



UNO COMMUNICATORS TOOLKIT

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

The Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications (MarComm) created this Event Planning Checklist to help you plan your event on campus.

OVERVIEW

1. [Define Goals, Objectives, and Audience](#)
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Please note: some of the tasks happen simultaneously; therefore, this list is not necessarily in step-by-step order or all inclusive, but it is an overview of tasks to be sure to consider.

1. DEFINE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND AUDIENCE

To begin planning an event, it is important to have clearly defined goals and objectives.

Defining Goals

Goals give direction to your efforts, help set priorities, increase your convictions in achievement, support decision-making, motivate you to act, and help you reach your full potential.

1. Why are you having this event?
2. Why are you inviting attendees to your event?
3. What are the key things you want an attendee to walk away with?
4. How will you specifically measure your success?

Defining Objectives

An objective is a measurable, specific action an employee or team needs to take to meet the needs of a larger company goal. A strategy, on the other hand, defines how each employee or team will accomplish the objective.

1. How can the goal be accomplished?
2. Measure progress, offer a sense of achievement, confirm your confidence in the strategy, help in making difficult decisions, help understand what is expected of you.

Determine Your Audience

Depending on the type of event you are planning, your audience should be determined early to ensure you are planning with the audience experience in mind and promoting the event in the most efficient way, whether that's public announcements or private invitations.

Think about who will need to be included on your guest list:

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Sponsors/Donors
- Dignitaries
- Alumni
- State representatives
- Distinguished guests
- VIPs

2. ESTABLISH EVENT BUDGET

A budget is a detailed forecast of what will be happening financially at your event. A budget helps control your expenses and measures the success of your meeting or event performance.

Budget Considerations

Before you can plan an event, it's critical to know how much funding is available so you can create a budget. Even when planning an event on campus, there may be costs associated.

1. Venue rental
2. Parking (shuttles?)
3. Invitations/Mailings
4. Use of audio/visual equipment
5. Catering – food & beverages
6. Tablecloth rental
7. Marketing & Promotional materials/Swag
8. Travel costs
9. Security
10. Speaker fees
11. Entertainment

NOTE: You will want to have access to your cost center budget number(s), so the charges can be invoiced.

3. BUILD YOUR EVENTS TEAM

To ensure your event runs smoothly, it's important to build a team to assist in planning and executing the event.

1. Identify your team and their roles.
 - a. **Event planner** – oversees the planning and execution of the event
 - b. **2-3 Staff Members** – designated venue and logistics tasks
 - c. **Volunteers** – day of event tasks and assignments
 - d. **Students** – day of event tasks and assignments
2. Allocate specific tasks and action items as required
3. Define key milestones and deadlines
4. Build out processes, including communication, reporting, and meetings

4. CHOOSE EVENT DATE(S)

Choose your date(s) and times carefully and thoughtfully.

Review University Calendar

Review the university calendar of events for different activities that are happening around campus. It may be best to avoid scheduling the event during campuswide events (e.g., commencement, homecoming, holiday shutdowns, spring break, etc.).

Select Multiple Dates

It is advisable to select a couple of date/time options as this will allow more flexibility while trying to secure your desired venue.

5. RESERVE A VENUE

There are a variety of spaces available for rent and/or reservation on UNO's campus to meet the needs of your event. Each space has a contact person that will help you reserve and confirm the space for your event.

How to Make a Reservation

Visit the full listing of spaces and contacts, visit the [Facility Rental and Reserving Space on Campus website](#).

List of potential venues:

- Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC)
- Baxter Arena
- CPACS Commons
- Criss Library
- Mammel Hall (Scott Campus)
- Milo Bail
- SAPP Fieldhouse
- Scott Conference Center (Scott Campus)

- Strauss Performing Arts Center (SPAC)
- Thompson Alumni Center
- The Barn at Glacier Creek

Tips to keep in mind when scheduling a space:

When choosing a venue for your event there are several things you may need to consider to ensure you are accommodating the needs of your guests.

