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AN INTRO GUIDE ON BECOMING AN
EVENT COORDINATOR

WHY?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO START INVESTING TIME AND RESOURCES, IT'S GOOD TO KNOW WHY

An important question anyone who enters the event organization space is why are they doing this to begin with. Why do this anyway? Some do it out of a passing interest and think it will be fun, there may be a need in a niche community for an event of its kind to happen and a member takes the initiative, or someone who thinks they can make a quick buck off of it. An important thing to realize is that if anyone is to see any success in the space they're trying to host events in, there needs to be passion behind it. Without passion it will not only show in the quality of the attendee experience but the drive to improve the series will wane sooner than you may realize. This is also not an avenue to make easy money as in order to make a good amount of money, a considerable amount of time needs to be invested into it which may

or may not be worth the payoff at the end when starting out. Once again, passion and a want to improve either the community you're hosting the event for, or just wanting to get better at event management in general is going to be your main motivators.

If you already know your intentions and reasons for becoming an event organizer, congrats! Now it's time to learn the essentials.



LOCATION

PUTTING ON A GOOD SHOW IS ALWAYS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EXPERIENCE , BUT THAT CAN BE HINDERED BY A LESS THAN IDEAL VENUE.

So you've decided you are ready to host your first event. A good starting point is to figure out what venue you're going to be hosting it at exactly as that will dictate who your target audience is, your branding / theming, and being able to get a rough idea of how much it will cost so you can start planning your budget. If the goal is to seem legitimate and for people to have faith in your series, a quality venue will be the biggest testament to that.

Depending on what kind of event your hosting, there are some equipment restrictions you need to keep in mind when selecting your venue:

- Number of people the space can hold while standing.
- Visualize your flow of traffic day of the event, does the space allow you to get people where they need to be without much hindrance?
- Does the venue have working AC? The temperature come day of is going to be drastically different than when you went to view it due to the lack of people in the space. The last thing you need is a stuffy room which will leave not the best memories for your guests.
- Whats the parking situation going to be like? This is easily one of the most overlooked parts



of the event space since people tunnel vision on getting people in the doors.. Make an estimate of how many people you're expecting and scout out if there is a parking lot provided that will hold that many cars, or look for alternate parking facilities nearby that people can walk from.

The final important note on location is making sure your venue is an appropriate place for the event you're hosting. Having conflicting themes in the form of the event and the space being held can create a weird situa-

“IF THE GOAL IS TO SEEM LEGITIMATE, A QUALITY VENUE WILL BE THE BIGGEST TESTAMENT ”

tion for the attendee as the venue could be a family friendly space while the event being held is strictly for adults. While not an issue as one is probably finding a venue that matches the event's vision, its important to keep that in the back of ones head when touring different places.

Put yourself in the shoes of an attendee for this event that you want to host. Look around the space and start thinking if there is enough to do for the time allotted and if theres a reason to leave and come back.



AUDIENCE

PUTTING ON A GOOD SHOW IS ALWAYS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EXPERIENCE, BUT THAT CAN BE HINDERED BY A LESS THAN IDEAL VENUE.

Typically if you've already decided on getting into event hosting, you already know what audience you're trying to host an event for and have a general path forward. However if you don't exactly know the audience you're trying to reach, you want to choose a group who will closely relate to the kind of event you're hosting especially for the first iteration. This will be your hardcore audience and will be the ones coming out to your events on a semi consistent to consistent basis, and will provide lots of earned media in the form of word of mouth advertisements. This is how events / venues grow such as Phantom Power, a local music venue in Millersville, PA. They primarily went after the local music scene as a starting off point and appealed to fans of those specific groups. They weren't the biggest acts but they had loyal fans that liked the service Phantom Power provided and were incentivized to continue to go to more events there. This allowed them to eventually reach out to a broader

audience for different kinds of events to service multiple different audiences.

