



Differences Between Event Planning and Coordinating

There are several loosely-defined terms in the event industry. That is, words that can be interpreted in different ways. The word "event" by itself could mean anything from a birthday party to a benefit concert. This use of different terms can lead to confusion and misunderstandings, specifically around job titles. One of the biggest areas of confusion concerns event planners vs. event coordinators.

Event Planners vs. Event Coordinators

Outside the industry, many people do not understand the difference between an event planner and an event coordinator. Generally speaking, the planner makes critical decisions regarding what, when, who, and how. An event coordinator, on the other hand, is responsible for making sure all the details are executed and that each vendor shows up on time and performs appropriately.

Responsibilities of an Event Planner

An event planner works directly with the client to determine the customer's vision, needs, and budget. For example, if it's a wedding, the event planner may discuss the couple's intended tone, the level of formality, and the size of the guest list.

From there, the event planner designs an event to wow the client. They will choose a venue and type of entertainment, then work with the client to determine a menu. They focus on the big-picture items that make an event memorable.

Becoming an event planner takes years of experience. A planner carries a lot of responsibility ensuring the client is happy and designing an event that fits the customer's needs and expectations.

Before becoming a planner, several years of working as an event coordinator is often necessary. It's an important stepping stone to a career in events.

Responsibilities of an Event Coordinator

An event coordinator does not get involved with the design of the event, itself. Instead, they are in charge of managing the individual components to ensure the event goes smoothly.

Once the planner has determined the vision for the event, the coordinator assists the planner in making that a reality. They may look at vendors, organize delivery dates, and handle logistical tasks.

Larger organizations may have two coordinators for every planner, while smaller operations might only have one coordinator who serves the needs of all executive decision-makers. Either way, there is typically a direct line of supervision over the coordinator position. That doesn't mean event coordinators have it easy. Most of them have the difficult task of organizing everything on-site with only a few hours before the event begins. This, of course, is when most problems occur, which is why a good coordinator is focused, organized, and resourceful.

This is a great position for those looking to start a career in event planning. Working as a coordinator gives you a strong foundation to move on to an event planner role later in your career. A strong coordinator is worth their weight in gold to any planner, and job security (if you're good at your job) is virtually guaranteed.

To break into a career in event coordination, getting an internship or volunteering with a non-profit to help them plan their fundraising events can be advantageous. You'll get hands-on experience in coordinating a real event and build your professional network at the same time.

Event Communication

Creating a plan for effective event communication is not an easy task, but it is well worth the time and effort. There need to be clear, transparent lines of communication between everyone involved in your event including your team, vendors, and attendees.

Why is it Important to Communicate in Event Management?

Once an event is scheduled—and the dates and times are set in stone—you must deliver. This is precisely why you have to communicate effectively with every single person in the event planning process. Building an event communication plan allows everyone you work with to have clear expectations of their tasks, and increases productivity. Productivity is of the utmost importance when working in event management due to tight time constraints and deadlines. Without effective event management communication, your event could fall apart at the seams.

Before the Event



From the time your event is first thought up, to the minute it starts; you should ensure that your team and any potential attendees are kept apprised of all of the important information. There are critical pre-event details that should be conveyed to and easily accessed by all those who need to know.

Important Pre-Event Details to Communicate

Your pre-event communication should, at a bare minimum, address the following:

- **Names of Presenters:** This will not only serve to keep everyone involved in the event informed of the presenters, but this information will also drum up excitement from registered attendees.
- **Event Timeline:** Attendees will want to know when and where certain presentations and activities within your event are taking place so that they can plan accordingly.
- **Communication Methods:** Your event communication channels need to be clearly defined. Luckily, for in-person, hybrid, and virtual events, much of this communication can take place through apps and digital methods during the pre-event phase.
- **Food and Drink Considerations:** If there will be food and drink available at the event, this is important information that needs to be conveyed to your attendees so that they know whether or not they should eat beforehand.

