

## Be Empowered to Plan your own Events (& Why Public Relations is the Best Thing Ever)!

*“How to Get 300 People at Your Event” | by Suzanne Fletcher - April 27, 2022*

- *Please don't be discouraged by the class title “How to Get 300 People at Your Event.”*
- Events are so important, and you CAN pull them off on your own.
- With 30 guests, that is a HUGE success!!
- It's **not** about the quantity of people, but the **quality** of the experience and relationship growth/value between you and your sphere.
- Regardless of the exact outcome, especially as you're getting started (if this is something you want to pursue), it is important to simply do it, give it a try, and then give yourself grace, and room to grow and improve, as needed.
- **Here are some steps to help you plan your own Events...**
  - You CAN hire a planner to do this, but also know it's worthy to try planning it hands-on for your first event (and some subsequent ones), if possible.
- **What's the goal here?** Your Event needs to be something that other people want to go to, regardless of Real Estate.
  - But then, **because of your great PR**, they will also want to go *because of you* (and they'll come to know you as the Real Estate expert in their life).
  - *You want people to say “Agent X/Team X is hosting an Event... I HAVE to go, and bring my friends and family.”*
- **MY** Goal is to empower you to get started planning events for your sphere, with small steps.
- **[BEFORE] BRAINSTORMING / PRE-PLANNING:**
  - *As we know, each sphere is so different, [community over competition, there's enough for everyone] so much of this depends on you and your unique clients!*
    - *And, we all know that it might be a tad simpler getting that first deal with a client, **but** the 2nd, 3rd, 4th transaction, etc. may present more of a challenge – because it requires you to maintain relationship(s) with them, AND stay top of mind in their world when it comes to Real Estate Agents, typically over many years.*
  - When you're making your normal weekly calls, **ask clients what Events they'd like to see.** *Tell them you want to provide an Event they are excited about.*
    - This could also come in the form of an **EVENT SURVEY.**
    - Especially, If you already have a specific Event in mind, you could get feedback and ask questions in a survey like “What food, entertainment, time of year, do you want?” and give a couple options for each.
    - Once you've done an Event or two, you can compile a specific database of “Clients Who Have RSVPed to Past Events...”

- ...and you can send those people a Survey saying “You’re receiving this because you’re RSVPed to our past Events, and we’d love your input for our next one!”
- **Example:** Prior to planning our Summer 2019 Movie Event, I did an email survey with our clients asking which Summer 2019 movie they’d most want to see, and we screened the two top-voted ones at our Movie Theater Event at Regal Cinema Green Hills for our Event. It helps clients feel involved and that their opinion matters!
  - **Google Forms** is great for surveys like this (and for RSVPs)! Easy to use, free, and fully customizable:  
<http://forms.google.com/>
- **CONSIDER: Who do you want to INVITE?** (certain neighborhood(s), block party on your street, new clients, clients of 5+ years, luxury, clients who’ve referred people to you, or EVERYONE (this is what my Team has done, and it’s been great for us) etc.)
  - You can choose, and this changes what your Event may be like.
  - My Team has chosen to only invite INTERNALLY through calls and Email Marketing to our Client Database, and this has worked well for us (*instead of also promoting it to EVERYONE on social media*).
  - Inviting *internally only* (instead of on social media) helps to enhance the personal/relational aspect, and enforce the CLIENT Appreciation factor of the Event.
  - **Quality over quantity.** Personal invites mean a lot more than a Facebook Event invite, an email blast, etc.
  - **Example:** When it came time to invite clients to our last Event, my Agents were determined to invite their entire database. As they went down their lists, there were a couple clients here and there that they were eager to skip over, but they decided to call anyway. They were surprised by the good experience, and even got some appointments, and a listing and buyer out of it! ***Just from calling to invite people to the Event...Imagine the possibilities!***
    - *These efforts were in addition to the mass email & text invites we did for our database, so it was an awesome and personal supplemental touch of contact from the individual Agents to their clients/friends.*

- **USEFUL TOOLS FOR PRE-PLANNING & PLANNING:**

- If y'all aren't already using Google Drive for your business, that's going to change when you plan your Event! ;)

