



EVENT-PLANNING TIPS

Overview

The 50 Million Pound Challenge was started because obesity and heart disease are plaguing the African American community. It is important that everyone gets involved with The Challenge and does their part to "Give Up The Pounds, Not The Fight." There are many ways you can be a part of The Challenge. The first is to make sure you are signed up and that you log your weight regularly. The next way is to involve your community, via your own Challenge event.

Hosting your own Challenge event will aid in spreading the word about The Challenge and increasing registrants/participants. Together we can help everyone be healthier. There are many things to take into consideration when hosting your own event, and the information below provides some helpful hints to make your event a success.

Getting Ready

Before you get ready to plan your Challenge event, think about what you want to accomplish. Maybe your goal is to get a certain amount of registrants or to get other organizations involved with your event in order to spread the word even more. Setting some clear goals of what you want to accomplish will only help you make your Challenge event a success.

Partnerships

When planning your event, remember that first time events take a while to "catch on" with the general public; therefore, consider having your Challenge event in conjunction with another already established event (e.g., a health fair, church bazaar, etc.).

If you are creating an event (not in conjunction with another established event), consider having the event at a time that is most convenient for people. Weekend afternoons usually work best. Also, avoid scheduling the event on holidays. Remember, you want to get the best possible turnout, so you should not schedule your event against other already established events.

Location, Location, Location

Where you have your event is an integral part of its success. You might have a location in mind or access to great space, but below are some things to consider when you are looking for space:

- **Do not try to "create a venue"—hold events in popular areas of town that are known to the public for holding concerts or other popular local functions**
- **Areas with preexisting structures/services (stages, pavilions, tents, power, waste management, grandstands, etc.) help with decreasing setup time and logistics that will be needed for the event**
- **Choose areas with plenty of parking and access to public transportation so it is easy for participants to get to and from the event**
- **Keep security in mind by selecting areas that can be easily contained (overnight and during the event)**

Questions to Ask Your Venue Contact

Asking the right questions to the venue point-of-contact will alleviate a lot of problems and improve the relationship between you and the venue:

- **Are golf carts allowed? (Golf carts allow for easy transport of materials)**
- **Can we stake tents? (Sometimes venues do not let you stake tents as they can mess up the grass)**
- **Can we hang signage from existing structures?**
- **Are there restrictions on the type/quantity of signage used?**
- **When can we access the site for setup? (Minimum: 1 day prior, preferably 2 days)**
- **When must site be vacated for teardown?**
- **Where is the access path for courtesy cars, large trucks, trailers, etc.?**

Things You Might Need

- Tents
- Tables
- Tablecloths
- Pens
- Computers (to register attendees)
- Prizing/Games
- Signage to help advertise your event and location

Registration

Registration is the most important part of your event, as this is how people can get involved with The Challenge. So keep the following in mind:

- **Centrally locate an area for registration to maximize its visibility and accessibility**
- **If the site won't allow for the registration area to be centrally located, place it near the entrance to the site so that people coming into your event can't miss it**
- **When creating your site layout, factor in spacing for long lines or purchase stanchions**

Gotta Get the People There and Keep Them There

With any event, you have to get the people there. But once they are there, you must keep them there by entertaining them. It is always helpful to have some sort of hook or game to keep the crowd engaged. It might be a contest, game or just giving away free prizes, but you must have something compelling to keep people engaged.

Afterwards

Think about your event, and ask yourself what would you change, what would you do differently, what would you definitely do again. You should also think about other ways you can keep extending the message, "Give Up The Pounds, Not the Fight."