Pre-Event Communication Tools

Thankfully, technology can make pre-event communication an easy, reliable process. The following is a list of options you may want to consider for your communication strategies leading up to your event:

- **Event Website:** The event website will likely be the first stop for anyone looking for information on your event. Your website should be clearly labeled with intuitive links and all of the necessary information readily available. All other event communication tools should funnel your potential attendees to your website.
- **Email Marketing:** Email is one of the best, unobtrusive ways to reach a wide audience. Ensure that your event communication strategies include email marketing to provide regular updates to all potential attendees.

- **Social Media:** Marketing your event on services such as Twitter and LinkedIn is an essential step in your pre-event communication process. Each social media platform has a different user base with unique demographics and you can appeal to a wide audience through the effective use of these platforms.
- **Mobile Event App:** A mobile event app is a versatile tool that can serve as an incredibly effective means of communication for everyone involved with your event. With an event app, you can create polls, surveys, and group chats to engage with your audience and team throughout your event and make modifications as necessary.

During the Event



Once your pre-event communication tools have all been put in place, and the day of your event arrives, communication is equally important but changes slightly in form. At this point, there can't be any delay in communication, as people will quickly become frustrated if they can't get an answer to a question during the event.

Important Details to Communicate During Your Event

It is essential that you have a clear system of communication regarding the timeline of your event. All team members should know where they are supposed to be and when they should be there. This includes, but is not limited to when certain social media announcements are posted when live polls open to the attendees, and when each presentation is starting.

As far as communication strategies concerning event attendees, you'll want to consider the following tools:

Communication Tools to be Used During the Event

- **Mobile Event App:** Stress the benefits of all attendees downloading the mobile event app. Regardless of the specifics of your event, having the app will be an invaluable resource during the event for both you and those in attendance.
- **Live Polling Survey:** Gathering [real-time feedback](#) from your event is an invaluable event communication method that allows you to make changes on the fly and address any issues as they are developing. This can be easily done through the mobile event app.
- **Push Notifications:** Whether the event is hybrid, in-person, or virtual, event-goers can become distracted and miss a presentation if they don't have appropriate prompting via push notification.
- **Social Media:** While social media is an essential tool to use before your event, it can be handy during your event as well. You may choose to post real-time updates to your Twitter account or live stream portions of the event through Instagram. Social media makes this integration seamless.

After the Event



Now that your event has ended, there is important after-event work to be done.

Important Details to Communicate After Your Event Has Ended

You'll want to be sure that you appropriately thank everyone who was involved with the event from your event team, to your vendors, to your attendees. Everyone in attendance will appreciate this recognition. Additionally, you'll want to capitalize on the information you've gathered during the event in several ways using your communication tools:

Post-Event Communication Tools

- **Post-Event Survey Feedback:** Even though you likely gathered survey data during your event, you'll also want to allow attendees to answer survey questions afterward. This will enable you to determine what went well and what needs to be tweaked for next time.
- **Email Marketing Follow Up:** Don't let your communication channels dissolve just because the event is over. You should maintain regular communication with attendees and [follow up through email](#). This will make it easier to have an audience base for future events and to convey any further information about the event that just concluded.

Final Words

Event planning can be a very stressful job with too many moving parts at once, but effectively communicating with your team and clients can make your job much simpler. Communication is one of the most important aspects of being an effective event planner. Being successful in event management is multifaceted, it is much more than just communicating with the people on your team as there are many pieces to the puzzle when pulling off an impeccable in-person, virtual, or hybrid event. Knowing just how to speak and communicate with people well is a skill that takes time and practice, and it is one of the most useful traits in the realm of event management. Incorporating an effective communication plan is a must. Once you can see why it is important to communicate effectively with others, your productivity will soar to new heights.



Event Checklist of operational area

Planning an event involves layers upon layers of details. From the pre-planning stage to the day-of-event logistics, there's a lot to keep track of. If you keep all those details in your head, the event day will undoubtedly be chaotic and stressful.

To say the least, that's counterproductive.

A checklist for your event can make a huge difference! At the same time, no two events are the same, so **there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all event planning checklist.**

Instead, we suggest creating a customized event planning checklist. This not only keeps you on target, but it will also provide essential information to the event team, who can work with you to execute an amazing event. Just follow these steps to create a checklist that will keep you on track and executing flawlessly.