If you're having trouble getting to know your audience or getting in contact with them, go to events that are similar to what you are trying to run and get to know the attendees. Learning more about them and the best ways to reach your audience through a first hand survey will set you up to properly advertise to them in the future.

“CHOOSE A GROUP WHO WILL CLOSELY RELATE TO THE KIND OF EVENT YOU'RE HOSTING ”

BRANDING

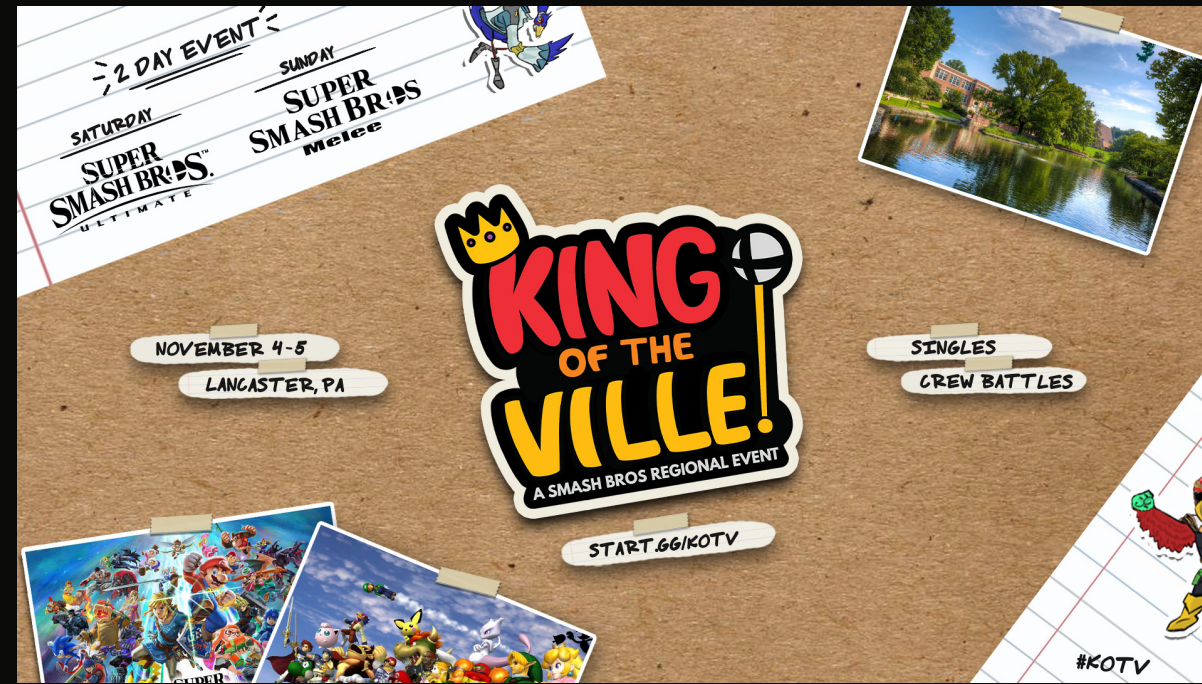
FIND WAYS TO SEPERATE YOURSELF FROM THE REST OF THE PACK WITH UNIQUE MESSAGING AND CONSISTENT THEMING

Branding at the end of the day is the most important thing to a company can ever have. The importance of having good branding is being able to separate yourself from the rest of the field using design and messaging that stands out to anyone and being instantly recognized for it. Thats why companies invest so much money and go to great lengths to create recognizable pieces of content to convey whatever image theyre trying to project to the public. While it is not the entirety of the brand image, it is a large part and without it they're almost unrecognizable. While an event may not have as much on the line as a large corporation, the importance of branding still stands.

