



EVENT PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

**How to Create a Wildly Successful
Offline or Online Event**

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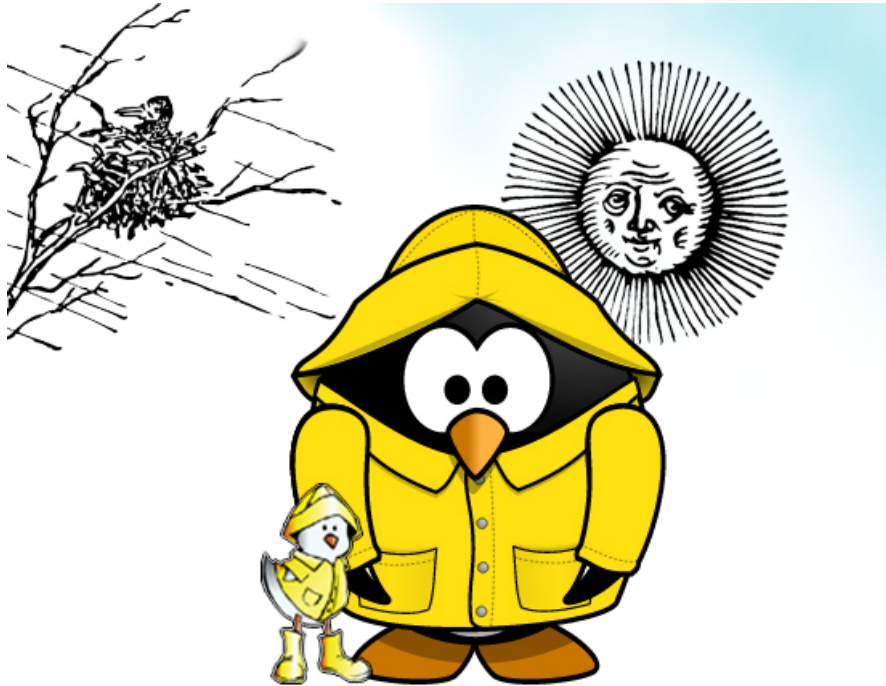
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Module 4: Tailoring Your Events

Events of all types remained very similar right up until this last year, when event culture began to change.



Two factors are most likely responsible for this: Universal mobile addiction has changed the way people shop, interact, connect, search and access both local and online venues – and events. And people have become more impatient, more value-conscious, more demanding and far more selective.

As a general trend...

- Lower-income bracket consumers are more careful where they spend their money
- Higher-income bracket consumers are more careful where they spend their time
- Mid-income bracket consumers are more careful where they spend both money and time

New technologies have also altered the way both online and local events are searched, located, accessed, interacted with – and signed up for. So

let's take a look at factors you need to consider, when creating events from this day forth.

Step One: Understanding where we're going

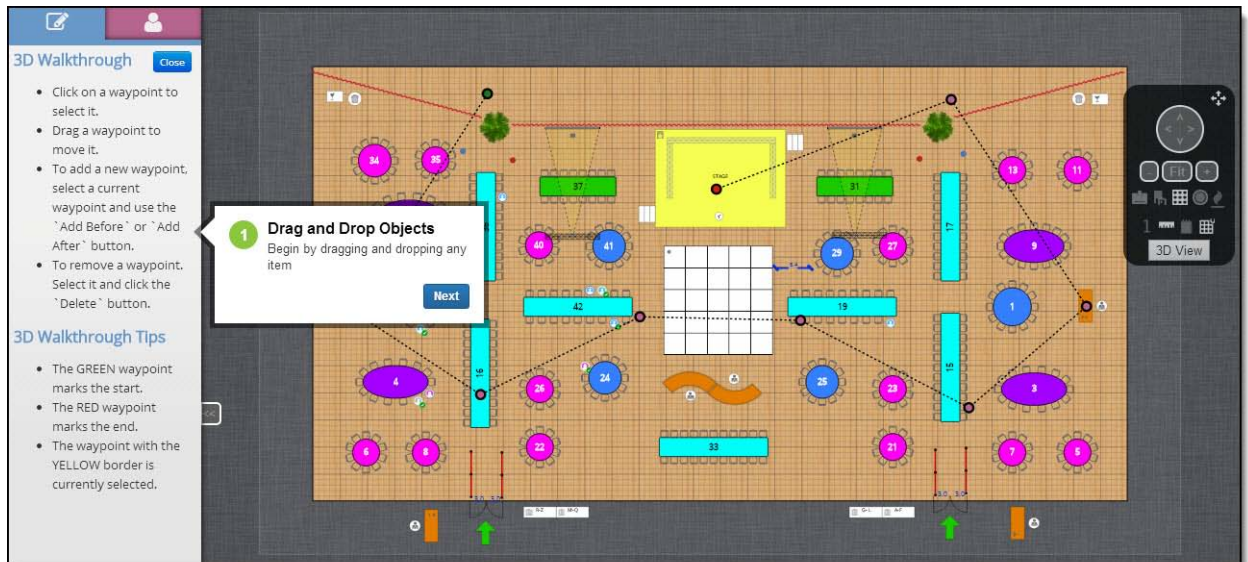
As far as event management goes, people are no longer suspicious of cloud-based storage and sharing. Cloud-based event management solutions are being adopted and adapted to with enthusiasm – but it's important to use the right platform with the right event – and the right audience.