1. Create an event planning checklist template.

As you create your checklist, put all the items into a template. You can create your own in Microsoft Excel or Google Docs, or find a template online. You can also use a project management app, such as Asana or Podio, that let you work collaboratively with your event staff.

Once you have a template, you can fill it in with specific to-dos as you think of them. Work backward from the event and create a timeline of tasks and a schedule of deadlines, which assures that every minute detail gets covered.

2. Establish the event essentials.

Next up is to determine some of the key elements of your event:

- **Date and time:** Where will the event happen and what time? Consider how the date fits into attendees' schedules.

- **Location:** Think about where the event is geographically (which city makes the most sense) as well as the venue. Create checklist items: Research, interviewing vendors, signing the contract, etc.
- **Type of event:** Is it a conference? A party? You likely already know this, but it's good to write it down and communicate it clearly.
- **Event goal:** The overall reason for hosting an event. For example, it could be fundraising, celebrating employee success, or launching a new product.
- **Event objectives:** How will you measure you met the event goal? For instance, if the goal is fundraising, an objective might be to raise \$1,000 or receive 50 pledges of support.
- **Audience:** You need to clearly understand what expectations attendees have of the event. If you don't meet their needs, then the desired guest action is less likely to happen.

Make each of these things a to-do item on your checklist to make sure you don't skip these steps.



3. Build an event budget.

When you think about *every* event expense, creating an event budget seems daunting. With a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, it's not that complicated. **Start**

with the major categories, such as catering, décor, and rentals. Then, breakdown all the expenses under each category and let Excel do the work for you.

Under this section of your to-do list, you can add smaller tasks like:

- Researching costs of rentals
- Contacting vendors for quotes
- Negotiating discounts with vendors
- Paying deposits

All that is to say: The event budget isn't a single checklist line item that can simply be marked off. Your budget is a living, breathing document, and this format encourages you to keep revisiting all aspects of the event until it is as cost-effective as possible.

4. Create the event design.

This is the heart of event planning because it includes the event components that impact guests the most.

We'll go over some of the broad elements of event design. As you think about these, **consider the specific tasks you need to add to your event checklist.**

Program

The program tells the story of the event goal and objectives. Each story element leads to the next story element, which builds anticipation during the event. The peak of that anticipation should be dramatic. It is what you want your guests to remember the most. An event checklist helps layout the story by breaking down the timeline of the event.

On your checklist for event planning, the program comes to life by:

- Planning the program agenda
- Mapping out the program timeline
- Hiring vendors or entertainers to bring the program to life
- And more

Layout

How you're using your space — all the way down to the seating arrangements — can make all the difference. And we're not just talking about the seating chart: Consider the placement of electrical cords and bussing stations, for instance.

On your event checklist, include a task to visually laying out the event space. A user-friendly tool like Social Tables' Diagram can help you map it out and easily share your layout with clients and vendors.

Theme

Choosing an event theme isn't just for fun. The theme represents the event message and serves other essential purposes, such as:

- **Creating buzz.** The guests' event experiences begin long before the event. A themed invitation and social media posts create anticipation and set the tone for the future event.
- **Connecting the elements of your event.** A theme connects the individual event components (such as décor, catering, and entertainment), thereby layering the event message into a cohesive guest event experience.
- **Making the event memorable.** If a guest attends an event with a '50s diner theme, the next time they see a diner on TV or eat a meal at a diner, they'll likely recall the diner-themed party. That also means they'll think of your business, product, or brand.

5. Plan out the décor.

Décor isn't just pretty — **it's crucial for a successful event.** And since it runs the gamut from rentals and florals to tablecloths and accent pieces, it can be a lot making sure that you're covering all your bases.

Your guests experience the event through their five senses, so make sure ask yourself what attendees will:

- **See:** What visual elements can elevate your event? What type of lighting or decor will you include?
- **Hear:** Will there be music? What about presenters or speakers? What should guests be listening for?

