



The Complete  
**CORPORATE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE**

CALL: 1300 618 033

| PILLINGERS HIRING SERVICE



## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
1. Why running an event is good for your business .....	4
2. Target Market .....	5
3. Be Prepared and allow plenty of time .....	6
4. Be Creative .....	7
5. Choose the best season .....	8
6. Time of day .....	9
7. Choose the right venue .....	10
8. Think about a pub or bar .....	11
9. Create ambiance with sound and lighting .....	12
10. Catering ideas and trends .....	13
11. Transport .....	14
12. Professional Photography .....	15
13. Social media .....	16
14. Stick to your schedule on the day .....	17
15. How to make it a hit .....	18
16. And finally don't forget to follow up... ..	19
17. It's time to get planning! .....	20

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing and promoting your business can be difficult at the best of times. People hate being pushed into purchase and sold things they don't want. They love being paid attention, time, and genuine interest. And of course, it all has to do with emotions. As human beings we make important decisions, particularly purchases based on emotion. So as a company marketer or owner, speaking directly to your customers emotional needs is highly important and can prove very successful in making sales and business leads.

One of the best and most unique ways of striking an emotional chord with your target audience is, of course, through a live event. There is no mistaking that a physical space, that speaks to all of the senses of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste, is much more productive at converting customers than any print, online or television ad. But that's not to say it's an easy feat by any means.

Lucky for you, this Complete Corporate Event Planning Guide provides a step by step solution to ensure your event is pulled off perfectly. Best of luck!



People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,

**BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.**

[Maya Ngelou](#)





## WHY RUNNING AN EVENT IS GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS



Hosting an event for your business isn't just fun – it's also really beneficial for a number of reasons. Even during the event planning, you'll make new business connections, from the people you're working with to plan it, to the people you hope to invite. The planning of an event itself can be an excellent method of creating awareness around your business and product / service – particularly if you choose to promote the event locally, online or in the media. During the event, you'll have opportunity to further promote your business to attendees and may even be able to sneak in a sale or two! Even better, why not make your event a charitable affair, helping to bolster your local community or other organisations! The main goal of hosting an event is to boost your business, so be sure to have clear and concise goals before you begin.



## TARGET MARKET

Whether you're planning a multi-targeted event like a charity gala for 400, or a small event such as a sit-down dinner for ten, you'll want to ensure that your event appeals to your target audience. If you're aiming to draw in a young audience, don't be afraid to add some zing to your event, but don't over complicate it. For a philanthropic group, you'll want class all the way. If you're hoping to draw more of one particular gender, it's reasonable to create a very male or female focused event that speaks mostly to their wants and needs. For a highly targeted event, even consider throwing an event that is central to the target market, but a little removed from your brand to grab their attention. For example, just say you wanted to attract more young men to your home décor store. You could make the event all about your products, but you'd do so much better attracting your target audience if you held a sporting event (for example) and perhaps used your home décor products to furnish the event.

Remember, the best way to gain insight into your audience is to ask them directly. When you can, ask your customers for opinions – either online via social media or a survey, or in-store in person – is a great idea to draw inspiration from.

“

If you're aiming to draw in a young audience, don't be afraid to add some zing to your event,

**BUT DON'T OVER  
COMPLICATE IT**

”



## **BE PREPARED AND ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME**

The overall feel of your event will rely on so much more than the event itself. It involves the perfect execution of plans, careful curation of the guest list, a wonderful invitation, great promotion, location, venue and venue embellishments. Some organisations plan their events months ahead of time and some have even been known to plan years ahead, and these are usually the best corporate events. From the moment a guest receives their invitation, to the moment they leave your event, everything has to be unique, inspiring, meaningful and attractive to your target audience. So think about what you'll need to prepare. Here's a rough list to get you started:

- **A date, time and location**
- **A venue**
- **A theme**
- **A clear idea of your target audience**
- **A way of promoting your event, or invitations**
- **Staff or stakeholders to plan and host the event**
- **An event program**
- **Entertainment (including sound systems, an MC, dance floor etc)**
- **Décor**
- **Food and drinks**
- **Transport and parking**
- **Media and photography**



