



## **National Philanthropy Day®**

### **10 Key Things to Remember When You're Starting A National Philanthropy Day® Event**

**1) Keep the event manageable and under control.**

Just as with any fundraising event, a small event that generates positive buzz is much better than a larger event that is not managed well or does not come off quite right. Even a small event will involve a significant number of attendees and lots of details. Keep attendance limited, thus ensuring people will want to participate next year, and don't develop a long program—just one or two awards is sufficient.

**2) The more people involved in planning, the more interest and participation.**

This is always true for any NPD event, but especially for chapters just starting their celebration. Planning an NPD event should be the job of several people, not just one, and ideally a full committee if possible. This structure will not only help ease the burden of responsibilities on any one person, but will ensure more voices and perspectives are heard. In addition, the more people involved, the more connections into the community that members can use for inviting people to the event. Keeping chapter membership updated on the event is also crucial. The chapter should position the first couple of NPD events as critical membership-building and public relations activities that all members should attend.

**3) Your event may not always be a money maker.**

From informal surveys that AFP has conducted, only about half of AFP chapters make significant amounts of revenue from their NPD events. A majority of chapters make money on their event, but sometimes the margin is close depending on the particular year, the economy and other factors. Given the amount of work and coordination required to put on an NPD event, chapters should not view NPD as a panacea for any funding issues, but as a way of growing awareness of the importance of philanthropy and fundraising and increasing the visibility of the chapter.

**4) Sponsors are critical to generating revenue.**

The one common characteristic that most NPD events which make significant money have is that the chapters have developed and cultivated sponsors for the events. This has become such an important aspect of NPD for most chapters that AFP has developed guidance and obtained samples from chapters. You can find them in the NPD-Chapter Information of the AFP website.

**5) Luncheons and breakfasts are the way to go.**

Very few chapters hold dinner events anymore. Most have found that luncheons or breakfast events have led to increased attendance and are more convenient for most attendees. In addition, having a breakfast or lunch forces the chapter to ensure that the celebration runs on schedule.

**6) Carefully consider your honoree.**

One of the biggest factors in determining attendance, especially at events that are just getting started, is whom the chapter is honoring. It is recommended that chapters choose honorees (assuming awards and honors are part of the event) that are very well known in the community so that many people will want to attend. For the first couple of years, the chapter may not wish to conduct an official awards program but rather have the board select a couple of honorees that will attract attendees. Then, after the NPD event has been established, the chapter can begin an official awards program and open up submissions from members and the public.

**7) Start early.**

Most chapters begin their NPD planning in January or February. This is important not only to select an appropriate venue, but to ensure there is enough time for marketing and other aspects of the event.

**8) Keep records of all activities, prepare final report and pass on to future committee members.**

Many NPD chairs keep a notebook of everything they work on regarding the event, regardless of what it is or what it covers. That notebook is then passed on to the next NPD chair. Included in the materials should be a short overview of key issues and challenges that the chair faced, as well as key reminders.

**9) Plan and script everything.**

Nothing is too small that it should not be written down and checked off a list. Especially as the event approaches, chapters will appreciate having a checklist of items to ensure they haven't missed anything. Samples of some chapter timelines for their NPD events are available here online. Chapters should also script every part of the program to ensure it does not run over. While not everything can be planned (acceptance speeches, for example), give each aspect of the program plenty of time. It's better to end early than late.

**10) Get out invitations early. Follow up appropriately.**

The competition for the charitable dollar has never been greater. Similarly, the competition for events, especially charitable events, has never been greater either. Get invitations out as early as possible so attendees can mark their calendars. An email or other follow-up later in the year may also be appreciated.