

How to be better at event marketing

Some event marketers are killing it. I have been impressed with Boston University Alumni Association's efforts. They are doing everything right: well-timed, well-designed event invitations, pre-event reminders, and always a post-event thank you email.

Not everyone is doing so well. Some event marketing, especially by small nonprofits, seems haphazard, with little planning and even smaller attention paid to details. And really, better event marketing pays attention to the details, the logistics, and the user experience.

First, plan good events

Marketing an event successfully starts with the event itself. Is it interesting or relevant to your audience? Is the date good, with few conflicts?



Photo by Karolina Grawbowska on Kaboompics.com

Entice and inform your audience

Once you have chosen the event, the date and the venue you are ready to market it to your audience. You will have to develop a description of the event that entices but also informs. Why would your audience want to come to this event? Who is speaking? Why are you hosting the event? What makes this event special or important? And you must provide all the important logistical information, such as: date, time, venue name and address, cost (including if free to attend), and ways to sign up.

Time the invitation properly

Think about how much time your audience needs to make a decision. If it is an event that requires travel and hotel reservations (e.g., annual conference, wedding), you will need to send it with a few months lead time. If the event is local, then you can market closer to the event time. However, don't

send out an invitation too far in advance because it will be forgotten, but don't do it too close to the event because your audience may already have made other commitments.

What to include in the actual invitation

Emails must have text and a link to sign up. *Do not* ever have an image/graphic-only email, since some email programs do not automatically open images and require them to be downloaded.

Again, make sure to include all the details your audience needs to decide whether to attend or not (look at the list above).

Signing up should be easy

You should have an easy way to sign up—do not make me jump through hoops such as making me scroll through multiple screens, and having to create accounts and passwords. You are not selling tickets for an international flight. Think about what information you absolutely need (e.g., name, contact info such as address and email, credit card information), and start with that. Other information (e.g., phone number, demographics, etc.) that might be good to have should be weighed carefully. Asking for too much information can be a huge turn-off.

Always acknowledge sign-ups

This should go without saying, but once people sign up for your event, they should get an email confirmation.

Calendar links!

Be sure that the software you are using has a universal calendar link both in the sign up screen and in the acknowledgment/confirmation email. Attendees should be able to download the event info to any major calendar (i.e., Apple, Outlook, Google).

Friendly reminders are welcome

Always send a reminder at least one day ahead. Include all important logistical information (i.e., start time, address, directions, public transportation/parking information, and any requirements (e.g., picture ID, cash on hand, laptop, etc.).

After the fact

Always send something after the event—it can be a simple “thank you for attending,” or a survey/request for feedback, or sharing of information relevant to the event (e.g., contact information for speakers, handouts, bibliographies, etc.)

Would be nice if...

The software you use would be smart enough not to send event invites to people who have already registered. When I get another invitation to an event I have signed up for, I always think that I forgot to register or that my payment didn't go through.

Bottom line

Make your event marketing better: Always think about your audience and what they need in order to make a decision and attend your event.

How to make your event go well, and why it is important

Have you ever attended a professional development/learning

event that didn't meet your expectations or deliver on its promise? I have, and I bet you have too.



Via Pexels.com

Good events lead to good things

Many organizations put on these events as a benefit to their members, or to provide an interesting take on a hot topic, or simply, to provide a learning opportunity. And events are often a great way to build interest in your organization, and to help increase membership.

But the positive aspects of holding an event disappear if the event is bad. Bad events are events that don't go as planned and don't offer what they promise.

Bad events lead to bad things

Attending an event that doesn't live up to its billing is incredibly frustrating. You've given up your time, and many

times your money, to attend what seems like a waste. You've learned nothing and achieved nothing.

Don't let your event harm your organization

Event organizers, whether professional or volunteer, need to be aware of the negative consequences of having a bad event:

- Loss of trust in your organization
- Decreased attendance to future events
- Reputation damage

Ultimately, organizations could see revenue loss. That should be incentive to prevent bad events from happening.

How to make sure your event goes well

Ensure your next event goes well with proper planning, organization, and communication.

