

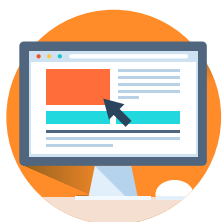
# UNPLANNING YOUR EVENT

## A Checklist

**So, your event has been  
cancelled or postponed.  
Now what!?**

There are many important tasks to tackle and things to think about when you determine that your event can no longer proceed as originally planned. It is especially tricky when there is little advance warning or notice of the event postponement or cancellation and immediate action is required.

**Here is a general checklist of things to think about and act upon:**



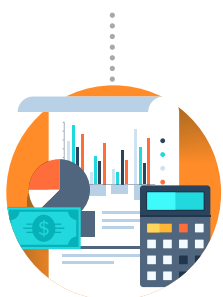
### Event Website

Which pages of your event website should be kept online? What info needs to be amended or immediately changed? Remember, event-goers will be relying on your website for timely information.



### Venue Contract

Review the cancellation or force majeure and impossibility clauses in your venue contract(s). What damages are in play? Are deposits recoverable or non-refundable? Will a new contract be signed with the event venue(s) for the future or will any aspect of the current contract be applied to a new or revised booking at the same venue? What are your financial liabilities? Do you need a legal opinion?



### Financial (Event Budget)

Which event expenses are sunk costs? Which ones can be deferred to a future year's event? Are you eligible for refunds of deposits for any contracted supplies and services or can you re-negotiate to apply deposits or paid invoices to a future event?



## Marketing

Do any pre-scheduled marketing messages on social media, via email, etc. need to be paused or revised? Are there any paid advertising campaigns that you need to change or halt?



## Communications

Make a list of everyone who needs to know about the change in plans and decide who is the best person to communicate with these stakeholders and what information will be passed along to different groups. The stakeholders may include board and committees, sponsors, event talent or entertainment, speakers/hosts/emcees, suppliers (photographers, AV, décor, caterers, etc.), donors or sponsors. Which communication channel will be used – phone, email, face-to-face meeting, etc? Is there a hierarchy in terms of which stakeholders need to hear the news first?



## Paid Attendees or Ticketholders

Will refunds be offered to attendees? How will the existing refund policy be applied? Can the registration/ticket revenue be deferred to a future event or another product or service (which would allow the event host to keep the revenues and avoid refunding)? Are there any hard costs that will be incurred to process refunds (i.e. credit card administration fees, etc.)? Are registration system processing fees lost if tickets/registrations are cancelled or refunded? Is there a make-good offer that can be provided to attendees (i.e. can registration fees or ticket fees be applied to something else that the event host can offer or a different type of event)?



## Sponsors & Partners

Review sponsor contracts to determine which sponsorship deliverables have been fulfilled at the time of event cancellation or postponement. Connect with each sponsor individually to agree on a make-good arrangement that is mutually beneficial for all parties. Cash sponsors and VIK sponsors will be treated differently depending on how much of the VIK was received/utilized at the time of the event cancellation. In the case of grants or funding partners, contact the funder to discuss how the change in plans will affect the grant. Explore ways to keep sponsors on board and maintain those relationships – flexibility is required and there is no one size fits all solution when it comes to renegotiating sponsor partnerships in the case of a cancelled or postponed event.



## **Travel & Transportation**

Explore the need to cancel air or train tickets, hotel room bookings, etc. Contact bus companies, ground transportation services, car rental agencies, etc. to modify or change bookings. If refunds are not possible, how will travel credits be applied? Are travel credits transferable or can they only be used by the original traveller?



## **Contract Staff/ Consultants**

Review clauses with external contractors and consultants with respect to their role in wrapping up the event and assisting with unplanning the event or re-scheduling it. How will you settle up on the obvious changes in the original scope of work? Do you need additional resources to assist with unplanning the event or managing a postponement?



## **Purchased Event Supplies**

Can any items that were purchased for the event prior to the cancellation or postponement be used for another purpose or a future event? Can items be returned for a refund? Is storage required if items will be used in the future?



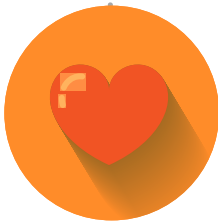
## **Printing, Graphic Design & Signage**

Can any of the graphic design work be used for a future event or easily modified for future events? Are any printed items salvageable or re-usable?



## Registration & Ticketing Systems

Disable any online registration or ticket sales platforms until such time a plan for the re-scheduled or future event is confirmed or until any refunds or cancellations are fully processed.



## Volunteers

Connect with volunteers to explain the change of plans and to thank them for their interest in helping out at the event. Can they assist with any of the unplanning tasks or be kept engaged for a future event? If volunteers have already provided some assistance and were promised swag or other perks, make sure to make good on these promises.



## Insurance

Check company/organization insurance policies for coverage on event cancellation or postponement and other à la carte coverages that may apply in unforeseen circumstances. When in doubt about whether or not coverage applies in specific situations, obtain a legal opinion.



## The Pivot or Flex

Can any aspect of the event still be offered? Can the event pivot or flex into a different type of event and still meet the overall event objectives? Can the event be virtual or modified in any way?

**Unplanning an event, managing a postponement, and coordinating the details and protocol that are required in order to maintain a **POSITIVE** relationship with your event attendees, sponsors, and partners is not easy.**