



Your Amazing Event Planning Guide

For Conferences, Retreats or Special Events

How do you feel about planning your next women's event? If you are like most busy women, you might be asking yourself questions like:

- Do I have enough time to plan this? What if I get overwhelmed?
- What if I don't find enough volunteers?
- How do we pay for everything?
- Can our women's ministry team work together without fighting?
- How can we get new women or younger women to come?

**An event planned
with excellence
glorifies God and
inspires others!**

Whether you're a long time event planner, pastor's wife, women's ministry leader or brand new to event planning, I wrote this guide for YOU! If you long to create an experience that will draw women closer to God, I'm here to help! I've planned and hosted large events for over 15 years, including co-leading my church's women's conference hosting 10,000 women during the conference's five-year run.

Women's events exist to bring women together. So, why are some women's events more successful than others? That's the big question! To answer that question, we must drill down past our desire to host a gathering of women and dig deep into the heart of God. Who is God calling us to reach and what message does He want us to share with them? If you don't know who God wants you to reach, you may miss your opportunity. Your hard-working, well-meaning efforts could be wasted - like inviting a hungry vegetarian to a Texas barbecue! So, flip the page to learn how Jesus teaches us to draw a crowd...



Barb Roose is a Christian women's speaker and author. She is passionate about equipping women to win at life with Christ-Empowered strength and dignity. She has been speaking to groups from 10 to 10,000 people since 2005.

For five years, Barbara co-lead the Fabulous Women's Conference, hosting an average of 2,500 women each year over the two-day event. Barb developed expertise in leadership, talent management, budgeting, event planning/programming and social media promotion. Find out more about Barb at barbroose.com.



Who are you "fishing" for?

Think about Jesus' recruiting the disciples. He called them to be "fishers of men." But, the men didn't stay in their boats. They left to go where the "fish" or far from God were located.

Our challenge is to understand where God is calling us to fish and who are the fish that God is calling us to cast the gospel line toward. And we can never forget this: If we don't go fishing, someone else will!

And let's make sure that we fall in love with catching the fish instead of getting attached to our "net."

For our context, the "net" is the kind of event - retreat, luncheon, conference, workshop, etc. Nets capture fish in groups and so do our events. In fishing, nets can wear out and break. It's always important to know when to replace an old net for a new one. As events go, even our most effective events eventually become outdated or ineffective. So, don't fall in love with the event. Remember, it's the fish that matter, not the net!

So, back to you. Who is God calling you to fish for? Here is a list of important questions that you can pray through and talk about with your pastor, pastor's wife, women's ministry team leader or small group pastor BEFORE planning your next event.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS BEFORE PLANNING THE NEXT EVENT:

- What age or stage in life do we feel called to reach? (Singles, Mothers, Teens, Recovery, Mature, etc)
- If we think about the women that God calls us to reach, what are they stressed out about in their lives?
- What are the words that they would use to describe their lives?
- What do these women do for fun? Where do they go? What or who is important to them?
- What do these women need from God?
- How can we provide some of what they need so that they can connect with God?

It takes courage to answer these questions and you definitely should seek out the input of your pastor. These questions take courage because you may have to let go of traditions or favorites in order to reach new women. But, it's worth it!

If your team needs extra help working through these questions, I have a workshop titled "Connecting Women at Every Age & Stage" to help. I can coach your team via the internet. Email barb@barbroose.com for more information.

All the best, Barb



Volunteers

Did you know that one of the best ways to promote your event is to have lots of volunteers! Women who are involved are women who will inform others!

Here are some of the volunteer positions you need for an event hosting 100-250 women. (Number of volunteers in parentheses.)