Note that the following tips are not intended as an exhaustive list. Instead, this list reflects solutions to various issues I have experienced in the bad events I have attended.

Planning tips

Prepare your speakers: Explain what you expect them to present, how much time they will have, and who you expect to attend the event.

Review the presentations: Make sure that what the speaker is planning to present matches what you required. Review the slides.

Organization tips

A/V, computer checks: Ensure that the A/V and computer/internet connection are working *before* the event. The time to check is not just as the event is starting. This wastes time, and doesn't allow you to correct problems.

Agenda: Share an agenda, whether printed or digital.

Inform your audience: Set ground rules for your audience, and address common issues (i.e., if and when there will be Q and A, if there are refreshments available, location of restrooms, etc.)

Communication tips

Before the event: Send a reminder to those who have registered. Be sure to include the location address, date and time of the event, and logistical information such as directions, parking availability, etc.

During the event: Properly introduce yourself, the host organization, the topic, and the speaker (s). Make sure the speakers share their title, affiliation and contact information.

After an event: Send an email thanking people for attending. This email can also include an event survey, request for feedback, and sharing of any relevant information (e.g., websites mentioned in the talk, the presentation deck, contacts, bibliography, etc.)

The bottom line is that events are a great marketing communications tool when done right. Done wrong, they can be a disaster for your organization.

It's not all about you, nor

should it be

As I was driving in today's heavy rain, I noticed whether cars had headlights on. Most did, but there were several that didn't. What reasoning would possess anyone to not turn on their headlights in the pouring rain (and I think it may actually be a driving rule here in Maryland)? Sure, some people forget. But when you look around and everyone else has theirs on, does that not remind you to do it too? I mentioned this to a friend, and she said she believes it's because the drivers think they only need lights on when they themselves can't see. They fail to think about the fact that the lights help others to see them.



Photo by Louis from Pexels

The marketing communications angle here is that whenever you produce any marketing materials, you can't just think about yourself (your company or organization) but about the people

who will be using/reading/accessing those materials. When you fail to think about what they need, like the cars without headlights in the pouring rain, you are making it harder for them to see you.

Events happening sometime during St. Patrick's weekend

Take for example the Facebook event posting from a local Irish pub for its St. Patrick's Day celebration. It listed the following information, verbatim:

Saturday and Sunday Outdoor Festival. Live Music, Pipes & Drums, Irish Dancers, Bouncy Castle Face Painting and so much more!

Do you notice anything missing (other than the comma between castle and face painting)? How about times? Is it all day? When and where is the live music? What bands will be performing? Where does this all take place? In the pub? On the street outside the pub? Is this free? Or is there a fee?

Since I was interested in attending (come on, they had a bouncy castle!), I had to message the pub and ask. They responded telling me they were opening early for brunch at 10 a.m., and that the outdoor activities would also start then, and the live music would go on at 2 p.m. I thanked them and suggested they include that information in their event page, you know, to make it clearer for anyone interested in possibly attending.

The devil really is in the details

Having seen many marketing pieces, whether it be websites, brochures or press releases, with a similar lack of salient detail, I know it is common to forget that your audience does not know everything you do about whatever you are promoting. There are the restaurant websites that fail to list their location or their operating hours. Or the product sales sheet

that doesn't list the size of the product or its cost. And on and on.

In order to produce effective, useful marketing materials, you *must* consider your audience. What details does the audience need to know? What information is relevant and is it included in your marketing piece?

It's all about the Ws

A way to gauge whether you are including the information your audience needs is to follow the journalist's guideline of asking the "5 Ws + H": who, what, where, when, why, and how. If your marketing piece answers those questions, you will have provided the most relevant information. For events, the what, where, and when are crucial. Clearly, the pub's marketing folks do not have a journalistic or events planning background. I will chalk up their poorly thought out event invitation to it being produced by an amateur. One would hope no professional marketing person would fail to include the when and where information on an event listing.

Don't be so centered on your own needs that you forget what your audience needs to know. In other words:

Turn on your headlights so others can see you.

