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## **SETTING EVENT TARGETS**

As almost all books on business will tell you – setting targets is one of the most important things you can do in order to set you and your event apart from any other. By setting targets you will be able to focus on your desired outcomes for your event more clearly. All event managers should always ask the question, What is this Event for?

### **Setting Targets Before you start**

Once you have some clear reasons for holding your event, you can use them to set targets. These targets will control what you are doing, and will ensure that you know how to get where you are going. But it is not just about you – it is important that all of your team, contractors and suppliers know the reasons for the event and what you are trying to achieve. Targets are most useful for evaluation – if you know you want to measure your performance, you can only do this by setting a target first – if you don't have a target – what can you compare to? Finally, targets are important, because after each event you can re-visit them and change them for the future, so that you, your event and your company can continue to grow and develop.

### **Setting targets (to help you get there)**

Setting targets often seems like a waste of time particularly in the fast moving, dynamic and creative industry that is event management – however setting targets will help you to keep your event on track. Every time you reach a cross roads in the event planning process – every time you think of a new idea or a new suggestion is made – you should ask the question, 'Does this fit with my targets?' If the new activity or idea will help you to achieve your objectives, then GREAT – but if not, then what is the point? If you accept every suggestion or idea, without any kind of check – you run the risk of holding an event that is little more than a collection of different activities, rather than a single, flowing event that has continuity and works well together.

### **Setting Targets (so that everyone else knows what you are doing)**

When you set the targets for your event, you should make sure that this is a team effort – and once the targets have been set you should ensure that they are communicated to all of those involved with the planning and management of the event. This will help the people in your organisation to keep focussed on the event – and not to veer away from the main reasons for holding the event. Setting targets for different areas will provide the roadmap to a successful event – throughout the

planning process you will be able to quickly see which areas need more attention (poor ticket sales means focusing resources on tickets) or which are close to reaching their target.

If a target is reached, then a new target should be set so that the momentum and pace of the event is not lost.

### **Setting Targets (so you know if your event has been a success)**

When you are trying to evaluate your events, you measure the success of the event against the targets that have been set – if you do not set any targets, then how can you measure against them? These targets can be personal, for the event management team, for the event or for the business as a whole. For example, you may choose to set a target as ‘selling 100 tickets’. If you sell only 90 tickets then you have failed to reach your target and you need to investigate why. If you sell 110 tickets then you have exceeded your target – but again – why was this?

### **Setting Targets (so you can change them next time)**

Once the event is over – you should look at all of the targets individually – your performance against these targets will provide a comparison between how you did and how you wanted to do. This provides a framework for any evaluation – and allows the evaluation process to be streamlined.

It is not acceptable to just see whether you did or did not meet a target – you have to investigate why – as this is where you can learn lessons to take forward to the future. The reasons for matching targets should be carefully considered, and action points arranged from them – it might be that some areas failed due to lack of funding, or others due to lack of training. Without knowing this, the risk is that the event, staff or company will continue on, never quite getting it right – year on year and event on event.