



Free Event Planning Tips:

Develop the event:

What is the idea for an event and then what is the purpose? Must be a great idea, or new or has an important twist, clear goals, everybody you know thinks it is a great idea, you have enough time, you have enough staff, you plan to do it more than once and you are willing to pay attention to hundreds of details. Again, the purpose....to raise money, more visibility for the winery, promote a specific wine, inform, educate, entertain, increase awareness, build a base support from a specific audience, facilitate good community relations.

Feasibility study:

(a survey you do in the community to save time, money and grief for first-time events) Feasibility study consists of a cover letter, a copy of the survey, a phone call or personal visit and a follow-up thank you letter.

Start with what are you doing. Describe the event idea and the purpose. Then identify who. Who you survey is in fact, the most important part of the feasibility study process. Identify key people, customers, potential customers, and media. Who is the target audience? Is it new customers, thanking current customers, retrieving old customers, restaurant owners, distributors?

For a small special event survey about five people by phone. For larger events talk with ten to twelve people.

Name the event and set goals:

Coordinate a marketing plan for the event which includes: direct mail, advertising, radio, press release, TV, etc.

Develop a timeline – 3 month lead time. Timeline includes what needs to be done, who is doing it and the date it needs to be completed. What materials and equipment are needed, when they are needed and who is responsible.

Create a budget:

Coordinate the event: Implement the timeline through weekly meetings.

Get all permits from the County or City. In Napa County it is a six to nine page temporary application that should be submitted three months prior to the event. The permit will address police and fire policies and procedures, portable toilets, parking, building use, utility support needed, clean up, emergency plans, transportation, insurance, water, dust, noise, lighting, etc.

Media:

Turn your news into an event and your event into news....special events are especially successful when you are creative, well organized and media savvy – right from the start. Your event must be media friendly, meaning it meets the media's needs by offering demonstrations / tastings, access to wine maker / mentors / leaders in the community / keynote speaker / follow-up groups, sessions, seminars and / or other spokespersons and product information not available elsewhere.

Compile information about your event and product for distribution to the media through calendar of events, news releases, photos and any additional information use. Send the information regarding the event out to the media well in advance of the event so there is a possibility of free advertising / editorials. Place follow-up phone calls to further entice the media and to gauge their interest in the event. Offer one-on-one interviews before and after the event. Send a media reminder the day of the event.

On Site Operations:

Site inspections - On site review/ Rehearsal - Set up - Tear Down

FOLLOW UP – FOLLOW UP – FOLLOW UP

A thank you or follow up procedure should have been coordinated and included in the timeline. This is one of the most important aspects of the event. Thank individuals for coming and follow-up to see what they thought of the product, promotion, wine. Some of this can be done by direct mail, email and some by personal calls.