## BE CREATIVE

What is the purpose of your event? What do you want your guests to take away? Your event needs to live and breathe your brand ethos, but also give your guests the ultimate experience that leaves them wanting more. Are you a car dealership selling luxury vehicles? Then why not hold your event on-site and allow your guests to truly experience the cars first hand? Do you own beauty products or a haircare company? Perhaps a special day spa that allows your guests to exclusively use your products and provides them access to exclusive discounts at the event could work.

When planning your event, think outside the box, and especially outside of your industry for ideas to create an event that really piques the interest of your audience. One way to do this is by partnering up with other businesses whose expertise complements your own, making for a bigger better event for your guests. Be careful though, as you may find

yourselves jostling for guests attention at the detriment of the other business.

Next, you'll need to consider your budget, time frames and stakeholder involvement, as well as whether or not you're going to partner up with other businesses, or hold the event yourself. Hosting your event with another business is an excellent idea for large-scale or charitable events, as your attendees will enjoy double the fun, but you'll only be paying half the price. For a smaller event, two or more businesses might find themselves jostling for promotional opportunities and the attention of their guests; however, it can definitely still work with a bit of forward planning.



## CHOOSE THE BEST SEASON



You might decide to use a specific date or time of year to promote your brand; however, there's no use planning, say, a fashion show, if there are going to be three other competing events in your area on the same day! To avoid this, keep your ear to the ground and try to find out what else is going on in your area at the same time, so as not to clash. Also, remember that for events like Valentines Day, people often plan their outings well in advance, so it's worth publicising your event well before the day you'll hold it. This will ensure people can 'lock it in' before other activities present themselves.



## TIME OF DAY

To get the most impact out of your event, you'll need to consider what time of day is most suitable for your audience - even if it's not for you. At the end of the day, if no one shows up, it doesn't matter how convenient it was for you to organise. If you're hoping to attract working professionals, it's best to plan your event for a time when they're available, but you'll also need to consider what time they'd be willing to attend. A mid-week evening event might work for a short event that only runs for a couple of hours, but if you're planning a sit-down banquet (with or without alcohol), you might want to hold it on the weekend so that attendees won't feel like they need to rush home in order to have enough rest for work the next day. If you're targeting parents of young children, a midday or late morning weekday event would be best, as there aren't many parents who are willing to commit to an event that clashes with school runs, weekend sports, or bedtime for younger ones.

When deciding on a time and date for your event, it's important to consider the ebbs and flows of your business. Do you want to hold your event during a slow business period in order to attract more customers during these times? Or perhaps holding your event during a busier time will help you to capitalise on existing customers. Whichever way you go, make sure you have the resources to handle new and existing customers simultaneously.



Consider what time of day is most suitable for your audience

**EVEN IF IT'S NOT FOR YOU**





## CHOOSE THE RIGHT VENUE

Think back to the last time you attended an event – even if it was just a kid’s birthday party at a home you’ve never been to before. You noticed the lovely extra touches and effort that was made, didn’t you? I bet you also noticed things like the small stain on the tablecloth, the ripped wallpaper in the corner and the dodgy floating ceiling panels, right? That’s right – your guests will notice EVERYTHING, from the quality of the hors d’oeuvres and the scent of the centrepiece candles, to the lighting, window fittings and the flooring. That’s why it’s so important to choose the right venue for your event.

When choosing a venue, first and foremost think about your theme and target audience. Corporate events are no longer one-size-fits-all corporate function centre events. Today, all manner of venues can be ideal for a business event, from the local surf life saving club, a cafe, or the refurbished pub around the corner. In fact the benefit of established venues like pubs and bars are that they already have the facilities you need, including bathroom amenities, seating and décor, staff, drinks and – in most cases - food. You will also save

money on venue hire, as the pub or bar will very likely welcome the extra income from the customers you bring.

