

Master Your Event Strategy

SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS



A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR NONPROFIT LEADERS

EVENT STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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Event Strategies For Success

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An Important Note

The information and strategies provided in this guide, and on the Event Strategies For Success® website, are intended for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as a guarantee of future results.

While these suggestions have yielded positive outcomes for many organizations, they should be considered as part of a comprehensive fundraising strategy that is tailored to the specific needs and goals of each organization.

It is essential for organization leadership and board members to actively engage in the fundraising process and take ownership of their organization's financial success.

Implementing the suggestions provided can enhance your fundraising efforts, but it is not a substitute for strategic planning, dedicated leadership, and a commitment to achieving organizational goals.

Please seek legal counsel, or enlist the services of a professional accountant, if you have any specific questions or concerns regarding your organization's fundraising activities.

Event Strategies For Success®

Event Strategies For Success

Event Strategies For Success® partners with established regional nonprofits, cultural institutions, and membership organizations to design and lead signature fundraising events that raise \$500K-\$1M+ — with strategy, execution, and results you can repeat year after year.

Whether you're building your first major event or elevating one that's plateaued, we provide the strategic leadership that helps you move from 'figuring it out as we go' to 'we have a system that performs — consistently.

At the helm of Event Strategies For Success® is Monique Brizz-Walker, our founder and a seasoned expert in the field. With nearly three decades of experience collaborating with some of New York City's leading organizations. Her expertise lies in orchestrating events that not only engage prospects and donors but also foster strategic alliances with corporations and stakeholders, solidifying each organization's presence in the philanthropic arena.

We lead with quiet confidence, thoughtful partnership, and a commitment to making your event feel as good as it performs.

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A COMMON QUESTION - IS SPECIAL EVENT FUNDRAISING AN ART OR A SCIENCE?

When the public encounters special event fundraisers, who consistently achieve success, some say their success is due to the “IT” factor.

While our goal is to create “magical outcomes, special event fundraisers require focused attention.



HERE'S 'WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE'

When planning fundraising events, things are rarely as straightforward as they may appear.

My colleagues and I encounter challenges most people don't anticipate.

However, navigating these problems becomes more intuitive with experience.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS



Q: How does this work?

A: By asking, and answering, questions.

5 Top Questions to Consider:

1. WHY are you hosting this event?
2. CAN you afford it?
3. DO YOU have enough resources?
4. HOW will you engage current donors as you solicit new donors?
5. WHO will tell your hero stories?

#1 - WHY ARE YOU HOSTING THIS EVENT?



Money is important but your needs will extend BEYOND FUNDRAISING
#beyondfundraising.

5 Priorities to Consider:

1. Recruit board members & volunteers.
2. Cultivate donors.
3. Market the organization.
4. Refine your organization's mission.
5. Raise your organization's visibility.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Money is important but your needs will extend **BEYOND FUNDRAISING**
#beyondfundraising.

1. **Beyond raising money**, what relationships do we hope to build or deepen through this event? Consider both new connections and existing supporters.
2. **If this event were wildly successful**, what would be different about our organization six months later? Think beyond the dollar amount raised.
3. **Which of our stated goals** (#beyondfundraising) will actually move our mission forward, and which are "nice to haves"? Be honest about what truly matters.
4. **What would we do if** we had the money this event aims to raise **WITHOUT** hosting the event? This question reveals your true priorities and whether the event itself serves a purpose beyond revenue.

#2 - CAN YOU AFFORD TO HOST THIS EVENT?



Enthusiastic Yet Cautious!

Unforeseen costs can occur up BEFORE you secure a sponsor.

You MAY need to fund the EVENT in addition to your PROGRAMS.

Determining HOW you will do BOTH is critical BEFORE you undertake plan your event.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Financial readiness requires honest assessment:

1. **What is our realistic budget ceiling** for upfront costs, and what happens if we don't hit our fundraising goal? Have a clear contingency plan.
2. **Do we have the financial reserves** to cover unexpected expenses, or are we counting on sponsorships that haven't been confirmed yet? Hope is not a strategy.
3. **What other organizational priorities might suffer** if we redirect staff time and resources to this event? Consider opportunity costs, not just financial ones.
4. **Are we planning this event because it's the right strategic move**, or because it feels like "what nonprofits do"? Sometimes the most strategic decision is to invest in capacity-building instead.

#3 - DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES?



