12 TIPS for throwing a GREAT Event!

CANVAS Lounge

Tip #1: Set a Date and Time.

Selecting a date for your event establishes a deadline and gets the ball rolling.

1) Decide on a date.

- By selecting a date, it gives you enough time to plan without stressing out, because planning a party is **a job in itself**!
- Think about how many other companies there are planning parties. To avoid the disappointment of not booking the **venue**, **entertainment** or caterer that you want because the date is taken.

2) It's best to have at least 3 different date options available.

- Give your staff a survey of three dates and see what the most popular choice is. This includes them in the planning process, so they feel like their opinions are taken into account. It also guarantees **higher attendance** and helps you look like a star!

3) The closer to you get, likely people will be away on holidays and have other plans.

- When selecting potential dates, keep in mind the season, people have other parties to attend and some may also be going out of town.

4) Weekend dates usually cost more than weekdays but offers more flexibility for guests to attend.

- Everyone wants a weekend date so they can party till the sun comes up and not worry about a hangover the next day at work. But, keep in mind that **venues** are the most high in demand on weekends so **buyouts will cost more**.
- The average cost for food and beverage minimum is $10,000 for a weekday and $15,000 for a weekend.

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Tip #2: Prioritize Your Budget.

1) If you are given a budget from the get-go, decide on how much to budget for food and beverage before anything else.

- **Food** and **beverage** costs should take precedence over all other costs. Decide on food and beverage cost, then use what is left over for entertainment.
- The menu usually needs to be pre-ordered, so if you have budget constraints, spend more on food, because people can always purchase drinks if they run out of drink tickets or host alcohol, but it is usually difficult to ask for more food.

2) If you are not given a budget, start by looking into the past.

- Christmas parties from previous years will give a good indication of how much to budget for in terms of food, beverage, **venue** rental, prizes and **entertainment**.

3) Time your event according to your food budget.

- For events that begin earlier than 8 pm, you will need to supply a dinner portion of food. A dinner portion menu, whether it be sit down or heavy canapés and **food stations**, average at $50 per person and up.
- If the event begins after 8 pm, you can offer a light snack portion upon arrival for the few who are still hungry. Offering a late bite after 11 pm, it will help soak up the alcohol. Budget $20 per head and up for the snack option.

4) Be smart about your bar options.

- There are many options besides host bar, cash bar and drink tickets. Consider other options such as: a host bar limited to certain beverage options, host bar limited to a certain spending limit and a host bar limited to a certain time.
- If you limit your host bar from shooters, it lowers the bar cost quite a bit. It also keeps the party from getting out of hand with rowdy behavior.

5) Pick a full service venue to help cut costs and stress on your end.

- A full service **venue** offers a one stop shop for food, beverage and service staff. This lowers costs by having **service staff** as part of the food and beverage package.

6) Pick a venue with decor and A/V built in to cut costs.

- Why not pick a space that already has ambiance? Restaurants and lounges are great spaces with **decor and equipment**. You don't really need to do anything more to dress up these spaces.

7) Break your budget down to cost per person.

- An overall budget can be intimidating, by breaking down the budget to cost per person, it allows for a more personalized look into the details of each attendee.

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Tip #3: Selecting the Right Venue.

1) Place an estimate on the number of expected attendees for your party

- With an **estimated number of expected attendees** in mind, you can narrow down the choices for **venues** quite a bit. You don't want one with a capacity that is a lot larger than the number of guests you are expecting, because **the room** will look empty and the energy of the party will be low. You also don't want a venue that will be too small as the venue has the right to refuse entry once its legal capacity is reached.
- When speaking to event or **catering** managers from venues, ask them what their sit down and stand up capacities are.

2) Keep in mind who this party is for. Choose a venue that fit the personalities and needs of your guests.

- Does the venue suit the tastes of your guests? There is a certain culture about every company and group of people. So, pick a venue that **embodies characteristics** that match the company or group culture. This provides a more comfortable atmosphere for your guests.
- Remember, too, that people can be allergic to anything, so make sure you ask your guests about allergic reactions and keep them in mind when picking your venue so that you don't leave anyone out.

3) It is best to pick a venue that is located in close proximity to the company to ensure that most people can attend.

- People at your company live all over the lower mainland and some drive while some don't,

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but one thing is for sure: they can get to work one way or another. By picking a location that is close to where they work, you are offering familiarity; **likely increasing attendance**. This is especially convenient if the party is on a weeknight as people can just walk or bike over or take a short cab or bus ride.

4) Look into the what events the Venue has hosted in the past

- Before booking the venue check into their history of events, because the last thing you want to deal with is a venue with a team that lacks experience, knowledge and versatility. Ask the event/ catering manager about his/her experience, the **staff's experience**, how often they host events, what type of clients they have worked with, and what type of events they specialize in.