- **EVENT LEADER (1)** - Lead event promotion/marketing, budget (even if working with church treasurer), programming for event and guest speaker(s) (SKILLS: leadership, creativity, discernment, **MUST** delegate well)
- **EVENT CO-LEADER (1)** - Lead volunteer recruitment and registration (SKILLS: leadership, ability to recruit, **OVER**communicator, administration)
- **EVENT ASSISTANT (1-2)** - Friendly and organized. Manage phone calls, emails, processing registrations and follow-up tasks as assigned by Event Leader and Event Co-Leader. (SKILLS: administrative, good problem-solving, friendly phone voice, works well under pressure)
- **PRAYER LEADER (1-2)** - She will champion prayer on the team by praying for the leaders and then reminding the team to pray. She also encourages pray for the speaker, event and the attendees.
- **HOSPITALITY LEADER (1 or 2)** - Manage menu planning and work with caterers/kitchen staff. Should love Pinterest! Must be able to creative plan table decorations, event menu/beverages as well as plan within a budget (SKILLS: Ability to work with volunteers to create table decorations and plan menu for event)
- **SOCIAL MEDIA LEADER (1)** - Proficient with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and able to create engaging social media messages to promote event as well as answer questions about the event. (SKILLS: social media proficiency, ability to write well, administrative) (Think twice before just picking a teenager...)
- **HOSPITALITY TEAM (10-20)**- Friendly volunteers who will help them women once they enter the main conference or event space. Volunteers should have the ability to converse with attendees and help attendees feel welcome and connected.
- **FACILITY TEAM (10-20)**- Under the leadership of Hospitality Leader, these volunteers will set up event tables and help with food preparation, set-up and clean-up.
- **PROGRAMMING TEAM** - Specialized team of volunteers who should have ability to handle lights, sound, microphones, projector/powerpoint. Must be a team of volunteers dedicated to excellence! Number of volunteers depend on type of equipment. Contact local high school to hire students if volunteers aren't available.



How to Recruit Volunteers

**Are you tired of 20% of the women doing 80% of the work?
How can you recruit more women to help at your next women's event?**

A women's ministry event is an incredible opportunity recruit new volunteers! Why? Because a women's conference is a short-term commitment so a new volunteer doesn't need to worry about a long-term obligation.

One of my favorite parts of leading a women's conference was inviting new women to serve and lead. In fact, we had over 100 women eagerly signing up to volunteer each year for the conference.

How did we get such great volunteers and so many each year? Here's how we did it:

- First, we created a list "dream team" list women in our church and community that had gifts and skills that are needed to make the event successful. (Yes, we asked women who didn't attend church to volunteer. Guess what? Many of them started attending church because they were volunteering!)
- For those at the top of our dream list, we created volunteer positions for those volunteers to matched their rock-star abilities.
- We asked them early! We wanted great volunteers on our team so we asked them months in advance to they could schedule the event and team meetings on their busy calendars.
- How did we ask them? "We want you on our team because we know that your skills with _____ will help us reach more women than ever." (Important: We told her what skills she possessed were crucial to the event success.)
- We showed her a written job description. We outlined the THREE things she needed to do in order to be successful. For example: Volunteer Coordinator job description: Success is 1. communicating with volunteers weekly, 2. filling 25 volunteer positions each week and 3. making each volunteer feel like she matters. When you have a highly skilled volunteer, you don't need to tell her what to do, just let her know what the "win" looks like.
- For all volunteers - we assigned team leaders over groups of volunteers. Those team leaders met with their teams once a month. As conference leaders, our job was to support our team leaders and help them be successful, not micromanage.
- THIS IS HUGE! We hosted a volunteer celebration the week before our conference. It was always a big success!. We fed the volunteers dinner, went through event details, got them excited, handed out their special volunteer badge or t-shirts and prayed with them over the event.



Planning Timeline

This is a timeline template for planning an event. This means that you can adjust this template to your specific event. Overcommunicate as much as possible!

20 weeks before event (four weeks to complete tasks)

- **EVENT TEAM:** Choose event theme, type of "net" (event format) and scripture verse. Keep your "fish" in mind! Then, create title and subtitle based on theme. Make sure that clever isn't confusing. The title needs to be something women will quickly understand. (Suggestion: Check out my Courageous Women's Conference pre-packaged event template at barbroose.com/courageous.)
- **EVENT TEAM::** Establish list of volunteer needs and job descriptions. Help women sign-up quickly by setting up an online volunteer sign-up tool at Volunteerspot.com.
- **EVENT TEAM:** Determine event per-person cost, registration fee and estimate event budget. (See my finance page)
- **EVENT LEADER:** Investigate three speakers and prayerfully invite. Invite speaker before proceeding. Don't delay!

16 weeks before event (four weeks to complete tasks)

- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Begin contacting prospective volunteers and making "asks" (See Volunteer Page)
- **EVENT LEADER:** Meeting with worship leader or arts pastor to discuss event order of service and music..
- **EVENT LEADER:** Confirm speaker booking and make travel/hotel arrangements
- **EVENT LEADER:** **EVENT LEADER:** Create Facebook event and send "save-the-date" to church email/ mailing list.

12 weeks before event (four weeks to complete tasks)

- **EVENT LEADER:** Communicate with speaker about event theme and confirm message topics.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Set up online registration/payment system if possible and link to Facebook page.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Create 1/2 page registration form with event logo that can be inserted into program.
- **OPTIONAL PROMOTIONAL:** Send out an event postcard or invitation letter to congregation and area churches.
- **LEADERSHIP:** Event Leader, Event Co-Leader and Hospitality Leader meet to plan menu and review budget.
- **EVENT LEADER/ASST:** Order t-shirts, pens, special bags or other items for the women attending.
- **HOSPITALITY LEADER:** Contact caterers for bids or create shopping budget for meals/snacks.

