

SU event planning timeline

pre-event planning

6–12 months before

detailed planning

4–6 months before

intermediate planning

2–3 months before

final preparations

1 month before

1 Create a Budget

Before you start your planning, it is always good to have the budget in place. This is a brief idea of what you need to think about:

- **Estimate expenses:** venue, catering, entertainment, marketing, staff, etc.
- **Forecast income:** ticket sales, sponsorships, auctions, donations.
- **Budget Example:** Sample Budget for Gala Dinner

2 Define Objectives and Goals

- Set clear fundraising goals.
- Identify key messages and themes.
- Identify **keynote speaker** (when deciding on your speaker, we encourage you to have someone who can connect with SU and our vision and mission. Someone who has been involved somehow works best. When briefing them, ensure you ask them to speak into SU)
 - Invite keynote speaker.
 - Ask for their media package for advertising.

3 Form a Planning Committee

- **Assign roles:** Chairperson, Sponsorship Coordinator, Marketing Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, etc.

4 Select a Date

- Consider other local events, holidays, and availability of key attendees.

5 Choose a Venue

- Book a venue that fits the event size and theme.
- Consider logistics: parking, accessibility, capacity, facilities.

6 Develop a Fundraising Plan

- Plan for silent and live auctions, raffles, donations, and sponsorship packages.
- Create a list of potential sponsors and donors.

7 Create an Event Program

- Plan the event timeline: arrival, reception, dinner, entertainment, speeches, auctions.
- Book MC and entertainment.

8 Catering Arrangements

- Select a catering service.
- Plan the menu, considering dietary restrictions.

8 Marketing and Promotion

- Design and send out save-the-date invitations.
- Develop marketing materials: flyers, posters, social media posts.
- Create an event website or page for ticket sales and information.

9 Ticket Sales (if you choose to include an admission charge)

- Set ticket prices inline with the Budget.
- Set up an online ticketing system.

10 Speaker

- Contact and brief the speaker with copy/content for the night. Ensure they are fully aware of how you would like them to speak towards the vision and mission of what the night is all about.
- Book any accommodation and flights
- Organise transport and a driver if required.
- Send them a full itinerary.

11 Secure Sponsorships

- Contact potential sponsors.
- Finalise sponsorship agreements.

12 Logistics Planning

- Arrange transportation and parking.
- Book any necessary rentals: tables, chairs, AV equipment.

13 Decor and Theme

- Plan event decor according to the theme.
- Order necessary decorations.

14 Auction Items (if required)

- Design and send out save-the-date Solicit and collect auction items.
- Organise and catalogue items for the auction.

15 Volunteer Coordination

- Recruit and assign tasks to volunteers.
- Schedule volunteer training and briefings.

16 Send Invitations

- Send formal invitations.
- Follow up with invitees who have not responded.

17 Confirm Arrangements

- Confirm all bookings: venue, catering, entertainment, speakers.
- Finalise the event program and script.

18 Prepare Materials

- Print programs, place cards, and signage.
- Prepare auction bid sheets and donation forms.

19 Run Through Event

- Conduct a full event run-through with key staff and volunteers.
- Confirm roles and responsibilities.

SU event planning timeline

event week



event day

post-event

ongoing

20 Final Checks

- Confirm guest count with caterer.
- Finalise seating arrangements.
- Ensure all materials and equipment are ready.

21 Setup

- Decorate venue.
- Set up registration, auction, and donation areas.

22 Staff Briefing

- Conduct a final briefing with staff and volunteers.
- Review the event timeline and responsibilities.

23 Execution

- Oversee event setup.
- Manage the registration and guest check-in process.
- Coordinate the event timeline and program flow.
- Ensure auctions and fundraising activities run smoothly.

24 Thank Yous

- Send thank you notes to sponsors, donors, volunteers, and attendees.
- Publicly acknowledge contributions through social media and event communications

25 Review and Report

- Evaluate the event: what worked, what didn't.
- Prepare a final report including financials, feedback, and recommendations for future events.

26 Follow Up

- Maintain communication with donors and sponsors.
- Start planning for the next event based on lessons learned.