

CONFERENCE AND RETREAT PLANNING GUIDE

THE  NAVIGATORS
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PLANNING A CONFERENCE

Know the Why

The first thing you and your planning team must do is know the 'Why'. Without a clear purpose and understanding of why you are planning the conference, your goals will be unclear, vision fuzzy, and plans pointless.

In your initial planning, ask yourselves "Why are we planning this conference?" Do you know how this conference will relate to the vision and mission of your campus, your region, the kingdom of God? Are there goals and dreams you have where this conference is an integral part to meeting those goals?

Establish Goals and a Vision

Plan your conference or retreat top down. That is, first clarify the big picture, then work through the details.

To help establish your goals and vision for any particular conference, here are some questions to help you sort through the issues:

What are the goals of our campus/ region? How does this conference fit into these goals?

What can we accomplish at a conference that we cannot accomplish in our campus ministry?

What are the sensed and felt needs of our potential conferees?

What do we believe God is doing, and how do we want to partner with Him?

Make sure that your goals and vision are clarified and can be easily passed on to others. You will use your goals and vision to direct the other decisions you make for your planning. You can even establish set up individual goals for different aspects of the conference (e.g. recruitment, number of new campuses represented, number of people making commitments to Christ or Missions, etc.)

Remember- a clear vision is one others can follow and leaves a marker to measure accomplishments.

It's an Adventure by Faith

Just like doing one-to-one, leading Bible studies or overseeing an entire ministry, running a conference is a step of faith. As the director's team meets and plans, keep asking God for wisdom and vision to carry out His goals for your conference.

Think out of the Box

To push the limits of what you do with the conference and to take a conference beyond mediocre, allow yourselves to think outside of the box. That is, just because you've seen things done one way, doesn't mean that you have to do it the same again.

Three questions to ask yourselves, and to continue to ask yourselves is "Why", "Why not", and "What if".

Build the Framework

After the goals and vision have been established, start laying out the framework of the conference. What are the big decisions which will affect everything else? Work through these issues, for everything else will be influenced by it.

Things which will build the framework: When is the conference? Who is the conference for? What kind of budget do we want to work with? What is the tone of this conference?

Delegate Duties

Use and modify the Roles and Responsibilities section of the planning notebook to direct the duties you'll have for planning the conference. As the Director or member of the Director's Team, you'll want to know who is in charge of what. Be clear about who is in charge of what. You need to communicate with them what your expectations, vision, and goals are so that they can carry on their duties in light of the overarching vision.

As the planning moves forward, be sure to encourage those who are working under you. Help keep them focused on the task at hand and help them see how their duties relate back to the big picture.

Start Filling the Details

Using the framework and assigned tasks, begin to start working through details. Each party will be working on their respective tasks. As you develop things- whether it is the program, housing lists, budget, etc., keep in mind the vision and goals of the conference. Staying true to the purpose of your conference will help when making decisions.

The beauty of the conference will come from a good structure and framework that is established in the planning. The strength will come from attention to details. Pay close attention to the details, for they can make or break the conference.

Integration of Parts

As the conference planning continues to move forward, take time to evaluate and see where everyone is at. This is something the Conference Director needs to oversee. Find out the various details are coming together and look at how they might impact each other.

Each element of the conference is inter-related to the other parts in one way or another. The relationships between the various team members may need to be clarified or tweaked as needed. Look ahead to what's coming up in your planning- learn to anticipate needs and decisions before they are upon you. One way to do this, is to think backward. Start with you desired outcome (what you want to see at the conference), then start backtracking. What has to happen to achieve the desired end? Which steps have to happen first? Are there people you need to talk to first that influence your decision?

Another way you can integrate the parts of the conference is through thinking laterally. By this, think side to side, not just straight ahead. The Assistant Director may oversee the Signs and Banners person, yet the Activities person might need to be communicating with them to fulfill their needs. It's a good idea for everyone who is involved in some responsibility to be able to know who is also working on the conference.

Conferees are People Too

As you plan the conference, remember this- you're planning with people in mind. There are a lot of tasks and projects to preform. Don't get so wrapped up in what you are doing that you forget that individuals are attending, not simply statistical numbers or a body count. Think through the kinds of people who will be coming. What are their needs? What will they enjoy? How will this conference serve them?

Don't assume that they'll understand things the same way you do. Their capacities and preferences will be different than yours.

Walking Through the Conference

As you work on the conference planning, take the time to do a conference walk through. There are a couple of ways to go about this, all of which can help the conference.

One type of walk-through you'll want to do employs more of your imagination than actually walking through the site. Starting early on in your planning, and even as the conference draws close, do this kind of walk through. Put yourself in the shoes of everyone who is coming. Ask yourself what they are experiencing and going through throughout the conference. How do they know where to go? What will they see? What won't they see? What kinds of experiences will they have? Put yourself in the shoes of students, staff, guests, etc. By looking at things from the different perspectives, you might catch details that would be otherwise overlooked. As you do a walk through like this, try to envision how the various parts of the conference will be integrated. (What happens between registration and the first meeting, what happens while people are waiting for their workshop to begin? etc.)

