

Planning Events Checklist

by Annalee Waite



Most shop owners have terrific ideas for special events that they want to hold in their shop. Actually turning an event from an idea you have considered into reality is a huge step. We hear about retailers who offer special events all the time. How do they deal with the everyday workload and plan a special event on top of all this? Most of the retailers I talked to specifically stated that they used a detailed checklist and kept permanent files on each and every event. Here is how they do it!

Most business owners I talked with mentioned DEMOGRAPHICS play a major role in the events the plan and ultimately how successful these events are. DEMOGRAPHICS is the profile of the people living with a 666 mile radius of your retail shop. If you have a majority of retired folks in your area you will probably want to schedule an event during the day. If your area is made up of working women you'll want to offer an event at night.

The four major areas of planning an event include:
—WHO —WHAT —WHERE —WHEN

Answer all of the these questions concerning your event and create a time line. The time line should include a step by step schedule of what is to happen and when. Post a copy of the time line for yourself and in an obvious place for all employees to see.

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- Scheduling/Staffing
- List what activities will take place and the area of your shop that will be needed for those activities.
- Will you need a permit? Do you need to contact the sanitation or the police for this event?
- What supplies or food will you need to order ahead of time?
- Decorating (who will decorate and where will the decorations come from?)
- Information (include a sheet of information to employees and all others).
- Bringing in a Teacher? Consider the following: transportation to and from the airport, accommodations, travel to the shop, food and welcome gifts.
- Give teachers a copy of the event schedule clearly listing when and where you expect them to be.
- Who will handle the thank you gift, note, payment check (treat teachers like a guest in your home and they will gladly agree to return to teach next year at your event).
- Physically walk the event area to make sure you have traffic flow. You probably want food far away from merchandise.
- Keep all the details concerning your special event in a permanent file so you can refer back to your notes if you decide to present the event again in the future.
- Take plenty of photos of your guests at the event so you can send them to your local newspaper and trade publications to promote your retail shop.
- Make notes during the event of what worked well and what did not work.
- Finally, talk with a few regular customers who attended your event. They will give you feedback and will probably offer suggestions on how to improve events for the future.