

EVENT PLANNING 101: THE BASICS

Holding a successful event may seem like a simple task, but in all actuality, it takes some pre-planning. Here are some tips and guidelines to help ensure your events are excellent!

- **Form an Event Committee:** This could be a great way to involve both active and new members in what your organization is doing.
- **Create a theme for your event(s):** Make sure the theme is appropriate. You may also want to carry your theme across the breadth of programming you will be doing over the span of the weekend.
- **Send out invitations to your alumni:** Remember that not all alumni are technology savvy, so be sure to send out invitations through snail mail at least 2-3 weeks prior to the event. Also, having your alumni/ae RSVP will give you an accurate count on who is attending.
- **Create a schedule and communicate it effectively:** You will want to stick with your pre-established schedule of events during the week. If you are changing a lot of things around, you are bound to lose alumni/ae, and it won't make them very happy. Furthermore, make sure you get them the schedule ahead of time. A good idea is to include it with your invitations – this way everyone is on the same page!
- **Have a sign-in sheet:** This will help you keep track of who is at each event and will help you follow up with your alumni/ae after your event(s). Additionally, if you have nametags, it will help the current members start conversations with your alumni/ae members.
- **Hold a variety of age-appropriate activities:** Some of your alumni/ae are going to be older than others. Some may even be bringing family and children. Therefore, it would be a good idea to make sure you have things for all age groups to do. Examples include:
 - Coloring/finger painting table for children
 - Board games
 - Have your alumni help prepare food
 - Pick up soccer, football, or frisbee games
 - If you have a generator, you could have a TV playing a game, have people playing Wii, etc.
- **Incorporate some service:** Service is one of the main fraternal values. So, maybe you want to ask your alumni/ae to donate canned food items or money to a charitable organization in town. This could also help you talk to your alumni/ae about the good work in which your organization is involved.
- **Everyone likes a pat on the back:** Find a fun way to recognize your alumni/ae. Maybe this is with a certificate of appreciation for the years of service they put into the organization or perhaps this is with special nametags for folks who used to be on your organizations Executive Board. Any way you can positively recognize the good work that made your organization successful, the better off you will be.
- **Don't forget to follow up afterward:** Alumni/ae love to stay connected. Therefore, it will be important that you thank them after your event(s) and let them know how they can stay in touch. Because let's be honest, no one likes to just get a letter when folks are looking for money. Keeping your alumni/ae in the loop more often will only yield positive results for you in the future.