

Starting A Dance From vision to reality

Class Period 1: Sat., 9:00-9:50 -- 50 minutes

- Identify management model – non-profit (board), benevolent dictator; select committee, other?
- Think intentionally about your goals and vision, and try to write a short vision statement.
- Design: Describe the general plan for the event. Follow the questions below to assist you in your strategic planning and in the development of a plan or proposal.

What is the purpose of your event?

- Describe the proposed dance, including its history and origins and any connection or history it may have in your area.
 - i. What is the dance style?
 - ii. What is the level – will there be instruction?
- How does it support the vision/mission of your organization?
- Does it duplicate any other current area dances?
- Is the planning complete and is there enough lead time to plan and capture an audience?

Who are the key organizers? (Name/address/phone # of each). If the dance is being sponsored by an organization, provide the name, legal status, and description of the organization. Include the names of directors and officers, a balance sheet, insurance(s) carried, and any other events it sponsors if applicable.

Date & Time

- What is the proposed frequency and duration of the dance?
- What time and day of the week will it be held?
- Have you checked with other dance calendars for compatibility or conflicts?
- Is this a one-time event or a recurring event?

Target audience

- Who is the target audience?
- How many other dance events are held in your area that target the same participants? Your dance will likely have more potential the less it competes with other area dances. Consider doing a short community poll or questionnaire to gauge interest.
- Is the event inclusive (nondiscriminatory of sex, religion, race, age, disability or political views)?
- Do you hope for gender balance?

Location - Where is it to be held? Describe the facility and location:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| - Location? | - Suitability of floor? | - Any restrictions on use of the property? |
| - Availability confirmed/Reservations made? | - Stage? | - If needed, is food allowed? |
| - Date and time? | - Electricity? | - Kitchen facilities? |
| - Capacity -- fire codes for crowd size? | - Restroom accessibility appropriate for expected group? | - Smoking and drinking restrictions? |
| - Seating? | - Is the site handicap accessible and fire code compliant? | |
| - Parking? | | |

Leave the site of the event better than you found it. From a professional, community, and environmental standpoint, it will leave an impression.

What activities will be included in your event?

- Other than dance? _____
- What potential liability issues might there be?
- Children's activities?

Talent

- What sort of dance/music are you having?
- Have you booked the band?
- Caller?
- What is the projected compensation?

Sound

- What do you need in the way of amplification?
- Do you have sound equipment?
- Sound personnel?
- What is the expected pay for sound personnel?

Food - Will there be meals or refreshments?

- Potluck? Prepared? Catered?
- Sanitation? Refrigeration?
- Serving? Tables? Dishes/flatware?
- Cleanup?
- Provisions for special diets? (wheat allergy, vegetarian, etc.)

Marketing

- How are you handling publicity? Website? Newspaper? Flyer? Other?

Decorations

- Do you plan to decorate?
- Will it comply with fire codes?
- Budget?
- Volunteers to help?

Volunteers - How will you be using and rewarding volunteerism?

- Registration?
- Decoration?
- Food?
- Recycling/trash?
- Day-of help?
- Floor maintenance?
- Clean-up?

Evaluation - How will you evaluate the success of the event?

- Feedback forms for participants? (Include a sample)
- Budget reconciliation: Were you able to stay within your budget?
- Staff evaluation of event

Plan to prepare a final report with evaluation of the event, final budget information, and comparison to the original plan.

BUDGET

Project a budget that includes all expenses, income, hidden expenses, taxes, etc., to the best of your knowledge. See the list below as a guide in planning this. Include a projection of varying headcounts for admission – i.e., if you have 50 or 100 or 200 people, and how that would impact the plan for expenses. Remember to figure in your volunteers as non paid participants and how that affects things like the cost of food, rentals, and materials AND how they are not adding to the revenue coming in. Show projected income over time and anticipated break-even points. What attendance levels will be required to make your dance self-sustaining? See attached sample budget spreadsheet.

Expenses:

- ___ Band
- ___ Caller
- ___ Hall Rental
- ___ Sound
- ___ Advertisements
- ___ Insurance
- ___ Food
- ___ Supplies
- ___ Decorations
- ___ Security
- ___ Child Care
- ___ T-shirts, other items for sale

Revenue:

- ___ Price per advance ticket x projected # purchased
- ___ Price per ticket @ door x projected # purchased
- ___ Projected financial assistance
- ___ Other income
- ___ Food sales
- ___ T-shirt or other sales
- ___ grant funds

After the event, do a final report, either formally or informally, summarizing the following:

- 1) Attendance figures
- 2) Final budget figures
- 3) Evaluation results
 - a) participants – at least 25 respondents
 - b) committee members' feedback
- 4) Based on projections and outcomes, what have we learned, ie:
 - a) what worked well and needs to be repeated in future events?
 - b) what did not work well and need adjustment in events of the future?