6-8 weeks before event (four-six weeks to complete tasks)

- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Post weekly messages on Facebook page about what the women will experience at event. Ask women to share posts - important! Ask your speaker to record 60 second invite video to share on social media.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Announcement during church (if appropriate), 1/2 page registration form in weekly bulletin/program.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Send out registration reminder email to church email list.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Meeting with worship leader/arts pastor/drama director about programming details.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Continue to recruit to fill volunteer positions. Send reminder for volunteer team meeting.
- **HOSPITALITY LEADER:** Plan table designs and table decorations within budget.



Planning Timeline

4 weeks before event (four weeks to complete tasks)

- **EVENT LEADER:** Meet with key leaders to pray, review registration numbers and make adjustments to budget.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE:** Facebook page reminders (once a day), weekly announcements at church, registration table set up at church. Also, give 2-3 volunteers a phone script and ask them to make reminder phone calls to women.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Continue to recruit to fill volunteer positions. Send reminders for volunteer team meeting.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE:** Send an event flyer and follow-up email to 20-30 area churches about your event.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Host lobby tables for registration before and after weekend services. Make tables beautiful!

2 weeks before event (four weeks to complete tasks)

- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Facebook page reminders (give reasons why to attend, not just reminder about deadline), weekly announcements at church, repeat lobby registration table set up at church.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Host final volunteer pre-event celebration. Make sure volunteers feel valued!
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Review volunteer roster and make personal phone calls to fill in any crucial gaps.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Confirm speaker(s) arrival times and any other details.
- **HOSPITALITY: IF COOKING:** Make lists for food and decorations shopping trip. Make sure final shopping budget is verified and church purchasing guidelines are clear. (Don't forget tax ID number) **CATERING:** Give final headcount and confirm menu.

7-10 days before event

- **EVENT LEADER/ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Confirm speaker travel plans and hotel arrangements, arrival times and make sure that you have up-to-date cell phone numbers. Assign a team of two women to pick up speaker. No men!
- **EVENT LEADER/ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Request checks for catering, honorariums or other payments. Assign who will be responsible for delivering checks to speakers or other vendors/service providers at the event.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Set up rehearsal of music or dramas either day before or morning of event.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Remind speaker to send in powerpoint presentation or other materials, if not already received.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Contact women who have registrations missing payment or other questions.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Confirm deliveries that haven't be received or deliveries scheduled for day of event.

5-7 days before event

- **EVENT LEADER:** Conduct pre-event check in with team. Ask for update on progress and most importantly encourage the team and help them problem-solve challenges. Ask your team these two vital questions: Tell me what is stressing you out? What do you need to be successful?
- **EVENT LEADER:** Review final programming details with worship leader/arts pastor.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER:** Work with Hospitality Leader to prep final shopping list
- **EVENT CO-LEADER/ADMINISTRATIVE:** Create name tags for event. Leave space on the front for women to write their names. It would be helpful to put event timeline on the back of the name tag. You can produce name tags by using a program like Canva and running name tags on heavy cardstock.



Planning Timeline

3-5 days before event

- **EVENT LEADER:** Call team leaders and encourage them each day. Write personal note, if possible.
- **EVENT CO-LEADER/HOSPITALITY:** Shopping trip! (Shopping a few days early lets you see if anything is missing and you'll have plenty of time to pick up missing items.)
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Final messages on social media reminding women what time to arrive, where to park and details about eating (people like to know when they are going to eat). You can also send via email.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** Set-up "green room" area for your special guest. It should be a private area where she can change clothes, review her notes, pray or rest in between session if needed. Stock area with water and fruit.

1-2 days before event

- **HOSPITALITY LEADER:** Set-up tables/decorations (except flowers)/registration areas.
- **EVENT LEADER/CO-LEADER/ ADMINISTRATIVE ASST:** **EVENT WALK-THROUGH** - Go over planning template, programming and walk through event location to identify, troubleshoot or deal with any unresolved issues.

DAY OF event

- **EVENT LEADER:** Arrive early so that you can greet your guest speaker and pray with her.
- **EVENT LEADER & CO-LEADER:** Make sure to start the day with praying for your team. When you arrive, take 20-30 minutes to pray with everyone prior to registration opening. Greet each volunteer personally.
- **EVENT LEADER & CO-LEADER:** Make sure to delegate as situations come up throughout the day. You'll have plenty of people who can problem-solve so that you can stay focused on your top priority: leading the event.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Keep a big smile on your face all day! Pray, don't panic!