Events can be great marketing, or not

A couple of months ago, I found out that Kramerbooks, an independent bookstore in Washington, had started doing book events. After checking their events website, I saw an author I

wanted to see (Derek Thompson, author of Hitmakers). I went to the Thompson event, which took place in Kramerbook's new and pretty tight "event" space, with enough seating for about 20 or so, and standing space for about 20 or so more. I thought Thompson was very interesting, and I actually went home and got his book from the library (and I will be sharing thoughts on it in a future blog post).

Based on my positive experience, I kept tabs on the Kramerbook's online event calendar. Soon, there was another event I wanted to attend. It was three journalists who cover the White House (and being a politics and news junkie, this was totally up my alley). So I put it in my calendar. In the back of my mind I thought this would be a very crowded event, this being DC and the space being so small. Well, I took the Metro from Rockville, and got there around 5:20. Even though the event wasn't scheduled to start until 6:30p.m., there was a line around the block. It was very hot, and based on the space constraints, I knew I wouldn't get in, so I decided not to stand in line for an hour in the sun and heat.

It costs \$6 to ride Metro from where I live to Dupont Circle, where Kramerbooks is. I basically wasted \$12 and well over an hour. I was not happy.

The next day, I noticed that Kramerbooks had tweeted about a livestream. I tweeted back that had I known I would have skipped going down there. I got back a reply that they tweeted it, and put it on Facebook and Instagram, and they were sorry (more like sorry, not sorry) that I hadn't seen it. I asked why they hadn't included this information on their event page. And I got no response back.

Based on this experience, I may never attend try to attend an event at Kramerbooks again. Transportation is just too costly and time-consuming, and getting a seat is too much of a crapshoot. I also didn't care for their social media response. A much better response to empathize and then to send me a link

to the recording of the event.

Events can be great marketing tools. In this case, Kramer's gets people in the door, and hopefully, checking out their book selection or eating at their restaurant. Events can also generate publicity. But when done poorly, events can have a negative effect.

There's another independent bookstore in Washington, Politics and Prose, which has been holding author events for years. They have an event nearly every single day, mostly free and in their bookstore (which has way more space than Kramerbooks). When they have a big author or an event likely to draw large crowds, they sell tickets and hold the events at Sixth and I (a synagogue and event space in D.C.), which can seat hundreds. This tactic has made Politics and Prose a leader in author and literary events, and probably also has generated considerable book sales.

The difference between these two bookstores and their event marketing strategies is stark. One has the experience to understand that some talks require larger spaces, and have partnered with another organization to address the need while also generating ticket and book sales. The other is still learning what to do with their space.

Have you ever attended an event that ended up being terrible? What made it so and what were the consequences for you? Let me know in the comments.

A tale of two organizations and five best practices

To paraphrase the opening line of *A Tale of Two Cities*, it was the best of practices and the worst of practices. Let me explain.

In the past few weeks, I've attended two remarkably similar events put on by two different organizations. Both organizations are membership-based, advocacy/non-profits, and are local affiliates of a national organization. One organization clearly followed best practices, while the other appeared to have no idea how to make the most of a successful event.

Organization A

Event description: Luncheon featuring a *Washington Post* reporter discussing the challenges of covering the Trump Administration. Cost was \$35.

Sign up: On the organization's website, taken to an outside website (PayPal) for payment. Receipt sent from PayPal but no acknowledgment from organization. No information or email list sign up captured.

Reminder for the event: None.

Follow up after the event: None.

Organization B

Event: Cocktail reception followed by panel discussion, featuring three White House correspondents, about the challenges of covering the Trump Administration. Cost was \$36.

Sign up: Through Eventbrite, which allows for email capture, branding, and payment on one page. (There are other benefits

to using Eventbrite, including ability to sign in people, print labels, be listed on an events page, and others.) Tickets with event information sent from Eventbrite.

Reminder: Eventbrite sends a reminder two days ahead of the event.

Follow up: Personalized thank you email from the organization's development director, including a program survey, and encouraging involvement in the organization and attendance at future events.

