

YOUR ROADMAP TO A SUCCESSFUL COMPANY PICNIC

A successful company picnic can increase morale, reduce employee turnover and make everyone feel better about the company. You have been assigned the duty of planning a company picnic this year. The first thing you ask yourself is: Where do I start? What do I need to consider or What is it I don't even know to consider?

This infographic will provide a general **roadmap of what you need to consider** in planning a successful event. We provide a free detailed consultation if you have specific questions about your event.

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STEP 1

Define the **Objective** of Your Event:

Is this a company anniversary or the annual company picnic? Is this a special thank you to employees for some milestone that was met? Is this a company expansion, merger, or acquisition? How about a promotional product or company introduction?

Define who will be attending:

Will this be employees only? Employees and their families? Will outsiders from the company be invited? Local dignitaries? Home office managers or other corporate "big wigs"? How about company retirees? Make sure to identify any potential special needs that may be required.

Answering these questions first, will dictate all other planning aspects of your event; site selection, logistics, menu/catering, entertainment and aesthetics.

STEP 2

Site Selection: Onsite vs. Off-site

ONSITE CONSIDERATIONS:

Questions to consider:

- Do you have adequate space for the event?
- Does your site have adequate parking for an onsite event?
- Have you consulted with your Risk Management department regarding any potential liabilities that may occur, such as workers compensation, vehicle liability, etc? The main objective is to have a safe, comfortable and fun event.

Onsite Benefits

- Enhancing company pride. Your employees will have the chance to show their family and friends where they work.
- Onsite venues could offer more flexibility and accommodating support from company staff.
- The visual appeal that is gained by the set up activity and completed venue design for your employees and any local traffic. This adds excitement and anticipation for your event, which in turn will help with attendance for your event.

OFF-SITE CONSIDERATIONS:

Questions to consider:

- People tend to disperse at these types of venues and you can lose the intimacy of a single location company picnic. Even if you have a “picnic” lunch set up at a designated location, many people will be distracted and not come back.
- Many parks offer discounted tickets for large corporate groups, however, they may require that you use their food service to provide any picnic food items. Often this is where they make up the savings on the ticket price!
- Have you consulted with your Risk Management department regarding any potential liabilities that may occur, such as workers compensation, vehicle liability, etc?

Off-Site Benefits

- Off-site locale options: city parks, state parks, fairgrounds, horse parks, farms, special event facilities, amusement parks, zoo's and water parks. These can be more aesthetically pleasing and offer logistical benefits such as; seated picnic pavilions, permanent restroom facilities, permanent power and water options and much needed shade during warm weather events.
- They may also offer additional entertainment features such as: swimming pools, lakes for swimming and fishing, paddle boats, playground equipment and ball fields.

STEP 3

Event Logistics

Event logistics is the foundation of any successful company event. When considering logistics your goal is to eliminate any "negative" feelings from your guests. Things to consider: Is there adequate and safe parking? Was there help in entry, parking and getting into the event? Is there sufficient signage? Is there a long check in line? Do my guests have to wait in line getting checked in while their kids are jumping up and down "dying" to get to all of the fun?

Registration:

Have you consider how you can eliminate long lines by ensuring you have adequate check in capabilities for your guests?

Event design:

Your event design is important to ensure your guests are comfortable during the event.

- Where should you place the kid's games? Bounces or fun houses? Relay races? Where to place concessions?
- How about the food service, where is the line, drinks, condiments? How far is all of this from the eating area? Where is the food prep area in relation to the rest of the event? Where are the bathrooms?
- Do you need multiple stations of anything to accommodate your guests? If Mom and Dad can't leave young children, you want them to have ample opportunity to get something for them or the kids to drink out in the venue.
- Restroom facilities, you must have plenty available throughout the event. Number of attendees and capacity is critical here. You also need to

consider the quality of the facilities, are port-o- lets okay or do you need comfort stations (high end portable restroom facilities). The difference in costs can be significant.