- **GOOGLE DRIVE IS YOUR FRIEND!**

- All of you already have a KW® Gmail address (or you may have your own Business Gmail Account, my Team does), so therefore, you have access to Google Drive.
- Google Sheets to create your Event Expenses Spreadsheet (we will touch on that more soon).
- Google Forms to create your survey asking clients about an Event they'd like to see, etc.
- Google Forms to create the RSVP form for your Event, (and in turn, that creates a back-end Google Sheets spreadsheet where you can see all responses laid out nicely for your reference).
- **Summary:**
  - Google Sheets for Expense Sheet/Budget
  - Google Sheets for Co-Sponsor Invoices
  - Google Forms for Pre-Event Survey & RSVP
  - Tags/Labels in your Email Inbox
  - Google Docs for To-Do List/Schedule + MORE
    - *Auto-saves, & access from ANYWHERE!*

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- **TIMELINE:**

- Consider your Event planning timeline (maybe you get feedback about this in your prelim client Event survey, which is awesome).
- **Ask yourself these questions:**
  - What time of year could I personally host this Event (maybe you have x number of closings one month, or your relative is getting married another month, so you may need to rule those out)?
  - In addition to that, what time of year could this Event be well-attended by your unique clients?
  - Brainstorm about your sphere, and what type of Event you think could benefit your clients?

- **EXAMPLE:** For us, a lot of our clients have kids, and we decided that Breakfast with Santa would be a great and valuable Event for them, vs. going to the mall and waiting for Santa photos, etc.
  - Ideally you need at least 6 weeks to call your clients, invite them to the Event, as well as digitally Market your Event to them.
  - *Therefore*, you need at least a several MORE weeks (sometimes longer depending on what kind of Venue you may need to book in advance) prior to that to lock in details like date, time, place, sponsors, food, rentals, entertainment, items-of-value handouts (cups, t-shirts, fun newsletter), etc.
  - Once you establish your date, you can promote it a few extra weeks in advance as a “save-the-date,” so your clients can mark their calendars and get excited about it!
  
- **Consider who you want to INVITE?** (certain neighborhood, block party on your street, new clients, clients of 5+ years, clients who’ve referred people to you, luxury clients, etc. or EVERYONE? (This is what my Team has done [invited our whole database/sphere], and it’s been great for us).
  - You can choose, and this changes what your event may be like.
  - My Team has chosen to only invite INTERNALLY through calls and Email Marketing to our Client Database, and this has worked well for us.
  - It helps to promote the relational aspect, and enforce the CLIENT Appreciation factor of the Event.
  - Quality over quantity. Personal invites mean more than a Facebook Event invite, etc.
  
- **BUDGET:** What are you able to spend on this Event? Map it out using an Event Expenses Spreadsheet.
  - Can do Estimated vs. Actual (spreadsheet; *Google Sheets*)
  - Keep records of all invoices and receipts (for reference, and for if you’re splitting with co-sponsors); use Gmail tags/labels to help with this.
  - If you don’t know what things may cost, start with getting some quotes from a few Vendors.
  - Think of whatever you spend as being an **investment** because the great Event that you plan is going to bring you business/nurture your sphere! ;)

- **CO-SPONSORS:** Helps alleviate some burden relating to your Event cost.
  - Ask some Vendors you work with/refer regularly if they'd be interested in/willing to co-sponsor your Event.
  - **EXAMPLE:** At our Events, we've had an Insurance Agent, Title Company, Lender, Home Warranty Company, and Home Inspector co-sponsor (sometimes we've had 2, 3, 4, or 5 total co-sponsors), and it's been very helpful and beneficial to all groups involved.
  - Let them know what the estimated split of the cost would be for them.
  - Let them know how their business will be hi-lighted before and during your Event, from this sponsorship.
    - **Examples:**
      - You'll link them in all email blasts and social media posts, citing them as a Co-Sponsor.
      - You'll provide a special "sponsored by" table at the Event for them to hand out items-of-value they want to give to guests.
      - They'll be able to invite their clients, friends and family to attend the Event also.
      - Emphasize how it's an opportunity for them to also meet potential new clients, generate more business for themselves, etc.
  
- **VENUE:**
  - Depending on the Event you want to host and the amount of people you're inviting, there are many possibilities for venues in the area.
  - As you research this more with whatever is in your area/budget, you'll learn that venues have certain requirements, like preferred caterers, minimum spends on food, and things like that, etc., as well as some included amenities, so those things can all factor into your decision.
  - Research/visit Venue options; *[some Venues provide event planning services, or have other services included in their Event Packages, etc.]*
  
  - **VENUE IDEAS:**
    - Block party in your neighborhood
    - Public Park
    - Sporting Event
    - Movie Theater
    - Governor's Mansion
    - Listening Room

