

Event Promotion Planning Checklist

Courtesy of the Presbytery of Chicago

Here's a basic checklist for promoting your event. I've left out major media due to expense and the fact that the majority of church events do not warrant mass media promotion. It's a starting point and may be modified based on the individual event needs.

1. At two to three months out, name your event and solidify date, site, time and general information.
2. At two months out, Firm up details and create a press release for the event. ALWAYS INCLUDE contact information, website and facebook addresses. If reservations or ticket payment is needed, have it set up and include details in the press release. Post notice of upcoming event in church newsletter, church bulletin, church website, Presbytery Connect, and send emails/letters to other local churches and organizations for inclusion in their publications and announcements. Create a Public Relations contact list that you will be able to use anytime you have an event in the future.
3. One month out, send a more extensive press release with a reminder to "save the date" out to everyone you previously notified and now to local papers & radio stations for inclusion in their Community Events. If you are hosting a special guest/speaker or have a topic of newsworthy interest, see if the newspaper will send someone to cover the event.
4. Post flyers at your site, local and public places like libraries, train stations, banks, stores, restaurants, other local churches and community centers (anywhere you can). Start building relationships in your community, talk up the event and be willing to promote events for other local organizations to your congregation.
5. At two weeks out, send out reminder emails, announce on Sunday mornings, make a few phone calls to other churches, organizations or groups you want to attend the event. Personal invitations are always most effective. Invite folks to bring a friend.
6. Now that the main event is covered, prepare a flyer, card or handout about other upcoming events so attendees can take the information home with them, especially if you plan regular events. Include a brief piece about the church and basic information on your regular schedule – worship, Sunday school, Bible study, and other weekly or monthly programs. Be sure to include your website, Pastor and contact information.
7. If you have a few smartphone savvy folks, ask them to tweet about the event.
8. At the event, have someone on hand to greet and welcome attendees, answer questions give directions.
9. Plan to have someone take pictures and write a review of the event. This post-event PR will be valuable for newsletter, newspaper articles, and posting online as well as providing material for the next time you plan this event.

10. When you've had a week or so to rest up after the event, have a review meeting with your planning team to debrief and think about what worked and what didn't, what you can improve upon, add or change going forward.