

Sage Steps in Evaluating and Celebrating Your Special Event

Step 1: As soon as possible following the event, invite staff and volunteers involved with the event to come together to celebrate and evaluate the event.

Step 2: Thank volunteers with a small gift or inexpensive gift basket. It's the thought that counts!

Step 3: Spend time hearing everyone's perspectives on their experience of the event. Give everyone a chance to speak. Have someone facilitate the conversation and record feedback. The facilitator should be someone other than the lead event organizer.

Step 4: Document the following:

- What went well?
- What could be improved if we do the event again?
- Metrics for this year's event compared to last year's event
 - Metrics should be in alignment with your event and fundraising goals:
 - # of attendees (scale/volume)
 - net amount raised that includes the cost of staff time, shared costs (those costs shared across several programs), and administrative costs
 - # of new people added to the database (did we expand our community?)
- Did we stay on track with our plan and timeline? What happened when?
- Did we effectively share our mission message, that is, did we incorporate opportunities to educate event attendees about our work? (depth)

Step 5: Visit with a major donor or two to learn their perspective about the event and thank them for attending. Have questions ready such as, "What did you like about the event? What would you recommend we do differently in the future? Would you attend this event again? Would you invite friends or co-workers to attend? etc.

Step 6: Answer the BIG QUESTION: Should we do this event again?

If the answer is "yes," explore when you should begin planning to make next year's event even bigger and better.

Step 7: Send thank you letters with impact statements to sponsors, major participants, volunteers, etc. including funding goals met, plans for the funds raised, and plans for the event in the future.