Five best practices

1. Have a hook

Kudos to both these organizations for their choice of speakers. Both events were very informative, lively and interesting. **Hosting an interesting, topical event is a big draw for members and is attractive to non-members.**

2. Use the right online tools

There are lots of online tools available to organizations, at all different prices, for various functions (event management, surveys, time management). They offer functionality such as being able to generate reports, charge credit cards, build email lists, communicate with attendees, and so forth. **Using the right online tool will let you increase your organization's efficiency through automation and increased functionality.**

3. Build your email list

If you are a membership or donor-based organization it becomes extremely important to build and expand your email list. Having an event is a great way to attract new people, so it makes sense to get their email address so you can keep in touch. **Automatically adding people that have signed up for an**

event to your email list is easy and smart.

4. Follow up after the event

Presumably, by hosting an event, you have a goal for it. This goal could be to increase awareness, or increase your membership, or attract donations, etc. **Following up after the event, reminding people of what you do and how they can be involved will go a long way to achieving your goal.**

5. Survey your audience

If you want to continue to have successful programs, you'll need to know what attendees liked and didn't like. **Asking attendees to rate your program and give suggestions is a great way to improve your future events.**

It really was the best of times and the worst of times

Organization B was much more sophisticated and tech-savvy than Organization A. It used online tools to make things easier, and it seemed to be clearer on the outcomes it wanted. Even though both organizations advocate, only Organization B had the foresight to build their email list to make advocacy happen.

Organization A, in effect, has put the onus on me if I want to be more involved in the future. If I want to see what programs are coming up, I will have to visit their website. Organization B is making my involvement and support easier. Since I will be getting B's emails about advocacy and events, I will be able to involved if I choose, without having to take an extra step to do it.

Always start with the reader in mind



Photo by Kaboompics.com

It seems obvious that you should always write your marketing and communications materials with your readers in mind. After all, if you are trying to communicate with them, you have to understand what they need to know.

And yet, how many times have you received a letter that doesn't say anything? Or an email that lacks crucial information? How many times have you had to call up a company because you didn't understand something it sent you? I bet you've had many a moment like this, which left you frustrated.

Missing information

I had such a moment last week. I had signed up for an editing workshop from the American Copy Editors Society (ACES) being given on November 5 in Washington, DC. Here's the email I received a few days before the event (note that I blocked out the names of presenters and a phone number for privacy):

This message is to confirm that you are registered for the American Copy Editors Society (ACES) Boot Camp from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. this Saturday, Nov. 5, at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The workshop will take place in the Fonger Hall auditorium, room 103, located on the Foggy Bottom campus.

Lunch will be provided by the local chapter of ACES.

Presenters XX, XX and XX look forward to welcoming you on Saturday.

If you have any questions or find yourself lost on Nov. 5, please feel free to call 571-xxx-xxxx for assistance.

Notice anything missing from this email? How about the address for the building? Or how about directions and parking information (or links to those)? How about an agenda and/or schedule for the day? Is there any information about what you need to bring with you?

Trying again

The next day, ACES sent another email, regarding parking information. It is basically the same email as before, except for the addition of parking and Metro information, which I bolded for you to see more clearly.

We look forward to seeing you at the American Copy Editors Society (ACES) Boot Camp from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. tomorrow at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. The workshop will take place in the Fonger Hall auditorium, room 103, located on the Foggy Bottom campus.

Lunch will be provided by the local chapter of ACES.

Parking

The closest garage to Fungler Hall is the University Parking Garage/G Street Garage, located at 2028 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20052. There is access from both 20th Street and 21st Street between F and G Streets. The self-service garage is open 24/7, accepting MasterCard, Visa and American Express for payments (no cash). The full day rate is \$12.

The closest Metro stop is Foggy Bottom-GWU, with service on the Blue, Orange and Silver lines.

If you find yourself lost on Nov. 5, please feel free to call 571-XXX-XXXX for assistance.

