**Evening Event Overview**

Gathering donors together in a room can be a meaningful experience, both for the donor and the organization. An evening dinner event can not only help raise additional funds with sponsors and attendees, but it can also introduce the mission to new people, while cultivating current supporters to even larger gifts. This is a great opportunity to “activate” your base of supporters!

**A few key ingredients:**

* Form a working event committee. Get 10-15 (minimum) committee members (only 2-3 who are also Board members) to help get an honorary committee, sponsors, and attendees. Use the committee for their contacts and feedback on the overall event plans, not to help with managing event logistics. Focus on getting committee members who are willing to leverage their connections to get sponsors and attendees for the event.
* Identify an honorary committee (highly recognizable names).
* Honor/Celebrate a key donor/community member/partnership, and present an award.
* Make the focus of the event very mission based and impact related. Incorporate a variety of impact areas into the evening, program, and visuals. Have “activities” with mission related projects or “kiosks” with interesting information, engaging the crowd in what you do and the lives you change.

**Event Committee Overview:**

* Committee should be 10-15 people with the primary purpose of engaging others in the event. There is no “maximum” – a committee of 20 would be great!
* Committee should include 1-2 members of the Board of Directors to ensure there is alignment in direction and support from this group.
* New members should be recruited each year to replace the 2-4 likely to drop off each year.
* Names for the committee: Working Committee, Planning Committee, Event Committee

**Recruit Committee Members:**

Committee members can come from a variety of sources. It’s good to go to close friends of the organization and also to engage people who don’t currently have a strong connection. Think about recruiting individuals from:

* Companies who are currently sponsoring the event or have sponsored in the past
* Companies who we would like to solicit for high level/presenting sponsorship
* Actively engaged coordinators of groups that have recently volunteered (companies, churches, schools, etc.)
* Former board members
* Friends/co-workers/family of the honoree
* Current donors
* People who regularly attend your events
* Vendors of the organization (banker, tax person, printer, etc)

\*It’s important to get organizational staff buy in on the event, but staff should not be recruited to sit on this committee.

**Roles of the Event Committee include:**

* Help recruit additional committee members if necessary.
* Offer feedback on the event honoree and ways to make the evening special for him/her.
* Identify and secure honorary committee members.
* Secure sponsors: identify sponsor prospects, deliver clutter busters, and make follow up calls.
* Help ensure the event’s attendance goals are reached by assisting with writing personal notes on invitations, make follow-up phone calls to invitees, etc. Invite personal friends and colleagues.
* Offer feedback on the “mission focus” of the event including flow of the evening, style of the ask, cocktail hour activities, etc.

**Event Committee Chair Role:**

* Help recruit committee members.
* Facilitate meetings and discussions.
* Hold committee members accountable for agreed upon activities/follow up.
* Act as committee representation to staff when whole committee input cannot be gathered for specific and time-sensitive decisions.
* Assist in thanking committee members for their service (during meetings and after event).

**Honorary Committee for the Evening Event**

An honorary committee for an event lends credibility to the event, and the organization, by demonstrating buy in from community leaders.

These community leaders can be from a variety of leadership positions. In particular, focus on:

* Philanthropic (major community donors/supporters, key staff of large foundations, etc.).
* Corporate (staff or board members of key businesses/employers of alumni in the area).
* Community (leaders of partner organizations, elected officials, etc.).

For a member of the Honorary Committee, participation includes lending their name to the event invitation and program, and financially supporting the event with a sponsorship or paying to attend. Our hope is that others will be inspired by their leadership and commitment to the organization and want to join in on the event. This honorary committee can be particularly helpful when securing sponsors and attendees with a high giving capacity.

**Recruitment of prospective committee member talking points:**

Introduce self and thank for support of ABC Organization.

We are putting together a committee of people to help us plan a new event to celebrate the impact of ABC Organization in our community. This committee will help us craft a mission focused event highlighting the important role we play. The event will also be honoring a special supporter of ours, this year, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The committee will be involved by offering suggestions on how to engage the attendees in what our mission really means, while the primary focus of the committee will be identifying and asking sponsors and attendees to be involved.

We will be having a kickoff meeting on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from 7:30-9am. We will then be meeting monthly on the first Thursday of the month at 8am at XYZ Offices. We will also be touching base via phone, email, and individually with committee members as various needs arise.

Your name rose to the top of our list when we started thinking about who could help us on this committee. Is this something that works for you and that you’d be willing to help with?

Is there anyone else that comes to mind that you think would like the opportunity to be on this committee? Thank you again!