

Event Organizer Job Description

As the Summary described, AAN is not your typical arts festival. In fact, it is better described as a community-building event with civil society building benefits ... *disguised* as an arts festival. Therefore, while arts organizations are invited to participate, organizations with a social justice or community building mission will be better suited and more likely to succeed.

Likewise, the Event Organizer (EO) needs many skills but arts management abilities are far down the list of those required. Here are the top qualities needed to succeed in producing AAN:

1. Deep experience with volunteer recruitment, retention, training, and management

- Recruitment: To meet the first year goals, the Event Organizer will need to recruit volunteers of all ages, backgrounds, and incomes. In the first year, 150 volunteers are needed on the day of the event. In the second year, 225 volunteers are needed on the day of the event and between 45 and 65 volunteers will help produce the events for 6 months prior to the event.
- Retention: Recruiting volunteers is the easy part. More than half of those who said, to your face, that they would like to volunteer, will not show up. Of those that do show up, half of those will not come back a second time. So volunteer retainment is an ongoing challenge.
- Training: The premise of AAN is that volunteers learn valuable skills while producing the event. In other words, the Event Organizer must be a teacher of the various tasks needed to produce a large scale event like: How to Write a Press Release, How to Lead a Meeting, How to Recruit Other Volunteers
- Management: But since the Event Organizer cannot be everywhere at once, they will need to delegate some of these responsibilities to other volunteers who act as deputies.

2. Has the anticipation of a Master Chess Player with creative problem solving abilities

The Art All Night budget works because the community (government, businesses, foundations, churches, and most of all, people) donate their time and resources. Just as all of these favors, gifts, donations are donated, they can just as easily be rescinded. Imagine a business that offers AAN the free use of its two-way radios which the volunteers will use to communicate during the event. But then a paying client wants comes to that business and wants to rent those same radios. The donor business is going to have to rescind their offer to AAN in favor of the paying customer. This happens all the time with donated items. *Nothing* is as secure as when you are a paying customer. Likewise, a key volunteer might have a death in the family and can no longer participate in the event. The Event Organizer needs to anticipate every weakness that could derail the event and have alternatives prepared. Finally, they need to be able to think outside-of-the-box to figure out a solution that won't break the bank. The need to fall back on an alternate plan will happen over and over again.

3. The Ability to manage thousands of details but still be a creative force

Organizing AAN is organizing a series of details, details, details. There are a tremendous amount of moving parts that are all interrelated. The Event Organizer must be incredibly organized and methodical but not at the expense of the grand vision. (Prediction: Whoever is hired for this position will one day turn to their Supervisor and say, "This is one of the most complicated endeavors I have ever managed.") Imagine them managing 2 large weddings and the World Cup at the same time and you will get an idea. The Event Organizer is both the grand architect of a new hotel but must also understand and manage the day-to-day hotel operations.

To hire someone who only has a great vision means the event will be sloppy and likely not meet the funders goals.

To hire someone who only has great attention to detail means the event will likely be bland and uninspired.

Finally, the Event Organizer needs to do 1, 2, and 3 with charm, charisma, and composure. This person will be the spokesperson and face of the event. They must be equally comfortable with door knocking in Medellin's poorest slums as well as chatting up a potential donor at a cocktail party. The event lives and dies with the success of this person.

Is your Organization equipped to manage such a person? Does your organization have the time and experience to give them guidance and support?