AFTER your event

- **EVENT CO-LEADER/ADMINISTRATIVE:** Send thank you cards to your volunteers. Don't skip this!
- **EVENT LEADER:** Meet with event team and process through how the event went.
- **EVENT LEADER:** Gather all outstanding receipts and turn them in.
- **CELEBRATE!** Go out to dinner or gather to share stories from the event and talk about how God showed up!

Event Promotion

How do you get women to come?

PRACTICAL PROMOTIONAL TOOLS FOR EVENT PLANNERS!

EVENT GRAPHIC

The visual image of your event will carry HUGE influence with potential attendees. Don't let the design overwhelmed the title or subtitle of the event. My tip is to design a Facebook cover that can be used in multiple ways. If you don't have access to a graphic designer, you can use a free service like Canva.com.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you are looking to reach women aged 26-70, they are hanging out on Facebook. Use tools like Facebook "boosting" to promote your event and services like Buffer or Hootsuite to schedule your posts in advance to save time and maximize your efforts to get the word out. (Learn about these on YouTube.)

LOBBY TABLE

Personal invites are POWERFUL! You must have a beautifully decorated lobby table with your most influential and friendly volunteers set up each week starting four weeks before you event.

VIDEO

Since visual messaging is extremely popular, consider making a 60 sec video to post and share to social media. Make sure the "talking head" speaker is energetic and influential. If you bring in a guest speaker, she should definitely do an invite video!

EMAILS

Emailing your church members every two weeks is helpful, but leverage it well. Keep it short, personal and direct the women toward how to register.

DRAWING

Give the women an incentive to register! Create a special drawing giving away a free registration or a donated basket of goodies. Check out Rafflecopter.com - it's free!

GUEST SPEAKER

Ask your special guest speaker what promotional ideas she has seen used for other events.



Social Media Graphic & Messages - examples

Ladies, join us for fun and friends at our next women's event! Check out our Facebook page for more information!

Guys, do you want to do something special for your wives? Register them for the upcoming women's event! Details below.

Grab your girlfriends and register for our next women's event!

FAQ's

Common Questions that Event Planners Ask...

Our women's team wants to do an event, but no one wants to lead it. What do we do?

As leadership guru and pastor John Maxwell says, "Everything rises and falls with leadership." This means that if you don't have willing and skilled leader to lead the event, don't host the event! She doesn't have to have experience in events, but she must be a good leader that people want to follow! We all know how painful it can be for a woman to "just fill in" as leader for an event. Her well-meaning sacrifice often ends up at great personal cost to both herself and everyone else..

There should never be a "hostage leader" when it comes to planning events. I know that it might mean a season or even a year without an event, but pray and be patient for God to send a leader. And when He does, support her 100%!

What if our desired speaker is out of our budget?

This is a common question! With few exceptions, speakers understand the awkwardness that event planners feel when discussing speaker fees. So, considerate speakers initiate the conversation and provide helpful suggestions.

Before you speak with a potential guest speaker who may cost more than your budgeted amount, be thoughtful and consider these options:

- Offer a lower fee for the speaker's consideration (be gracious if speaker declines reduced rate);
- Receive a love offering/free will offering to offset a budget shortfall;
- Wait for a future event when the event budget can support desired speaker.

Please refer to my page for more details on hiring a speaker.

Help! What do we do if women aren't registering for our upcoming event?

First, personal invites are what fills the seats. If you want women to come, the best approach is a face-to-face invite. This makes someone feel uniquely valued.

If your event registrations are slow, don't just hope for things to pick up. You can do the following:

1. Lobby Tables - Host registration table at church, but make sure that it looks BEAUTIFUL and make sure that your best people-person is at the table extending a personal invitation.
2. Social Media - Your volunteers and leadership team should be sharing personal invites on social media. Make sure that your speaker video is shared, too!
3. Registration - Is it easy for women to register? If there isn't an online option, that will often slow registrations.
4. Phone Calls - Ask women to make reminder calls or texts. Keep the calls/texts short. Here's an example of a call or text: "Hi _____, we'd love to see you at our upcoming _____ event on (date/time). We want to uplift and bless you. Register at _____. The day won't be the same without you!"
5. Contact area churches - Send your flyer out to at least 20 churches with a follow-up email.