- **Smell:** Even if it's in the background, smell is always there. Should guests smell candles, food, flowers, or something else?
- **Touch:** Will guests interact with any elements of your event? And yes, picking up silverware or barware counts!
- **Taste:** Food can make or break an event! More on food in a moment.

Once you plan out all these elements, add them all to the checklist: Hiring vendors, sourcing supplies, setting everything up and more.



6. Get creative with food and drink.

Food & beverage can be the most important components of an event because sharing a meal is a true community experience. Food is associated with nurturing, so this is an opportunity for the host to **illustrate thoughtful hospitality**.

The checklist for planning event food includes a lot. Here's just a sample:

- Researching and interviewing vendors
- Determining the type of service (seated dinner, food stations, passed appetizers)
- Planning a menu around dietary restrictions

Your checklist helps you chart those nuances so that you pick the perfect caterer, keep your menu on-trend, protect the planet, and, most importantly, leave your guests feeling nurtured and nourished.

7. Hire entertainment and plan guest experiences

If you plan to hire speakers or entertainers, you need to add several items to your checklist. For example:

- Sign contracts
- Book hotel rooms for VIPs
- Set up transportation for VIPs
- Set up a green room
- Promote keynote speakers

In addition to speakers and entertainers, **you'll also need to coordinate interim entertainment**, such as:

- Photo booths
- Guest engagement stations
- Relaxation areas

Your checklist acts as a blueprint, helping you to see the big picture, while you are planting micro-experiences for your guests.

8. Map out a marketing plan.

Event marketing creates buzz, builds anticipation, and guarantees a good turnout.

It can also involve a *lot* of details, like:

- Custom logos and branding

- Printed flyers
- Paid advertisements
- Dedicated event emails
- Social media posts
- Marketing budget

An event checklist will help map the pre- and post-event marketing strategy across all of those channels. This is where an online project management tool will be especially handy for you and your team.

9. Plan for little details and the unexpected.

It's the little details that make a big difference. That's why you'll want to **keep track of every minute thing that can affect the guest experience.**

Here are just a few things to consider:

- If you plan to put directions on the event's website, make sure they are correct
- What transportation options do guests have? Will there be parking?
- How will you handle event registration? Will the lines get too long?
- What about guest access to Wi-Fi and electrical outlets?
- What if someone has a medical emergency?
- Will there be signs to direct guests around the venue?
- Do you have a plan for event security?

Those are the small, but very important details that need to be added to a meeting planner checklist.

10. Create a chart of event-day logistics.

Plan to create a logistics timeline for the event: a minute-by-minute schedule of *everything* from vendor arrival and set-up to run-through and post-event breakdown.

There are many moving parts on event day, and inevitably, unexpected situations will arise. If you don't have the day-of-event details outlined to a tee, **you will miss something**, which will show up later as a big problem. There's no need for that added stress when you can use your checklist to create a thorough day-of-event schedule.

Pro tip: You can create a visual layout of your event using space planning software and share it with catering staff and other collaborators before the event to cut down on potential mishaps.

11. Plan to follow-up after the event.

After your guests leave the event feeling all warm and fuzzy, touch base with them. This is an opportunity to reinforce the event message and get feedback, as well as prompt guests to take action to meet event objectives.

When putting together your list, contemplate a variety of post-event communication methods that will achieve those results, such as sharing event photos, sending a thank you note, posting on social media, or linking to event materials. The checklist will not only help you manage the tasks, but track the results.

12. Take time to debrief and write a post-event analysis.

Shortly after the event, you will want to sit down with your team, talk about what went right, and what can be improved. On an event planning checklist, you can list criteria to consider that will map back to your event goals.

That completed list of criteria will provide information for a comprehensive post-event analysis to be written. And, a post-event analysis will contribute to the return on investment report, **where you can find out if you met your event objectives**.

This information is valuable in analyzing your skill as an event planner, reporting goal and objectives results to your company, and constantly building upon the success of each event.

Try this approach when making your next day-of event checklist.

