

BACKWARDS PLANNING

One of the most rewarding and challenging tasks an organization will encounter is planning an event.

The key to success is having a plan of action to accomplish every task required to ensure a great event. An effective method of planning an event is to start from the day of the event and work backwards to the present day. By creating a timetable to accomplish the tasks, you'll be more likely to complete your tasks in a timely manner and have a successful event.

PROCESS

Make a list.

Make a list of tasks that must be completed before the event. Include:

- ➔ publicity and advertising pieces
- ➔ space reservations
- ➔ food and security
- ➔ all other details

Using a calendar, start with the last task before the event.

Record it on your planning calendar and consider all of its components. If there are component tasks which need to be completed by specific dates, work backwards with them and plug them into the calendar.

Proceed with the next to the last task to be completed, and so on until you have worked up to the most immediate task.

Delegate. After all deadlines are decided upon, delegate tasks to team members.

➔ *By working backwards, before you ever start to go forward, you run less chance of running out of time or overlooking an important component of your event. This process of careful pre-planning gives you a better chance for allowing time to complete the tasks efficiently and effectively.*

EXAMPLE

To see backwards planning in action, let's propose that a fictional group (Concerned Collegiates, a.k.a. CC) is organizing a yearly banquet (Dinner with Concerned Collegiates). The first task CC has to do is brainstorm what kind of banquet they would like to have. Would they like to rent a huge ballroom and spend hours decorating it, or would they prefer to have a small hall that needs few decorations? What restrictions are they working within?

After CC has made up a list of tasks that they need to accomplish to make this a great banquet, they need to set a date. Let's suppose that today is September 1, and CC would like to have the event on December 1. CC schedules completion dates for each task, working back to September 1.

After they have scheduled their entire banquet process, CC will then delegate tasks to their members. For instance, someone will reserve the balloons or hall. Another member will be in charge of arranging for food service. A third member will be in charge of contacting interested parties and selling them tickets, etc.

By simply following their plan of action CC is able to stage a great banquet and have each of its members contribute and feel as if they did their part.

For more information or details contact the
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Club Resources - September 2008



Student Life
LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE