

11 Biggest Event Planning Mistakes

1 - Not starting early enough. The sooner you start thinking about your event the greater the chance that the event will be a success. Some corporate events are planned several years in advance.

2 - Not Identifying dates. What are your preferred dates? Are these fixed, or do you have alternative dates as back up? Have you checked that the dates are compatible with senior people within your organisation that are expected to attend? Do they clash with industry events, public events, major sporting or cultural events, internal company events, competitor events etc.? By correctly identifying your date options to begin with will save you hours of time when sourcing availability at venues. There is nothing more frustrating than negotiating space and rates with a venue only to be told that the key person is not available on those dates, because nobody has taken the time to check their availability first.

3 - Not being in a position to confirm dates. Are you really in a position to make a decision if a suitable venue has been found, or will it take several weeks, even months, to get approval from a more senior member of the company? Do you have the authority to confirm a venue if suitable? Quite often, venues will only provisionally hold dates for 7-14 days and then automatically release if no interest has been shown. Similarly, if another enquiry is in a position to confirm the same dates, they will give you a deadline as to when a decision must be made or they will offer the space to the other client.

4 - Not conducting site inspection visits. We strongly recommend to all our clients that they conduct site inspection visits to assess the venues suitability for that particular event. Familiarise yourself with venue in advance, experience service levels, assess decor, accessibility and general ambience of the venue. This will enable you to make a far more informed decision than just brochures and internet information.

5 - Not setting deadlines. Once you have decided to hold an event and identified dates, it is imperative to set deadlines as to what tasks need to be achieved by when. This will keep you on top of the organising, making sure you should have everything organised well in advance and not have numerous last minute tasks to complete. Find out from the venue when they need confirmation of certain details - final numbers, catering requirements, accommodation rooming lists etc.

6 - Not setting a budget. How is the event going to be paid for - internally by the company, through ticket sales or with some financial support by a sponsor? Who is responsible for paying for what elements? Main cost centres to consider include - venue hire, food & beverage, Audio visual equipment, stage and set design and production, event literature, marketing, accommodation, transport, activities and speakers.

7 - Not dedicating somebody to project manage the event. This does not mean that this person has to do everything themselves, however they could be tasked with co-ordinating all the different elements and getting everybody else to work to their respective deadlines.

8 - Not asking for specialist help or outsource to specialists - Even if the event is your sole responsibility, you should still be able to delegate or outsource some tasks to colleagues or industry professionals, whether it be venue finding, event management, obtaining quotes on Audio-Visual equipment or guest speakers etc.

9 - Not familiarising yourself with the Terms & Conditions, especially the Cancellation Policy. What is the venues attrition policy? When confirming numbers at the contract stage, be accurate and realistic with your commitment. If you are over ambitious, your function room might look empty and you could be hit with cancellation charges. If you are over cautious, the function room might end up being too small for the event and delegates feeling cramped. You might also end up not having enough bedrooms to accommodate additional delegates and spend hours trying to source nearby hotels with availability. Work with the venue to find out how flexible they can be - this will work well if you have set deadlines in your planning stage.

10 - Not having adequate Event insurance cover. We take out insurance on most things in our private lives, however very few organisations consider taking out Event Insurance despite the £1,000's or \$1,000's committed to the event. The Icelandic Volvanic Ash disruption of April 2010 and harsh winter snow in the UK earlier that year saw numerous events and exhibitions cancelled which cost organisers vast amounts of money. Not all of them would have been covered by Event Insurance which could have a drastic impact on any organisation.

11 - Not setting clear objectives for event - If you do not know what you are trying to achieve from hosting an event, how can you evaluate if the event has been a success or not?

By avoiding these mistakes you will be in a much stronger position to create and deliver your perfect event. Try them next time and see if it helps you?

- with thanks to [Red Dragon Events](#)