The venue will also be dictated by your guest list. You will need to look at the general amenities and catering facilities, audiovisual facilities, entertainment facilities and décor, if required. When enquiring with potential venues, always ask what they can and cannot provide, and what comes at an extra cost. Will you need to provide chairs and tables (including baby high chairs), a dance floor, portable bathroom amenities, sound and lighting? What about decorations and dining ware? If you’re hosting an outdoor event, you’ll likely need shelter, cooking and restroom amenities too, so don’t forget about that.

When you’ve settled on a venue, consider what else you’ll need to supply for the event. It’s always a good idea to check out a list of what’s available to hire from party hire businesses, like Pillingers Hiring Service, so that you can go through it and tick off the things you’ll need. Alternatively, you can contact us for a free consultation.



## THINK ABOUT A PUB OR BAR



A pub or bar may at first seem like a completely inappropriate choice for an event venue, but these days, most pubs and bars are much more classy and don't have the same reputation as they once had. The shift of pub décor from dingy, alcohol-soaked carpets and bar-bottom ashtrays to ambient, modernised meeting venues that now cater to businesspeople and weekend visitors, is evident, making pubs and bars an ideal venue for a small to medium-sized event.



## CREATE AMBIANCE WITH SOUND AND LIGHTING

Whether you're holding an indoor or outdoor event, large or small, it is always a good idea to have some sort of audiovisual entertainment, and equipment to be able to speak to your guests, if needed. You might choose soft, background music for a sit-down dinner or cocktail hour, or you might choose an exciting live band to accompany your event. You could mix the two at various times too, with quiet background music for the bulk of the event and louder foreground music for an hour or two, so that people are encouraged to get up and dance.

Regardless of what you choose, you'll need to ensure your system is powerful enough for the sound to reach all areas, as well as hiring screens (if needed) large enough to be visible from all areas. If you have an

MC, make sure the sound levels are neither too loud nor too quiet. Check the sound levels from all areas before guests arrive and ensure this isn't dramatically altered during the event.



Whether you're holding an event, it is always a good idea to have some sort of

**AUDIOVISUAL  
ENTERTAINMENT  
AND EQUIPMENT**



## CATERING IDEAS AND TRENDS

If there is one commandment to corporate events, it is to provide at least some form of food and drink. It encourages people to stay longer, feel more comfortable and gives a talking point between guests. Not to mention it improves the event, meaning guests will have a more positive experience, therefore increasing their chances of purchase, or returning to you for business in the future.

Your choice of food and beverages should be based on your budget, guest preferences, the style of your event and even the weather. The menu is one of the most important elements of any corporate event, and can make or break it for your guests. Messy finger food that's difficult to eat is never popular at a standing cocktail function! Yet when done well, canapes and drinks are a great way to feed a large crowd of people without the cost of a sit down dinner. For sit-down events, share platters encourage mingling and conversation over the meal, or a buffet or set menu might be ideal, particularly when dealing with food allergies and preferences. Always ensure the food is presented in an attractive way (Pillingers Hiring Service can help you out with that!), because attractive food presentation can actually make food appear to taste better!



## TRANSPORT

Depending on your target audience and whether or not you'll be serving alcohol, you'll likely have some people requiring public transport to attend your event. Because of this, it's important to ensure your venue is on a public transport route and easily accessible. If your budget allows it, you could also organise your own transport to take people to and from your event from a convenient set location, or even from their homes and businesses.

Another consideration is parking. If you know you are having a large number of guests, you'll need to ensure there's somewhere nearby where people can park their cars. It's a good idea to notify people in your invitations of a place nearby that they can park, or the best public transport links.



