

# THE GUEST EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

CONSIDER AND PLAN FOR THESE ELEMENTS TO ENSURE AN A+ GUEST EXPERIENCE!

## EVENT DATE/DAY OF THE WEEK

- Consider your attendees/audience when making the determination about the event time of year and day of the week.
  - Are there certain times of the year when your attendees are the most/least busy? Check local school, civic, sports etc. calendars to ensure your event isn't competing with something else.
  - Consider if a weeknight or weekday is better for your crowd.

## VENUE SELECTION & TIMING

- Keep your audience in mind when planning event timing. Are people coming from work? What's a reasonable start time if so? If your event is on a weeknight, also make sure it doesn't go too late.
- Think about access to the venue. Is there ample inexpensive parking nearby? What's traffic typically like this time of day? Will you need to partner with a shuttle company?

## PRE-EVENT COMMUNICATION

- Once each attendee purchases a ticket, what comes next?
  - Let them know if they need a physical ticket, or if it's a ticketless event.
  - Stay in touch with attendees, especially when tickets are bought far in advance, by sending them teasers about the event. As new details get confirmed, send updates to keep them excited. Plan to send 2-4 pre-event updates, one every 3-4 weeks.
  - Send a final re-confirmation email with all event logistics information -10 days prior to the event date. Include information about the format/timing of the event, the location, instructions for guests with dietary restrictions, attire, directions, parking and any other pertinent details.

## DURING THE EVENT

### GUEST ARRIVAL

- Ensure that parking/rideshare drop off signage is plentiful and obvious.
- Have volunteers or staff greet and direct cars. If parking is far away, consider a shuttle or valet.
- Think through handicapped entry and include signage pointing out elevators, ramps, etc.
- If guests will be bringing bulky wraps, include a coat check.
- Don't overload guests with things to hold at registration. Place bid paddles on tables vs. handing them out at registration. Guests will want their hands free for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

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## DURING THE EVENT

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### GUEST ARRIVAL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- If the venue is large, give each guest a simple map at registration or place large maps throughout the space.
- If wifi is provided, include the wifi network and password on the registration tables.
- Identify a designated private mother's area for any nursing parents, and communicate the location of this to your registration team.
- Have a lost and found at registration.
- Stock registration with a first aid kit.
- Ensure that there are ample bars to serve guests upon entry. Consider a food station in addition to passed hors d'oeuvres. The station allows anyone who is really hungry to serve themselves vs. waiting for a tray to come around.

### DURING DINNER:

- Ensure that wait staff is prepared for any guests with special dietary needs.
- Ensure that wait staff offers beverages throughout the meal.
- Allow 20-30 minutes for guests to socialize at their tables and enjoy dinner.
- Start on time and stick to your timeline. Your guests won't be happy if dinner goes an hour or two long. Create a detailed run of show document for the stage presentation in advance and prep any speakers on their allotted time. Assign a stage manager to cue speakers and to signal them if they go over time.
- If a guest is celebrating a special occasion, do something a little extra special for them like a small gift at their seat, a birthday cake during dinner or a shout out from the MC.
- Consider including a slide of the silent auction winners in your presentation before the live auction begins. Guests will often want to know if they've won an item in the silent to help gauge what they'll bid on in the live.
- Consider delivering receipts/auction items tableside for any guests who pre-registered their credit card.
- Ensure that signage to the restroom is clear and plentiful.
- Be conscious of the temperature in the room and adjust as needed. If the event is outdoors, plan in advance and have fans/water misters/heaters/blankets available if possible.

### AT THE END OF THE EVENT:

- Have volunteers available to help guests with any questions as they exit (things like how to check out, where to pick up auction items, where to wait for a taxi, etc.)
- Depending on your theme and budget, consider sending guests home with a little treat - hot chocolate to enjoy in the taxi line or a baguette for breakfast the next morning, etc. This final touch can leave a lasting impression!

## POST-EVENT COMMUNICATION

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- Make sure you thank your guests in a timely manner (no later than 3-5 days post-event).
- Consider including a survey in your thank you email. Include sliding scale and free response questions, and request respondent's contact information (make that optional).
- Gather as much feedback as you can. Keep good wrap notes to help tweak any issues the following year.