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[Q: What criteria should govern the establishment of new fundraising events?](#)

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Establishing a new fundraising event should be carefully considered. The quality of the event reflects on the reputation and credibility of the organization and all events increase staff workloads, even if primarily conducted by a third party agency. Every organization should have an established policy featuring criteria that represents a disciplined approach to the establishment of new fundraising events. Too often, enthusiasm, emotion and excitement override reason in this important development area.

Suggested criteria:

1. **Reasonable Expectation to Achieve Defined Success.** An event must be worth the time and effort involved. Determine the minimum financial and/or prospect yield for what type of event?

a. Private reception

(1) minimum goal of \$XXXX (above expenses) secured on site

(2) a fundraising goal of \$XXXX donated within one year of the event by people attending event

(3) XX new prospects capable of \$XXX gifts introduced to the organization

b. Public event

(1) minimum goal of \$XXXX (above expenses) secured on site

(2) a fundraising goal of \$XXXX donated within one year of the event by people attending event

(3) XX new prospects capable of \$XXX gifts

(4) \$XXX in event sponsors

(5) \$XXX program ads

(6) \$XXX from silent auction

(7) \$XXX from live auction

2. Host Committee Commitment. The board or a volunteer group should be assembled, agree to the event goals and be responsible for the donor solicitation plan. Each member should be asked to make two or three of the following commitments:

a. Contribute personal list and commitment to make personal calls to follow up

b. Personal contribution to offset expenses

c. Personal commitment to purchase table/tickets to event

d. Deliver one or more significant "friends" to the event capable of making a major contribution (corporate, foundation, personal) in the future

3. Go/No Go Deadline. A date should be established prior to the public announcement of the event, by which the organization must meet minimum standards. For a reception, it might be securing the home and a commitment to underwrite the cost of food, valet parking, etc. For a public event, the go/no go decision might be completely dependent on the acquisition of a sponsor that covers full or a large percent of the costs, a host committee in place, an optimum date and confirmation of an optimum facility. It should also include approval of the detailed event budget. This gives the organization a test space between the enthusiastic decision to do an event and a more realistic assessment of whether all the elements necessary for a successful event are present or in progress.

4. Adequate Preparation Time. What is the minimum lead-time necessary for event execution? Suggestion: no less than 12 weeks for a small event and six months for a large production.

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Topics

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