Branding an event goes beyond just slapping a pretty logo on and calling it a day. The vision and messaging for the event is a part of its brand identity. If the event is supposed to be a formal occasion, such as fine art exhibit, you want to use appropriate messaging so people dont get the wrong idea coming in. You dont want people thinking its a social hangout where its very high energy with loud music playing overhead if youre going more for a calm social gathering where people are mingling and there's classical music playing. You can avoid this by using proper messaging on any ad-

vertisements along with using the correct language to convey that further.

The face of your brand and the first thing people are going to see are the visuals that have been created to convey what the event is going to be. The logo is going to be one of the more important parts of the process as it should be put on any piece of content you put out to promote the occasion. An example of this is for an event Ive hosted for the past few years called King of the Ville. Below is the logo we used for this past iteration:



The goal of the logo was it to be colorful and stand out amongst all its advertisements. It helps that it looks like a sticker which helps it stick out when its against a background and helps it stand out further. It's animated and emotes that the event is going to be a fun high energy which lines up with the kind of event being advertised.

Besides the logo design, an important part of the messaging was the tagline at the bottom of the logo. For previous attendess they already knew what the series was about and came in with the correct expectations. We knew the advertisements would be posted in areas where not everyone would know what it is, so we included the tag line to help deliver that expectation.



We wanted the branding to stay consistent with all pieces of content, which led to using the same background and the same general theme of aassets among all pieces.

The ultimate goal of branding and advertising events is to get people to register or gather more information or think on later. On all content pieces this should be achieved by including the date(s) of the event and including a way for people to sign up or gather more info. In this events case it was by including the url in every piece of content. Including some kind of call to action will help people do the intended goal you want them to do.

BUDGET

YOU CANT FUEL EVENTS OFF PASSION ALONE, EVENTUALLY YOU WILL NEED TO START THINKING ABOUT THE BOTTOM LINE

Even if you're not in this to make money its important to know your costs going into an event. Costs always trump passion. You cant fuel your passions with determination alone, you're going to need revenue if you want this to be a regular venture. Make a detailed plan of what costs are associated with an event so you're not caught off guard that something costs more than expected and youre left paying for vendors out of your own pocket.

Almost all costs are going to be seperated into 3 main categories :

- Venue costs
- Equipment Rentals
- Staffing needs

If possible start to get any purchases done as far out from the event as possible. This includes venue and equipment costs as it will be a lot easier to recoup funds with fundraising efforts or by incoming registration costs leading up to the event. If you are having trouble raising initial funds, depending on the size of the event you could get an event loan.

Only do this if you are certain you will get the number of entrants to pay back the loan otherwise you got a good number of payments for the next few years.