- Private Room at a restaurant
  - Music Venue
  - Museum / Zoo
  - Brewery / Winery (Wine Night)
  - Tons of Event-specific venues (like Ruby, Clementine, etc.)
- **DECOR / RENTALS**: Varies based on your Event, and your Venue's amenities.
- Do you need chairs, tables, table linens?
  - Tent(s) for an outdoor Event?
  - Serving dishes?
  - Sound system?
  - Projector?
  - Lighting?
  - Flowers?
  - Balloons at the entrance?
    - I love **Liberty Party Rental** ([libertypartyrental.com](http://libertypartyrental.com)) & **Art Pancake Party Rentals** (<http://artpancakeparty.com/>)
- **ENTERTAINMENT / ACTIVITIES**: Depending on your Event, there are tons of possibilities for this as well.
- **Professional Photographer/Videographer!!**
    - We love **Mandy Liz** (<https://mandyliz.com>), **Acacia Evans** (<https://www.acaciaevans.com>), and **Darcy Ferris** (<https://darcyferris.com>)
  - Live Music
  - Face Paint / Coloring for Kids
  - Games
  - Sports
  - Silent Auction
  - Movie
  - Photo Booth
  - Appetizers / Meal / Desserts / Drinks
  - Wine / Beer Tasting
  - **ITEMS OF VALUE** – Provide a fun newsletter handout (something fun that people can also keep to reference your business info), a cup with your brand logo on it to hand out drinks, koozie, t-shirts, a giveaway drawing for a gift card, spa day, etc.

- **FOOD / DRINK:** This totally depends on the vibe of your Event, too.
  - Food trucks for an outdoor picnic Event
  - Breakfast with Santa ;)
  - Popcorn and Coke for a movie Event
  - Passed hors d'oeuvres at a songwriters night
  - Concessions voucher at the Sounds game
  
- **ACCESSIBILITY / VISIBILITY:**
  - You want your Event ideally to be as simple and accessible as possible for your clients and their friends/families to attend.
    - **EXAMPLE:** When I was scouting potential new venues for our 3rd Annual Breakfast with Santa for December 2020, some venues I toured or researched had little to no parking, or they'd require guests to valet at a nearby hotel and walk or Uber/Lyft over, and that was a big **NO** for us...considering how we hope to have 600+ clients attend again, and this is the opposite of accessible.
  - Consider parking, entrance area, outdoor pointer signs on surrounding streets to guide people to the entrance/parking, safety, etc.
  - Pointer signs indicating where bathrooms are, etc.
  - Make things *clear and simple* for guests.
  - ...Also **send a “See you at \_\_\_ Event” Email** to those who RSVPed (either via email or text).
    - A few days before the Event
    - Reiterate parking / entry details.
    - Add other necessary info, as needed (check-in process, etc.)
    - **Mass texting service:** <https://simpletexting.com/>
  
- **BRANDING YOUR EVENT:**
  - Once you establish the date and other Event details, you can start ***PRE-Marketing your Event*** to clients on your daily/weekly calls (relates to the idea of PR being foundational, and Marketing/advertising/branding being supplemental).
  - Let them know they'll receive an email blast with more details about it soon. This promotes memory, brand recognition, and gets them excited for your Event!
  - Create a memorable **design/BRAND** for your Event, and use these elements throughout the promotions for your Event (especially if they become an annual thing).

- You can outsource **Invitation graphic designs** like this from a freelance designer, buy a customizable one online from a site like Etsy or Minted, make your own in Canva (or another graphic design program - I use Adobe Illustrator), or use templates inside KW® Command, etc.

- **Event Schedule + To-Do List**

- Create a Site Plan/Layout
- Create an Arrival Schedule with Contact information of all Vendors & Team Members
- Create a To-Do List of things to be done for setup and teardown
- DELEGATE to Team Members & Intern(s); *ask for help when needed!!*

