evaluator or individual is talking to a group of people about their experience with the activity or event. Again, it may be better if the evaluator is a neutral party, but sometimes there are not enough funds to hire a person just to conduct evaluation. Sometimes people are less or more likely to talk about their experience in a group setting, as compared to a one-on-one interview.

4) Media or Arts-Based

⬂ Media or arts-based evaluation sometimes happens informally and organizers are not even aware of it. Many events are documented and often times there are testimonials on what people's experiences were. However, sometimes this type of evaluation is intentional, and it is always good to share when

trying to gain support for future events. Arts-based evaluation invites participants to respond to their experience through making art, to help them share their feelings, and to reflect on their experience. Many arts programmers prefer this method, because it provides them with a more in-depth analysis to the benefits or challenges with a project/event. Techniques include poetry, storytelling, and murals. More information can be found in Artreach Toronto's toolkit on arts-based evaluation.

5) S.W.O.T. Analysis & Group/Partner Debriefs

⇲ This method is usually used among groups/partners who have worked on the event together. SWOT is a structured way to talk about the overall process and event in relation to the internal Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as the external Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Group/partner debriefs are usually a bit more unstructured, and is just an opportunity for groups to come together and talk about successes and challenges without setting any particular agenda.

6. Self-Care

Self-care is something that is often neglected during the planning and execution of an event. In the desire to produce a successful event, one is bound to become busy. However, during that time, key organizers can easily fall into unhealthy habits: not eating, not sleeping, not relaxing and not drinking enough water. But it is important to also take care of yourself. After all, if you are not taking care of yourself, the question becomes: how effectively are you carrying out the event? The following are a few ways to help ensure that your health and that of your team is not compromised in the planning of your event.

Meeting Check-Ins

⇲ When your team comes together for meetings, an effective tool to use is a meeting check-in. What this means is that before the meeting begins and discussion moves to the work at hand, each member of your team is able to check-in and let their peers know where they're at. Whether you've having a bad day or you've been having a good week, it is important to be able to voice your feelings. Being able to share your thoughts helps to foster an environment of care and a sense of responsibility to each other.

Personal Check-Ins

⇲ Aside from checking in with your group, it is also important to take some time to reflect each day,

After all, if you are not taking care of yourself, the question comes: how effectively are you carrying out the event?

perhaps before bed, about how you're doing. Thinking about how you're doing, keeping note of what you're eating and drinking, and coming to terms with your own feelings and where you're at is key in maintaining your own health during stressful time periods.

Food, Sleep, Water

⬈ During the lead-up to your event, always ask yourself whether you are eating enough food, drinking enough water, and getting enough sleep. During preparation, planning, and execution of your event, it is easy to lose track of all of this. But that does not make it okay. To keep going and remain effective, you need to take care of yourself and ensure you have enough energy to keep going. Food, water and sleep are essential ingredients to maintaining your energy throughout the process and ensuring that you are as effective as possible. Always keep water on hand, and if necessary, don't be hesitant to schedule in time for food and sleep. Do whatever works to keep you alert and healthy. Overall, this will not only serve you but also help you in producing a successful event.

Making Time for Outside, Personal Activities

⬈ In the planning of an event, it is possible that you will become so busy that the event takes up most of your time. This is expected and makes some sense, especially as you near closer to the event date. However, it is still important to do things outside of the event, which are not connected to it. Take some time each day to enjoy yourself, to relax and not be consumed by preparations for your event. You need space away from planning. And remember that when you take some time away and allow yourself not to be overworked, this can ultimately help you be more effective in your work.

Post-Event Health

⬈ Following the culmination of your event, it is important to take care of yourself. In the craze leading up to your event, your health is undoubtedly sacrificed in some ways, whether it is through lack of sleep or improper nutrition. Thus, it's important that you allow yourself adequate rest time following its completion. Give yourself some time off, allow yourself to move slower, and work on getting back into a regular, less stressful routine.

Also, with the production of an event comes a certain rush of adrenaline and excitement. Therefore, following the completion of your event, it is understandable that you might feel a sense of loss or sadness. After all, the event is something that will have become so much a part of your daily life in the lead-up to it. Again, we stress the importance of resting, relaxing and finding time to enjoy yourself following the event's culmination. Enjoy the free time, which you might not have been able to do as much during the planning process. Also, talk to friends and family. Voice your feelings and thoughts when necessary, and allow yourself to make a calm, slow transition back into daily life.

> *TIP:* *If possible, have a team set up prior to help you with post-event tasks, such as tying up post-event financials. It's beneficial to include people who weren't involved heavily in the event.*