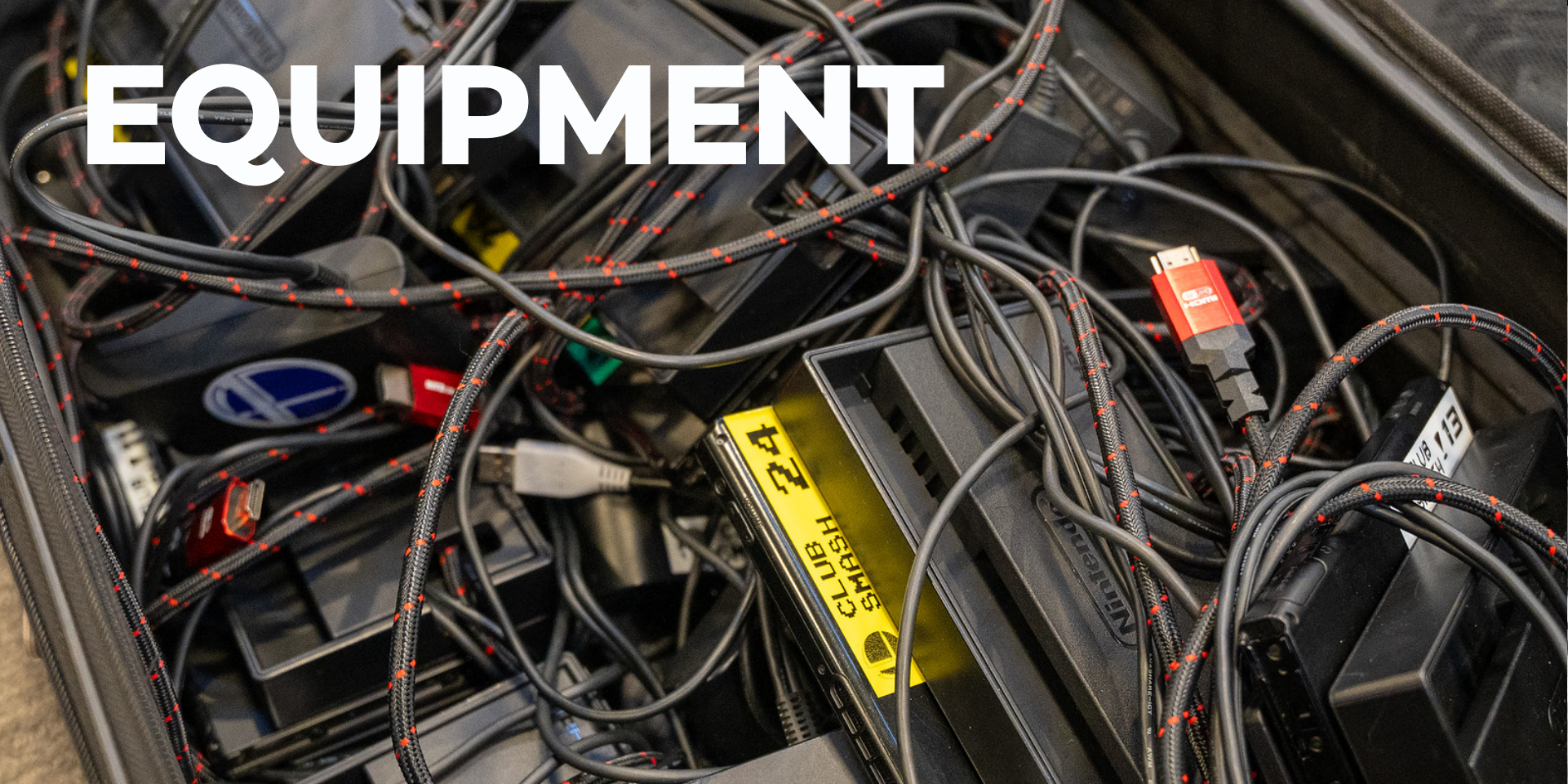
Venue is always going to be the first cost you need to get handled. If it's a big event and its farther out, you not only will be able to space your costs out and make the overall financial burden more manageable but you will also have an abundance of space options to choose from. The more options you have out there can also give you more room to negotiate with the venue owners as they want to fill up the space for as many dates possible during the year. This also allows you to raise funds over a longer time if needed.

Staffing can be approached in a few different ways. Depending on the importance of the role you're more than likely going to have to pay them for their services. In my experience this has been with broadcasters, experienced bracket runners that can run the bracket portion of the event efficiently, or designers on the team. If its a role that is relatively easy to do and doesn't need someone to be booked out months in advance, volunteers from the audience can be utilized with event costs being waived, free merchandise, or offering free meals in exchange for their assistance.

Equipment can be expensive if you don't already have it on hand. Either invest in quality equipment that will last a long time, or rent them out from 3rd parties if necessary. If you're renting them out from individuals who express interest in going to your event as an attendee, you can typically comp them by waiving any event costs in return. This can encourages people who were finding ways to lower the price to justify being in

Im of the mindset that every organizer should run a profit. There is more motive to improve events and access to more resources to do so if you run a profit. If you break even its still good but there isn't as much drive to push yourself and the event further for better results. End of the day no one is going to get rich off this but its good to be rewarded for your efforts.