You'll need to ensure there's somewhere nearby where

**PEOPLE CAN PARK THEIR CARS.**





## PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY



In this day and age, a company without advertising and social media is likely to suffer. Creating a public face is not just clever, but essential. By hiring a professional photographer or videographer for your event, you will be able to use your event images in your social media, main stream media, advertising and to promote your products / services, as well as future events. Be sure to get permission if you're going to use images of your guests in the future though.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

As mentioned, social media can be used with images after the event to promote your products and services, but even more importantly, social media is the perfect tool to create buzz around your brand leading up to the event. You can begin to utilise social media to create awareness of your event very early on. Once you have confirmed that you'll be holding an event and have a general idea of who the attendees will be, why not give little hints at first – something along the lines of “we have a surprise coming up... Stay tuned to find out what it is!”. This way, you'll create a bit of buzz before even announcing your plans!

Once you do announce your event, don't just stop there – continue to keep the ball rolling by posting about the event. To maximise engagement online, you can create a Facebook event and invite guests online, allowing them to get a taste of what to expect on the day. You can also cross promote any vendors you're using, such as the venue, catering or entertainment. Depending on the type of event, you could even have social media posts explaining what's occurring during the event as well – like a step-by-step account of the activities, features and highlights of the day.





## STICK TO YOUR SCHEDULE ON THE DAY

During the event itself, you'll still need to work hard to ensure everything falls into place. Think of your event guests in the same way you'd think about your customers or clients at work – would you ever leave a customer hanging, waiting too long for service? No? Then don't leave your guests hanging either. Make sure you have enough staff help to ensure every guest is fully catered to at all times. It's also very important to stick to your event schedule as best as you can. If something occurs to derail it, just hop right back into whatever the next step on your schedule is and keep going. Having a well thought out event schedule will show great organisation and professionalism. Remember, always prepare for the worse, but hope for the best.



People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,

**BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL**





## HOW TO MAKE IT A HIT

There is one primary rule to making your event a hit and that is to provide amazing service to every single one of your guests. Put away your preconceived notions about who – out of your guests – you think you want as a new client or customer, and treat everybody as though they are the most important customer you've ever had. Why? Because each and every one of your guests has the power to make or break your brand name. If you have even a couple of unsatisfied guests, they are more likely to jump online and voice their unhappiness than those who are happy with their treatment. So, keep your staff on their toes (in a nice way, of course) and ensure that every person has a smile on their face and that any issues are addressed immediately.

If you have a product for your guests to sample, provide them with the best. Don't offer up your cheapest wares to try to save money. By showcasing your crème de la crème, you will make an excellent first impression to anyone who hasn't tried your product yet, and this is exactly what you want.

Before you know it, you'll realise that your investment has paid off tenfold. Similarly, if you are offering a product for use or sample, don't ever get pushy about displaying it. This is not the time for a hard sell. The idea is to interest them in your product or service by giving them an example of just how wonderful it is, then giving them motivation to come back later to purchase, as well as spread the word to their friends, family and colleagues.

While all of this is going on, you may forget to get out there and mingle yourself, but this is an important part of the process. You are the face of your business and people are so much more likely to purchase from – or recommend – a brand, if they have had a good experience with the people who are selling it. It's also important to try to actually enjoy yourself, as your enthusiasm will be contagious and really, there's nothing like a genuine smile to set people at ease and make them feel welcomed.

## AND FINALLY DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW UP...



If you do not already have the contact details for all of your guests, it's a good idea to have a sign-in book at the entrance of the venue to collect this information, for those willing to give it. That way, you can follow up after the event to make sure your guests enjoyed themselves, ask for feedback and generally re-engage them. Another idea is to have a newsletter signup form, so that people can opt in to receiving your business newsletter. Again, don't be too pushy with this – make it completely optional and don't overdo the follow up contact. Thank your guests (and staff or other stakeholders) for attending and invite them to contact you again.

After the event, set up a process of measuring the impact of it. This may not be something tangible immediately, but you will see a positive impact if things went well. Some events can even create a positive outcome months or years down the track!



## **IT'S TIME TO GET PLANNING!**

Now that you know the ins and outs of a successful corporate event plan, it's your turn to give it a go. Build the brand image you want, and secure your dream clients. Just remember, if you can make them feel good, they'll always remember you.