

# Planning Your Event

## Committees

Recruit a few friends, peers, family members, or community leaders and create a committee to help you steer and organize the event. No one person can single-handedly run a successful fundraiser; it takes a group of motivated individuals who are passionate about supporting your efforts.

- By getting more people involved, you will be creating more awareness of the event, have access to more networks, contacts, and opportunities, and prevent yourself from becoming overextended.
- By dividing and conquering, more attention and focus can be put into multiple areas of the event planning. A good committee will help you delegate tasks and save you time. Make sure to hold regular meetings to monitor the group's progress and communicate regularly between meetings.
- Most people are more than willing to help you organize your event and are just waiting for you to ask. Be bold and surround yourself with a great committee!



## Goals and Objectives

Determine the overall goals and objectives of the event

- What is the fundraising goal amount?
- Will the effort increase awareness among others of MS and the National MS Society? Will it draw attention to our cause?
- Will the event motivate others to take action? Will the event motivate others to become volunteers?

## Timing

Keep these things in mind when determining the time and date of your event:

- Choose a date far enough in advance to give you ample time to prepare.
- Consult with your [local chapter](#) and be aware of conflicting local and/or national events.
- Make sure to consider holidays and other busy times of the year for your attendees.
- Consider coordinating your event with a significant date or time of year.
- Consider hosting an event in March during MS Awareness Week!

Develop your timeline — create a specific timeline:

- Set realistic dates and goals for when you will accomplish each of your goals to make the event successful.
- Make sure to record the name of the committee members or volunteers responsible for meeting specific goals.
- Remember, that it is better to finish your to-do list earlier than later so make sure that you allow enough time to complete tasks well in advance of the event.

## Budget

- Set realistic goals for attendance, revenue, and expenses. Make sure to consider any up-front costs or significant fees.
- Estimate attendance, cost of decorations, refreshments, printing, mailing expenses, food/drink, location, giveaways, supplies etc.
- Determine what items can be donated for your event.
- Determine the overall cost per person and then determine the ticket prices to ensure attendance and a profit.
- Consider significant up-front costs and deposits that may be required to reserve the location, caterer, DJ, or other service provider.
- Have a plan for paying expenses until sponsorship money is received.
- Start to create incentives for committee members and volunteers to encourage tickets sales, secure donated items, and sponsorships.

## Make It Memorable

Most DIY activities are successful because they are unique and memorable beyond the day of the event. Ask yourself these questions:

- Will attire be casual or black tie?
- Will the event be held on a significant date or in a month that could help determine a theme?
- What will the flow of the event require — a speaker, video, live entertainment, someone living with MS to share their story, etc.?
- Will there be an auction, drawing, just socialization, etc.?



## Location

Find a venue that will help you meet your goals and objectives, is within your budget, and will give the event the atmosphere that you are looking for.

- Tap into the committee's or volunteers' networks.
- Explore opportunities to get facility fees fully or partially donated since your event is benefiting a charity.
- If appropriate for your specific event, contact local Lions Club, American Legion, town halls, galleries, schools, and places of worship for large spaces that may be available for little or no cost to you.
- Book the venue as far in advance as possible to reserve your desired date.
- If charging an admission fee, consider facilities that make it easy to control entrances/exits.
- Remember that outdoor venues can become expensive if additional lighting, tents, barricades, portable toilets, etc. are required.

## Getting the Word Out

There are a wide variety of ways to let people know about your activity — from flyers and brochures to email and Facebook. Be sure to utilize all available avenues to promote your event.

- Create your guest list. Exhaust all your networks in addition to volunteer networks.
- Create and send out 'Save the Date' postcards or save on postage and send emails or electronic invitations to those people that you absolutely want to be at your event.
- Create flyers, posters, invitations, and brochures for the event.
- Any honoree names should be prominent on the invitations and committee members should be listed in addition to a description of the Society, sponsors, and major donors.
- Send out invitations no later than two months prior to the event.
- Market event through social networks, online calendars, grassroots, etc.

## Day of the Event

All the prep-work is done, and it is the day of the big event. It is a good idea to create a checklist of things to do and vital items you will need.

- Schedule a meeting with your volunteers well in advance of guest arrival.
- Communicate any last-minute changes or additions to your volunteers. Identify and troubleshoot any problem areas.
- Ensure the event is running on time and that all speakers have arrived and understand their role for the event.
- Identify a designated volunteer, whom you trust and can be relied upon to make good decisions, to troubleshoot any problems or answer any questions that volunteers may have.
- Make sure to greet your guests - let the volunteers focus on their roles while you thank guests for attending and encourage them to participate in the event's activities.

## Post Event

**You pulled it off!** But there is still more to do:

- Thank attendees and volunteers through an email or personal note.
- Thank sponsors through a personal note.
- Host a wrap-up celebration with your volunteers where you can discuss what worked and what did not.
- Ensure all expenses are paid and that proper documentation is retained to support use of revenue.
- Organize the attendee list to make sure they are invited to next year's event.
- Submit proceeds to the Society.
- Be proud of the great work you did to help people affected by MS.

# Thank you!