EQUIPMENT



Make sure you verify with the venue if tables and chairs are going to be provided to you. Organizers have been left dry expecting these basic amenities to be provided only for them to be missing and only noticing when its time for set up. In addition to tables, tablecloths are a small addition that can go a long way in helping hide clutter if its been kept underneath tables along with just looking nice.

Signs and guides are going to be crucial for helping people get to where they need to be along with making the event appear to be more organized and leaves a better impression.

If you're going to be giving items to attendees such as badges and lanyards or any other consumable, it doesn't hurt to be overstocked rather than running out halfway through the event. Even if not everything is used for this event it can be saved for the future.

Depending on the scale or importance of the event you can potentially skimp out on not getting the highest quality materials. You don't NEED the highest end equipment to put on a great event! Only start to invest in the best of the best when its time to scale up and you're sure you want to do this long term.

SPONSORSHIPS



Events aren't just for attendees, sometimes brands want to get in on the action too. Companies are always trying to get their brand out to reach new demographics, especially among the younger generations. Events can act as a liaison between brands and the public, and money will be offered to have these companies be apart of the spectacle.

Whenever you are discussing sponsorships with other orgs, its important to know the different kind of sponsorship opportunities out there. There are sponsorships that only go as far as placing the companies logo on

marketing materials or having them be the "brought to you" sponsor of the event. These typically are compensated in either cash or any resources the sponsor can provide.

You always want to have a plan on how you will execute the sponsorship. A lot of sponsorship opportunities have been passed on because a plan was not presented on how the brand will be featured. Describe any materials they will be on and give estimates on how many people their brand will reach. Its essential this is thought out in advance to ensure sponsors have confidence in you representing them.

PHOTOGRAPHY

CAPTURING MOMENTS AT EVENTS CAN LEAVE PEOPLE WITH MEMORIES THAT CAN LAST A LIFETIME

Something that sometimes can be overlooked is capturing moments of the event. If there's a broadcast you are only capturing one POV of the experience while there's hundreds others happening away from the main cameras. No matter if its a wedding, a party, a concert, or anything in between, a photographer capturing these moments will offer not only a way to reminisce on those who went but also provide those who weren't able to attend an idea of whats in store for future installments. The first step however is finding a photographer and how can you utilize the content that they captured for you?

Now how exactly do you find the right photographer for your event? There will be photographers that are used to capturing a certain kind of event such as a wedding, sports games, concerts, etc. While at the end of the day, a photographer is better than no photographer, you will end up with an infinitely better product if you find someone that has an idea of what to look for in the kind of event you're running. The best personal example I have is for one of my first big events, my team and I hired a friend of ours who was mostly working with weddings and the portfolio he provided was really good and we were confident in our decision to bring him on. The event we were hosting was an Esport event and while he did do a good job, a lot of the photos didnt match the vibe of the event because he captured calm moments to while the environment moments to be captured such as someone jumping out of their seat due to a win or the audience



effectively losing their mind due to their favorite player winner or losing their set. For later iterations we got a different photographer that was more acclimated with the concept of Esports and what moments to be on the look out for which resulted in a product that matches the energy of the event better once everything has come and gone.

Once your photographer has given all the deliverables now its time to utilize them to start generating excitement for the next installment. Posting the full album on your socials will generate nostalgia for the event and help reinforce the good memories that people had while attending. They can also be shared by users

and as long as theres some kind of indication such as a logo in each of the photos, it is a form of marketing thats being dispersed amongst friends and family. They are proof that people came and had a good time making it easier to grab new attendees with the previous iteration participants seeing the memories and registering again out of nostalgia.

Once everything the photographer properly and don't pay them in exposure. You will benefit more than them and they deserve to be paid especially if its an all day affair. They will also be more likely to participate in



DAY OF SETUP



Let this be a warning for those first go around with setting up. DO NOT start setup at the last second or an hour or 2 before doors open. Too many times have people done this mistake where its come time to open the doors for people to come in and theres still boxes all over the place, tables and chairs are stacked and it overall looks disorganized. You do NOT want that to be someone's first impression of a space they planned on spending potentially all day at.