Committee Tasks:

Head Organizer – the ultimate person in charge

- Financial responsibility for the dance:
 - Count money at the end of the evening and pay performers, sound-person, and the hall.
 - Keep documentation of revenue and payments for each event.
 - Reimburse volunteers as needed for expenses.
 - Manage and document any money that is kept from revenue to pay for misc. expenses. If the cash flow becomes high enough, it could become a tax liability for someone, and the event may need to pay event taxes. If needed, find a non-profit umbrella organization to house your event, or eventually incorporate as a separate non-profit. May want to someday open a checking account for the dance.
- Note: CDSS has a mini-grants program to support new dances. See “Leveraging your resources”.

Liaison with the Hall (might make sense for this to also be the Head Organizer’s responsibility).

- Contact person with the venue.
- Negotiate payment for hall.
- Negotiate all terms of use – opening and closing procedures (create checklists for openers and closers), what you’re allowed to use, what you’re allowed to bring in, what you’re allowed to leave there, condition of hall upon arriving and departing, etc.
- Re-confirm use of the hall for each up-coming season, and re-confirm all terms of use
- Keeper of the key. Has been trained in unlocking and locking procedures, including disarming and arming the alarm. The venue rep knows this person, knows they have the key, and trusts them with this. This might be delegated to the Opening and Closing chairpersons (see below).
- Maintain contact info for the venue – maintenance folks, emergency folks, booking contact, etc.
- Note any special circumstances. e.g., if you use a church, will there be seasonal obstacles at Christmas and Easter time?

Booking

- Booking the bands, caller, and sound person for each dance, usually 4 or 5 months at a time (Sept. – Dec., Jan. – May, Jun - Aug). Confirms dates, times, and payment arrangement.

Door/Admission

- Schedule one or several people to take turns staffing the admission table.
- Store and bring all the stuff for the admission table: cash box, sign displaying admission rates, name tags & markers, business cards and/or generic flyers to promote the dance, e-mail sign-up sheet.
- Re-stock \$50 in change: Cash box starts with \$50 for change. At the end of the night, \$50 should be kept back before counting total revenue. This \$50 may need to be converted back into ones and fives for the next dance.

Publicity

- Create and update flyers for the next dance.
- Recruit and manage any volunteers who will help distribute flyers, at schools, churches, community centers, etc.
- Mail PDFs of the flyer to distribution volunteers, for them to print and distribute as agreed OR get a batch copied and mail small batches of flyers to volunteers as needed/agreed.
- Update the website for the next dance. (Maybe have a separate web-master).
- Send event info each month to local papers, radio stations, etc. to be included in community calendars and other event listings. Keep master list of media contacts for this purpose. Establishing a relationship with some individual at each publication or station is best; better than sending to a generic e-mail such as “events@wxyz.com”.
- Send event info to other dance organizations to be included in their listings, newsletter, etc. Ask to be linked on their websites.
- Maintain and update the e-mail list. This includes adding new sign-ups after each dance, and deleting e-mails that bounce. Also on Facebook. Decide how much you can do.
- Send reminder e-mails to the e-mail list two weeks before the next dance, and two or three days before each dance.
- Keep a list of other individuals with e-mails lists of their own, such as home-school networks, and e-mail event notices. Send e-mail notices of upcoming dances to these folks for them to forward to their lists.

Opening

- Oversee the opening procedures as agreed upon with the Hall. (Need to work with the Hall Liaison on this – determine who will be the keeper of the key and arrive early to unlock the building).
- Carry out or oversee delegation of set-up needs for the dance:
 - Turning on all lights
 - Folding and storing tables and chairs
 - Sweeping the floor as needed
 - Setting up the admission table (i.e., the physical table and chairs; Admission Chair should bring all the stuff and set up the operations of the admission table).
 - Greeting sound-person, musicians, and callers, and attending to any needs they may have.
 - Making sure restrooms have supplies and look acceptable.

Closing

- Oversee the closing procedures as agreed upon with the Hall. (Need to work with the Hall Liaison on this – determine who will be the keeper of the key and be the last one out to alarm and lock the building).
- Get closing checklist from the Hall Liaison – reconfirm each season and update checklist as needed.

Hospitality

- Store and bring 5-gallon jug for water; and perhaps a 2nd jug for lemonade if willing to provide it.
- Store and bring reusable cups and then take them home and wash them for next time OR purchase and bring disposable cups each month.
- Store and bring markers and tape to label cups (so kids don't use 5 cups in one night).
- Store and bring any signs for the refreshments table.
- If you have the time and passion: negotiate any deals you can with local eateries for them to donate some goodies for the dance. In turn, acknowledged them at the dance and encourage dancers to patronize their business.
- Manage any additional refreshments desired – either bringing stuff, or managing logistics for potluck contributions. Plates, napkins, hand sanitizer, serving utensils, etc.
- Lead clean-up of refreshments at the end. Make sure any trash with food is tightly tied and disposed outside in tight receptacles so you don't attract bugs or rodents over the weekend.

The above material is a combination of work produced by the Old Farmer's Ball, Asheville, NC, as guidelines for OFB sponsored events and applications for OFB mini-grant funding, and an outline produced by the Asheville Area Family Dance (Diane Silver).