For example, if you are hoping to attract higher-income bracket consumers, invest in a top-end event management planning platform such as [Social Tables](#). One that makes life easier for your prospective attendee and allows for easy growth as you expand your teams, your services and your events scope.

You can try it for free, and licenses for one user start at \$49.00 per month – but for a richer, larger event, you are more likely to have a team of three or four; in which case you may wish to go with their \$99.00 Pro access. Social Tables is particularly ideal for meetings, social events – and trade shows. It is all about matching the quality of your event management with the quality your clients expect you to deliver.

If you need a planning platform that involves careful placement of physical elements such as seating, tables, stages, equipment and booths, this might be a platform to explore (and it syncs across any tablet, computer or mobile).

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If you can afford to go top-of-the-line, can contact Social Tables for an estimate for their totally customized Enterprise pack, which offers a real, live Account Manager, 24/7 “red-phone” access, “white label” branding, partner integration and – something the wealthy expect, if diagrams are involved – 3D rendering.

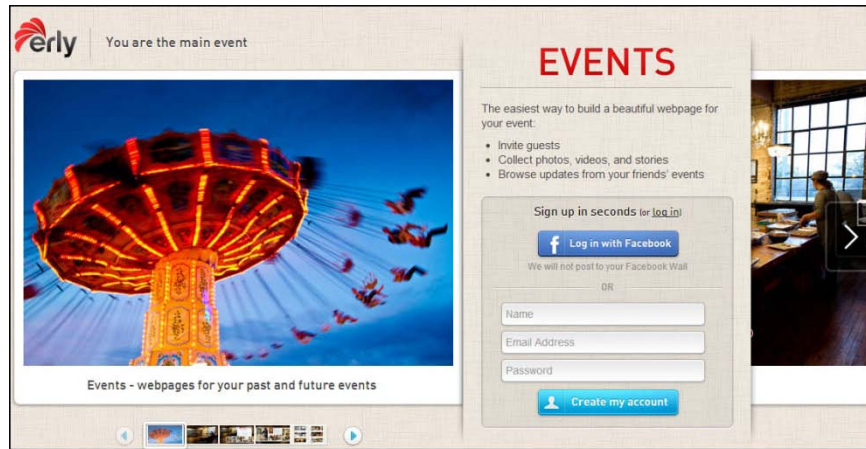
But it doesn't really matter what platforms you go with as long as you **match the deliverables to your client income bracket**. So for wealthy clients, it's worth the investment in top-of-the-line services – and service. No matter what income bracket your attendees belong to, however, remember that in 2014, the biggest shift is all about **putting more control into the hands of your attendees**.

Look for ways to do this as you plan your event, and you'll be giving yourself an advantage your competitors haven't yet realized exists. Other trends include:

- Live event planning via the cloud
- Events that donate all or part of the ticket price to a favorite charity or worthy cause
- More event-sharing and management via mobile apps – including:
 - Registration
 - Seating
 - Booking
 - Picture and document sharing

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- One-page event mini-sites created with landing-page social platforms like [Erly](#).



- Use of premium, event-oriented WordPress themes like [Januas](#) and [Fudge](#).

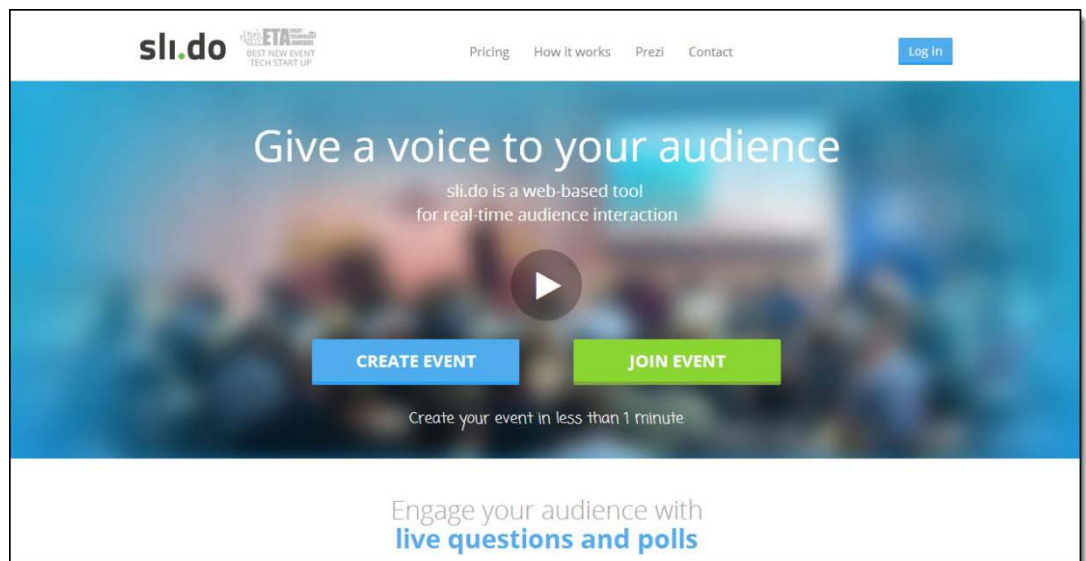


- Heavier use of dedicate Apps for all aspects of event planning and management (such as [Hotel Map for Event Organizers](#)).