Seating:

- You typically want to have seating and tables for 25-35% of your guests at any one time. So if you have 1000 attendee, that means you need seating and tables for 250 to 350 guests. The more activities in a smaller amount of time means you need to plan for more seating.
- For a 250 to 350 person seating tent you would need 2700 square feet of tent space or you may be that you have multiple shaded, seating and table areas.
- You may need a tent if there is limited natural shade trees. You may also strategically place tents throughout the event for cooling purposes.

Electricity:

Power problems at an event can be devastating and ruin your event and the requirements are often the most misunderstood logistical component of any event.

- It is imperative that you understand how much each powered activity will demand and how much capacity is needed at the venue to satisfy that demand.
- The number of outlets do not always equate to total capacity needed. Make sure you have somebody with the knowledge of the power requirements and capacity of the venue you use.

Trash management:

- Trash is a potential visual "negative" for any event. Make sure you have adequate trash cans.
- You will need a trash management crew that will be responsible for the busing of tables, overall event clean up and the distribution of full trash cans outside of the action of the event.

Other Considerations:

Depending on the theme and such there are other potential logistical needs to any event to include; staging, dance floor, lighting, shuttle service and first aid.

STEP 4

Event Menu/Catering

- Know your attendees and have an idea of their food likes and dislikes. Will you need special menu items, i.e. veggie burgers or gluten free options?
- If families will be attending, they tend to consume more flavored drinks like orange, grape or others.
- Make sure to have enough healthy drink choices like water or juices.
- The number of attendees will dictate capacity of your caterer and/or grill space.
- Most events are typically outdoors during the spring, summer and fall months.
- Most companies choose a simple picnic style food option such as hamburgers, hot dogs, BBQ pork, and grilled chicken.
- The most popular sides are baked beans, cole slaw and potato salad.
- If an outdoor BBQ type of event is the plan, make sure to keep the menu simple with options for the guest to "dress up" their food with sufficient condiments.
- You can make a simple hamburger/hot dog menu feel like more by adding chili, coleslaw, etc...
- The most important component of a successful catering event is to have the food served the entire duration of the event. You don't want to disappoint families that can only get to their picnic the last hour and the food is gone.
- The food service and the entertainment should be going simultaneous for the entire event. Most company picnics last from 3-5 hours depending upon the hours of the business and number of guests.

- Have the food prepared onsite. The smoke from a grill adds to the atmosphere of any event and to have the food fresh on site adds a level of quality.
- The sights and smell of an outdoor barbecue add to the enjoyment of the event for your guests.
- Have the food prep area behind or away from the main activities of the event. It is great to have the smoke and sounds drifting through the event, but the actual cooking and prep area can be a visual negative with boxes and foil paper and pans.
- The buffet line should be a short walk from food prep in order to monitor food availability.
- It is important to keep your food items warm if they are supposed to be served hot. Chafing dishes and cans of Sterno makes this easy to do.
- Drinks must be kept cold at all times. Make sure to have enough ice on hand for the event and be aware of the type cooler or bucket that drinks will be served from during the event.
- Cooling the drinks prior to the event can conserve on your usage of ice during the event.
- If you are not using insulated coolers, but iced buckets, then have more ice available for drinks.
- Depending on the size and design of the event you may need more than several drink stations placed throughout the area.
- When to start food preparation is the key! The start time and duration of your event will determine the initial demand for food service. For example, if your picnic goes from 11am to 3pm, the demand in your food area will be early. Almost 70 % of your food consumption will take place between 11am and

1pm. So you need to have 50% of your food prepared and cooked with the 70% number completed one hour into the event.

- If your event times are during dinner hours peak meal times will demand more of your food prepared and ready to serve.
- As a rule of thumb, food quantities are calculated 2.5 units per attendee.
- Drinks calculate at 2-3 per person.
- Keep in mind the weather will have an effect on food and drink consumption. If it is a hot day over 90 degrees you will see less food consumption and more demand for drinks.
- You will want to have more water available on hot days. Also, make sure to add additional ice and some method to conserve it during the event.

Concessions:

- Concessions are a staple of the family fun day at the carnival. Popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones, funnel cakes and candy apples add great atmosphere and nostalgic value to any event.
- Concessions need to be considered in the overall design of the event, near the midway for kids and close to the food.
- Concessions tend to have a relatively high demand for power. So make sure that power is available for any concessions that you plan. But by all means, plan on having some concessions!