Programming Timeline

Half-Day Event

If you are first-time event planner, the following timeline may be helpful for you. Build your event around the program plan. Don't fit elements into the event, plan them around an intentional, prayed-over program. Think about how a new woman would experience your event. Even if you want to leave room for flexibility or a sway of the Spirit, it's still important to have a defined program plan to keep everyone on the same page. Remember: This is a tool to create clarity, not to use for control.

7:00am - Music/Arts volunteers staff begin sound check/rehearsal
8:00am - Venue doors open for check-in
8:45am - Auditorium/sanctuary doors open for seating
9:00am - Welcome/Hospitality Announcements (no business-stuff!)
9:05am - Why are we here?/Music (two songs)/Prayer
9:20am - Introduce Message #1/Talk #1
10:00am - Special programming (special song, drama, video)
10:10am - Break Time (Announcements/snack/book signing)
10:30am - Introduce Message #2/Talk #2
11:10am - Special programming (special song, drama, video)
11:20am - Interview panel with morning speakers - can solicit Q & A from audience OR two personal testimonies.
11:35am - Thank Yous to volunteers and leaders (with gifts!)
11:40am - Worship
11:55am - Announce next event or Bibles study/Reminder guest
Speaker book signing reminder
12:00pm - Send off

*Note: Your guest speaker can do one or both talks. But, make sure to ask a younger woman to share her testimony or do a small message. If you want young women at the your event, then you need to put young women on the stage.

**Note: Announcements kill the mood! Try not over-do the announcements at the beginning of the day. Keep it to one or two quick tidbits so that you don't drain the momentum and excitement before worship.

Some extra notes...

1. Audiences are uncomfortable when events appear unorganized, so honor your attendees by planning their experience well by using a programming plan.
2. The smaller the team/volunteers, the more simple your event should be. Better to be faithful and excellent with a simple event than to overwhelm yourself with too many elements or too much programming.
3. Since God is never late, rarely early and always on time, then your speaker should follow His example. Make sure to communicate timeliness to your speaker.
4. If you care about excellence, then rehearsal is essential. Numerous technical difficulties during an event points to lack of preparation. Anything that doesn't work in your morning rehearsal must be cut from the program.
5. Testimonies are an incredible way to celebrate what God is doing to change lives. Keeping a testimony to 5-7 minutes long allows the most important elements to come out and keeps the audiences' attention.
6. Plan your Thanks Yous. Too often we forget important people or contributions. Thanking women well sets you up for recruiting leaders and volunteers for the future events.
7. Make sure that you have a substantial morning breakfast OR snack for a half day event. Don't overdue the food, but don't skimp either.
8. The unexpected always happens! But, keep your apologies to your audience to a minimum. Just fix the issue and keep the programming moving along.

Programming Timeline

One-Day Event

If you are first-time event planner, the following timeline maybe helpful for you. Build your event around the program plan. Don't fit elements into the event, plan them around the prayed-over program. Think about how a new woman would experience your event. Even if you want to leave room for flexibility or a sway of the Spirit, it's still important to have a defined program plan to keep everyone on the same page. Remember: This is a tool to create clarity, not to use for control.

7:00am - Music/Arts volunteers staff begin sound check/rehearsal
8:00am - Venue doors open for check-in
8:45am - Auditorium/sanctuary doors open for seating
9:00am - Welcome/Hospitality Announcements
9:05am - Why are we here?/Music (two songs)/Prayer
9:20am - Introduce Message #1/Talk #1
10:10am - Special programming (special song, drama, video)
10:15am - Introduce Message #2/Talk #2
10:55am - Announce break/speaker book signing/hospitality reminders
11:00am - Break
11:20am - Interview panel with morning speakers - can solicit Q & A from audience OR two personal testimonies.
11:40am - End interview/lunchtime prep
11:45am - LUNCH
-Music/arts teams should do afternoon sound checks, repeat any necessary songs/dramas
-Speakers should have space for their book tables and signings
-Event leadership team meet to make time adjustments - and communicate adjustments. Make as few adjustments as possible!
1:15pm - Thank Yous to conference team, church and volunteers - give tangible gifts!
1:25pm - Introduce Keynote Speaker or Talk #3
2:25pm - Special prayer time
2:40pm - Break
3:10pm - Special programming (Combination of special song, drama, video or personal testimony)
3:25pm - Celebration of what we've learned/What are our Next Steps?
3:35pm - Music (three songs)
3:55pm - Send Off/Prayer
4:00pm - End

*Note: Your guest speaker can do one, two or all three talks. But, it's good to invite younger women to share of their 5-7 minute testimony. If you want younger women at the event, then you have to put younger women on the stage.

Some extra notes...

