



PRODUCING HIGH QUALITY EVENTS ON A LOWER BUDGET

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Just because you have a smaller budget should not limit your event to basic A/V, or worse, cancel the event altogether. High-quality production is attainable for events of any size or budget, you just need to know a couple of creative solutions. These tips will allow you to host an event of excellent quality while remaining within your organization's allocated event funds.

The economy is tight, inflation is rising, and organizations of all sizes are looking for ways to reduce costs. Organizations are scrutinizing expenses more and after years of navigating a global pandemic, it's certainly understandable. If you are among the many who are slowly returning to regular programming, you should be prioritizing value over price when considering your event budget. Instead of budgeting with a pre-set cost in mind, consider how you can get creative to execute a meaningful and effective event without cutting corners. Too often, organizations think they should cancel an event if their budgets are reduced. It doesn't have to be this way. There are several ways to plan and produce an excellent, high-quality event with a lower budget. Here's how.

Shorten the Event

If your annual conference has always spanned three days, consider condensing the agenda to two days. It's entirely possible to save six-figures simply by cutting down a conference by one day.

If you're scratching your head wondering how you could possibly do this, you'll be pleased to know there are several simple ways to condense an event simply by designing a more efficient run of show (ROS). You may be surprised how much time and money can be saved. It's often possible to shave off several hours, potentially a day, simply by adjusting the flow of your event. In order to abbreviate your conference, you'll likely need to rework your program. Study the agenda from previous conferences you've hosted and ask yourself:

- What's the goal of the gathering? If the goal is networking, make room for mingling in the halls. If the goal is hearing from leadership, maximize the general sessions. If the goal is specific learning, maximize breakout sessions.
- Did a certain break feel unnecessary or too long?
- Did it feel like time was lost coming and going from various breakout sessions?



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- How often were attendees in general sessions vs. breakouts?
- Could any breakouts be combined? Could any general sessions be combined?
- Is it necessary to have general sessions and breakout sessions every day of the conference?

Don't underestimate the power of visualizing yourself at an event. The exercise of walking through each segment of your agenda helps you determine which elements are absolutely necessary to accomplish business objectives. Once you've done this, ask your event production vendor to review and provide input. A little effort during the planning phase will enable you to produce a more efficient event that will require less time. And in this case, time really is money.

Budget with Vendors in Mind

Event production vendors often bill for equipment and crew in different ways. Equipment is usually billed on a day-rate basis while crew is billed by the hour. You can reduce costs by factoring this into your planning. If your meeting runs from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and you typically host a cocktail reception directly after, keep in mind that many crews bill at an overtime rate for more than 10 hours of work in a single day. If your attendees typically travel to your conference, consider kicking off your event with an afternoon general session and a casual event directly after. This way, the crew can provide support without working overtime.

Rethink Hybrid Events

The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations of all sizes to rethink ways of working. Virtual meetings are now a standard part of business. It's practically an expectation for meetings to have a virtual or remote attendance option. If you haven't taken time to reevaluate the purpose and value of hybrid conference attendance, you should.

Three years ago, most organizations considered virtual attendance an option only for people who couldn't make it to their conference in person. With remote attendance becoming a new norm, you should ask yourself: does everyone really need to attend in person to benefit from the program? If you're in the increasing majority of organizations who answer no to that question, you've got a great way to reduce expenses and empower your employees at the same time.



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Poll your employees. If 30% say they'd opt to attend remotely if given a choice, you have a tangible metric to assess your budget against. Additionally, by giving your employees the choice of how they prefer to attend, they may be more inclined to participate thoughtfully. You'll also promote diversity of engagement by inviting perspectives from different groups. How about a fun competition or icebreaker pitting in-person and virtual attendees against one another?

There are many ways to determine who will attend in person and online, but regardless of how, the bottom line is you'll save money. You'll save on flights, hotels, and other travel costs associated with planning a multi-day event. Equipment will even cost less. An AV system for 700 people is less expensive than a sound system for 1000 people. Screens for 700 people don't need to be as big because the room is not as large and the room is not as deep. With fewer in-person attendees, you can also maximize your layout and set a budget by focusing on a space that accommodates all attendees instead of spreading resources across potentially several rooms you'd need to accommodate a larger group.

Don't Be Afraid to Adjust Your Approach

This is a unique moment where organizations that regularly host events can reflect on the past and refine for the future. Budgeting for an event doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition. It's amazing the level of excellence and continuity that can be achieved on a lower budget with a little forethought and savvy. The ideas above are just a few to get you started. We hope they're helpful. If you're feeling stuck with your next event or know you need support, [please give us a call](#). We'd be honored to serve you.



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avad3 Event Production is nestled in the center of Northwest Arkansas. We're a full-service provider combining our skilled team of professionals with a warehouse of avad3-maintained equipment. At avad3, we believe that quality audio, video and lighting are key to making an event a true success. Our mission is to provide personalized event production for organizations who make a difference, because we love to serve.



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