

Strategy worksheet: Your events plan

The American Press Institute developed this worksheet as a guide to getting you started with conceiving and creating an events strategy that is right for your audience. Before starting, be sure you've read the accompanying Strategy Study:

“The best strategies for generating revenue through events” (<http://bit.ly/apievents>).

Consider sitting down with a few creative collaborators from across your organization to tackle these questions together.

1) What do you know about your community?

What are your community's passions? Who are your high-performing audiences? Who are the more fringe audiences for which with you would like to improve relationships?

2) Who and what will you compete with?

Identify organizations in your community that also produce events. What is your other competition? Include the “abstract” competitors: Long commutes, traffic, family obligations that take up weekend time, etc.

3) Brainstorm your creative ideas, no devil's advocate

Brainstorm whatever comes to mind, whittle away at the list later. What are some topics and interests you think individuals and businesses in your community would be drawn to?

4) What kind of event?

Based on the target audience and the subject matter, what format of an event would serve them well? Consider interview/panel events, expos, festivals or parties, activities (like races or walks), classes or workshops, awards, or other formats.

Pick one or two event ideas you identified in questions 1-4 to begin planning in the next few questions.

5) Initial budgeting questions

You should create a spreadsheet for examining possible revenue versus likely expenses. Here are a few questions to get you thinking.

What do you anticipate potential sponsors or exhibitors would want out of an event with you?
What can you uniquely offer them?

This will get easier later, but where could you creatively cut costs on this event without harming quality?

6) How will you promote this event externally?

Don't undervalue pushing your event. Talk about all the possibilities – full-page ads, homepage takeovers, a content series leading up to the event, etc. – then whittle down from there.

In what ways could a partner also promote this event?

7) How will you promote the idea of events within your organization?

Success and energy for events will ultimately come down to your staff's motivation and understanding of their purpose. How could they be involved? What are reasonable ways in which many staff members can touch the event in some way?

8) It is easiest to start with one event. Out of the ideas you've come up with, which event would likely be best for the staff and resources you have available?

Afterward, begin talking about your top-tier desired sponsors and partners. Set up initial calls and meetings.

We would appreciate hearing about how you use this process and what comes as a result. If you try this, please send us a note at hello@pressinstitute.org to share your experience.