5) Check into additional Venue Services

- **Parking facility -** It should be big enough to easily and conveniently accommodate your guest's vehicles. Never compromise on the availability of parking space especially if you want everything to run on time. To make the guests feel event more spoiled, see if the venue offers valet parking services.
- **Venue Staff** - Your venue must have an **adequate number of staff** to serve your guests. Find out the ratio of servers/security to guests. The venue staff must be friendly, experienced, helpful and courteous.
- **Restrictions** - Every venue has restrictions like alcohol licenses, noise restrictions, dress codes, decor related issues, advertising bans, catering arrangements, etc. Look into these details before booking.

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Tip #4: Dream of a Theme.

1) When deciding on a theme, it is important to keep the interests of your guests in mind. There is no use in picking a theme when no one can relate to it.

- Think about the age of the crowd. It will dictate a lot in terms of what will work and what won't work. Typically, if it is an older crowd, you will want to pick a theme that is more traditional so they are familiar with it. Younger crowds like fresh ideas related to pop culture.

2) With each theme comes a price.

- By incorporating themes, the décor that comes along with it might increase the cost for the party. **Budgetary concerns** are always an obstacle, but you can tone down the amount of **décor** and make use of in house lighting and other a/v options. Also try creative outlets like second hand stores to find items to decorate your party with. Ultimately you want to theme a party to provide uniqueness.

3) Before asking guests to arrive in themed costumes, think about whether that would mesh well with them.

- Costumes are a big hit with some people and can raise excitement for a party, but at the same time, the cost and hassle of finding a costume might deter people from **attending**. A solution would be to provide guests with simple items that can dress up their outfits so that they are part of the theme.

4) Incorporate your theme into every aspect of your party, not just décor.

- Some ideas of where you should and could incorporate your theme is in the **food** menu, **drink** menu, **entertainment**, gifts, music and games.

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Tip #5: Track Your Attendance Numbers.

1) Give ample time for your guests to respond to your invitation.

- Large parties require a good **month to organize**, give your guests lots of time to plan for it and respond to your invitation.
- Small parties are more spontaneous in nature, and require less organization. No more than a month's notice is necessary for casual events.

2) Be sure to place a limit on the number of guests that your attendees can bring.

- Typically each attendee can invite a "significant other" or one guest. This simple request can help you stay within your **budget**.
- Be sure to set a 'hard' time for people to attend. Ideally you want everyone to be there at the same time for important speeches and greetings.

3) Solidify your numbers by requesting your guests to RSVP.

- **Depending on the formality** of your event, certain invitation formats can yield higher results.
- Formal printed invites such as cards offer a tangible reminder to your guests, a quick follow up phone call or email can quickly affirm your numbers.
- Consider having tickets printed for entry, this will provide great control for the number of expected guests, and accountability for those who actually showed.
- Emails, Texts and Social Media are great easy ways to promote your event.
- Whether formal or casual, it's necessary to prompt your guests to respond to your invitations ASAP.

4) The Uncertainty Factor

- It is important to verify the number of guests attending as the date draws nearer. You will need to inform the Event **Venue** of your expectations at least one week in advance.
- It is better to round up for your numbers rather than to round down. You don't want to leave any of your guests out in the cold.

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Tip #6: What Beverages will you be serving & type of bar service.

1) Types of Bar Service

- A Host Bar that works within your allotted budget. It can be a full open bar or limited so it can turn into a cash bar after you've used up **your budget.**
- A Cash Bar requiring your guests to pay for all their own drinks. It can really help with **your budget**, and your legal liability is considerably reduced.

2) When is your bar service?

- Hours of service are typically defined by the legal limitations of **the venue**. 2 am is generally closing time, but some venues can stay open later.
- Extensions of service can be requested as long as **the venue** has a month to process the request and are generally available at an added cost.
- You can always stop service during dinner and presentations to avoid unnecessary distractions and help control your **bar budget**.

3) Know what you have at your disposal

- Beer is a popular beverage and is simple to serve. It has a mid level cost that will not break your bank. Beer takes longer to consume so generally your guests will last longer.
- Wines range widely in price but you should take into consideration the varied tastes of your crowd. It's a classy drink perfect for a mature or early crowd.
- High Balls are simple drinks that involve spirits such as Vodka, Rum, Gin and Rye mixed with pop and are popular across all **demographics.**
- Cocktails and Martinis add an extra touch of class to your event. Consider creating a **signature drink** for your event. The extra ingredients of liqueurs and juices add to the overall cost.
- Shooters get straight to the point. They kick up the energy level. Consumption will be higher and will likely add substantially to your budget and liability if it is a host bar.

