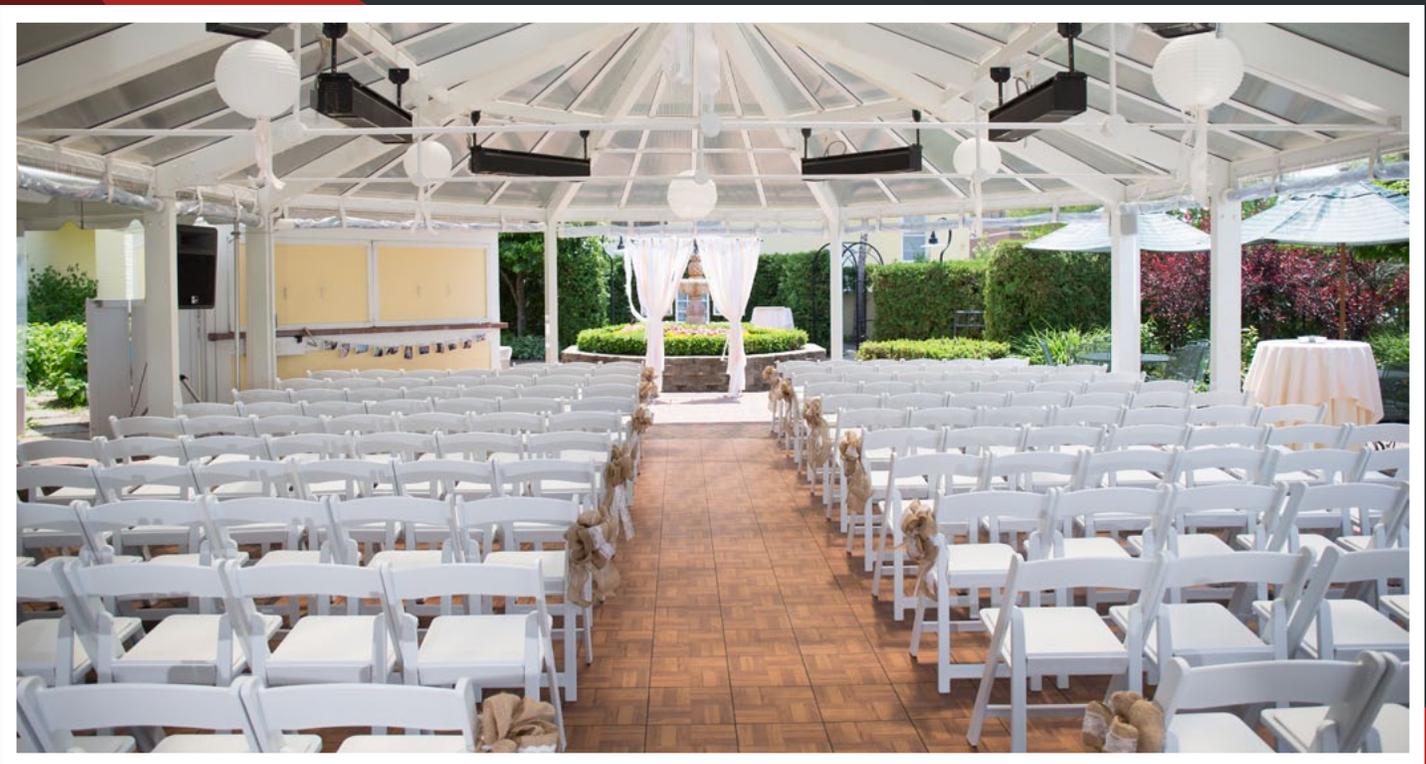


# Save The Date

*Heroic Event Production*



Visit us at [aaarents.com](http://aaarents.com) or (818) 785-1105 for all your rental needs!

# Introduction

Event production, party planning, making things happen. That's the business you're in.

Whether you're planning a big birthday or producing the Emmys, hopefully you enjoy the job and the process of making a day into something special.

Creating memorable events is seductive and addictive. It's a creative job that keeps you on the move with something new every day—what more could you need?