1. Audiences are uncomfortable when events appear unorganized, so honor your attendees by planning their experience well by using a programming plan.
2. The smaller the team/volunteers, the more simple your event should be. Better to be faithful and excellent with a simple event than to overwhelm yourself with too many elements or too much programming.
3. Since God is never late, rarely early and always on time, then your speaker should follow His example. Make sure to communicate timeliness to your speaker.
4. If you care about excellence, then rehearsal is essential. Numerous technical difficulties during an event points to lack of preparation. Anything that doesn't work in your morning rehearsal must be cut from the program.
5. Testimonies are an incredible way to celebrate what God is doing to change lives. Keeping a testimony to 5-7 minutes long allows the most important elements to come out and keeps the audiences' attention.
6. Plan your Thanks Yous. Too often we forget important people or contributions. Thanking women well sets you up for recruiting leaders and volunteers for the future events.
7. If your event runs behind, make your adjustments at lunchtime. It's too disruptive to try to adjust during the event. Let the committee/team know at lunch and the audience know after lunch.
8. The unexpected always happens! But, keep your apologies to your audience to a minimum. Just fix the issue and keep the programming moving along.

Inviting a Guest Speaker

Choosing & Inviting

Finding and contracting a speaker for an event can be intimidating. However, women's conferences speakers LOVE being invited to speak and the majority of speakers can't wait to speak to you!

SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AN OUTSIDE SPEAKER?

1. Do you need a fresh, new voice?
2. Does your event feel stagnant or is it losing energy?
3. Is budget the only reason why you use in-house speakers?

If the answer to one or more of those questions is "yes," then you may want to consider an outside speaker.

Take a deep breathe and remember that cost isn't your biggest consideration. A speaker is an investment, like a car. You don't purchase a car just based on price, but it is a factor. You consider the car's features, track record in addition to price. .

Apply that same mindset to finding a speaker for your event..

RESEARCHING A PROSPECTIVE SPEAKER:

- Is she a women of integrity? Does her "walk" match her "talk"?
- Does she care about you and your event?
- Does she stay away from gossiping or slandering other Christian speakers? (Check her social media pages.)
- Is she accessible on social media to make you feel a part of her ministry?
- Is she well-connected with her local church?

One more thing...Your communication with your guest speaker before the conference will depend on the speaker. Most regional speakers will communicate with you directly, but speakers with national platforms may have assistants to answer their emails or coordinate details.

No matter what, it's always a good idea to set up "check-in" meetings with guest speakers at the following intervals: three months prior, one month prior and the week before the event to confirm all details.

What I've learned from booking guests like Nicole Johnson, Lysa TerKeurst, Mandisa, Natalie Grant and other top-tier speakers.

1. Ask sooner than later! - If your event is in March-May or September-October, it's important to email speaker 6-9 months in advance of those prime conference months. Find out about booking details and pricing.

2. Read the contract carefully! - Make sure that you can perform all of the details successfully.

3. SPEAKER FEE: If a speaker's fee is outside of your budget, don't despair. Start praying for God's wisdom and provision. It's okay to negotiate a reduced rate, but be respectful.

If your desired speaker is unaffordable, then trust God's ability to provide another speaker. Keep praying for the future! Contact the next speaker on your list and keep praying!

4. COMMUNICATION: Professional speakers appreciate timely and clear communication. It's always helpful to send her due dates and deadlines for slides or other conference materials.

5. Your speaker is also your guest, so treat her like one! Be respectful of her time and her talent. Make sure that all of the big and little details are taken care of so that she can do her job well.

Flowers & Decor

Making it pretty matters!

Table Decorations

It's always a good idea to pick three colors for your event theme. Pick colors that will match the mood of your event. Choose two dominant colors and then an accent color (either silver, gold or white). Also, keep it simple. Not everything has to be match-matchy, just classy. Here are some of my favorite, classy color combinations:

- Red, black and silver
- Orange, brown and gold
- Brown, teal and gold
- White, black and silver
- Lavender, sage green and silver



Centerpieces

Women will be looking for beauty and inspiration at your event. If you love Pinterest, then you know that thousands of ideas exist online for centerpieces. Why do we care about centerpieces? We just do.

Centerpieces don't have to be huge or expensive. Follow the KISS rule: "Keep it Stylish & Simple."

PRO TIP: Create a sample table, fully decorated a month before the event. If you love it, then purchase everything or make adjustments.



Flowers are a must! Real flowers let your attendees know that your event is special. If you want to set the right tone for your guests, flowers sing the right tune. For ideas, use Pinterest. Is there a woman on your team with a florist connection? If so, make the ask for help! If not, save money by purchasing flowers from wholesale shopping stores and ask talented volunteers to create the arrangements.