Don't think of your event planning checklist as just a to-do list. It's a fluid document. With your checklist in hand, **you should be able to visualize the event**

from all perspectives — client, event team, vendors, and, most importantly, the guest.

Invest the time, and amazing execution will follow. Use our *Event Planning App* to keep everything in its place.

Have more questions about event planning checklists?

How do you plan an event checklist?

The key aspects of an event checklist are the essential components of your event so get those squared away first: date, location, type of event, goals, and budget. Once those are in place, the rest of the details can be built to accommodate the major components.

What are the steps to planning an event?

Set a budget, establish goals, find a location, pick an audience, design the event, secure F&B, plan experiences, iron out logistics, and plan for contingencies.

Event execution

We can talk about the many innovative ways to make an event truly memorable and valuable. But in the end (or is it the beginning?), if the basics of event execution are missing, the rest is forgotten. No one will remember the powerful speakers and amazing receptions if the event is unorganized, running late, misdirected, and generally “unbuttoned.”

As an event professional, your aim is to deliver a flawless event. And that begins and ends with flawless execution. Here are 5 key ingredients to look for in the ideal solution:

1. Planning & Collaboration Tools

Your time is limited. Your resources are finite. And you have many constituents to take care of. Your ability to manage projects, timelines, and practices across one or many events is multiplied with the right event management platform, complete with powerful planning tools. And since you're not in this alone, the platform you

choose should also facilitate collaboration with the people who will help make the event flawless. Look for event planning capabilities that allow you to:

- Easily manage project tasks, schedules, and assignments.
- Align with your organizational hierarchy and business processes.
- Collaborate with key players throughout the event.
- Streamline and centralize multi-level request and approval processes for events, speakers, or papers.
- Share critical data and gain visibility into spending with real-time budgeting and roll-up reporting

2. Sourcing & Spend Management Tools

Probably one of the most time-consuming and traditionally manual processes of event management is securing event venues and rooms. To free up your time for more valuable tasks, sourcing requires the right approach. And that means the right technology. The sourcing solution you choose should make it easy to compare and secure event venues while consolidating processes and controlling event spend. Look for a solution that allows you to:

- Automatically locate and negotiate global hotel rooms and venues while saving time
- Attain the perfect venue for your event with extensive meeting room specifications and side-by-side hotel comparisons
- Control budget and global hotel spend with easy and competitive online negotiations and supplier selection
- Access the same up-to-date data used by hotels to propagate content on travel websites
- Manage booking details accurately and eliminate manual repetitions
- Secure the best rooms available for your specified budget
- Integrate the entire event management process with reduced costs and significant enhancements to the overall event value

3. Truly Customized Branding

Your cohorts on the marketing side of the organization will appreciate your attention to this detail. A big part of a properly executed event is how well it reflects the event brand. This must now be considered a minimum requirement of any event management software solution. And we're not just talking the ability to

upload your logo or change the color scheme to some pre-determined template. Every step of the way, from the email invites and event registration software to the event website and mobile app, should be easily and completely customizable to your brand.

4. Real-Time Reporting

When you're juggling as many details and decisions as you do, the last thing you need is outdated reporting. Details change by the hour—even by the minute—in the course of a typical event professional's day. Your ability to make decisions, track progress, enact contingency plans, and provide meaningful updates to stakeholders relies on having up-to-the-second reporting. If this capability isn't included in your list of must-haves for an event management platform, you're spending too much time chasing down real information.

5. Robust Infrastructure

You've got to be able to rely on the infrastructure behind the Event Automation software solution you use. What does this mean? Like the engine of a car, your Event Automation software solution powers your event. A small engine might be able to do the job for a small or basic event, but enterprise-level events require greater horsepower. The technology you choose should be able to handle events of any size and complexity, with customizable registration paths, API integrations to marketing automation and CRM software, powerful email marketing, mobile applications, world-class security, and more.

You can't begin to think of all the other ways to bring value to an event until you have the basics covered. With these 5 key ingredients, you'll be well positioned to execute a flawless event and move onto other ways of building attendee engagement and delivering value.