Yes, it's a career where you can call the shots to make sure everyone makes it the best party ever.

Unfortunately, it's not always glamorous.

It's thankless. Many times, clients or attendees will get in the way with micromanagement, or else keep things from happening by not providing vital info. Perhaps the people who say they're coming just don't make an appearance. Any number of unpredictable mishaps can happen.

In the end, event production demands much more coordination than most jobs. It can be absolutely thankless at times.

When hundreds of people congregate at an event, do they consider the people behind it? Probably not. But we think they should.

This guide is a resolution to these issues. There are solutions to the stress, the costly problems, and the complicated nature of planning a large event.

The problems may not be caused by poor planning, but the planners take a lot of the blame.



When things go wrong, the heat flows to the center of it all: the event planner. People can brand you as the villain and destructor of your own creation.

Don't be the villain. Be the hero.

Here's how.

## DEFINING THE ROLE FOR EVENT PRODUCTION

The job for event coordinators, event producers, and party planners are all in the same vein of work. The event has to meet two sets of expectations: those of meet the clients' needs and those of the attendees' expectations. Getting both of these done is like being asked to climb Mount Everest. It can be done, but it's definitely not easy.

Events are managed by coordinating and communicating between many groups of people. The event producer or coordinator has the job of being the control center. All communications pass through you. You are the boss, the King/Queen, and the Hero/Villain of the event. You have to receive information and pass it back out to the correct people with instructions. That's a lot of responsibility.



The role of an event coordinator is not especially creative at that point. It is similar to running any other business. Get the right vendors, and communicate exactly what everyone needs, delegate appropriately, ensure quality along the way, and keep the customer happy through it all. That's the job in simple terms. You are the communication center.

## DEFINING THE ROLE FOR A HERO

We can talk about the word Hero in a few of different ways. You can be a hero to the client. You provide everything they asked for, you go above and beyond, maybe you'll save them from previous bad planning experiences. As a hero, you are the answer to every problem a client has.

You can be a hero to the attendees. You provide the most fulfilling event ever experienced. Whether it is a party or a corporate event, and whether they know you're the one behind the scenes, people will want to come back and revisit the perfectly themed and executed experience.

The final kind of heroics is the internal kind. Through efficiency and saving time, it is possible to remove stress from the job. It is also possible to find more fulfillment from going to work and getting the job done. This is being a hero to yourself, and being the person you imagine you could be.

In most cases, heroics is whatever makes you happy, makes your clients happy, and gets everyone paid. If you can make that happen, then you will be heralded as an event hero.

But a hero has trials to overcome. There are trials and villains in every story. Do they stop you? No! An obstacle is just a proving ground to show the strength and abilities of a hero.

A hero uses the right tools to get the job done. Power ahead with project management, planning, and communication tools to win the day. (We will introduce you to some tools to add to your utility belt later.)

Finally, a hero doesn't save the day by themselves. They've got sidekicks and helpers to back them up. Use your trusty vendors to get the job done for you. Delegate the right tasks to the right

people and together you can take on any challenge. That is the role of the hero.

Combine both the hero and the project planner, and it you'll see it's true—you can make every client happy. You can throw the best possible event. Take away the stress, increase the take home value, and enjoy the job. Heroic event production is fun!

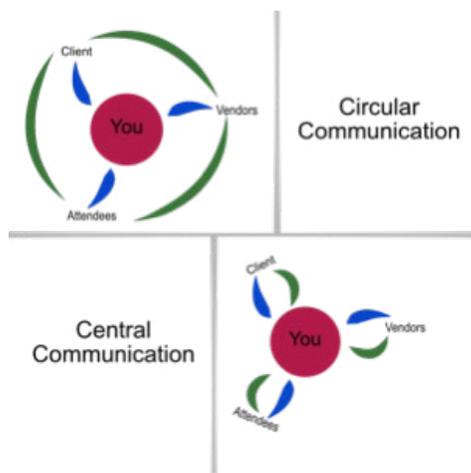
# COMMUNICATION

Communication is what makes any business thrive. You receive the specs and scope of the project, you find the people to make it happen. Passing that information around is a key part of efficiency.

