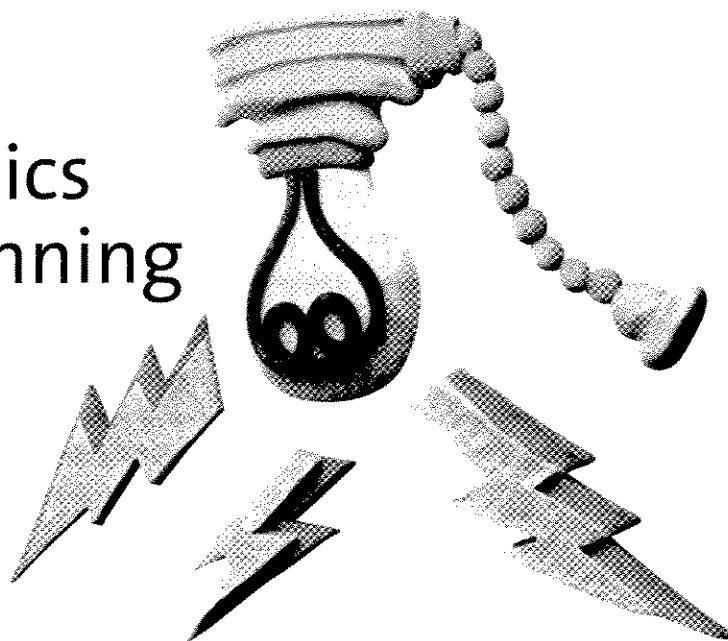


Back to the Basics of Program Planning

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Campus programming runs the gamut from working with associate members to book acts, attractions and speakers to planning programs ourselves completely from scratch. No matter what route we take in producing a program, it is imperative to remember the basics of programming to make sure we are on the right track and take care of all essential details. Sometimes, though, we overlook the basics and that's where our events start to go awry.

What are the basics of programming and how can we be sure to stay on track? Journalists follow the “Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?” rule in constructing news articles. However, this fundamental concept also applies to programming.

Who?

It may seem obvious, but when planning an event it's important to determine your target audience. While this is apparent to many, sometimes we lose sight of exactly who our programming is designed to reach. This is the time the committee needs to figure out exactly who your programs are geared to attract. Are you offering a campus-wide program for students and the rest of the college community? Or, are you planning an event for seniors—perhaps a 21-plus event—or something that is designed to help students to prepare for life after graduation? Maybe your event is for first-year students who are trying to get adjusted to the new realities of living away from home? It could be a commuter-focused program, too. **Who?** is an important question to ask, as it will help determine what type of program you are planning, how to promote it and where to hold it.

What?

What is your program going to be? Now that you've decided who you are trying to reach, what are you going to program for them? Sometimes the **What?** can come before the **Who?** and often, they may be discovered simultaneously.

When? and Where?

If you are planning an event from scratch, you can probably schedule it on any available date. However, if you are booking an attraction through an agent, you might be tied to a specific date or range of dates.

When picking a date, consult your advisor and your campus calendar. Make sure you aren't putting your