



# School Council Tip Sheet

## *How to Plan a Successful Event*

- 1. Start planning early.** Plan as far ahead as you reasonably can. Involve representatives from all participant groups (students, parents, teachers) in setting goals and planning activities. Select your first, second and perhaps third choice of dates and book your event location as soon as possible.
- 2. Identify your purpose or goal.** Determine what you want to accomplish with the event. Are you trying to raise funds? Are you planning to address an issue or share information with your school community? Who will benefit from your event?
- 3. Pay attention to the details.** Make sure you plan activities that fit your purpose or goal and are relevant to your school community. Prepare an action plan that is detailed and specific, to help volunteers carry out their tasks with a minimum of supervision.
- 4. Manage your budget.** Budget carefully. Your budget should include items such as: room rentals, refreshments, audiovisual equipment or other specialized services, honorariums, expenses for speakers, presenters or other guests, publicity, promotional items and awards. It is wise to allow for a 10% "contingency fund" for unexpected expenses. If you are going to charge a fee for the event, take into consideration all of your expenses and set the admission price accordingly. It's also important to decide how you will handle refunds and cancellations and to communicate that information clearly to volunteers and ticket purchasers.
- 5. Publicize early and often.** Promote the event to your school community well in advance, so people can plan to attend. Put up signs in your school and in local recreation and cultural centres. Send flyers home with the students and advertise the event in the school newsletter and website. For larger events, consider placing announcements in your local paper, community TV or radio station. Many local media sources will allow you to place a community notice for free.
- 6. Maximize your resources.** Start gathering resources early and continue right up to the big day. Involve as many people as you can in planning and organizing the event. It's a great way to build strong relationships with parents and raise awareness of School Council activities. Reach into the school community for donations, too. Many local businesses are more than willing to donate funds, prizes or refreshments to support programs that benefit students.

- 7. Expect the unexpected.** There likely will be surprises (like bad weather) that will interfere with even the best-made plans. So, be flexible, accept that you may have to make last-minute changes, and try not to lose sight of your purpose or goal.
- 8. Make your event accessible to everyone.** Consider the needs and interests of your school community. If possible, make your event wheelchair accessible and try to address the needs of special interest groups. Offer babysitting to make it easier for families to attend. Are there people in your school community for whom English is not their first language? You could ask a couple of these community members to help by translating promotional information. Chances are that if you include people in the early stages of the event, they will be more likely to attend and bring others with them.
- 9. Show your appreciation.** It takes many helping hands to organize a successful event. Make sure that you publicly thank your volunteers, supporters and donors for all of their hard work. Make a point of letting them know how their efforts have benefitted the school and contributed to student success. If you let people know how much you appreciate their efforts, they'll be more willing to lend a helping hand the next time.
- 10. Conduct an honest evaluation.** Wrap up your event with a thorough review. What worked and what could have been improved? How well did you meet your purpose or goal? Make notes to make your next event even more successful!

## Questions?

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