If you are setting up tables chairs, equipment, etc get that done minimum 2 hours before doors open if its a smallish event. Around 70 entrants or below but it ultimately depends on the size of your venue space. Bigger events with larger venues need to be done the night before to put all focus into at door check in, money collection, and any final broadcast and equipment testing. Focusing too much on chair and table placements can direct attention away from smaller things that need to be setup such as broadcasting equipment, check in, and any other specific needs related to the event.

As stated in the equipment section, double check with the venue that tables and chairs are provided so youre not left scrambling and overpaying for fixtures at stores that should have been provided to begin with. If you do find that additional equipment is needed make sure you have someone designated to be the runner and either buy or retrieve items from somewhere else. There is no need to take the team on a field trip to buy something when there are other tasks at hand

If the event is taking cash at the door for payment or for amenities, make sure to have spare cash on hand and in each register or box. Most people just grab money from the atm and only recieve 20's in return so be prepared to hand out a lot of lower denominations in return.

Today of all days is where communication will truly make or break it for you. Be understanding of one another and remember everyone is working toward the same common goal.

PRODUCTION

While not necessary for every event, a good production value will elevate the overall experience for attendees and help further the spread of your series for future iterations. Production can take on many meanings depending on if you're doing a stage production, music production, or something similar, but they all share the same common trait that it involves using technology to set the mood and theme of the event in your favor.

In terms of materials needed to put on a good production they almost always include lighting equipment, sound equipment, and a stage. Lightning is essential to set the right mood for the event with the different tones and colors you can control setting the ambience. If its a wedding then a warm low lighting will be appropriate for the occasion while dark lighting with strobe effects would be more appropriate for a club setting. The same can be applied to sound with relatively soft sound can be more appropriate for a calming environment with loud audio heavy on bass more appropriate for a high energy space.

If the event is being broadcasted then that can be included and will work with all the other equipments listed. It is also possibly the hardest to get right as this then includes video cameras, microphones, software akin to a television broadcast, and a crew of people extremely knowledgeable in how each part interacts with each other to pull off. That isn't even including other assets they may use for the broadcast such as transitions, overlays, or general graphics made to relay information to the viewer of whats happening on the other side of the tv.





STAFF

YOU DIDNT THINK YOU WERE DOING THIS ALONE FOREVER RIGHT?

An important thing to know about event organization is that this is a collaborative effort and you will either be cooperating or working with others in the process. If you are looking to take this on all by your lonesome I'm not going to say its impossible but it will be a lot harder than necessary. Adding on people to your staff whether it be for one off occasions or on a consistent basis is going to be a huge boon as you wont have to be in this alone anymore. Just make sure the others are on the same page of what the goal is otherwise it may lead to infighting and cause more stress than need for a simple miscommunication issue.

Once you have a staff formed you can begin to expand your endeavors to a larger scale than what you were operating at previously. There may be some training involved and growing pains with a group of individuals trying to work towards a common goal their own way but actively communicating any issues that may arise will quickly defuse any situations.

During the planning process it is important to assign people to specific roles to help keep the event organized. It is important that people stay in their specific roles and not stray from it if the group is too succeed. Each part helps the others out and help the machine keep moving along.

The central brain behind the event, the Head Coordinator, will be responsible for all organizational aspects leading up to and during the event. These duties can include: Venue selection, budgeting, vendor relations, among many other roles. To effectively organize an event they will need to delegate roles to other staff members.

Do not expect everyone on the team to fully know how different pieces of technology interact with one another as they may not be as inclined. Thats why having a Tech Producer is important as they are delegated to making sure all electronics including sound, lightning, and other electronics are working as intended and if not they go and put out the fire.

