

A blue-tinted photograph of the UC Riverside Campanile tower, a tall clock tower with a grid-like facade, serves as the background for the slide. A small orange chevron graphic is positioned above the title text.

# **Event Planning and Execution Tips and Tricks from Your Friendly University Events Team**

# Please Meet the University Events Team



**Marisa Ronca**  
Director



**Jill Barber**  
Assistant Director



**Mar'kettia Hull**  
Events Manager



**Wendy Garcia**  
Public Events Manager



**Jessica Garcia**  
Events Manager  
UE/Chancellors Office



**Maritess Gutierrez**  
Administrative Coordinator

# Topics We'll Discuss

**01 Strategic Prioritization & Organization**  
How to decide where to start and what to focus on when everything feels important, plus organizational tips for setting yourself up for success

**03 Design on a Dime**  
Creative ideas to get the most bang for your buck to help your events look and feel great

**02 Navigating Red Tape**  
Insider advice for identifying and working potential pitfalls

**04 Event Tech**  
Navigating working with tech to elevate your planning and guest experience



# Strategic Prioritizing

*“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax”*

Jill Barber  
Assistant Director – University Events





- **Four Key Pillars**
- **Outlining Your Event**
- **Building Your Project Plan**
- **Staying on Track**

# 4 Key Pillars

## Identify Before Planning



**Budget**



**Date & Time**



**Location**



**Objective**





# Outlining Your Event

## Scope of Work

- Budget, Date, Location
- Desired Outcome
- Event Summary
- Primary & Secondary Audience(s)
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Major Production Deadlines

# Building a Project Plan

- Expanding your outline's key parts
- Identify various goals
- Working Backwards
- Know your vendors





# Project Plan Example

TASK	OWNER	PRIORITY	START	END	COMPLETION %	DOB	NOTES
<b>Basic Planning Items (Venue/Date/Time)</b>							
Initial Planning Meeting - discuss details & objective					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Date & Time					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Venue					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Obtain Overall Budget						<input type="radio"/>	
Create Estimated Costs Breakdown					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Determine logistic roles & responsibilities					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Scope of Work 1-2 pager					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Schedule recurring planning meetings (with committee and/or internal)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Accounting</b>							
Collect CDA Accounting Codes					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Request PO from Processor					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Update budget					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Marketing, Communication, Registration</b>							
Develop Marketing Strategy					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Develop Marketing Materials					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Meet with creative team, if applicable					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Website					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Raisers Edge Created					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Karma Form Created (Registration)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Karma Form Tested/Go live					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Determine RSVP deadline					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Develop Guest List					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Develop Communication Timeline					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Jira Requests - Email lists, Email invite & reminders (multiple)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Design Mailchimp Invite					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Design Mailchimp Reminders					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Printed Materials: Signage, banners, etc.					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Programming</b>							
Develop Program					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Contact participants					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Collect participant information (bios, photos, etc.)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Finalize program flow					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Craft timed program agenda / run of show					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Share program flow					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Set up Meetings as needed					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Create Cue Book (including script and technical cues)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>On-Campus Vendors</b>							
Catering					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Facilities					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Multi media					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
TAPS					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
HEMS					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
UCPD					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Fleet/Gem carts					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
The Barn					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Performers					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Book Store						<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Off-Campus Vendors</b>							
Security (CSC)					0%	<input type="radio"/>	
Security (CSC) - CONCEPT APPROVAL & PO					0%	<input type="radio"/>	

## Various Areas of a Project Plan

- Key Planning Items
- Accounting
- Marketing, Communications, Registration
- Programming
- On-Campus Vendors
- Off-Campus Vendors
- Permits
- Staffing
- 8-4 Week Logistics
- 4-2 Week Logistics
- Week of Logistics
- Post Event

# Plan for Staying on Track

## Event Planning *AND* Project Management



### Keeping the Team on Track

- Meetings - clear expectations & roles
- Personal & Team Deadline Reminders
- Accountability and Assertion, and Context



### Vendor Deadlines

- Defining needs and expectations early on
- Ensuring both parties have all information to succeed
- Check ins and updates
- Final summary / Load-in + Load-out schedule



### Plan for execution

- Thinking ahead - giving yourself time to organize the week-of and day-of activities
- Play by play



# From Red Tape to Green Light: Event Success!

**Event Manager: Jessica Garcia**





# What is Red Tape?

**Formal procedures and regulations that can sometimes slow down the process of organizing events.**

## Why do we have Red Tape?

**Ensure safety and compliance**

## Possible feelings & thoughts of Red Tape?

- **Overwhelm**
- **Stress**
- **Confusion**



**What does all this Red tape cause?**

**Time Delays**



# Common Challenges

**Bureaucratic Processes**

**Policy Restrictions**





# Bureaucratic Process Pro-tips

## Scheduling Conflicts

- Venue availability
- Academic Calendar Considerations
- Meeting cadences

## Budgetary Constraints

- Use of University Resources
- Vendor approval process

## Approval Processes

- Event Proposal Submissions
- Multiple layers of approvals

## Vendor Management

- Contractual Obligations



# Policy Restrictions Pro-tips

## Venue Use & Reservation Policies

- Priority Scheduling
- Central event services software
- Limit advance booking

## Free Speech & Public Forum

- Designated “free speech zones”

