Setting Goals

Every January, I start the New Year setting goals, personal and professional. My personal goals are always the same: eat healthier, save money, exercise more and get rid of the clutter (stuff and people). My professional goals change yearly. This year's goals include: network more, learn more about and use social media, be more efficient and be more mindful when managing.

Fortunately for me, Cultural Festivals recently hosted a workshop for artists called "What Works/What Doesn't - Behavior of Successful Artist Entrepreneurs." I had no idea what was going to be presented with a workshop with a title like that, or if it would pertain to me (I do not consider myself an Artist!) As I sat listening, I kept thinking this would work for the Saint Louis Art Fair. Wow! This will work for any event! This is easy to understand and the end result is something of substance!

With that being said, I have to share. The workshop was all about setting goals and spending the time to actually set meaningful and attainable goals. I realized we (Saint Louis Art Fair staff) hadn't actually sat down and itemized the specific goals we, as a team, wanted to accomplish. I then wondered if other event driven organizations spend actual time setting goals.

Do you set goals for your event? Do you *write them down*? Do you share the goals with your board and your staff/ team mates?

Writing them down is hard. In your head you think you know how and where you want the event to go, but how clear is that goal to others? Can you express it in words and are you willing to commit to it by writing it down and letting others know the goal . . . making you accountable?

In the workshop, they had us go through some exercises that helped clarify our goals. Let's take a moment to walk you through the exercises. Grab your pencils!

Success

First we looked at Success. How do you define success for your event? Seriously, have you sat down and listed what success is to your team? Is it to make the budget balance? Have "X" number of people attend? Have "X" number more new sponsors? Or is it something that only the event team members understand? Something like, "This year, success to us will be that the night before the event, the team will able to spend an evening with their families and/or friends, instead of pulling an all-nighter."

Event Assets

Next, list your event's assets. What is your event really good at, not just what you want the public to think, but what is an asset of your event? Is it location, unique programming, community support?

Event Deficit

What is your event's deficit? Not just actuals dollars, but what doesn't your event do well? Your event doesn't have to be good at everything, you just want to know how to manage those not so good areas or things, or know how you can improve that element. Are their certain things you and/or the public endure about your event? An example for the Saint Louis Art Fair: Our attendees endure not enough free parking and long lines to purchase beverages. Are their things you and/or the public prefer about your event?

Event Obituary

Now this is hard. Write your event's obituary. What do you want the public to remember about the event? What do you want your team/staff to remember? What was the event's legacy? Put it on paper.

Set Your Goals

By working through these steps, you are ready to set your goals for your event. Decide on your goals. Are they attainable? Are they measurable? Are the goals expressed in terms that can be measured? Are the goals achievable? Nobody wants to set the event up for failure.

ARE THE GOALS WORTHWILE? What is the end product? What is the outcome and is that outcome going to push the event to the next level of what you determined success to be?

Can you anticipate any problems or challenges the event may encounter? Can you look at those situations and devise strategies for solving them?

Think about the steps you need to accomplish these goal. Write them down. Now decide on three goals to accomplish in the short term (one year), three in three years, five years and for ten years.

As you go through the above exercises, have you perhaps realized that you have one very accessible resource that can help you achieve your goals? That recourse being . . . the IFEA and the many programs and services they have available to you. One specifically that we here at Cultural Festivals take advantage of a great deal is the IFEA's Online Webinars. Each and every Webinar offered in 2015 is full of valuable information that my team can gain knowledge from to help achieve one or more of our goals. For example:

1. **GOAL:** How can we design a better experience for our participants? **IFEA Webinar:** *Designing the Best Participant Experience* on **Thursday, March 12, 2015**
2. **GOAL:** How can we expand our event? **IFEA Webinar:** *When, How, and the Challenges of Expanding your Event* on **Thursday, March 26, 2015**
3. **GOAL:** How can we get better at sponsorship activation and ROI? **IFEA Webinar:** *Strategies, Tactics and Cool Ideas for Activating Sponsorship* on **Thursday, April 9, 2015** **IFEA Webinar:** *Providing Sponsors with ROI Other than on EventDays* on **Thursday, October 15, 2015**
4. **GOAL:** How can we improve our financial Management? **IFEA Webinar:** *Event Budgeting & Financial Management* on **Thursday, April 30, 2015**
5. **GOAL:** How can we increase our children's programming?

IFEA Webinar: *Beyond the Bounce Houses! Programming Children's activities at your Festival* on **Thursday, November 15, 2015**

Goal setting personally, professionally and for your event can be a lot easier when you take advantage of the resources available through the IFEA. We're looking forward to getting one step closer to reaching our goals as we view the IFEA Webinars . . . I invite you to join me on the IFEA Webinars so you can do the same!

I look forward to our paths crossing soon and wish you continued success in 2015.

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site circa 2004 still functioning. However,