Where do you place flower arrangements? Registration table, centerpieces, pulpit/stage. and in women's restrooms. By the way, make sure your speaker doesn't have allergies.



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Speaker & Author | barbroose.com

Event Planning Guide

Budget & Finance Strategy

Part 1

Since this is one of the most difficult aspects of planning, I'm sharing my event finance strategy with you.

1. Determine how many women will attend.

Be realistic about attendance. It's good to have dreams of 500 women, but if you've been trending 120 -150 for the past few years, then start with 130 and add 10 percent for your new attendance goal.

EXCEPTIONS: You may experience an increase OR decrease in attendance if you do any of the following:

- Drastically change your ticket price/registration fee;
- If you change locations;
- Bring in a guest speaker
- Increase or decrease your advertising dollars

2. List all of your event costs.

Check your previous event expenses. Be as accurate as possible. If you haven't hosted an event before or if you need new budget guidelines, I give some budget guidelines in the right column. However, you can adjust to fit your event goals. NOTE: I did not include rental facility costs in my budget guidelines since most events are hosted at churches.

3. Calculate your PPC (Per-Person-Cost)

Once you have the final total, divide that number by your expected number of attendees. This is an important number known as your "per person cost" or PPC. The PPC helps you determine your ticket price.

My advice: Try to make sure that your PPC doesn't exceed 90% of the individual ticket price. This keeps you from going over budget and keeps a healthy margin for unexpected expenses or lower registration.

4. What do you do if one area exceeds your budget?

Just like at home, you'll need to decide what you'll prioritize. If you feel strongly about a budget area and your team agrees, then go for it! But, you'll need to reduce your costs in another area. Another option is to negotiate costs or change vendors. You can do this with your caterer, speaker or other service provider for the event.

Let your budget reflect your priorities. If you want women to come and have time to connect and bond, then budget for experiences that reflect that goal. If you want women to experience a great speaker, then budget for that. If you want them to enjoy a getaway experience, then gear your budget toward that goal.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Catering (food, beverages and supplies/Volunteer dinner) - 30%
Speaker fees & travel - 35%
Attendee Swag bags/Thank you gifts - 15%
Decorations/Flowers - 10%
Advertising/Administrative Costs - 10%

SAMPLE BUDGET FOR 200 PERSON EVENT:

Printing of posters/postcards: \$100
Postage/Social Media paid ads: \$300
Catering: \$1400
Speaker fee: \$1250
Speaker travel/hotel: \$400
Conference materials: \$500
Flowers: \$150
Decorations: \$250
Volunteer T-shirts/thank you's: \$300
Administrative Supplies: \$100

Total: \$4750

Per-Person-Cost (PPC) = \$23.75 PPC

TICKET PRICE/REGISTRATION FEE

If something has value, then women will pay for it. There is nothing wrong with charging a registration fee.

Generally, women are used to paying \$25-35 for a day long event that includes lunch, speakers and materials

Event Planning Guide

Budget & Finance Strategy

Part 2

Extra Tips & Things to Consider

1. ONLINE REGISTRATION/PAYMENT

This is a must-do if you want new women to attend. If you only expect the women from your church, then you can skip to the next suggestion.

Online registration is consistent with how our society thinks and lives - especially for anyone under 40 years old.

Every online registration options MUST HAVE a link that can be shared on social media, text or email. Share this link often!

2. FOOD

Your largest expense in both labor and money is food. Here's a sobering truth: It's probably cheaper for you to cater than to assign volunteers to shop, prepare and serve your guests.

Another sobering question: Do you want your volunteers tied up in the kitchen OR connecting with and ministering to the women?

Check with local caterers and tell them your budget for lunch. My tip: boxed lunch, but choose lunch items that appeal to women like chicken salad and veggie wraps. Pump up the "wow" factor by offering a selection of beautiful mini-cookies, cupcakes or ice cream bar for dessert. For snacks and bottled water, your local wholesale warehouse is the way to go to keep costs down.

3. SWAG BAGS

This is my term for the bag that women receive when they check-in for any larger or annual women's event/retreat. Imprint the swag bag with your event logo on the bag and fill it with a pen, notebook, tissues, mints/peppermints, morning snack and an invite card to your church and/or women's Bible study. This bag is a great first impression for your guests. It says, "We're happy to have you with us!"

The sturdier the bag, the classier the feel. You can special order heavy paper gift bags with your logo for less cost than a canvas bag. If you use a polypropylene product, just make sure order the heaviest weight that your budget will allow. Otherwise, the bag will feel like a grocery store bag. This sounds picky, but it's important to make the right first impression and it's great post-advertising for your ministry AND church.