STEP 5

Entertainment

- Based on your objective and attendees there should be a nice balance of activities for all age groups.
- There also needs to be a balance between physical activities, mental exercises, and skill and luck activities. There needs to be something out there for everyone.
- Always consider the capacity of the activity. How many plays per hour are there for each respective activity? For example, a caricaturist for an event with 1000 attendees. A good caricaturist can draw 10-12 per hour. That means for a 4 hour event, you will provide 48 caricatures for 1000 attendees. That is providing a less than 5% activity for your guests, which is not ideal.
- Consider bingo which can provide entertainment for several hundred at a time and can be played at a pace of 8 sessions per hour. This is a great example of a non-physical activity with some luck involved.
- Prizes should be a staple at any fun event for your employees. Be careful that prizes are not only awarded on skill and physical ability. There needs to be balance with mental prowess and luck involved.
- Children's activities such as a carnival midway are great methods for some level of skill and luck to be able to provide prizes. Consolation prizes can be awarded like pencils, crayons, etc..., but small stuffed animals can also be awarded to the WINNERS! This is a simple and inexpensive way to provide your guests residual value.

- Consider a crafts area for children. The ability to create, sand art, spin art and face paint and tattoos all help create value for any event.
- We recommend building an entertainment program with a foundation of high capacity activities for all of age groups. Once that is accomplished, it is acceptable to add those high value types of entertainment options such as a caricature artist.

STEP 6

Event Aesthetics

The final component of a successful picnic is how this needs to be packaged with an aesthetically pleasing look. Do you want a color theme; Corporate colors? Primary "fun" colors? A Carnival look and feel?

- Flagging and banners are great ways to add aesthetics to any event.
- Tables should be covered at the eating facility.
- Any tables used for food service, games, drinks, etc. should also be covered and skirted.
- Simple centerpieces can be made to tie together the theme of any event.
- Any event requires the use of staff to manage and work the event so having your staff uniformed also adds to the ambiance.
- The placement of tents, bounces, relay races, etc. need to be considered not only for the flow of the event, but also for the look.

Final thoughts for you to consider in your journey:

As you answer and review the points mentioned earlier in the document you may be asking yourself:

- **Do you need help?** Should you hire an experienced events planning company that will assist you in planning, design and execution? If you don't have the expertise or experience on hand you then this might be the way to go.
- **Do you go it alone?** Can you combine a local catering company with local event rental companies with you maintaining responsibility over the entire production of the event to assist with costs?
- **What do you do if you don't have the experience or expertise to put this large of an event together?** Then be sure that you have someone on your committee or the staff who is comfortable in handling an event with a large number of attendees.

ONE LAST TIP:

Whether you hire an outside event planner or you go it alone. Make sure any company you use has the necessary liability insurance. The minimum any vendor should have should be a \$1,000,000.00/2,000,000.00 insurance policy. If you are dealing with multiple vendors make sure your understanding of their liability coverage is provided to you in writing. Most insurance policies allow them to add your company or landlord as additional insured.

We hope this guide has given you enough information that you can begin your journey, successfully plan and implement a great company event. Remember, there is more to putting on a successful event than bringing in some bounces, grills, games and requiring your staff to work at their own event.

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Why is RH Events the right partner for your next corporate event?

With more than 30 years of experience in corporate events and hospitality, our leadership team brings vast and valuable history to the RH Events corporate ethos. Under their leadership, the RH Events project managers fill a vital role in shepherding your project with input from your key decision makers as well as communicating our progress back to you. They capitalize on all the resources RH Events provides to guide your event planning and ensure the desired outcome. Additionally, our capable crew of trained event managers possesses the ability and the aptitude to provide dependable guidance and oversight as they bring your event to life.

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RH Events operates out of a state-of-the-art 11,000 square foot office/warehouse facility in Powder Springs, GA. Some of the features of our facility include: 1,500 square feet of office/meeting space, commercial dish washing/kitchen area, 150 square foot walk-in freezer, 200 square foot walk-in cooler, five dock bay doors, fenced lot with security system and more than 8,000 square feet of racked warehouse space.