



EFFECTIVE EVENT PLANNING A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE EVENT PLANNING

Step #1 Choose Your Event

For a list of events other chapters have successfully planned and executed, see page 3.

If you are planning an Ability Experience event with alcohol, review the [Ability Experience Events With Alcohol Chapter Resource Guide](#). The Guide outlines the additional requirements, beyond those in the Pi Kappa Phi Risk Management Policy, that apply to Ability Experience events where alcohol is present. Ability Experience events with alcohol must be held at a Third-Party Vendor, and the event must be closed.

TYPE OF EVENT: _____

Step #2 Know Your Audience

The vision of The Ability Experience is to create a community, one relationship at a time, where the abilities of all people are recognized and valued. In order to determine your audience, ask yourself: Who do we want to support our event?

Your audience may include students, alumni, faculty and staff at the university, local community VIPs, family members, members of the community, and the disability community.

AUDIENCE: _____

Step #3 Set Your Goals

FUNDRAISING: _____

ATTENDANCE: _____

OTHER: _____

Step #4 Set the Date & Secure the Venue

For additional information on selecting the date and venue for your event, see page 4.

Information on securing a contract can be found in the Fraternity's [Step-by-Step Guide on Securing & Executing an Event Contract](#).

If you are unsure about a contract provision, be sure to e-mail a copy of the contract to Brooke Kingsley Isbell, Assistant Executive Director of Member Development, at bisbell@pikapp.org for review PRIOR to executing the agreement. Additionally,

requests for a copy of the chapter's Certificate of Insurance, as well as requests for the vendor to be named as an additional insured on the Fraternity's general liability insurance, should be directed to Brooke Kingsley Isbell, Assistant Executive Director of Member Development, at bisbell@pikapp.org.

DATE: _____

START/END TIME: _____

VENUE: _____

Step #5 Create an Event Planning Checklist/Timeline

Questions to consider when creating your event planning checklist can be found on page 5.

Step #6 Promote Your Event

For ideas on how to successfully promote your event, see page 6.

Step #7 Execute the Event

As a leader, your goal should be to ensure everyone is enjoying the event as intended. Enlist the support of your chapter brothers to help with the execution of the event, whether it's setting up for the event, collecting tickets at the door, sharing an Ability Experience mission moment with those in attendance, or assisting with clean-up.

Additionally, be sure to show your appreciation for everyone who attends and assists with the planning and execution of the event. Also be sure to thank those who make in-person and online donations to support the event. Through your chapter's fundraising page, you will be able to e-mail all of your donors to thank them for their support and updated them on the success of the event.

Step #8 Document the Event

In addition to completing the steps above and keeping a copy of your notes and planning checklist/timeline, be sure to summarize the following points for the next Philanthropy Chairman:

- What worked well for the event?
- What can be improved for the next event?
- What made the event fun?
- How did participants react to/feel about the event?
- What media contacts, if any, reported on the event?

EVENT IDEAS

Each event listed below has been successfully planned and executed by a chapter somewhere across the country. This does not mean that each event will work for your chapter and campus. You may need to adapt one of these events to fit your needs or create an entirely new event that will innovatively captivate your audience, but you do not need to reinvent the wheel unnecessarily.

- Tennis tournament
- Frisbee golf
- Foosball tournament
- Dodge ball tournament
- Tug of war
- Black light volleyball
- Football competition
- Relay races
- Softball tournament
- Ping pong tournament
- Golf tournament
- Obstacle course
- Basketball tournament
- Wheelchair basketball
- Racquetball tournament
- Bike-a-Thon/Ability Ride
- Battle of the bands
- Talent show
- Phone-a-thon
- Car wash
- Bowling
- Free throw competition
- Dance marathon
- Miss-a-meal
- Concessions
- 50/50 raffle
- Pizza sale
- Doughnut sale
- Bake sale
- Seesaw sit
- Prize raffles
- Greek Olympics
- Block party
- Toll roads
- Benefit concerts
- Guitar Hero/Rock Band
- Penny wars
- Dunk tank
- Coupon books
- Bike/tricycle races
- Eating competitions
- Dorm storming
- Road rally
- Valet parking
- Clean houses
- Casino night
- Landscaping
- Caddying
- Regional rides
- BBQ/Cookout
- Curb painting
- “Greek Idol”
- Haunted house
- Student tuition raffle
- Silent auction
- Hospital bed race
- Broom ball
- Chili cook-off
- Scaffold sit
- Strongman competition
- Pageants
- Car bash
- Music festival
- 5K walk/run
- “Krispy Kreme Challenge”
- Adaptive sporting events
- Egg toss

DATE & VENUE CONSIDERATIONS

Cross-Referencing Calendars

In order to maximize the impact of your event, be sure to cross-reference your chapter calendar, academic calendar, university athletic calendar, intramural calendar, and fraternity/sorority community calendar to avoid any conflicting dates.

Avoid hosting your event at the same time as any other major events on campus, and be sure to consider exam schedules and breaks.

