

Before You Build the Run-of-Show

10 questions to make sure your event has a strategy behind it

Most agendas get built backward (rooms booked, AV ordered, timing locked) before anyone asks what attendees are supposed to walk away with. This checklist flips the order. Ten questions to ask before you touch a floor plan.

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| 01 | Have I named the one shift I want attendees to make in what they know, feel, or do before planning a single session? | ☐ |
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| 02 | Do I know why this content matters to <i>this</i> audience, right now, not just in general? | ☐ |
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| 03 | Have I mapped what attendees actually need before I mapped the room? | ☐ |
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| 04 | Is there a throughline connecting session one to the closing moment, or is it a stack of unrelated topics? | ☐ |
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| 05 | Have I decided what “success” looks like for this event before deciding what it looks like on paper? | ☐ |
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- 06** Am I designing for a transformation, or just filling time slots? ☐
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- 07** Have I identified where attendees will get stuck or resist before I locked the format? ☐
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- 08** Does every session earn its place, or is it there because “that’s how we’ve always done it”? ☐
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- 09** Have I built in space for reflection and share-back, not just content delivery? ☐
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- 10** If I stripped away the AV, the swag, and the room design, would the strategy still hold up on its own? ☐
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Logistics without strategy can produce a well-run event that did not need to happen. Strategy helps you decide whether an agenda deserves attendees’ time, attention, and investment in the first place.

READY TO GO BEYOND THE CHECKLIST?

From Planner to Strategist is PCMA Institute’s live, instructor-facilitated cohort for event professionals ready to design with greater purpose, influence, and impact.

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