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Tip #7: What is on Your Menu?

1) Vote on Variety

- When choosing the menu, whether a homey brunch, sophisticated hors d'oeuvres selection or a lavish six-course meal, you need to make sure you feature variety in flavor, texture, appearance, temperature and color.
- If you're having a dessert buffet, for example, you don't want the entire spread to consist of round, gooey and messy chocolate-y things.
- It's a good idea to keep in mind your guests' tastes; just remember to offer enough variety so that everyone can find something appealing to them.

2) Stay in Season for your menu items

- By going with the season it can really add to the **theme of your party**.
- This ensures that the food menu will be fresh and tasty. It might even help your **budget** if you choose items that are in abundance.

3) Don't limit your menu to food; include signature cocktails.

- Signature Drinks can be branded with company slogans and names that will add to the **theme of your party**.

4) Match the food to your event and guests

- Formality of the menu should jive with the formality of the party itself. Save the fancy canapés and hors d'oeuvres for high-end events.

5) Be considerate of your guests eating habits

- Keep in mind the ease of consuming "finger foods" versus foods that require utensils, especially during a stand-up reception.

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Tip #8: Layout of Your Party.

1) The type of room can dictate the mood of the party

- Large Rooms are great for **big parties**, sit-down dinners and **buffet-lines** but are less cozy for mixing and mingling.
- **Smaller Venues** offer more intimacy but lack the space for large parties and often **Hors D'oeuvres** is the best solution.

2) Flow of the Room is a big factor

- Typically it's a good idea to have greeters for your party followed by registration and coat check, and then a picture area to capture **every person in attendance.**
- What may seem like a procedure is actually a nice way for guests to **settle into the party**

3) You must always consider how people are going to be moving around the room.

- Are you allowing a quiet area for people to talk and/or smoke?
- How will they be lining up for a **buffet**?
- Is the Dance floor an appropriate size?

4) Different Venues affect the layout of your equipment and stations

- In a banquet room you must take into account the location of the Reception area, Coat check, **Bar, Sound Equipment**, Bussing Stations, etc.
- In a Restaurant or Lounge you don't have to think about certain aspects because they already form part of the existing layout of the venue.

Tips #9: What do you have for Entertainment?

1) It is largely dependent on your budget.

- There is a reason why DJs are so popular. They are flexible, abundant and **offer great value**. Plus most **venues are already equipped** for DJs.
- Bands are great but typically require more equipment, setup, sound tests and **cost much more** than DJs. Also keep in mind that bands have limitations to what they can play and they rarely take requests. It's also hard to control the volume of a band.
- Consider strolling acts such as jugglers, with little or no production required offering face-to-face interaction with your guests.
- Photo-booths & Photographers have become very popular at parties and are a form of entertainment themselves. Photographers add to interactions at parties while photo-booths are **more casual and fun** for guests to goof around in.
- **Unique options** for entertainment can include Silk Aerialists, Contortionists and even Flair Performance Bartenders.

2) Do you have the right equipment and space?

- DJs typically perform behind the scene. Lighting will be more of an **issue for the room** and live bands will require more lighting, gear and space.
- Make sure you take care of your entertainers. You want to make sure your entertainment is at their best at your event.

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Tips #10: Do you need to rent any Equipment or Decor?

1) In-house amenities versus outsourcing from specialists

- Renting from the **venue** can often lead to better deals and simplifies your **planning schedule**. There might be compromises that you have to make.
- Specialists can provide you with exactly what you want but at a cost that can complicate **budgets**.
- Banquet rooms are large rooms that can be setup in many configurations, however quite often rentals make them prohibitively expensive.
- **Restaurants and lounges** can save you the hassle of renting **bar** and **kitchen** equipment. Decor rental can be kept to a minimum.
- You must always consider set-up and tear-down staff when renting equipment. **Production schedules** are a must.
- Work your immediate contacts for the best results and deals.
- Ask your **venue** to provide a list of referrals of companies that they have worked with in the past. This can also help in the budgeting department.
- By working with referrals they will have had some experience working within the venue. This will **save you time and money**.
- **Book early** to lower the cost of the rentals.

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Tip #11: Be Sure to Staff your Event Adequately.

1) In-house staff vs Outsourcing

- Venue staff already know the space. They are trained and comfortable and have a great **feel for the venue**. Typically the rental fee for the venue includes the costs for the in-house **staff** .
- Outside Catering companies offer great flexibility, require a **setup schedule** and will often add to **your event budget**.
- Security staff can be hired in house or from an outside company. It is recommended to use in house security when you can. Its **budget wise** and avoids issues with the house rules.
- Nobody wants to wait around for ANYTHING. Make sure to have enough **Bar staff** to expeditiously serve drinks, waiters to serve **food** and porters to clean up and re-stock the bars.