Selecting an Ideal Venue

The first place you should look for a venue is on campus: the campus quad, student union, university center, campus ballrooms, campus theatres, gyms, etc. As a student organization, you may be able to utilize these facilities at a reduced rate or for free. For off-campus venues, you may need to shop around for a suitable place with a reasonable price. Ultimately, your ideal venue will be driven by your audience.

Planning in Advance

Most of the ideal venues for your event must be reserved well in advance. Many other campus organizations are also looking to use these venues. To ensure you get the venue you want for the date and time that you want it, make your reservation as far in advance as possible. Check with your local campus facilities, as you may be able to make your reservation a semester or two in advance.

Minimizing Costs

When choosing your location, your decision should be largely based on the cost of the venue. Many of your campus facilities are offered to student organizations at a reduced rate or for free. If you are unable to find a suitable venue on campus, your next option is to find an off-campus facility. When approaching an off-campus venue, be sure to explain the event and the mission of The Ability Experience. Then ask them to either donate the use of the facility or offer a discount on the fee.

When gathering supplies for your event, you should also keep in mind the cost of the necessary items. Many times businesses can donate items or services to help benefit your event. This can include grocery stores donating supplies/gift cards, catering companies providing food and/or services, and local businesses donating merchandise or gift cards. Minimizing the cost of your event will maximize its effectiveness and therefore the amount of funds that will go to support people with disabilities.

EVENT PLANNING QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In addition to answering the following tasks, be sure to set a deadline for each item you add to the event planning checklist:

- What additional supplies (e.g. tents, chairs, tables, lighting, A/V, banners, decorations, nametags, markers, etc.) do you need to secure?
- Does the venue require an amplified sound permit or noise permit?
- Does the venue require a contract? See [Step-by-Step Guide on Securing & Executing an Event Contract](#).
- Will you provide snacks, food, and/or beverages for the event? Who can you approach to have these items donated?
- Will you sell tickets for your event? If so:
 - How will you print them?
 - How far in advance will you sell them?
 - When will you stop selling tickets?
 - Who will collect tickets at the event?
- Will alcohol be present at the event? See [Ability Experience Events With Alcohol Chapter Resource Guide](#).
- When will you begin promoting your event? How will you promote the event?
- Will you create t-shirts for the event? Who will design the t-shirts? How far in advance will you order the t-shirts? Remember, most vendors have a minimum two-week turn-around time for producing t-shirts.
- What technology will you need (e.g. projector, speakers, etc.)?
- Will you hire security for the event? See [Security Vendor Checklist](#).
- Will you have entertainment at the event? When will you contract for the entertainment?
- Will you have awards at the event? If so, when will you order the awards to ensure they arrive on time?
- Will you have a photographer at the event?

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

E-mail/Letter Campaign

The basics:

- Gather at least 10 addresses/e-mail address from each chapter member.
- Create a mail merge OR upload the contacts into the online fundraising system.
- Use the campaign to tell your contacts about the event and the cause.
- Include a call to action – ask for their support in helping you reach your goals.
- Contact each person at least 3-4 times to update them and ask for their continued support.

Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are also great ways to promote your event. You can create a Facebook group or event to market your event. Snapchat and Twitter are a great way to give updates on the progress of your event both prior to and while it is happening.

Sorority/Fraternity Presentations

Invite members of other fraternities and sororities to your event by giving a brief presentation at one of their chapter meetings. Contact their chapter president to set up an appropriate time.

During the meeting, educate the members on The Ability Experience, invite them to the event, and use pre-printed fundraising letters during your presentation to ask members for their support or the support of their family and friends.

Flyers, Posters, & Electronic Sign Boards

For at least two weeks prior to the event, utilize flyers (electronic or print) to market your event. Include the date, time, and location, as well as a note the proceeds benefit The Ability Experience.

Event T-Shirts

T-shirt sales don't just help you promote your event; they can also be an additional source of revenue for your fundraising. Have everyone wear their shirt on the day of the event. Additionally, sponsorships can help offset the cost of t-shirts. Be careful with the amount of t-shirts you order as you may spend more on shirts than what your event raises. It is usually best practice to have participants pre-order shirts to prevent having a large surplus of shirts and spending unnecessary funds.

Tabling

Set up a table in an area of campus with high visibility (e.g. the quad, student union, residence hall, etc.) to raise awareness for The Ability Experience and your event, as well as to sell tickets to the event (if applicable).

Local & Campus Media

The basics:

- Two weeks prior to the event, send a press release to local and campus media.
- Call each media outlet the day after sending the press release. Introduce yourself, explain why you are calling, and use an attention-grabbing pitch to attempt to gain their attention. Provide the event details (e.g. date, time, location, how to get involved, etc.) and explain who the event benefits (i.e. The Ability Experience, which uses shared experiences to support people with disabilities and develop the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders).
- Call each media outlet on the day of the event to reinforce key details.