

10 tips to creating seamless events

By [Kelly McGillivray](#)

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There's a reason why being an event coordinator was identified as the [fifth most stressful job](#) in America last year (after police officer) - things can go wrong. Bringing events to life is fun and adrenalin works wonders when it kicks in, but the communication and production elements have to knit together seamlessly.



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As well as managing the complexity of event elements, there are other types of event stress. That of long term clients who expect excellence all year round, as well as producing the one-off jobs for people who need a “once in a lifetime” experience. So, running an events business means you have to perform at your peak 24/7.

Here are ten ways to circumvent things going awry and to help lower event manager stress levels:

1. Planning permissions

When working in Johannesburg, double check the venue owner has the necessary City of Joburg permissions to host events. Honesty and trust are paramount when dealing with establishment managers; if you have any instinct something is “off” then find another venue or it may become your problem on the day.

2. Risk assessment

Endless Events have a thorough [article](#) on planning a safe event which includes identifying risks, people related hazards and risk control - the latter involving removing any potential danger and/or the use of safety gear. Part of the risk assessment should include venue security and parking (see below).

3. Security and parking

Hire additional venue security as you begin setting up, this is important in terms of equipment insurance etc. Try and have ample secure parking, preferably free, but if there's not enough then give people the option of paid parking. Don't underestimate the risk of cars being stolen from a secure parking lot. We've had a thief trying to get in by pretending to be one of the guests. If there is a chance of this, give the parking attendants a guest list to check against.

4. Public relations

There are often different agencies working on the same event and things such as checking the PR invitation list can slip as it's not part of your scope of work. But at the end of the day you are answerable at the event - so jump in and assist with your expertise, you don't want to have to Rent-A-Crowd. (It has been known to happen.)

5. Catering

We like giving small businesses a chance and trying new catering companies is part of this. But be warned that using someone new for event food and beverage is a risk. Start by getting references, checking them and asking for information within your network.

Next is the menu tasting and finding out where the produce is sourced. Also double check their staff skills – for example, whether they can open wine bottles and pour properly – this has been a surprise issue for us before. Lastly, ensure your caterer understands that no dietary requirement is too small to get right for a guest.

6. Generator

Not having a backup generator can successfully derail your event and make it memorable for all the wrong reasons. Trust me on this, have a generator on site even when there's no threat of load shedding. Anything can happen, and if you haven't made an alternative plan, it usually does.

7. Wi-Fi

Most venues have Wi-Fi but much like the power supply, it can go down. Having your own Wi-Fi gives you peace of mind, whether it's for general attendee use or in case of venue issues. Remember to choose your password carefully in case your client asks you for the back-up Wifi password – “smellyfeet” is not ideal!

8. Power banks, charging stations and card machines

Whether for crew or guests, having a charging station and power banks on hand will keep people happy and connected. Because they're portable and in demand they tend to go “walkabout”, so mark them clearly and hope that deters any light fingers. Having a card machine on site for certain types of events is very useful when things need to be purchased.

9. Bad weather

Weather worries keep event managers awake at night. Aside from having marquees and covers on standby, it's the little things count – think umbrellas, blankets and shawls and don't underestimate the warmth of a few strategically placed standing gas heaters.

10. Tool box and other necessities

A well-stocked toolbox is an event manager's superpower. Aside from invaluable things such as gaffer tape and cable ties, have perks to keep your crew refreshed and energised - I love DCT lip ice, Turbovite (gives a kick!) and plenty of sparkling water.

ABOUT KELLY MCGILLIVRAY

Putting productions of every shape and size together for over 20 years. Now CEO of TheSquad Creative Events and on a mission! Creating brilliantly planned, well executed and bodacious event experiences. Teamwork, underpinned by strategic planning with passion and expertise. That's what it's all about.

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