This attempt was a better than the prior email, but still, no address for Fungler Hall. It's as if ACES thinks that everyone is intimately familiar with GW's Foggy Bottom Campus. For those of you who aren't in the DC area, GW's campus is a city campus. Buildings have street addresses—they are not in quads as in traditional colleges.

I looked up Fungler Hall on Google, but I forgot to note the address, and when I got to the parking garage on Saturday, I didn't know where to go. I looked it up on my phone and the address I got did not correspond to the building. I called the number on the email, but there was no response. I was able to get directions from a student I saw on the street, and I then got to the workshop several minutes late.

How helpful are you being to your reader?

If ACES had started with the reader's needs in mind when writing this email, it would have realized that providing an address and links to maps and directions would have helped recipients of this email.

It's about the 5 Ws

When you write a press release, you should think like a journalist and answer the five Ws: what, why, where, who and when. You should also answer the how. This advice is also

applicable to most any communications material you create.

If you need help creating effective communications materials, contact me!

7 actions that will give your event more mileage

Having attended a couple of professional development events in the last few weeks, I noticed that the organizers did little to guarantee people would a) enjoy the event and b) talk about the event (and by extension, the organizing group).

Event planning is a skill, and it is not easy. Too many volunteers and committee members think all they need to do is choose a date, book the space, order food and drink, and publicize the event. But those are the basics. To get more mileage from an event both for the attendees and for the presenting organization, you need to do more.

Here are seven actions that will help you get more mileage from your next event.

1. Designate volunteers to be organizational ambassadors/greeters. You will need more than the person greeting attendees at the door. These volunteers, who should be good representatives of your organization, will welcome people to the event and make sure they know where everything is located (food, restrooms, seats, etc.). But more so, ambassadors should introduce attendees to each other.

Why this gives you more mileage: Your attendees will feel welcomed. They will meet at least one person (the ambassador).

This makes your organization look welcoming and more enticing to non-members.

2. Prep your speaker(s) and/or presenter(s). Make sure everybody knows what to say so there is no pointless repetition. Divide up introductions appropriately. Make sure announcements and other information will be shared.

Why this gives you more mileage: Messaging is important and gives attendees useful information. By prepping your speakers, you are ensuring your organization looks professional.

3. Use social media. Invite your attendees to tweet about the event (and give them a hashtag) or post summaries to their blogs and other social media.

Why this gives you more mileage: Social media amplifies. Enough said.

4. Have someone monitor social media during and after the event. Make sure to respond to any questions or comments (especially if there is a problem—maybe the AC is not working or the Wi-Fi is spotty). Retweet and publicize your attendees posts.

Why this gives you more mileage: Again, it amplifies, but it also shows your organization is responsive and embraces social media.

5. Be sure to incorporate time for Q&A, and make it organized. Q&A shouldn't be an afterthought, and it shouldn't be a free for all. Organizers should make sure to designate a time for questions. Whether you decide to have a microphone for the audience or take questions via social media, you should make it easy for people to interact with your presenters.

Why this gives you more mileage: Your audience will get more clarity on issues and, again, it makes your organization look responsive.

6. Create a recap of the event and post it to your blog/website and your social media networks. The recap of the event could include a summary of the presentation, contact information for the presenters, and photos of the event (and if you post photos on Facebook, people could tag themselves).

Why this gives you more mileage: Your recap is now shareable content for your website, blog and/or newsletter. Attendees will have something to reference if they want to talk about the event.

7. Email all attendees a thank you and evaluation survey shortly after the event. You may also include a link to your recap (see above).

Why this gives your more mileage: You will have yet another opportunity to interact with your attendees while getting useful feedback. You could even have an offer for new members or discounts to future events.

What would you add? What has been your experience when attending professional development events?

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!

Are your events drawing fewer people?

Last week, I attended an event and the complaint from the organizers is that fewer and fewer people are attending. Now part of this particular group's situation has to do with poor publicity. In fact, their attendance has dwindled to such an extent that they have had to change venues. Today I attended another event (different group), same problem: fewer people.

If you are organizing an event that has been losing audience, you may want to ask yourself these questions:

Is your publicity reaching new/bigger audiences?