- **Location:** Is it easy to get to/find?
- **Parking:** Is there ample parking? Do people need to pay for parking?
- **Attendees:** Who is the event focused toward?
- **Number of Guests:** How many people are expected to attend the event?
- **Catering:** Do they allow catering? Is campus catering required or can an outside vendor be used?
- **Space:** How is the lighting and ambiance of the room?
- **Layout:** Is the layout conducive to the needs of your event? Will there be a presentation or a guest speaker? (If so, arrange chairs so no one's back is to the speaker/screen)
- **Equipment:** What type of equipment will be needed for your event? Does the venue have it? Who will handle the technical aspect during the event?
- **ADA:** Is it ADA compliant and accessible to people with disabilities?

NOTE: There may be different requirements and rental fees for reserving certain spaces, so it's important to reach out to the contact person for any additional information early in your planning process.

6. VENUE AND LOGISTICS PLANNING

How you set up your venue is important to maximize the success of the event. Keep in mind that some venues will provide equipment and some do not, so it is up to you to work through those details with your venue contact.

Venue Set-up

Work with your venue contact to set-up your space to meet the needs of your guests and maximize the success of your event.

Venue set-up needs to consider:

- What kind of tables are needed and what quantity? Are tablecloths needed?
- What shape/layout is required for the tables?
- Will there be a presentation or a guest speaker?

Arrange Audio-Visual Needs

Audio-visual needs are coordinated through the building contact for your venue.

Audio-visual needs to consider:

- Audio
- Screen
- Laptop hookup
- Internet connection
- Handheld microphone

- Lapel microphone
- Podium for speaker
- Live streaming

Schedule Parking

It is highly preferred that event parking requests are made with at least 48 hours advance notice to ensure parking availability. Requests that are made with less than 48 hours advance notice will be reviewed, but are not guaranteed.

To schedule parking for an event, please contact UNO Event Parking at unoeventparking@unomaha.edu.

Order catering

Catering is available to help you create a memorable event! Sodexo can provide everything from snacks to beverages for a meeting to full meals for an extravagant banquet.

Typically, when hosting an event on campus, you must use UNO's catering services through Sodexo.

To place a catering order please go to unomaha.catertrax.com and set up an account to view the catering menu and place your order.

Catering orders must be placed at least 10 days in advance and final quantities are due five days in advance.

Keep in mind potential allergies and religious holidays that may affect menu options.

If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Hamilton (patricia.hamilton@sodexo.com or at 402.554.6703).

Alcohol Policy

The consumption of alcohol on campus is authorized and governed by Regental policy and the Nebraska Liquor Control Act and subject to the procedures listed noted in the university alcohol policy.

Read more about the university alcohol policy for campus events and find the application for serving alcohol form on the [food services & catering website](#).

Make Accessibility Accommodations

UNO campus buildings are ADA compliant; however, it's important to talk with your contact about the accessibility accommodations needed at your event.

Accommodations to consider:

- Wheel chair accessibility
- Sign language interpreter
- Translator
- Approval for service animal
- Special seating or seating removed

To request accommodations for your event, please contact the Accessibility Services Center unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu.

Plan for Photography/Videography Needs

UNO's Multimedia team is available to assist in coordinating Photography and Videography services to meet the needs of your event whether that be a campus photographer/videographer or one of our freelance partners. Submit this form to [request UNO Photography/Videography Services](#).

Photo and Video Release Forms

1. The official UNO photography/videography release form must be signed. If the subject is 18 years old or younger, their parent or guardian will also need to sign the form.
2. It is the responsibility of the unit or department leading the photo/video production to maintain a file of signed UNO photography/videography release forms for reference.
3. Download and print the official UNO [Photo Release Form](#).

Public University Event or Crowd Permissions

1. Group and crowd shots, where individuals are not easily identifiable, do not require specific permission from individuals appearing in the image you are planning to use.
2. Out of courtesy, where possible, notice should be provided to the event participants or crowd.