First, you have to distinguish what the client wants. If you are your own client, you've got to figure out what you want. That can be incredibly hard, but it must be done, and it must be done clearly. Define what exactly it is you need from the event.

Then, you determine which vendors you need and what you need from them, and you pass that information over. Then you package up all the attractions for the event and tell all the attendees about it. To use a cliché, you need to keep everyone in the loop.

In fact, you want to keep everyone in a very efficient loop.



Compare the circular communication loop. Information is getting passed around to everyone. In some cases, there is no need to involve you. You can get busy with the fun creative stuff like picking out the theme for the event.

Then compare the central communication. It is much more restricted, and everything must pass between you. You have no choice but to be the central node. This becomes a game of telephone. If you mess up the message because something wasn't made clear, the blame lands squarely on your shoulders. Then you get labeled as the villain. Triumph over this trial with circular communication.

Central communication is often the default method. There is some innate fear or rationale behind keeping everyone separate and letting the party planner handle everything. That is a one-way ticket to StressLand where the rides promise hair loss and upset stomachs.

Do yourself a favor and open up communication as much as possible. Get business cards, emails, numbers, and trade them around. Don't be the choking point for communication.

Rather, facilitate communication around you. Keep yourself in the know, but don't keep yourself in the way. Keep a checklist of who needs to call whom, and just follow up periodically to ensure it happens.



Circular communication promises something amazing: most problems will solve themselves without ever starting. Issues that would've normally gone through you are taken care of before you even hear of them.

The end result of all of this is less stress, fewer problems, and more time to do the more important stuff.

# MAKE YOUR CLIENTS COMMUNICATE

Some clients may be stubborn and uncommunicative, while others may check in far too much. The best way to help everyone is set a standard for communications. Remember, you are the hero and the central project manager. You can set the rules.

Even if you don't have clients, and you're planning your own wedding, you might find that there are people in your life who have certain expectations. Parents, other family, over-bearing loved ones are all options for people who need a certain level of communication.

There are a few main points to get across:

## DEFINING THE ROLE FOR A HERO

Email, phone, skype whatever. Make a statement. Hopefully they don't knock down your door if they need something.

## THEIR EXPECTATIONS

You should completely understand what they want and why. Discuss what you can provide and fully flesh out the scope of the project. Define failure and success. This gives 2 absolutes. Land somewhere in between, and you're a good planner. Go above and beyond, and you're a hero.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR BUSINESS

Most likely, you aren't planning a party for the party planners convention. Spell everything out, and be prepared to answer questions on why you do things the way you do.

## REALLY FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY WANT

This is similar to knowing their expectations, but it's more about helping yourself understand their vision (as opposed to helping them understand yours). Here's a big tip: ask the client what they don't want. Often times, what they don't want will tell you much more about their desires and hopes for the event.

Once everyone has a realistic view of goals and scope, the project becomes much easier. Instead of squabbling and scrambling for justifications, you are treated like a professional providing a service. Make it blatantly clear the benefits and the tasks that everyone must complete.

### Action Tip:

Here's something you can start doing today: ask for whatever you need, and then explain why you need it and what they get out of it.

#### Example

"I need you to set the event date because you know more about the attendees and you can also set it for a day that's best for you"

What this kind of communication does, is put more things on the client's plate so you don't waste time, playing a guessing game on their expectations.



# COMMUNICATION

## With Your Vendors

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Build a great rapport with your vendors, and they will care for you. If you have the best vendors, you'll have the best parties. They will make things happen for you. They might be behind the scenes, but they are the secret weapon that will make you the hero.

But even great vendors need to know what you need.

A vendor really needs to know how they can help you. They're in the business of using your client's budget to make the party happen.

The more information, the better. You will see much better results if you can provide the estimated number of people, the client's expectations, basic must-haves, basic must-nots, and anything else that comes to mind.

Take advantage of your vendors—they are your sidekicks. They're here to help make your event awesome.

Ask and they will provide. If you need anything at all, ask around and see if anyone can help you out. If not, ask if they can refer someone who will help you out.



**You can always contact AAA Rents for more information on how we can work together and build a relationship to make your dream events a reality!**

**Call us at (818) 785-1105.**

# COMMUNICATE

## To The Attendees

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The attendees are really the reason why all of this is happening. You've got to make the party happen for them.

Usually, communication to attendees is the client's job, but don't be afraid to take on this task if the client is overwhelmed.

Communication to the attendees starts in two forms. First, let them know the event is happening. Second, ask them to let you know if they're coming. The RSVP system

has worked for quite a few years. If it isn't broken, don't fix it.

The great thing about modern technology is that RSVPs have become so much easier. Whether you use apps, emails, or just an old fashioned phone call, get into contact with the people who you want to be there.

If you have certain expectations of the attendees, make sure that gets out to

everyone as well. Certain things like parking information, dates, and schedule are all things that people will need to know.

If you're having trouble coming up with that list, think of it like an Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) list. If people continue to have the same questions about an event, provide that information regularly.

Also, if a specific piece of information is important, send it multiple times. It's amazing how often people do not read. They'll happily skim over a piece of information and assume that they got it all. Don't feel like you're annoying attendees by repeating yourselves. Often, this just shows that you're dedicated.

It will also most likely improve the attendance rate, not only because people are more likely to receive the information they need, but because the more often the message is delivered, the likelier they are to remember.

The other important thing to consider about people is they don't like doing hard things. Make it as easy as possible to attend. Imagine that the attendees are like water. They will flow whichever direction has the steepest downhill. If you make it easy to flow to the event, the crowds will come pouring in.

## DELEGATE

The ability to delegate is what separates the stress from the success. This is for those times that you wish you had 50 hours in a day, 10 days a week, and a couple extra hands. Maybe even one more just to hold your coffee cup.

With proper delegation, you can survive with the regular 2 hands, 5 working days a week. You can even save one hand for a cup of coffee if you still need it.

The trick of the trade is to find someone who will happily do all the boring work for you and the heavy lifting. There are even those out there who will do both.

**AAA Rents will offer a series of services that make your job easy and make you the hero of the day.**

Rentals are one service that will lead all other services. A company that offers rentals can often be the one stop shop for all your needs.

Rentals are also a core component of the party planning experience. With the right equipment, such as plates, tents, and a dance floor, you can truly transform the experience. The fun work is deciding what you want the party to look and feel like. The rental provider will fulfill that look and fill out your event.

Delivery is another important aspect. Part of renting is removing the worry by moving the inventory. That means removing the worry of where the equipment is, how it is getting to the event, and getting it back. No one wants to worry about an event after it is over. You also don't want to worry about all the stuff that would need to get packed up.

**There's a lot of physical equipment that any large event needs, and AAA Rents & Events has it all for you:**

- Tables and Chairs
- Furniture
- Umbrellas
- Tenting
- Canopies
- Umbrellas
- Fans
- Lighting
- Heaters
- China
- Flatware
- Glassware
- Trays
- Bars
- Bar Accessories
- Glassware
- Catering equipment
- Dance Floor

### **Ask us about catering**

We provide catering equipment to rent, and we also provide caterer referrals. If you can cut back on the phone calls, that saves time, energy, and stress. Don't make phone call after phone call hunting for the right caterer. Ask AAA Rents for a referral. We will happily send you toward the right person for the job.



## POWERING IT UP

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➤ Power is an issue that few people think of. If your event needs any sort of electronics, it can be a problem getting the event lit up and on the grid.

The technical issues of getting a generator or portable power plant are just as complicated as getting that long list of rentals. Getting the power at the same time as all the other rentals makes this process a breeze.

## LIGHTING THE WAY

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➤ Lighting is a part of power consumption, and equally just as forgotten. Events tend to go longer than expected, and when the sun starts going down, people expect to still have light. If you're indoors, this might not be such a major issue, but it can be. Even indoor locations may demand auxiliary lighting such as fairy lights or accent lighting.

If you've hired a lighting designer to bring the right ambience, they will very likely provide their own equipment and setup. But here, again, communication is essential: what power requirements will the designer have? Discussing this while getting the rentals continues the one stop shop for services, rentals and information.

## FENG SHUI?

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➤ Space usage is another issue, and one that is easily solved with a little professional help. Our professional CAD software allows you to map out a location and fill the space with digitally planned rental equipment. If you aren't certain everything will fit, you can get everything planned out before. Preparation is a key to success, and that leads to the next point.

## LIGHTING THE WAY

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➤ Do you need a city permit? Were you aware that certain events demand a permit? Even if you already knew, there is no way you should have to keep track of all the red tape and logistical complications of local litigation. Ask AAA Rents—we can let you know exactly what is needed for your specific location and event. Just one more thing you can check off your list.

The most important thing you can do is call early. You never know what you may have forgotten, or will need under emergency situations. Starting as early as possible gives everyone the opportunity to be prepared and take on the day with a sense of purpose.

AAA Rents stays completely behind the scenes. You, the planner, are the real hero, getting the help you need from your sidekick.

# TECHNOLOGY

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When the internet was invented, party planners everywhere were blessed with the ability to communicate better than ever before. Planning became easier than before with list making tools and organization methods that brought tears of joy to the industry.

Now, we've got phones. We hold the power in our hands to manage everything we possibly would ever need to. And we have more apps than we know what to do with. This is a list of some of the better options to help out with party planning, but none of them are truly necessary.

## ■ PARTY PLANNING SPECIFIC APPS

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### **Simple Soiree**

Simple Soiree is a way to track all of the attendees and get RSVPs as simply as possible. It is also possible to create a to-do list, a food list, and any other sort of list needed.



### **Pro Party Planner**

\$4.99 for some powerful party planning tools. It might be worth picking up for any sort of party planning.



### **The RSVP App**

A more serious option, this app even allows tickets. If you're serious about your events and need a full solution, this might be it.



### **Bizzabo**

Most likely the biggest most powerful option, this is for people who need all information in one place, for multiple events.

## ■ MUSIC

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If you're looking for alternatives to Google Play and Apple Music, there are still zillions of apps to choose from, but so to narrow it down a bit, try these:



### **Steamclock**

This company makes DJ apps for iPhone. There are plenty of apps out there for all devices. If one of Steamclock's apps don't work for you, just search the app store!



### **Spotify**

One of the world's most powerful and inclusive social music apps, Spotify also has DJ functions and genres based on music you like. Premium service is only \$10 a month, but the free version is serviceable in most occasions as well.



### **Songza**

Songza's biggest selling point is that it contains big lists curated entirely by real humans who happen to be music experts. Except for one commercial in the very beginning, it's free to enjoy without interruption. They have lists for almost any kind of event or party.

## ■ WINE AND LIQUOR

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### **HelloVino**

Get help shopping for wine. You don't have to be a professional wine taster to know where to find great wine.



### **Speakeasy Cocktails**

Learn to make great cocktails for your own event, or know exactly what you want the bartender to make.

## ■ FOOD

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### **Pepperplate**

From recipes, to storing planned meals, to shopping lists. Make the food part of the gig easy.

## ■ PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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### **Slack**

Simple Soiree is a way to track all of the attendees and get RSVPs as simply as possible. It is also possible to create a to-do list, a food list, and any other sort of list needed.



### **Evernote**

Evernote is available for a huge variety of devices, and makes note taking easy.



### **Insightly**

A professional CRM for those who need to take the business side of things seriously.

## ■ DESIGN

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### **Pinterest**

Pinterest is the perfect app for design inspiration. Keep a board for each event to hold onto ideas.

And of course, nothing is more useful than an email and a phone call. Even snail mail still works for Save the Dates.

Don't let technology blind you. If these apps start getting in your way, toss them. Email and phone calls are still the way business is done.

On that note, almost everyone has smartphones with them now. Getting people involved with technology is the best way to stay connected.

In the communication section above, we discussed circular communication versus central communication. Power up your circular communication—let other people communicate on their time, and just use email for timely follow-ups.

# PRODUCTIVITY PITFALLS

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## ■ GETTING DISTRACTED

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Event planning can be a long process, and it's pretty easy to lose sight of goals and current jobs. Keeping on track by using checklists or reminders is the best way to stay productive and to knock off the important tasks.

## ■ NOT DELEGATING

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Delegating is the biggest tip across this book. The best way to get the most done is by dividing work and processing tasks as efficiently as possible.

## ■ NOT USING THE RIGHT VENDORS

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Other rental companies will just provide rentals. AAA Rents goes above and beyond to make your event productive and happy.

## ■ NOT USING MODERN PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

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We've listed plenty of tools for managing the event. There are plenty more where those came from. Investing in a good tool can save time, money and productivity.

## ■ NOT ENJOYING THE JOB

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You've chosen to plan the party because parties are fun! Events are awesome! However, if you aren't enjoying what you're doing, try to find out why.

## ■ MISCOMMUNICATING

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Miscommunication increases costs, creates undue stress, and throws the event off its timeline. Taking the time to ensure that everyone is on the same page could stop problems from forming along the way.

## ■ NOT STICKING TO A TIMELINE

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Know when things must get done, and in what order. Then stick to that timeline for the most impactful and stress-free experience.

## ■ WORRYING AND STRESSING

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Stress lowers energy and increases the chances of giving up or procrastinating. Use tactics to remove stress like proper communication and delegating to AAA Rents. And if you have a free 90 minutes in all of it, get yourself a massage!

## ■ NEVER ASKING FOR HELP

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You don't know what you don't know. If you don't ask for help, you might be missing out on something.

# HEROIC PARTY PLANNING CHECKLIST

## (BY TIMELINE)

- Envision an event with theme
  - Use Pinterest or a planning binder to empower your creative design
  - Colors
  - Design elements - Bold, Elegant, etc.
  - Location
  - Music
  - Cocktails
  - Food
- Set a date and setting
- Start a guest list or acquire one from the client
  - Estimate total attendees
- Start creating a song playlist
- Draw up a budget or work on budget with client
  - Partition budget for certain vendors
  - Visit vendors websites or call for tentative numbers
    - Florists
    - Photographer
    - Videographer
    - Reception Band Florist
- Start asking for help from friends, family, or professionals
- Set up any technologies used for planning
- Consider outfits and special wear. Tuxedos or Dresses may be rented
- Discuss Options with AAA Rents
  - Rentals
  - Referrals
  - Spatial CAD Planning
  - Weather Expectations
- Finalize list of attendees
  - Send RSVPs
  - Manage Incoming Reservations
- Start government paperwork if necessary
  - Permits
  - Passports
- Finalize event design and theme
- Book Vendors
  - Cake designer
  - Florists
  - Bands
  - DJs
  - Photographer
  - Videographer
  - Bartender
  - Calligrapher
  - Transportation
  - Stylists
- Register for gifts, (Weddings)
- Create any literature for the event
- Make contact with RSVP guests who haven't responded yet
- Provide vendors with a final headcount
  - Confirm with vendors on all arrangements
- Have a final meeting with clients, or other people invested in the event
- Rehearse
- Have fun!

# Conclusion

When planning this event, plan on being a hero. Take early measures to get communication rolling, get the right assistance from AAA Rents, and get the attendees to meet you halfway. Really, this book isn't about being a hero to them. Clients will love the communication, and attendees will love the event, but this isn't about the clients or the attendees. Really, this is about being a hero to yourself.

Take away stress and really enjoy the job. Take the thing that you love most about this work, and amplify it. Let other people take care of the unenjoyable parts, and let technology manage the hard parts of organization.

And remember, call **AAA Rents & Events** if you're ready to start planning your event!

<http://aaarents.com/inventory/>

<http://aaarents.com/services/>

<http://aaarents.com/showroom/>