Having someone underneath the Head Coordinator will free them up to handle any large issues by being in charge of running whatever main activity the event advertised. This Event Manager is responsible for a bracket for example, running smoothly and allow the Head Coordinator to have an eye on every part of the event.

Volunteers can handle tasks such as Registration, food distribution, and any area where there needs to be some human intervention to keep it organized. The areas listed above can become huge choke points and hinder a persons experience so its essential there is an abundance of volunteers taking charge and helping keep the ship moving along. This is especially relevant with registartion where people can slip by undetected if its backed up resu-litng in them losing potentially important information needed to enjoy the event.

ENJOY

NOT TOO MUCH YOU STILL GOT AN EVENT TO RUN

Doors are open and the show is finally underway. As long as other parts essential to the day of experience have been properly prepared and implemented there shouldn't be any major concerns from the organizational aspect of the event. There may be small hiccups here and there with miscommunication between staff members, a vendor is having issues setting up their table or canceled last minute,

or personalities conflict in physical ways, but at the end of the day you have set you and your team up for success by taking the proper precautions weeks if not months prior. Now all that's left is to make sure the ship keeps sailing to a smooth finish. Remember to try and enjoy the fruits of your labor also. The experience isn't just for your attendees but for yourself as well.







EVENT FEEDBACK

PEOPLE PAID GOOD MONEY TO SPEND TIME WITH YOU ALL DAY, THEY DESERVE TO TELL YOU HOW IT WENT.

Congrats you made it through the event in hopefully one piece. If its a big event there's no rush to start planning the next one but you should take this opportunity to collect information from attendees about what went well and what they feel could be improved upon for the next iteration. Everyone has their own perspective and someone could point out something completely valid that might have not been thought up of previously. It is important to start collecting feedback as soon as possible from attendees as it will be fresh in their minds making it easier to recall the smaller details of the event.

To collect information theres a few ways to go about reaching out to attendees. You can always just post on social media in the comments of a post whether or not they enjoyed the event and what their favorite part was. While you will receive some responses this will not give you the best answers possible as theres no anonymity for anyone involved. Its well established that if someone gives out an opinion of theirs they are more likely to conform to what their peers think than what they truly think.

Putting out an online form on social media that doesn't collect personal information is a good starting point of getting truthful answers from attendees. Just be wary of responses from individuals that may not have actually attended the event and are just giving out their perspective from looking outside. While this can be acceptable if there was a broadcast for the event and they are commenting on the spectator experience, if there was no broadcast then these responses potentially serve little value.

If people had to pre register online and you made it as a box to fill out, you may be able to send an email directly to your attendees making any opinions be from someone that had an actual experience from your event. While this gives you the best data, be wary about sending out emails unprompted as people may feel they didnt sign up for that. A recommendation is adding an optinal box for them to click in the registartion if they would be willing to fill out a short survey about their experience after the event is over. Opting in may net you lower responses but it would be of people who are willing from the start to share if they had a good time or not.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello! My name is Dan Silva and im a Graphic Designer, Marketer, and Event Organizer based out of Central Pennsylvania! All of my experiences in these career paths started at Millersville University where I began as a Graphic Designer while also becoming president of my University's competitive fighting game club. Its there that I grew a love for event organization and began to slowly build my skill set in the craft. To date ive hosted hundreds of competitive fighting game tournaments in my local area with each event totaling an average of 60 entrants.

When im not doing my local events I am either traveling to participate in a large school fighting game tournament or have been hired to help out. Sometimes both! These range from 100 entrants all the way to 1000+ attendee events.

After over 7 years doing events I can safely say its been one of the more educational activities that I've done and recommend everyone give it a shot at least once. It teaches good leadership skills and how to collaborate with others that is essential in many job fields and industries.

Thank you for taking the time to read through all this and if you would like to reach out and get more information or collaborate please visit my website dansilvaart.com for more info!



