

From the Production Office: The Top 10 Tips every Event Planner should know

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1. **Let your event schedule inspire the venue.**

Selecting the right venue to accommodate your event can be a daunting task, even for the experienced Meeting Planner. Most hotels and convention center rooms can be transformed through use of airwalls, décor and audio visual components. For example, an awards ceremony can be held in the large ballroom that is also used for smaller breakout presentations the following day. The best events have a comfortable flow when the agenda is synchronized with what the hotel can sustain.

2. **Using (all?) the senses to heighten the attendee's learning experience.**

From birth, we are experts at learning to use of all five senses (touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing). Apparently a few of us go on to develop a Sixth Sense and star in movies with Bruce Willis; but for the rest of us the five senses are plenty to help us learn and retain information. We learn more from birth to the age of four than any other stage in our lives because we have not yet become selective in using limited senses. Offer your event attendees use of all of their senses to retain important themes and information (though you may want to ask those with the sixth sense to keep the presence of ghostly attendees to themselves).

3. **Learning skillz - How people learn best.**

Everyone dreads hours-long lectures and seminars even if the topic is of interest. Inevitably, heads begin to nod, eyes begin to glaze, and attendees eventually stumble away like a heard of zombies. Encourage your presenters to engage attendees through active learning practices and interactive lectures. Keep sessions focused to covering smaller amounts of material. Make optimum use of all of the technology that is available but keep that technology neat and organized. Whether you implement one or all three of these tips – we think you'll find less zombies and more learning.

4. **There's an App for this, that and more!**

World Internet Usage and Population Statistics show that 78.6% of all North Americans are online. That's over \$270 million people! It took radio broadcasters 38 years to reach an audience of 50 million people, while television only took 13 years and the internet a mere four years. With devices like iphones, pads and pods, Apps are easily integrated into our daily life. We are a visually stimulated society (see Tip #7.) If you haven't already, get familiar with popular special event apps like Guidebook, Eventmobi, Quickmobile, Grupio and CrowdCompass. And for fun check out Super Planner™; an App that provides a variety of planning tools, including calculators for venue capacity, catering and helpful AV tips.

5. **The Frankenstein of Events...Hybrid.**

Microsoft Founder and CEO, Bill Gates referred to the internet as “becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow.” With the growth of Generation X and Y meeting planners, we will start to see hybrid events that morph face to face business meetings with online facets. Hybrid events open up the realm of possibilities when presentations can be shared live on a website and attendees have the ability to upload pictures to your social media platforms. It also encourages participation from those who may not be able to attend the conference.

6. **Maximize your ROI – the buck stops here!**

If Mike Rowe is looking for a “dirty job” he should give event planning a try. It takes someone who is willing to roll up their sleeves and get creative. No one can expect to lose weight by eating fast food and refusing to exercise. And certainly no meeting planner can expect to meet their event goals if the message is unclear. Ask yourself what is the purpose of this event? What does my client hope to gain? If you allow this main objective to guide you, the return on investment will follow.

7. **Show me the money! What happens if I share my AV budget?**

The pricing for audio visual services is not like buying a car where you share your budget and all of a sudden you’re getting steered into buying the Rolls Royce. Microphones, projectors and lighting instruments just don’t change price like that. Sharing your budget helps an AV Company provide parallel ideas. Any good AV company will value your event goals and do their best to work within the parameters. That said, realistic goals are important to remember. Certainly, no one can expect to get a \$50k event on a \$5k budget. Share as much detailed information you can with your AV Company. They will provide creative solutions tailored to suit your needs and your budget.

8. **Staying ahead of the game. Don’t get run over by old and boring!**

We’ve talked about using technology, considering hybrid events, and keeping the zombies at bay (to mention a few things) to keep your event fresh. These are all solid tips, but to stay ahead of the game we suggest: stalking! Think about it though...events are happening all over. Check local hotels and conference centers regularly for their schedule of events. Grab a coffee and make a point to wander through lobbies prior to conferences for ideas (signage, event design and décor, etc.). Take a look at events just before they begin or just after they end – when your presence will be the least obtrusive but still useful for your research. From there you can upgrade or spin ideas in ways that fit your event best.

9. **Giving your breakouts a workout. The best way to coordinate.**

Twenty breakout rooms. Thirty presenters. A relentless schedule of specialized presentations from 8am – 5pm with an hour for lunch. Do your presenters have audio with their presentations? Do you need red and blue markers only for that flip chart? Arm yourself with an experienced breakout a/v team and rest easy knowing that your presenters are cared for and sessions have begun on time. Choose a breakout team with experience – so that your session needs are anticipated and well scheduled. Setting up each breakout room in a similar fashion with similar equipment allows your presenters to feel comfortable in every room. Leave your sweat in the exercise room and the breakout workout to your creative technology team.

10. **Choosing your creative partners - the right people make all the difference.**

We want to see the magazine ad that inspired the décor for your event. We want to hear the song that has become the theme of your conference. Did you see this really great interactive lecture last month in Florida? We want to hear all about it! When you can share your thoughts and ideas about your event freely, your production company can help you plan the best possible event. With a fully accessible and experienced team in place, your questions will be answered quickly, problems solved, and your event will be a memorable one.

BONUS TIP! (We just couldn't help it. The best tip of all!)

Call Axxis! We are ready to be your creative partner! **502-568-6030**