This can be done by:

Including a footnote on event materials (invitations, programs, etc) with the following language:

- a. The University of Nebraska at Omaha will be taking photos/video at this event for use in advertising and other promotional materials, whether in print, electronic, or other media.
 - b. And/or by posting signs at the entrance of the event stating: Photography/Videography in process. Photos may be used for advertising and other promotional materials, whether, print, electronic, or other media.
3. If you plan to attach the name of an event participant to a particular photograph, a UNO photography/videography release form must be signed by the identified person and kept by the department.

Click the link for more information about [Release Forms and Permissions](#).

Inform UNO's Public Safety

If you are hosting a larger an event with 200 attendees or more, please inform [UNO's Public Safety](#) of the event details. This will allow them to properly plan their day and check in on the event to ensure everyone's safety. If events are much larger than 200 attendees, Public Safety may need to get involved in the actual planning of the event. Please contact Public Safety at unopublicsafety@unomaha.edu, in this case.

7. DEVELOP EVENT BRANDING

From the event name and theme to the event website design and on-site look and feel – your event's branding sets the tone for your event. A strong event brand provides a vision and helps to steer the direction of your event.

Choose Event Theme

1. **Event name:** The first crucial step, your event's name is the first thing attendees will see, so you want it to reflect your vision for the event.
2. **Theme:** A name alone can't tell the whole story. Often events will create a theme to tie the event together.
3. **Photos or Graphics:** There should be consistency across all marketing touchpoints.

4. **On-site decor, email, signage, and more:** While every touch point doesn't need to be hyper-branded, individual elements should come together to support the story you are telling.

With these branding elements solidified, you should use them across all platforms including, your event website, social media, emails, tickets, and registration, etc.

Create Event Graphics

MarComm provides campus partners access to [Marq online design templates](#) to create UNO-branded communications materials. UNO logos, colors, fonts and other assets are pre-loaded.

Anyone creating UNO branded materials should be familiar with the [UNO Brand Guide](#) to ensure all guidelines are being met.

1. Marq Templates

- a. Choose from a variety of ready-made, UNO-branded templates from posters to digital signs to social media graphics and more, to meet whatever communications need you may have.
- b. **UNO-branded** means all official logos, fonts, colors, and disclaimer statements are already included to ensure your items are properly in brand from start to finish. You also have the flexibility to add your own typesettings and photos or illustrations to customize for your specific needs.
- c. Each item you create can be exported to fit your needs:
 - i. Save a PNG or JPEG to use on digital formats such as the UNO website, the Maverick Daily/Bullseye newsletter, or social media.
 - ii. Save a PDF to use on printed items such as posters, fliers, etc... and send to [authorized printers](#) for final production.
 - iii. Use this guide for making Marq [screen reader accessible](#) PDFs for the visually impaired.

2. Marq Access

Each campus unit has a designated Marq account license that can be accessed through a general email address and password. You cannot log in to Marq with a personalized email address.

- a. Please contact your college communicator or department lead to request access to your unit's shared account.
- b. If you're unsure about who your Marq account lead is, please contact MarComm at marcomm@unomaha.edu.

3. Marq Training

- a. Marq is extremely easy to use and very intuitive. Many have compared it to using PowerPoint, but if you have any questions along the way these resources can help.
- b. This [Quick Start Guide](#) that is a great reference to help you navigate the UNO Marq website and familiarize yourself with the menus and tools.
- c. For a little more in-depth training and specific questions, Marq offers a number of [tutorials](#) and free [video user courses](#), as well as a robust Help Center.
- d. For general questions about Marq, visit the [Marq FAQ page](#).

Disclaimer Statement for Event Materials

Disclaimer statements are required on all communications pieces for the university to be in compliance with Title IX and accessibility standards. Disclaimer statements should be displayed at the bottom or on the back of printed event pieces and should be no smaller than 6-point type.

The following disclaimer statement must be included on all marketing/communications pieces:

The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its education programs or activities, including admissions and employment. The University prohibits any form of retaliation being taken against anyone for reporting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for otherwise engaging in protected activity.