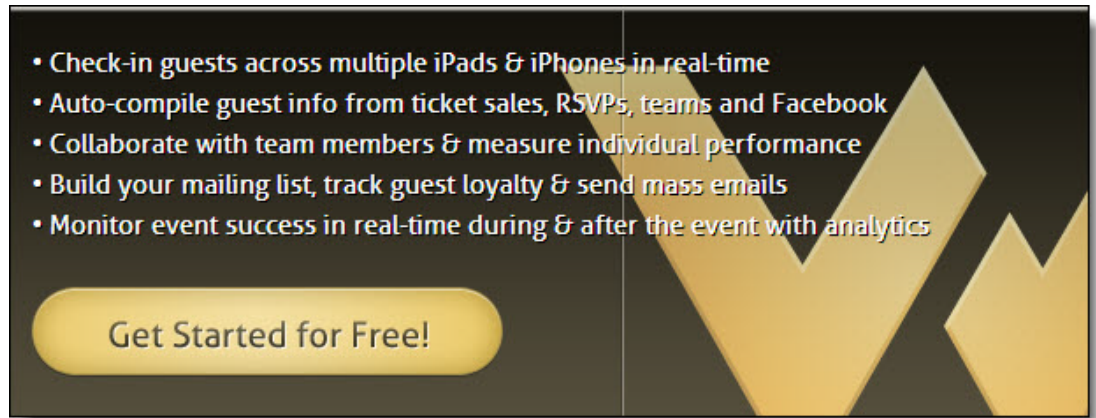
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- Co-operative, interactive event planning that involves audience feedback, like Sli.do.



- Faster check-ins and registrations, directly from social networks like **Facebook**, with Apps like [Eventbee](#) and [Venuewize](#).



Step Two: What Makes a Great Event?

You can use all the Apps, services and software you like, but if you don't know what people are looking for in an event nowadays, you may reap disappointing results.

The greatest factors in event success (once technology has been mastered and made easy) lies in both the guests – and your guest speakers. So know how to be a good event planner and totally cater – in the most effective way – to both.

Your Guests:

When people decide to join an event, two factors that make a huge difference are:

- Ease of use/registration/access
- Interactivity

They want to be able to access your event from anywhere, at any time (preferably on their mobiles).

They want to be able to:

- Book travel arrangements
- Change seats

- View slides of the venue
- View seating plans, itineraries, agendas
- Confirm bookings
- Get directions
- View resources

And they want to do all this with a quick click. Even from Facebook. And find information on Twitter, and pictures and photographs on other social networks like

Your Guest Speakers:

Treat your guest speakers like gold. They too want all the same things your guests will want – quick access to documents and resources and all the conveniences that competent event planning offers.

Don't spring any surprises on them. ("Oops. We forgot to tell you, we just booked you a one-way ticket, you need to book your own return home.") Make sure they receive all packages and documents in a timely manner. Make sure you check to see you have received any materials they have contracted to supply in a timely manner.

Hire or JV with the best. The better your guest, the more appreciative your audience – but this comes with a rider...

...Make sure the quality and efficient organization of your event is on a par with your guest speaker's level of professionalism. No one wants to be embarrassed by speaking at an "amateurish" event, where several things go wrong and you forget to hire a transcriptionist. You should aim at impressing your guest speaker, as well as your guests!

Finally, be sure to match the level of your guest speakers with your audience. Don't persuade the Minister of Finance to come and teach basic arithmetic to six kindergarten kids. (That's an extreme example, but it makes a point!)

Your guest speaker will want quality listeners too!

Conclusion

Actively market your event in areas targeted to your ideal attendee. Track your event through your Apps, services and software (most of which will

provide tracking metrics). Create a Facebook Page for your event (as well as a website). Use social media wisely and well for promotion. Engage people with contests and giveaways, using the most up-to-date Apps and methods.

Follow up EVERY event – no matter how big, how small; or what type – with an **evaluation form**, or a link to an evaluation survey (online, in emails, on social media).

Be sure to thank participants and guest speakers – both publicly and in private. Hand out surprise gifts – physical ones, if the event is at a local venue: Free digital downloads or high-value eBooks for online events. Pay attention to the small details, eliminate unnecessary ones and above all, know your guests, your speakers – and the culture you are operating in.

Paying attention to event marketing, 2014 style, will help you quickly build a sterling reputation as someone who really knows how to put on dynamite events – and deliver the goods, every time.

