

Michelle's Top 5 Things to Consider for Your Next Event

1. Have a Properly Trained Registration Team

In terms of their first experience on site, a properly trained team with a troubleshooter, will help make sure guests feel comfortable and cared for.

2. Clear Signage Around Parking and Specialty Items

Anticipate any questions and provide a custom branded sign to match. This is for parking logistics (e.g. park here, pay here) and housekeeping items (e.g. restrooms, coat check) but also specialty items. Is there a signature drink at the bar? What's in it?

3. Volunteers to Support Bidding – Especially with Special Technology

Whatever methods you're using for bidding in your auction, make sure you offer service. Support on hand (even for paper-and-pen bid sheets) has been proven to increase the bids and the success of collecting afterwards. Do participants understand how to bid and how they will be notified of winners?

4. Remember Interactive Elements

You want guests talking about your event! Give your guests the ability to share and tell the story of the event even as they're there. Provide set pieces and other components that encourage photography and videography. Tell your guests which hashtags to use and how to tag you into social sharing. Amplify guests' messages through your own social channel to reward meaningful content.

5. Run a Program Rehearsal

Michelle highly recommends it! Involve the clients in a run-through so that the people in the program know what's being covered and by whom. You may be able to help refine speaking notes so that key messages are being shared frequently without being repeated verbatim. You'll also ensure everyone feels comfortable about what's to come.

Trends in Fundraising Events Today

1. Increased Youth Engagement in Philanthropy

Michelle is noticing a trend towards younger attendees, younger donors, and younger volunteers. There seems to be an uprising in fundraising interest with this demographic. Ask yourself how to bring these special participants in! (Hint: it involves social media.)

2. ROI

The Return on Investment for events has always been important but this is being scrutinized on a whole new level. ROI can be measured in terms of donations and funds raised, yes, but through other metrics as well in terms of social media awareness and brand reach.

3. Corporate Philanthropy

More than ever before, CSR is high—corporations are wondering how they can give back. Millennials and other desirable hiring pools are attracted to companies that are engaged in the community. This provides great opportunities for event professionals working in this segment.

4. Competitive Event Market

The marketplace is flooded with event companies and opportunities for donors to engage. Even with successful repeat events, ask yourself "How can I make this fresh and bring something new?"