Human & Financial

If you (and your team) plan to manage and execute all aspects of the event

AND run your organization

You could become overwhelmed with the all details.

Your plans should include a resource team in order to stay on track and deliver a successful event.

YOUR RESOURCE TEAM MUST INCLUDE

PERSONS WHO ARE ABLE TO:

COORDINATE THE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN.

MANAGE THE HONOREES AND THEIR TEAMS.

COORDINATE & MANAGE ALL VENDORS

OVERSEE & ANTICIPATE EVENT LOGISTICS.

MOTIVATE BOARD MEMBERS AND TEAMS.

SERVE AS THE POINT PERSON FOR THE VENUE.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Capacity is about people, not just money:

1. **Who on our team has actually managed an event of this scale** before, and what support will they need? Don't assume expertise where it doesn't exist.
2. **If our Executive Director or Development Director left tomorrow**, could this event still happen? Overreliance on one person is a red flag.
3. **What will we stop doing—or do less of—to make room for this event?** Something has to give. Be intentional about what.
4. **Are we building sustainable systems**, or creating a one-time effort that will collapse when key people burn out? Think long-term capacity, not just this year's event.

#4 - INVOLVE EXISTING DONORS



Donors as Ambassadors

Committed donors can fill many roles:

1. Make Introductions to new supporters.
2. Serve on the event fundraising committee.
3. Agree to be an Honoree.

By engaging existing donors, you encourage them to activate their networks.

Their support could be the BOOST you need!

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Your existing community is your greatest asset:

1. **Which donors have we been meaning to engage** more deeply, and could this event be the excuse to finally do it? Be strategic about who you invite into leadership.
2. **What would make our most loyal supporters feel** truly seen and valued, not just solicited? Consider meaningful recognition beyond a name in a program.
3. **Are we asking our donors to activate their networks**, or just write bigger checks? The most valuable resource isn't always money—it's access and advocacy.
4. **How will we steward event attendees after the event ends?** One night does not build a community. Have a 90-day post-event engagement plan.

#5 - WHO WILL TELL YOUR HERO STORIES?



It's not all about you!

Events provide a platform for you to:

1. **SHARE** the impact of your work.
2. **AMPLIFY** your beneficiaries, who are the true “heroes” in your story.
3. **PREPARE** your “heroes” to pay it forward for others to come.

TREAT BENEFICIARIES “AKA HEROES” WITH CARE



Always applaud, never exploit!

1. **ALWAYS PRESENT** your heroes in the best possible light.
2. **EVERYONE** will be observe how you interact with your beneficiaries.
3. **UPLIFT, INSPIRE & EDUCATE** in all your interactions.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Storytelling is powerful—and carries responsibility:

1. **Whose stories are we centering, and who gets to decide how** those stories are told? Always involve the people whose stories you're sharing in the process.
2. **Are we showcasing impact in a way that honors dignity**, or are we inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes or savior narratives? Language matters. Framing matters.
3. **What would our beneficiaries say about how we talk about them** publicly? If you're not sure, ask them. And listen.
4. **How are we preparing our "heroes" to speak authentically**, not perform for donors? Provide coaching and support, not scripts. Let them own their truth.

Setting the Stage for Success



A QUICK REVIEW

1. WHY are you hosting this event?
2. CAN you afford to host this event?
3. DO YOU HAVE sufficient resources?
4. HOW WILL you engage your existing organizational supporters?
5. HOW will you tell your hero stories?

FROM FRAMEWORKS TO TRANSFORMATION

These strategic frameworks help you ask the right questions before you commit to a signature fundraising event. But asking the questions is just the beginning.

Events Reimagined: Transforming Fundraising Events Through Reflection & Strategic Alignment (available Fall 2026) is your comprehensive companion for designing events that serve your mission, honor your capacity, and build lasting community.

This isn't a prescriptive manual—it's a strategic tool built on a simple but powerful equation:

Reflection + Strategic Alignment = Impact

Whether you're planning your first cultivation dinner or your fifteenth annual gala, *Events Reimagined* invites you to pause, reflect, and make intentional decisions about your signature events.

What you'll find in the book:

- The Equity & Access Lens: a decision-making tool for inclusive, values-aligned events
- Five Strategic Insights: from maximizing impact to curating the right format
- Reflection questions and decision tools for every stage of event planning



Join the conversation at eventstrategies4success.com

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