2) Luxury vs Necessity Staffing

- Valet Service can help with the tricky task of parking in a central downtown location. It is considered a luxury and the cost of this can be offered to your guests who are willing to pay for this service.
- Restroom attendants add a **touch of class** and cost to your budget. Attendants ensure that the restrooms are always clean and that toiletries are stocked and readily available.
- Setup and tear down crews are necessary especially when there is very intricate audio-visual equipment on hand. When renting from outside companies the setup and operators are often included in the cost.
- **Extravagant events** sometimes hire **interior decorators** to spice up a space. It definitely adds to the cost of an event but it also adds another dimension to a party.

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Tip #12: Your Final Event Checklist.

1) Show up early and take an active role in the setup of your event.

- There is always an issue or question that you can help confirm, as the head of the service, **entertainment**, planners and **venue**.
- Give yourself sometime to get into 'game' mode to fill your role as the Event organizer.

2) Double Check and confirm your production schedule to ensure your event is on schedule.

- Catering, Entertainment, Venue, **Staffing** and **Décor Setup**.

3) Take a walkthrough with event/general manager to skim over the event layout.

- Discover details that might be missing before your event starts instead of dealing with issues as your guests arrive.

4) Introduce yourself to the staff and entertainment.

- As the event organizer, you will be setting the expectations for the event.
- Brief the staff on the number of guests and relevant details such as drink tickets and special requests from certain guests.
- By doing this you make your face know to the staff to avoid confusion during on the go requests during the evening.

5) Confirm your numbers of RSVP Guests with your catering company and the venue.

- This ensures that you have all your bases covered by providing the service staff with a **confirmation of your turnout**.

Have fun, enjoy basking in the spotlight & the gratification of making your dream a reality!

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YOUR 12 TIPS CHECKLIST

Bring in this list and get 10% off the cost of your next event at CANVAS Lounge!

12 Tips Checklist	
1. Set Your Event Date & Time (Include Alternate Dates)	Preferred Event Date: M____/D____/20____ Alternate Event Date: M____/D____/20____
2. What is Your Budget Range?	Min $_____ to Max $_____
3. What Venues Did You Select?	• • •
4. What do you have for Themes?	• • •
5. Estimated Attendance Numbers?	Minimum Number: Maximum Number: Expected Numbers:
6. Type of Bar Service (Circle Choice)	Please Select an Option
7. Food Menu Customization and Chosen Food Items	• • • • •
8. Layout of Your Party	Please Select an Option
9. Do You Have Special Entertainment? *Please Circle* ***YES or NO ?***	• •
10. Do you Need Equipment or Decor? *Please Circle* ***YES or NO ?***	• •
11. How Will You Staff Your Event? (Circle Choice)	Please Select an Option Please Select an Option •
12. Final Check List	• Show Up Early to your Event ☐ • Confirm Production Schedule ☐ • Do a Final Walkthrough ☐ • Introduce Yourself to Staff ☐ • Confirm Your RSVP List ☐

Have any questions?

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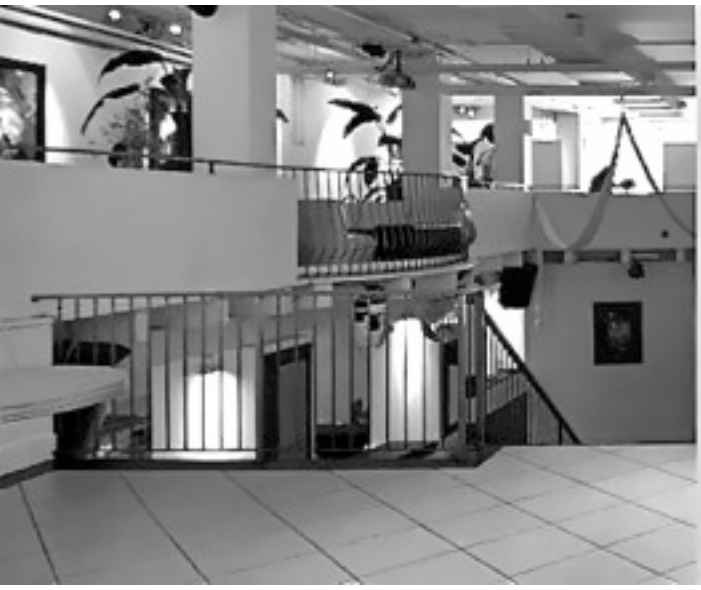
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