

Check your calendar before you do anything else

This morning, I got an email from a networking group apologizing for scheduling a lunch during Passover (which starts tonight and runs for eight days). It offered free admission to those observing Passover since they would not be able to eat the lunch offering (people who observe Passover refrain from eating bread and other grains, among other dietary restrictions).



“Fat-ass wall calendar II”
by Geir Arne Brevik on
Flickr

There are many religious observances from various religions throughout the year. Some are more observed than others. While organizers can't always avoid having a conflict, they should try. For observant Muslims, attending a lunch during Ramadan is impossible. For observant Jews, attending a networking event on Yom Kippur is unthinkable. Some Christians would not attend a BBQ on Friday during Lent.

Understanding the importance of holidays to their practitioners should be on communicators' and event planners' agendas. From a practical point of view, why would you schedule and promote an event that potential participants

won't be able to attend? From an inclusive point of view, why would you not be sensitive to different religious beliefs?

But it is not only about religious observance. It's about understanding what is going on when you are planning your event. Will something else affect your turnout? A competing event? A conflict? A major city-wide happening? If there is going to be a race that shuts down various city streets, for example, that might make it difficult for your attendees to get to your event or find parking.

All it takes is to check the calendar *before* you plan your event. Of course, some things will pop up after you have settled on your dates and venues, which may force you to reschedule or adapt somehow.

If you are constantly planning events, then you may wish to invest in Chase's calendar, which lists just about everything, everywhere. Otherwise, if you use Google, you can subscribe to various calendars (religious holidays, US holidays, etc.). Or there is this Holidays Calendar, which lists all major religious and US holidays for the year. For those who prefer paper, most wall/desk calendars list major holidays. And don't forget to check your local resources such as newspapers, local websites, chambers of commerce and others to understand what is going on closer to home.

But having a calendar is useless unless you check it. Make it part of your event planning and promotion checklist.

Wishing a Happy Passover to those who celebrate. It's on my calendar!