ONLINE REGISTRATION/PAYMENT OPTIONS:

- Set up a registration/payment form on Google Docs.
- Use online ticketing service like Eventbrite.com
- If your church has online giving, you might be able to set up an online payment link on that platform.

If it is a long weblink, use Bitly.com to create a shorter link and prevent problems with broken links.

IF YOU DON'T CATER...

My go-to for lunch is the simple, yet classy salad buffet for about \$4 PPC.

Purchase the following in bulk at a wholesale warehouse or GFS:
lettuce, cherry tomatoes, shredded cheese, cucumber, shredded carrots, bacon bits, diced cooked rotisserie chicken, french bread, salad dressing and cookies/pre-cut brownies.

The night before the event, I fill serving bowls of lettuce and wrap them. I fill divided trays with the toppings and wrap.

An hour before the lunch, I set out the trays on the tables along with the chunks of french bread, butter, bottled water and dessert.

Event Planning Timeline

More tips...

4. T-SHIRTS

Okay, I'm going to tell you my opinion, but you don't have to agree...

The cost of design, printing, excess inventory can quickly spin out of control. This is the place where event budgets get stressed or events lose money faster than anything else. (How many times have you had to swallow the cost of leftover t-shirts that didn't get used or purchased?)

If you want to give every attendee a t-shirt, then budget for it with the understanding that the per-person-cost (PPC) could be 20-25%. If you can include the cost of t-shirt into the ticket cost or if someone will absorb the cost, then go for it!

Do you know who I ALWAYS buy t-shirts for? Our volunteers and team leaders! Not only does the t-shirt make them recognizable to guests, but it is also a way to honor them, so buy them a lovely t-shirt and build the cost into the thank you/gifts budget.

5. MERCHANDISE

I create a separate budget for merchandise apart from the event budget. T-shirts, mugs and bags are an extra event expense and the first place that I cut when I need to reduce costs.

As a general rule, order less than what you think. It's okay to run out of merchandise. Too many merchandise items for sale can distract from the day.

It might seem like I am anti-merchandise, but I'm really not. But, we can get so wrapped up in what kinds of stuff to sell that it can siphon away the energy needed to plan the actual event. Don't let that happen!

One more thing: It's a big risk to bet on your merchandise sales for fundraising or to help your event break even. Be proactive and do your budget based on event attendance times ticket sales instead.

6. SCHOLARSHIPS

There will always be a segment of women who are financially unable to buy a ticket for your event. Plan in advance to cover the cost for a certain number of women, whether you add scholarships into the budget or ask the church to sponsor the women. Just don't forget that there are no free tickets! You are still covering their PPC cost for the event.

7. NO REGISTRATION FEE EVENTS

It's okay to host a free event if your church can handle the expenses. But, don't host a free event just because you are worried that women won't come if they have to pay.

Free doesn't mean that the women will come. It sends a message to the women that the event has little value to their lives. Even if you live in a lower-income area, free events don't equal better attendance.

BEST PRACTICES FOR FINANCE THAT WILL KEEP YOU, YOUR PASTOR AND CHURCH FINANCE DEPARTMENT HAPPY:

- Create your event budget and review it with your finance department before spending any money.
- Make sure that there is clarity on who will or can do the purchasing.
- Clarify how expenses will be managed, whether by cash or credit, as well as reimbursement procedures.
- If this event is hosted by church, then tax-exempt purchases are possible. Contact your finance department or treasurer for the procedure.
- Let God's blessing on this event begin with good financial management!

ORDERING T-SHIRTS/WEARABLES

I use a bell-curve to order t-shirts. The size L is the high point on my bell-curve. Large is average. For 200 women, I'll order 20 L shirts and adjust along a curve for the other sizes based on my best-guess.

S - 15

M - 18

L - 20

XL - 18

2XL - 15

3XL - 10

BARBROOSE

Speaker & Author | barbroose.com

My Favorite Things...



Swag - Want to do something fancy? You can have your conference name or logo printed in black or silver foil on the outside of the bag for about \$3 per bag. (from nashvillewraps.com)

Another fancy option is a reversible bag. A great option if you want an upscale bag for your merchandise table or guest speakers.



Bracelet - This simple chain bracelet looks expensive, but wholesales for \$8 ea. It can be imprinted with your conference name (from femmepromo.com)

Sparkly Tumbler - Who wouldn't want one of these! This tumbler makes a huge statement. It's a high-end merchandise item, so think carefully about the risk. But, it will definitely capture women's attention! (from femmepromo.com)

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