## Campus Safety & Security Requirements

- Fire Marshal deadlines
- Campus PD may need to review and approve

## Alcohol Regulations

- Service may be restricted



# Design on a Dime

**Creative ideas to get the most bang  
for your buck to help make your  
events look and feel fab!**

Marisa Ronca  
Director, University Events



# Design Tools At Your Disposal



Centerpieces &  
Arrangements



Table Coverings / Linens



Place Settings



Lighting



Printed Items



## Centerpieces & Arrangements

Décor doesn't have to be expensive. Consider using one of the following as a centerpiece or to spice up your registration table.

- Potted Succulents – I love to use low/large round succulents, or even group 3-5 smaller succulents together (TIP – always group in odd numbers!)
- Potted Mini Roses
- Orchids – Note: items over 12” tall don’t tend to work well as centerpieces, but can make for lovely registration or stage table decor.
- DIYers beware!



# Linens

Adding patterned, specialty or branded linens to your event is one of the easiest ways to elevate the look of your event. Below are tips for keeping costs down:

- If you have more than 10 tables, consider mixing and matching linens so that half the tables have a simple solid poly cotton linen (the most cost effective) and half have a more specialized fabric or pattern.
- If you already have a rental order in place, adding linens to the existing order will have minimal affect on your total costs
- Rent from a supplier that will ship directly to you and include return shipping
- Purchasing table linens online sometimes tends to be the most cost effective







# Place Settings

Making small enhancements to your place settings will make a world of difference to the look of your tablescape.

- Incorporate a colored or patterned water goblet. This is easy to add to an existing rental order. If you are planning to use disposable glassware, consider purchasing a high quality colored plastic glass to place at each setting.
- Ask catering to place china and flatware (or disposable plates and napkin/utensil roll-ups) at place setting instead of stacked near the buffet.
- Formal Events – Consider using a 14” place plate instead of a regular charger, it is half the price!

# Lighting

Lighting is crucial in creating the vibe of an events. Here are some tips for lighting up your world!

- Uplights: Use uplights to create a sense of place. If there is already an A/V or rental order in place, do your event a favor and these to your order for instant good vibes.
- Control the light: Ask the venue manager to show you how to control the lights and wield that power intentionally.
- Incorporate as much natural light as possible.
- If using a screen, splash the logo on the screen for an easy color wash







## Paper & Signage

Event branded printed items will communicate information to your guests, while adding an aesthetic highlight which will elevate the feel of your event!

- Start with the same look, feel, colors, fonts and design elements of the marketing materials for your event
- Create branded signs for the registration tables (framed 8X10), table numbers (2X3), buffet signs, reserved signs, etc.
- Add a colorful cardstock menu (5X7) at each place setting



# Event Tech

Navigating working with tech to elevate your planning and guest experience.

# Event Technology

Investing in your technology for events enhances the overall event experience for your guests.

Additionally, it creates an opportunity for:

- Engagement
- Increase your ROI
- Streamline the logistics for the planning team
- Collect analytical data
- New or returning guests and potential partnerships



# Event Examples

Commencement Ceremonies  
Galas  
Fundraisers  
Social Events  
Lectures  
Concerts  
Ribbon Cuttings  
Ground Breakings  
General Meetings  
Etc.



# Event Tech Examples



# Initial Preparations

After determining the event type, budget, and technology needs, the preparation should begin immediately.

Begin with a checklist of all physical and digital needs for the event. This could include various software platforms, company processes platforms, stakeholders, vendors, design, marketing plan, target market, review of historical analytics, etc.



# Physical Item Prep



Gather all needed physical items. Ensure items are properly packed for transporting and stored to prevent any performance issues. Properly label items to ensure clarification of the items and their preferred site location.



# Tips & Tricks



**Contingency Plan**



**Automation**



**Cheat Sheets / Reference Sheet**



**Tech Experts**

# Questions?

Marisa Ronca: [Marisa.Ronca@ucr.edu](mailto:Marisa.Ronca@ucr.edu)

Jill Barber: [Jill.barber@ucr.edu](mailto:Jill.barber@ucr.edu)

Markettia Hull: [Markettia.hull@ucr.edu](mailto:Markettia.hull@ucr.edu)

Jessica Garcia: [Jessica.garcia2@ucr.edu](mailto:Jessica.garcia2@ucr.edu)

Maritess Gutierrez: [Maritesg@ucr.edu](mailto:Maritesg@ucr.edu)



A yellow triangular graphic pointing upwards and to the right, located above the 'Thank You!' text.

# Thank You!