

# Event Evaluation Worksheet

By Harry A. Freedman



Depending on the type of event your charity hosted, these are some of the questions you might pose to staff and key volunteers during your post-event evaluation.

## Attendance and Results

- How many people attended?
  
- Did the group conduct an informal survey to determine the appeal to potential attendees?
  
- Did the event attract its desired audience? If not, why?
  
- What was your fundraising goal? Did you make more or less than that goal?

- Did the event attract new people who could become donors?
  
- Did guests enjoy themselves? Would they attend again?
  
- What changes might help improve attendance?
  
- Were there any comments from guests on how to improve the event?

### **Timing**

- Did the date afford adequate time to properly organize and promote the event?

- Did the event occur at the same time as another large event? Did you check for other events in your community before scheduling it?
  
- Would hosting this event at a different time or on a different day make a difference?

### **Committees**

- Were there written criteria for selecting committee chairs?
  
- Did each committee member have a written assignment, and were those assignments easily accessible online?
  
- Did committees meet often enough? Too often?
  
- Did committees complete assignments on time and within budget?

- Was a staff member available to answer committee questions?
  
- Did the chairs stay in frequent contact with the events manager or staff member?
  
- Did the chairs ask for assistance or advice when needed?
  
- Were the committees the appropriate size?
  
- Have any new leaders emerged from the committees?
  
- Did each chair or staff member work closely with someone who might head up the next event?

**Location**

- How well did the site suit the event?
  
- Was the site the proper size?
  
- Did weather play a factor?
  
- Did the group buy weather insurance?
  
- Did the organization or the venue provide and pay for liability insurance?
  
- Was there enough equipment (seats, tables, kitchen gear)?

- Could the event have taken place at a less expensive site (a theater instead of a hotel ballroom, or a park instead of someone's home)?
  
- Was the venue convenient for those attending? Easy to find?
  
- Were all spaces used during the event accessible to people with physical challenges?
  
- Was nearby public transportation available?
  
- Was parking adequate and reasonably priced?
  
- Were any permits required?

## Budget

- Were there best-case and worst-case budgets?
  
- Did organizers carefully calculate all expenses prior to setting a per-person cost to attend?
  
- Did the group stay within the budget guidelines?
  
- How much did the event cost?
  
- How much did the event net after expenses, including a separate estimated cost for staff time?
  
- Did any budget items significantly exceed estimates?

- Was the amount spent consistent with the group's goals and image?
  
- Did the group raise enough money, after paying expenses, to consider holding a similar future event?
  
- Was there enough money available in advance? What was the source for adequate cash flow?
  
- Did the accounting system adequately track all income and expenses?
  
- Was the accounting kept current throughout as the event developed in order to track expenses? Who was responsible for reporting costs?
  
- Were all bills paid in a timely manner?



- Were all contracts negotiated with an eye to maximizing revenue?
  
- What costs were missing from the budget?
  
- How might costs be reduced?
  
- Was there a list of specific items or costs that could have been underwritten? Who was responsible for seeking that underwriting?
  
- Were corporate and personal sponsors solicited prior to the event?

### **Promotion**

- Was there a written plan for promoting the event? Was the plan reviewed by staff, volunteers, and/or a public relations consultant?

- Was there a written timeline, with staff assignments, for obtaining adequate publicity?
  
- Did news releases get to the appropriate people?
  
- Was the media list correct, including the contact people, their titles, and email and office addresses?
  
- How might the group attract more publicity?
  
- Was there a preview event?
  
- If a staff member handled event promotion, did that person need more help?

- Was a public relations consultant contracted?
  
- If volunteers took care of publicity, might they have benefited from professional help?
  
- Did the group stay within the promotions budget?
  
- Were mailings, email messages, and social media promotions sent out in a timely manner?
  
- Did the event make it into all the community calendars available?
  
- How well did the charity make use of local media?

- How well did the group use email and social media?
  
- Did committee members write personal notes that were sent with invitations to friends and business associates to encourage their attendance? Did they make follow-up calls?
  
- Were flyers, posters, online promotions, and invitations attractive and easy to read?
  
- Were they properly distributed, emailed, mailed, and posted?
  
- Were invitation lists up-to-date? Were a lot of invitations returned as undeliverable, via either mail or email?

## Registration

- Could guests find the registration table easily?
  
- Were there enough people on duty to prevent long waits?
  
- Were there adequate staff at the registration table to handle problems?
  
- Were volunteers adequately trained?
  
- Were registration staff properly dressed and courteous?
  
- Who generated the list of attendees? Was it double-checked and available?

- Did the group use special-event software? If so, what kind? Did it work well?
  
- Did the computers and other electronics work well, and did the staff receive adequate training in advance?

### **Food and Drink**

- Who selected the menu? Was it within budget?
  
- Did anyone in the group hold a thorough tasting before the event?
  
- Were there any comments about the food or service?
  
- How was the presentation?

- If group members cooked or brought food, how did that work out?
  
- Were there enough people to set up and clean up?
  
- How did the group accommodate special dietary restrictions?
  
- How was the beverage and liquor service?
  
- Was the group able to get food, liquor, bottled water, or other drinks donated or underwritten?

### **Entertainment**

- Did the charity hire a talent service to get the best price for the talent hired?

- Were contracts adequately negotiated and reviewed? Did you initiate the contract or did the entertainer? Did the contract specify what the organization would and would not pay for?
  
- Did an attorney review contracts for extra costs and liability?
  
- Did the charity make the most of the promotional potential of high-profile entertainers?
  
- Did the contract for the celebrity include making a public-service announcement or social media posts for the organization?
  
- Did the group obtain sponsorship for the celebrity's transportation, lodging, and related costs?



- Could this event have succeeded without entertainment or celebrity participation?
  
- Did the entertainment add to the event? Did the audience enjoy the show?
  
- Did it fit the theme?
  
- Did it stay within budget?
  
- Was it worth the expense?
  
- Were there any problems with sound or lighting?

## Management and Staffing

- Was an event-management consultant contracted?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What were the criteria used to decide if a staff member or consultant would manage the event?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Was there a written timeline for producing the event, including staff assignments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Was there regular follow-up with committee chairpeople on their committees' progress?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Did the event manager handle contract negotiations? Make efforts to cut costs where possible?

- Were there sufficient staff and volunteers for the event?
  
- How did the event manager relate to paid staff and volunteers?
  
- Was the event manager accessible when problems arose?
  
- Did the event manager handle all aspects of the event professionally?
  
- Were there any logistical errors or emergencies worth noting?
  
- Were the appropriate emergency resources available (an ambulance, first aid equipment, etc.)?

*Harry Freedman is president of Strategic Initiatives, a Philadelphia company that helps nonprofits that plan special event fundraisers. He is the author of [Black Tie Optional: A Complete Special-Events Resource for Nonprofit Organizations](#).*