

## 10 Quick Tips For Planning Outdoor Events

Let's look at this "Outdoor Events" equation from the other side of the table. Most of the time we talk about what it takes to succeed from the exhibitor perspective. But do you also plan events?

This is the time of year we focus on what warm weather brings – outdoor event opportunities. So, if you are new to planning outdoor events or tackling a new type of corporate or public happening then we have some quick tips to make your life easier.

- 1. Weather Happens. Plan for it.**  
My wise Norwegian Grandmother always said "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing". This kind of event planning attitude will save you much heartache and pain. Are you ready for high winds or temperature extremes? Plan for the worst and be grateful when the weather is good.
  - 2. Craft an Organizational Chart (including vendors)**  
Much confusion can be avoided with a simple-to-understand organizational chart or diagram, with names/titles/phone #'s of all key players involved in the event. Then distribute it. This will eliminate a good chunk of unnecessary questions that sap your time and energy.
  - 3. Create A Master Timeline**  
Keep everything on track and on time with a master timeline that maps out all aspects of the event. I have often made a separate pre-event and day-of-event timeline if you are running a major event.
  - 4. Develop Backup Plan(s)**  
Think through the scenarios that would cause you to cancel, postpone or move your event and what your plan is in those unlikely (but possible) circumstances. Might there be an indoor option as a worst-case-scenario?
  - 5. Hold Mandatory Staff and Vendor Event "Classes"**  
Have an official training session where you plainly explain the expectations for dress, conduct, shift hours and to confirm delivery times, set up times, and any other details that you want to drive home. If feasible, printed handouts are a good idea.
  - 6. To Radio or Not to Radio? (walkie-talkies rock)**  
Even though I don't like the look, having a hands-free radio headset among your key staff can really make things easier. Your cell phone is not a good tool for the kind of instant communication with your managers.
  - 7. Water, Water Everywhere**  
Provide your staff with plenty of water, especially on hot days. This seems basic but it is amazing how many event planners forget to hydrate their staff. Have backup water bottles on hand. Seriously. And do attendees have easy access to water?
  - 8. Port-A-John Morality**  
DO NOT skimp on your bathroom budget, either in the number of porta-johns or how often they are cleaned. Many a wonderful event experience is ruined because of an atrocious restroom situation. Put yourself in your guest's shoes. Nothing can kill your event, especially upscale events, faster than neglecting this.
  - 9. Build A Supplies Tub**  
You will inevitably need duct tape, twist ties, cable ties, batteries, allergy medicine, first aid kit, flashlight, sunscreen, aspirin, ibuprofen, gum, mints, hand sanitizer, pens, small pads of paper and the like.
  - 10. Give Yourself a Break**  
This edict has multiple meanings. No event is perfect and every event is different. Do your best to plan but do not wear yourself out. Take breaks during the event. Being exhausted leads to short tempers and mistakes. Take notes on lessons learned, smile and always remember that life will go on.
- If you are short on staff and/or time, the seasoned outdoor event pros at Apple Rock can help you plan and execute your outdoor events and make them shine. From event planning services to providing tents, portable displays, flooring, lighting, A/V, staffing and talent, our decades of experience are at your disposal.