

4 things that *will* go wrong at that event you're planning

Ironing out the details of a major meeting or event is always an exercise in micromanagement. While you're absorbed in dotting your I's and crossing your T's, keep in mind this list of almost-guaranteed "whoops" moments that you should think about right now:

1. Tech is going to fail. Someone will have forgotten to mention something they need; a critical item will be strangely missing; the switch that has always worked before suddenly won't. Tech may be the #1 enemy of any event going off smoothly. You can't have too many checklists and backup plans for it.

2. Unexpected faces will arrive. You may think you have a perfect head count or have everyone fully registered, but inevitably, there are either too few or too many people for what you planned. Draw up a scheme for both contingencies. Think to yourself: How fast can we react if someone unexpected shows up, or insists they should have gotten an invitation, or registered when we have no proof of it?

3. A handshake agreement falls through. You and someone you've been working with to make things go smoothly suddenly realize there's been a miscommunication. That's when you realize you should have been just a little more firm with what you wanted. Even a written contract can't guarantee this moment is avoided, so ask yourself: Does everyone truly understand what we require, and when?

4. Time expands ... and contracts. There will be too much of it for some things, not enough of it for others. Everyone estimates time differently; we want to believe we can accomplish a lot in a little, but it doesn't always turn out that way. Envision what will happen if a presenter runs wildly over, or comes up well short. Add or subtract 20% from the time of every session and activity and imagine the ramifications.