

Events 101

Tips, Tricks, and Reminders on How to Throw Successful UP Alumni Events

1. Fill a need!

There are many ways alumni could choose to spend their time and money. It is important to be aware of how your offering is unique, and what need or want you're filling for alumni. This could be VIP access to a restaurant or museum, it could simply be a financial perk to attending this specific event because UP is helping cover the cost, or it could be purely the goodness of reconnecting with Pilots at a favorite spot in the city.

2. Walk the guest experience.

Now that you've figured out what your event is, you want to ensure that your guests will have a fantastic experience from start to finish. The best thing to do is to "walk the guest experience." Go to the venue, meet your contact, and be mindful of every step of the guest process. Items to consider:

- When you drive up to the venue, is it clear where you're supposed to go?
- Is parking easy?
- When you get inside, is it easy to find your way around?
- Do you need signage or a greeter?
- Where will people put their coats?
- Is there enough seating for everyone?
- Is there room for a small welcome table to hold nametags and a check-in sheet?
- Where are the bathrooms?
- Do you need to supply music?
- Do you need Wi-Fi?
- Could random people walk in on your event?
- Are there drink tickets?
- How do people order food and beverage?
- Are there ways you can tell UP's story – display photos on TV screens, etc.?
- Are there spots to add some UP decorations?
- How will people know when the event is over? Will you have people thank guests for attending?

3. Understand your budget and guest count.

On average, plan for a person to consume 2.5 beverages. This will help you estimate bar costs. UP is a non-profit organization. It never hurts to ask a vendor if they offer a non-profit discount.

4. It's all in the details!

Details can make or break your event. This applies to the logistics of the flow of the event, but also to the “paper” details. The small details add up and make an impact on your attendees...trust us! Items to consider:

- Welcome signs on the doors
- UP decorations
- Nametags that match your chapter brand
- How are you going to tell your story after the event? Be thoughtful about capturing the goodness of your event to share with others.
- Choose higher quality items for your visible zones. For example, the check-in table? Literally everyone is going to pay attention to it – make it count. The guest tables are much less of a concern. If there's a stage or a place someone will be speaking from, think of what the photo would look like. Do you like the background or surrounding area?
- Spend your resources on the areas that will organically capture people's attention.

5. Personal outreach is crucial.

While we will add as much pizzazz to your event marketing as possible, nothing ensures successful attendance more than personal outreach. We encourage you to extend individual invitations to your fellow Pilots. Imagine how nice it would feel to be personally invited to an alumni event!

6. Find the wallflower.

During your event, your job is not to catch up with your friends. You are the hosts. Find a person who is standing by themselves, or staring at their phone, or awkwardly loitering near the buffet. Walk up and introduce yourself and help make them feel comfortable. Maybe you can introduce them to someone who has a similar interest. Remember that this is your event and you want everyone to feel like showing up was worth their time.

Extending a personal connection with an individual not only increases the chance of connectedness, it directly impacts their likelihood to return to an event.

7. “If they love us when they leave us, they'll be back.”

First impressions are important and should absolutely be considered, but the most important thing is the last impression. Always remember, “If they love us when they leave us, they'll be back.” This could mean holding the door for people as they leave and thanking them for coming, having little favors for people to take with them, or simply having information about an upcoming event. Don't forget the last impression.