Successful Event Planning

Planning events is an important function for clubs. Here is some information to help make your events a success.

General Guidelines for Successful Event Planning:

To ensure that the event runs as smoothly as possible, the event planner or Regional Coordinator should outline a plan detailing every stage of planning.

Day and Date:

- Consult the Club's calendar to make sure the event does not conflict with other activities planned.
- Check your standard calendar initially for possible conflicts with national or religious holidays.
- Local calendars will be of help in screening for desirable dates as they may include dates of private and public school vacations, events of other organizations and local athletic events.
- Check Oberlin’s academic calendar to see if current students will be able to attend.

Time:

- Time is the next most important factor besides the date.
- Clubs located in larger cities must accommodate travel time before or after rush hours, etc.
- Time should be when the greatest number of alumni will be able to participate.

Place:

- Location is often the key to a successful event.
- Review past events, if available, to see which locations brought in the greatest participation.
- A central location is most advisable.
- If in a large metropolitan area, it is wise to alternate locations around the city
- Look for alternative venues to keep costs down.
- Clubs are encouraged to consider Churches, Schools, Alumni Homes, Community Centers, etc. to reduce or alleviate costs.

Cost:
• General rule of thumb is that each function should pay for itself.
• Cost can be a factor when alumni decide to attend the event. Try to keep the cost of the event as reasonable as possible, as cost can be a factor when alumni decide to attend the event.
• Many times, price breaks can be given to younger alumni or those with family to encourage their participation.
• Be clear if hosting an event if the alumni are responsible for their own refreshments at the establishment where the event is held.
• In planning a luncheon or dinner meeting, be sure to get an estimate of all costs - rooms, services, menu, beverages, etc.
• Make arrangements for an itemized bill.

Announcing the Event:

• Clubs are encouraged to plan events as far out in advance as possible.
• Event details should be e-mailed to the Alumni Office at least 8 – 10 weeks prior to the event date.
• Upon receiving complete event details (who, what, when, where, why, and how much) the Alumni Office will provide either a hard copy invitation, e-mail invitation or both as well as post the event on the ObieWeb Alumni Events Calendar.
• If the event details are received less than 8 weeks from the event date only an e-mail invitation will be provided.

How to Plan a Successful Event - 12 Week Planning Guide:

12 Weeks Before
The Steering Committee should meet to select the date, time, and location of the event. Reservation of the location should be made at this time. Determine how the club members and public, if applicable, will be invited. Note the time that it will take to have materials printed and mailed.

10 Weeks
Finalize event details and e-mail complete information to the Alumni Office. The Alumni Office will create the event invitation.

8 Weeks
The Alumni Office will print and mail (if bulk mail) invitations. First broadcast e-mail will be sent.

6 Weeks
Steering Committee should follow-up to make sure everything is running smoothly and solve any problems that may have occurred.

4 Weeks
Prepare program for event, if needed. The Alumni Office will mail invitations if using first class mail or local bulk mail. Check in with committee to ensure details are running smoothly. Confirm event details.

2 Weeks
Organize a Phone Tree to contact those who have not sent in their RSVP. Alumni Office will mail out Sign-in Sheet, Nametags, Event feedback form and Oberlin chotchkie.

Day of Event
Arrive early to attend to details and greet arriving guests. Set out Sign-in Sheet and nametags, if provided. Have someone from the steering
committee mingle with guests before program begins. Provide Event Feedback form for attendees.

After the Event Mail a copy of the event Sign-in Sheet and Event Feedback form to the Alumni Office. Send thank you notes to all involved.

Helpful Hints That Make A Difference:

- If the event has a speaker, remember to acknowledge the speaker's acceptance of your invitation to visit the club.
- Keep your introductory remarks as brief as possible.
- It is a courtesy to handle club business after the speaker has concluded his or her presentation.
- Use name tags whenever possible to jog hazy recollections and also encourage new acquaintances.
- Plan early - tentative dates can be made a year in advance

Event Checklist:

- Oberlin chotchkies
- Oberlin banner for wall or table
- Podium or lectern with microphone and light
- Sign-in Sheet
- Name tags (including blanks)
- Small basket for back of nametags trash
- Extra supplies; pens, pencils, masking tape, etc.
- Event Feedback forms

If needed the Alumni Office will pre-print the name tags before the event and place them in alphabetical order along with a small supply of blank tags on hand for errors or name preferences.

A phone committee is essential to a successful event, as printed invitations are often put aside and then forgotten. Prior to the event, members of the phone committee should call those who have not yet made reservations to attend. A little extra effort goes a long way!