

Community Event Checklist

So, you want to host a community event? Whether you're holding an annual affair or are new to event planning, this checklist can help you think through every detail and cover your bases before, during and after the big day.

Define Your Goals (6-8 Months Out)

Prior to planning, determine why you want to have a community event. What do you hope to gain by hosting the event? Do you want to connect with other local businesses? Attract new customers? Grow brand awareness? Develop a philanthropic reputation? Identifying your mission will help you form an event that best helps you reach your goals.

Goals:

Set the Theme (6-8 Months Out)

Once you've identified your goals, you should come up with a theme that best connects with your customer base and drives you toward your goal. Maybe it's a ladies' night, a community cookout or a pet adoption event—regardless, you should determine the type of event during the beginning planning stages.

Theme Ideas:

Contact the Right People (4-6 Months Out)

If you're planning to involve other companies or organizations, you'll want to get in touch with them as far in advance as possible. For example, if you want to partner with a local organization to host a community cookout, dates and plans will have to align with their vision, too. Cross-check dates and open up a conversation to ensure a positive experience for everyone.

Name:	Company:
Phone Number:	Email:
Name:	Company:
Phone Number:	Email:
Name:	Company:
Phone Number:	Email:

Create a Timeline (4-6 Months Out)

Once you know what type of event you're going to host, set a date and determine a timeline of what needs to be done throughout the planning process. Consider elements like marketing, staff preparation, purchasing supplies, rental equipment and food.

Date of Event:

Important Dates:

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Pinpoint the Details (3-4 Months Out)

Before you start marketing the event, there are lots of details you'll want to think through. Do attendees need to register or RSVP, and if so, how? Will attendees pay admission? If so, how will you collect money? Will you close the store for the event? What is the maximum number of people that can attend? If it's outside, what will you do if it rains? The list of questions could go on. While you should always expect the unexpected, plan as much as possible.

Event Details:

Create a Marketing Plan (2-3 Months Out)

In order to have a successful event, you have to get people there! Consider the best channel to reach your target audience. Radio ads? Social media? Direct mail? While you may not start advertising until a month or two ahead of time, plan early so you can successfully reach a large audience. Don't forget to send a press release to local news outlets—it may encourage the media to attend and cover the event.

Target Audience:

Marketing Plan:

Alert Your Staff (2-3 Months Out)

Before marketing goes live, let your staff know what's going on. Find people who are willing to work the extra hours to make your community event great. And for their hard work, reward them with a pizza party or some type of treat. As the event approaches, discuss important details like how staff will communicate, appropriate attire and what each staff member is responsible for.

Staff Members:

Gather Supplies (1-2 Months Out)

Make a list of everything you'll need, and include everything from tables to displays to pens at registration. Prioritize the big things first, like ordering rental equipment or giveaway items. Then save the small tasks, like gathering pens, paper and name tags, for closer to the event.

Supply List:

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Prepare the Store (1 Week Out)

Hopefully your event will drive lots of customers to your store. Make sure it's in tip-top shape! Clean the store from top to bottom, face every aisle and straighten up displays. Make sure attendees can easily navigate by putting up any necessary signage inside and outside the store. Have staff conduct a quick run-through of the store, set out any food and take care of other last-minute items the morning of the event.

Cleaning List:

During the Event (Day Of)

You've done as much prep work as you can. Now, enjoy the big day! With any event, it's inevitable that something unexpected will come up. Be flexible, stay calm and focus on creating the best experience for attendees. Be sure to have all contact information and important documents in one place, and make them available to staff members or volunteers so they're easy to access in case of an emergency or if you need to reach a vendor.

List of Documents:

After the Event (Post Event)

Once you've successfully hosted your community event, there are a few things you can do to spread awareness of your efforts and help you prepare for the next one. First, send out a press release to local media explaining your event's success, and put event photos up on social media. You can find a template at TheRedT.com/PressRelease. You'll also want to follow up with attendees and gather feedback by sending a survey. Then, write thank-you notes to your staff, outside vendors and anyone else who helped make the day a success. Finally, take a few minutes to reflect and write down notes on what worked and what can be improved for next time.

What Worked:

What Needs to be Improved:
