Event planning and management has been an enjoyable class with many valuable lessons. You can believe that you know all there is to know about how to plan and manage different types of events, but there is still so much detail and hard work that must go into a project to make it a success. The biggest takeaways that I have after completing this course are event analysis, budgeting, feedback, and strategic planning.

Strategic planning is the communication process that captures an organization’s aspirations and guides its activities. It is very important when looking to create and establish a meet or event to make sure that the project meets the hosting organization’s aspirations. An organization’s aspirations are what they desire to achieve and why. If an event does not actually meet the aspirations then it needs to be reworked so that it does. If the aspirations to not align then the mission, strategy, goals, objectives, and tactics will be counterproductive or not effective. Meeting and event planners need to think strategically to meet the desires of the organization, stakeholders, and attendees.

Meeting and event planners have a lot of analysis into an event before the event is even fully conceptualized or moved into action. There needs to be a categorization of Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats followed up by other forms of analysis. One such analysis is that of the SMART-ER analysis to focus on what the learning and program objectives and outcomes are to be from a meeting or event. The learning outcome and objectives are not just important for the organization to measure success but also to measure what the event provides as value to the attendees.

Budgeting is also a huge aspect of event planning. Organizations and their events can have differing goals. They could be hosting an event as a fundraiser which would make a profit, or they may just want to break even. Some events have a deficit budgeting goal as they are meant to serve another purpose other than financial profit. There are also two types of budgets, incremental and zero-based. Incremental budgeting is based on past budget numbers and notes. However, zero-based is completely new and there is no prior budget information use as a base. It is very important to keep extremely detailed notes and records of each event’s budget aspects so that they could potentially be helpful when planning a future event.

Lastly, feedback is important to the event planning and management process. There needs to be measured standards and metrics in order to gauge the effectiveness of the event in the areas of success and objectives. This feedback can be done through surveys and social media interaction. It is important to know what attendees and stakeholders think and what they would like to see a change in the future to better impact the success of an event or meeting.

It has been an honor and a blessing to be able to take this course as an elective this semester. I learned a lot and really enjoyed the work that I did with my theoretical event even though Covid-19 has made learning difficult at times. I also really enjoyed seeing what my peers chose and researched for their own events. I was able to learn a lot from their presentations on their own projects. Tasaday and Quinton’s events were the ones that I learned the most from. I loved Tasady’s creativity, venue, and the purpose behind her event. Quinton’s venue was absolutely stunning, and I personally want to attend an event there in the future. Thank you, Professor Merlino, for all your wisdom and insight into what it takes to be an Event Planner and Manager.