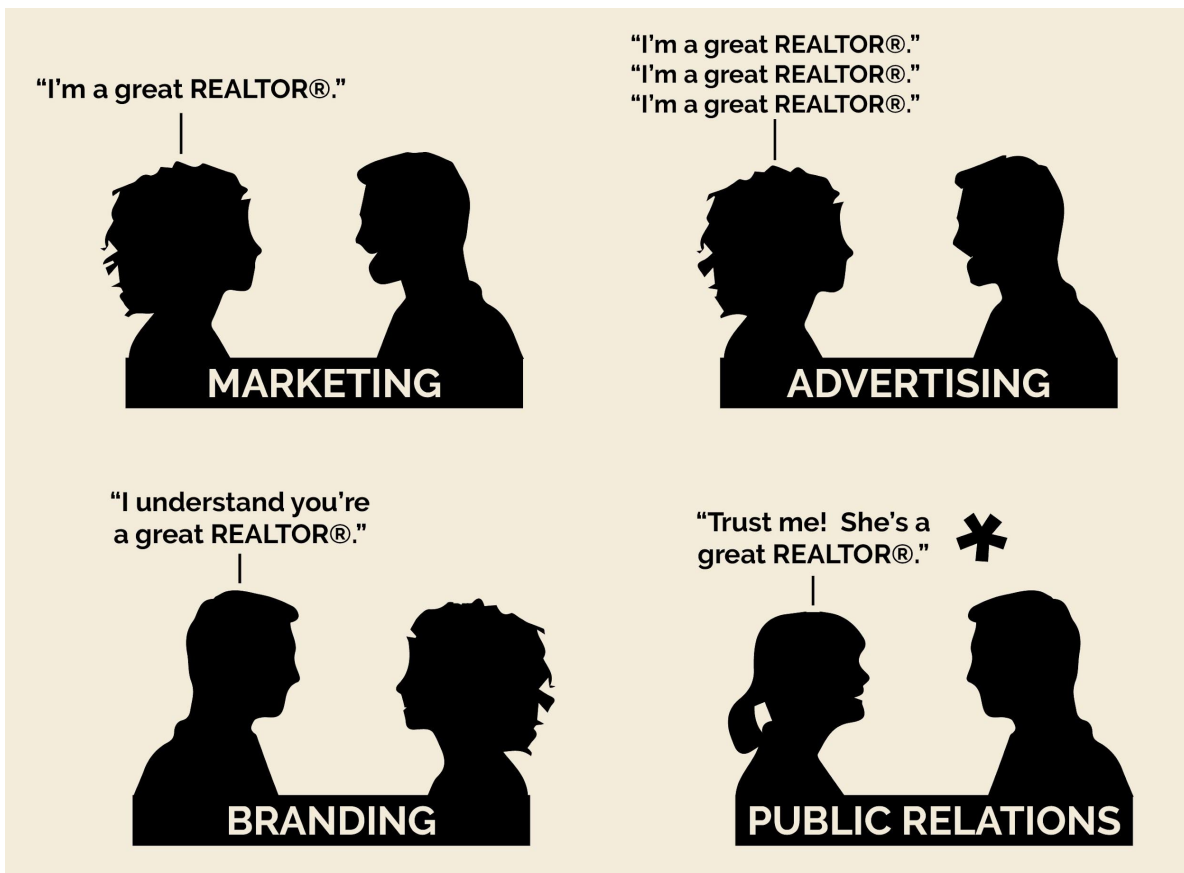
- **[DURING]** If you're a Solo Agent, consider asking friends or hiring Interns to manage food/drinks, keep up with attendees/check-in (depending on your Event), help with set up and tear down, etc.

- Belmont's Handshake Website can be a good resource for hiring students for part-time/seasonal work/project management (I've used this to hire many of our Team's Interns). – [https://belmont.joinhandshake.com/employer\\_registrations/new](https://belmont.joinhandshake.com/employer_registrations/new)
- Consider using QR Codes for people to scan on-site for check-in (or check-in table with staff/interns working), so you have a strong count of who actually arrived, vs. who RSVPed, and then you can follow up with the exact people who were actually there.
  - For QR Codes, I use the site Flow Code: <https://flowcode.com/> (*you can also track engagement through their site for each link*)
- ***Connect, connect, connect! Relational currency!***

- **[AFTER]:**

- Consider what worked well, and what maybe didn't work so well.
- Think about what you want to try next time.
- Follow up with clients who RSVPed, and/or the ones you know were there.
- Tell them you are so happy they attended/thank them, and ask their thoughts.
- Ask them about any future Events they'd like to see.
- *Let them know their input matters to you, and you're here to serve them.*





**PUBLIC RELATIONS** is the *creation* and *maintenance* of mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its stakeholders.

**The goal** is to *CREATE* raving fans through a stellar transaction...and *MAINTAIN* that relationship for years to come through adding value (regular communication, **Events**, updates about mortgage rates, the Real Estate Market, “FORD,” getting feedback, etc.)

Move your focus beyond meeting deadlines, getting the listing, making it to the closing table, etc. *Focus on **adding value** in everything you do for your clients (think Ninja).*

**Marketing, Advertising, and Branding** are **IMPORTANT**, and they're intended to be **SUPPLEMENTAL** in your business, while **Public Relations** is meant to be **FOUNDATIONAL**.

**...And remember that PUBLIC RELATIONS make the world go 'round. ;)**

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