

Organizing events on a

ZERO BUDGET

By Ovanes Ovanessian

**Exclusive
16 ProTips
64 Quick Tips**



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“Hello,



Welcome to the first edition of *Organizing Events on a Zero Budget*. My name is Ovanes and I'm the Co-founder of [Weemss](#) - a new generation event registration software.

This book is a collective effort from our team to bring you a deeper understanding of what really makes events tick, as well as share some advanced tips and tricks on organizing them. You may ask why should you take advice from a company that develops event registration software, even if it's one as excellent as Weemss. The answer is simple - all of us come with years of experience in event planning, organizing and marketing. We love unique events that challenge our perceptions and we are weary of the ordinary. But enough about us!

If you're in the event business this book is for you. If you want to be in the event business this book is also for you. If you want your company to be competitive and smart when organizing an event - this book is definitely for you!

Organizing an event seems like an easy job only to those who've never had to do it. It can be a grueling task for the unprepared, but it can also be a fun and exciting experience when you know how to do it. Most of the material you're going to read here can be applied in any situation regardless of event budget, but we wanted to approach the task in the most difficult of scenarios, where we are organizing an event without a single cent to spend - from zero.“

Ovanes Ovanessian

Founder of Weemss®

From Zero to Event Superhero!

Organizing an event on a zero budget requires a lot more preparation, know-how and actual application compared to what you already know about organizing an event. If you manage, or dare we say when you manage to pull it off you'll be a true event pro. Even if you've already organized a thousand events, we still guarantee you'll learn some new tricks!

Start With an Idea

For the purpose of this book we'll assume you already have a basic idea for an event and we'll help you build on it. Our focus for this guide will be to organize that event on a zero budget, get you selling as many tickets as possible, and make sure you're independent of any other sources of income. Ready? Time to get busy!

ProTip #1

Time for the first piece of solid advice you're going to read in this book. Once you have the idea for an event you will want to start working on it as soon as possible, or as the French say 'le ASAP'! Starting late is a common mistake that many event organizers tend to make. A late start is always very risky regardless of your budget, so we wanted to get this out of the way before we proceed. You will find this to be one of the most valuable pieces of advice in this line of work - we promise.

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AN IDEA

**Lack of ~~money~~
is an
obstacle.**



1

Refining the Event Concept



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you have an idea for an event and you want to be sure people will show interest and buy tickets for it. The early developmental stage of the event is all about identifying these main aspects:

The Why, Who, Where, And When of the Event

Why are you organizing this event?

Organizing any event should always be based on the premise that someone out there needs such an event and wants to attend one. So the first question should always be - Is there a market for this event? If the idea is relevant and interesting, chances are people will show up - the answer to the next question should tell you if the event will actually sell.

Who is this event for?

It is really, really important to identify who your event is suitable for. This is key to understanding what their expectations and needs are going to be. Solid knowledge of your target audience will be a major factor at nearly every consequent stage of organizing and managing the event. Every true event professional knows that people are the real measure of success, not profits, that is why we have dedicated a whole chapter on 'How to Know Your Event Audience and Why You Need to' (Chapter 3).

Where will the event take place?

Choosing the venue can present the first actual stumbling block on your way to organizing the event on a zero budget. While not an insurmountable challenge, we still think it requires a more detailed analysis and we'll touch on the subject further in the book.

When will the event be held?

The date and the duration of the event are no trivial matters. First of all, make sure is that you've given yourself enough time to actually organize the event. Then there are a few things you need to consider when choosing a date for your event:

- are there any similar events on or around that date?
- can you negotiate for the venue to be free at that date and time?
- are the performers (speakers, artists, acts) that you're inviting available in that period?

Event Content is Still King

Whether you're organizing a concert, conference, or a social get-together, content is what's going to bring people aboard. It goes without saying that this is a key area you need to put a lot of effort in. Your content will be the deciding factor when trying to negotiate partnerships, sponsorships, catering, media coverage, and so on. The stronger the content, the easier it will be to arrange the free stuff. Here are a few **QuickTips** that will always help when developing your content:

- Have a consistent theme.
- Align the content with your audience.
- Your aim should be to exceed participant expectations.
- Extra flexibility with the content when on a zero budget is a must.

QuickTips

ProTip #2

The more time you spend on solid preparation the better the results are going to be, always. Refining and then polishing your concept will always result in more sales, a better participant experience, easier customer retention and an excellent brand image. People at the event can always tell if you've put a fair amount of effort in organizing it or if you just decided to throw a quick event for some easy money.



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2

How to Know Your Event Audience and Why You Need to



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can have the most brilliant idea for an event and still fail to sell it. That's why it's imperative that you know who the audience for your event is. As we said earlier identifying your audience is key to understanding their expectations and needs. So how exactly do we do that?

Take a good look at your event!

Your event is in essence a product that you're going to sell to people. Analyze that product and think about how it will fulfill a need or solve a problem for a potential customer. Who might be interested and who may benefit from attending your event?

Do your homework

Doing some research about any similar events can help you get information about your industry, the current market and your competition. Such information is already out there and can easily be found at no cost whatsoever.

