

7 Steps to Project Planning

For an event to be successful in its finished product, you first need to be successful in planning the event from the start. Below are seven tips to help you start planning your program successfully.

Step 1 – Do your homework: evaluate the project up front.

Understand the turf. Check with advisors. Ask others. Research every possibility. Projects should either die early or have every chance for success.

Step 2 – Prepare yourself for a possible ordeal: identify hotspots and obstacles.

We cannot know everything about anything and never predict with certainty what tomorrow will bring. Planning is a matter of probabilities, which means sometimes what you plan works out and sometimes it won't. You will save yourself a lot of time and grief if you realize and plan for this sooner than later. Also realize that you can do things now to raise your probabilities for success.

Step 3 – Breaking it all down: into hunks, chunks, and bites.

Henry Ford said, "Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs." Break your project down into hunks, chunks and pieces – what is every piece of the program, from making flyers to taking out the trash at the end of the event. Chip away at your goal a little at a time.

Step 4 – Give it an order: what comes first on the to-do list?

Determine which hunks, chunks and pieces are to be done in what order. Make sure you're buying staples before putting up the flyers or that you order tablecloths in more than enough time.

Step 5 – Who's doing what?: determine who is responsible for what.

Determine who in a group is responsible for what. This is a great time to delegate – plus it adds buy-in from other members.

Step 6 – And the task will be completed when...?

Decide when each task needs to be done when – and stick to it! Use Forward and Backward Planning (start at the date of your program and work backwards with your calendar to find a start date for each part) to make sure you give yourself enough time before the program – and help you plan the program for following years. Hold yourself and others accountable!

Step 7 – Determine cost: account for money with a budget.

Account for all money to be spent. An alternate way of expressing your project-a credibility statement – shows the cosponsors that money was spent wisely and benefited the most number of participants.

Adapted from the NJIT Lisa A. Pierce Center for Student Leadership.