The ADA statement should be added after the disclaimer when your audience may need to contact UNO for ADA concerns and/or accommodations, (generally for marketing/communications pieces received prior to an event)

UNO is an AA/EEO/ADA institution. For Title IX concerns, please contact the Title IX Coordinator (phone: 402.554.2120). For ADA/504 accommodations or assistance, please call/contact the ADA/504 Coordinator (phone 402.554.2463) or the Accessibility Services Center (phone: 402.554.2872).

Finally, the photography statement should be added at the end if there is a chance your audience could be photographed during a UNO event (generally for marketing/communications pieces either received prior to, or the day of an event)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha will be taking pictures at this event for use in advertising and other promotional materials, whether in print, electronic, or other media.

NOTE: the final combination of statements you use will be displayed as a single paragraph of legal copy at the end of your design.

8. PLAN YOUR “RUN OF SHOW”

To have a successful event – whether big or small – proper planning and organization are imperative.

Define Your Event Structure and Agenda

Will there be a single session, a full day with a single track, or multiple tracks running at the same time?

1. Think about ways to maximize learning and goals.
2. Ensure there are enough breaks and downtime throughout the event.
3. Consider delivery, engagement, and room layout.
4. Can event technology support the meeting objectives?
5. Consider how effectiveness and outcomes will be measured.

Create a “Run of Show” Master Document

The “Run of Show” master document explains everything that goes on behind the scenes from setup to tear down to keep everyone involved in the event aware of where they need to be. It includes:

1. An item-by-item sequence of events that will happen during the event.
2. A detailed outline of what each person should be doing and at what time.

Sample "Run of Show"

1. **Welcome (College Dean)**
 - a. Short Intro
 - b. Welcome to the Event
2. **Introduce Chancellor (College Dean)**
 - a. College Dean moves to interview set after Chancellor takes the podium
3. **Chancellor Remarks (Chancellor)**
 - a. Thank the donors
 - b. Talk about crowd funding site and mention the fundraising goal
4. **Introduce Guest Speakers (Chancellor)**
 - a. Guest speakers will approach the stage and pose for a photo with Chancellor
 - b. Guest Speakers will make their way to the interview set after the photo
 - c. Chancellor exits the stage
5. **Interview (College Dean and Guest Speakers)**

Secure and Confirm Speakers

If a guest speaker is needed for your event, you will want to secure and confirm their presence early in your planning process after the event date, time, and location have been set.

1. Send a confirmation of the details to the guest speaker after they agree to attend the event.
 - a. Provide speakers with details and guidelines on the specifics of their session.
 - b. Set deadlines for content.
 - c. Gather headshots and bios to include on the app or website.
 - d. Share details of any AV or event tech to be used.
 - e. Outline arrival and departure times.
 - f. Confirm rehearsal timings.
 - g. Confirm contact numbers.
2. One week prior to the event, send another confirmation email.
 - a. Verify that nothing has changed with their schedule and commitment.
 - b. Ask if they have any last-minute questions.
 - c. If they are no longer able to attend the event, this will allow some time to find a backup solution.

If you would like to have the Chancellor speak or attend your event, it's important to begin the planning early to accommodate the Chancellor's schedule and submit a [request the appearance](#) of the Chancellor.

Event Walkthrough and Rehearsal

On some occasions, it is helpful to have a practice “run of show” to be sure everyone understands what needs to happen and has a visual of the space and set up.

1. Schedule your rehearsal in advance to ensure speakers and volunteers are able to attend.
2. Rehearsal should happen 1-2 days before the event.
3. Include contact information on what to do in case of emergency or crisis.
4. Have a backup plan if it is an outdoor event and there is inclement weather.

9. EXECUTE YOUR EVENT

You have worked hard! The venue is set up, the catering is scheduled, the speaker(s) has arrived, and now it is time to execute!

10. DEBRIEF

After an event, it is common to have a “debrief” session. This is not required, but it can be helpful to see what may need to be worked on for future events.

Some questions to address during a debrief:

- What were we trying to do? (Repeat the goals of the project and what was trying to be achieved). Did this happen?
- What went well?
- What didn't go so well?
- What can we learn from this?
- What should we do differently next time?
- Is this an annual event? If so, can the venue get booked for next year right now?



Connect with MarComm

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