Developing Audience Profiles

If you have a rough picture of what your potential audience is going to be, develop your event participant profile, or profiles if you feel the event's going to have more than one audience. Here's some food for thought:

- What is important to these people?
- Do they have advanced knowledge on your event's topic(s)?
- What impresses them?
- How do they interact?
- Are they technical?
- Are they conservative or bohemian?
- What are their problems?

To have a good understanding of your audience you need one more thing - identify where your audience is and what they do. Do some brainstorming about which websites and blogs they are likely to visit, which social networks do they frequent?

QuickTips

These things combined should provide everything you need to know and understand your audience. That knowledge will dictate what you do from this point on and how you do it - from generating event content and developing a marketing strategy, to negotiating partnerships and even choosing the venue!

ProTip #3

Your work is never done. It's essential to stay current on market and industry trends, your competition, and your audience. Make sure you keep track of sales, interactions, and more. This helps you see what participant preferences are, as well as notice trends, patterns, and possible areas of improvement. In Weemss for example you monitor statistics and real-time reports on all key elements of the event registration process so you can adjust them at any moment if something is underperforming!

3

How To Negotiate Anything For Your Event



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If you

really want to learn how to create an event on a zero budget and make the most out of this book, you need to adapt and change your usual approach to organizing. This section covers basic negotiation skills and practical applications in getting venue, speakers, partners and sponsors on board.

If you think outside the box, instead of paying for products and services, you could actually get paid.

QuickTips

Following on from the previous chapter, you should by now have a solid understanding of your event audience. That particular mass of people you are gathering, your event audience, will also be interesting to somebody other than yourself. If nobody finds your audience interesting, then you might have problems and should go back to the very beginning of this book.

Understand the Value of Your Event

Pay attention because this is what a lot of people struggle with and can't understand - the value of their event. Value will always be the basis of any negotiation, so it is essential to master this concept for any event.

Consider what any marketing professional from any company would love to get their hands on. Apart from a Porsche, it's reaching more people with their product or service.

Your event will provide access to people, even more so, access to a guaranteed audience in a natural setting. Knowing your audience well will mean you'll actually know who to approach in your negotiations. Convince them your audience is the right target for their product, service, and so on.

Still unsure about your event's value? You should probably work some more on your event concept!

QuickTips

ProTip #4

The event concept, content and the experience it's going to offer are also part of the equation to understanding the true value of your event. Every new speaker, performer, partner, piece of technical equipment and so on, that you manage to get on board will increase the event's value and give you stronger footing for the next negotiations.

Learn to Negotiate

When working on a zero budget, your negotiation and communication skills are absolutely vital. These skills come from practice, but if you don't know anything about negotiation, make sure to learn the basics.

Here are some **QuickTips** to prepare you for negotiation:

QuickTips

- Focus on the value of your event - your audience, the experience you're providing, the event concept and content.
- Talk less, listen more and ask questions: You may get a better proposal than you expected, so don't jump in at the first chance.
- When negotiating you should always make it clear that you have other alternatives.
- Make sure you DO have other alternatives available otherwise you're shooting yourself in the foot by going all-in on a High Card.
- Play your cards close to your chest. Don't reveal your options.

ProTip #5

If your event has a cause, companies with a similar CSR goal may be willing to participate. They may want to align your cause with theirs or just their personal and honest values.

I want everything.
I have nothing.

I WILL NEGOTIATE.



Know Your Options

You can get a product, service, or anything else for your event in one of three ways:

- Pay for it is not really an option at this stage of the event organizing. Further down the line you might have some money from ticket sales, but not in this early phase.
- Barter and get it free. As they say, ask and you shall receive. Negotiate a barter deal where you offer something in return for goods or services. Remember two things:
 1. In many cases you using a service benefits the provider of that service.
 2. The value of your event as discussed in the previous paragraphs.
- Get paid for it. Think Hollywood movies and product placement. If you can manage this part, you are a bad-a** event pro.

In terms of sponsorship, endorsement, partnership or in our case placement, the film industry can be similar to the event industry. General Motors for example paid good money to have a prominent presence in Michael Bay's Transformers series, because they understood that the movie's audience loves cars as well. There's no reason why your audience shouldn't be interesting to a brand, company, or service out there. But the best part is when there's good synergy between them it will make your event an even better experience for your audience.

What Needs to be Negotiated

Now that you see your value, know your options and understand the basics of negotiation, you can start negotiating anything for your event. Here are some helpful **QuickTips** to work with:

Venue

- Approach alternative, out of the box locations and avoid traditional congress centers and venues. Be original and be flexible.
- Be creative! For example, if you are organizing a conference for small business owners try to approach a bank and use their conference room. They may want to product position their small business loans!

QuickTips

Speakers

- Look for local speakers and save them and yourself transportation and accommodation expenses.
- Target people interested to position themselves within your particular audience.
- Offer them the chance of free publicity (within your event) and positioning for their product or service (within your audience).
- Entice them with non-monetary goodies.

QuickTips

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