Obviously, if few people know you are having an event, few people will attend. As a communicator, you have to evaluate where you are publicizing your event, and whether you are attracting enough people. Moreover, if you are trying to expand the amount of people at your events, you are going to have to experiment with new ways of publicizing the event. If you can only count on your core group, you don't have a recipe for growth.

Is your program good?

There are just so many times I can go to a social media event. I have heard lots of it before. Nothing new there. **Programming content counts.** Doing a boring event or having the same speakers is not going to draw a new or bigger crowd.

What else is going on that day?

This is about the importance of timing. If you are having an event, and there is a presidential debate going on that evening, you are forcing people to choose, and you may lose. Also, what time of day is your event? Have you experimented with other times?

How good was your last event?

You know the saying, *you are only as good as your last success*. How successful was your last event? Were people interested, motivated, energized? Or did you receive complaints? Was the speaker entertaining or boring? Unfortunately, you do not have too much control over circumstances (speaker was grumpy, people were late due to mass transit problems, etc.), but it matters anyhow. If you had a crappy event, people aren't going to want to attend another event that you put on.

Do you know who your audience is? Do you know why they attend

your events?

You don't survey you attendees? Big mistake! If you don't even know why the people who are there attended, how are you going to figure out why people aren't attending? YOU MUST SURVEY...even informally. As an organizer, ask people on the way in how they found out about the event and on their way out whether they enjoyed the event. Have forms people can fill out. Send out an electronic survey. Do what it takes to find out more about your audience.

What are you up against and how are you fixing it? Let me know in the comments.

Invest in event planning not just event marketing

Many organizations, especially nonprofits and associations, focus on having one annual event that is meant to be a fundraiser or a idea-raiser. Events are a great way to publicize an organization, get people together, and provide value to attendees. Except when the events don't go well. And that is a big exception.

Unfortunately, many events have better publicity than planning, and that is guaranteed to backfire. What I mean is that event organizers spend inordinate amounts of time and money to make sure that people know and attend a conference, and spend much less time and money on the logistics of the event.

This past Saturday, I attended a "women's conference." It had a very nice website, and was going to deal with some

intriguing subject matter (women and politics, women in developing countries, etc.) I believed the hype and bought my ticket (also, I had a very nice discount from a friend involved with the group).

First indication of a problem was the disparity of information between the ticket and the website. One said the program started at 8:30, the other that registration started then, and the program at 9:45. Neither was right.

Lesson: Make sure the details are correct, and that everyone has the same information.

The people who were involved with greeting and registering were doing neither when I arrived at 8:50. Badges were still being put out. No one handed me a program. It was disorganized.

The program did not start until 10:15. From there, everything ran late. No one thought to tell people where the breakout sessions would be, and one was on a different floor (the session I was signed up for).

Lesson: Timing matters.

The “panelists” for the session I attended were sitting and chatting amongst themselves for 25 minutes, ignoring the fact that 40 people were sitting and waiting for them to start.

Lesson: Explain expectations to presenters.

And then there was the issue of lunch. It was supposed to be “grab and go.” I am vegetarian and guess what, there was not a single vegetarian option to be found.

Lesson: If you are going to offer food (and there is no other food available on site) then you have to consider dietary restrictions.

The bottom line is that the event organizers did not pay

attention to the organization aspect of running an event. While I am sure that some people got some value from this particular event, these lapses in logistics wasted my time (and my money).

Event planners pay attention to every last detail from food choice and availability to coat checks to bathroom locations. Event marketers, on the other hand, are focused on getting registrations. Both are EQUALLY important. **If you sacrifice planning for publicity, you will have a disorganized event. If you sacrifice publicity for planning, you will have a poorly attended event.** Either scenario will create PR headaches for you later on.

In my case, I will probably never attend this particular women's conference again. My perception of the event and its organizers is that they were more focused on the bottom line than on making sure everything went smoothly for the attendees.

If you are organizing an event, be sure you spend as much time planning it as you do publicizing it. And PS, event planning is a skill. Get qualified/experienced people to help plan your event. It does pay off.