Another walk through that should take place is on-site a few weeks prior to the actual event. Have representatives from the conference site there to help out. Walk through the schedule for your conference, making sure that logistically, everything can happen. As you do a walk through, be mindful of details, and how details are communicated to the various parties affected by those details.

The Conference Site

As you plan, the conference site will be one of the biggest factors that may determine whether or not you successfully pull off the conference.

Here are some things to consider as you work with the conference site:

1. Know your expectations and desires and be able to communicate them clearly.
2. Find out exactly what the site can and cannot do for you. Find out who to talk to get answers you are looking for.
3. The Site may only be concerned with facilities and numbers of people attending. Remember that your conference is dealing with much more than what the Conference Site is concerned with.
4. View your relationship with the Site as an opportunity for ministry.

THE DIRECTOR'S TEAM

Role

The Director's Team is lead by the Conference Director and includes the Assistant Director and the Program Director.

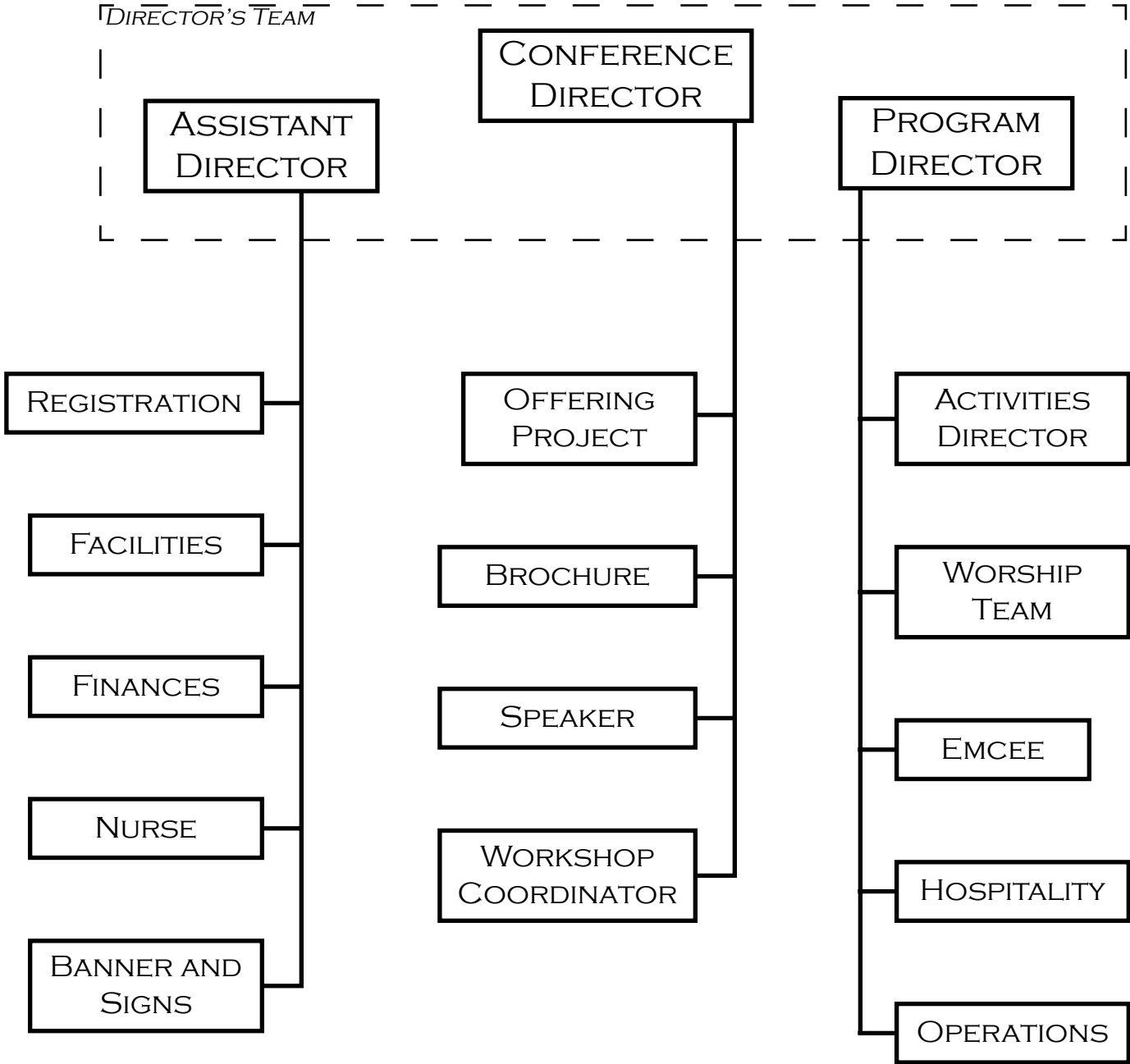
These three provide the overall leadership, direction and vision for the conference.

Responsibilities

- Determine Purposes and Vision for the Conference
- Establish Goals for the Conference
- Agree on Theme, Content, and Tone of the Conference
- Decide on Conference Dates, Location and Participants
- Provide the leadership over all the other conference responsibilities
- Establish Conference policies, protocol, and infrastructure
- Determine Timetable for the Conference Planning
- Review Evaluations of previous Conferences and incorporate suggestions to improve and build on this conference
- As responsibilities are added and new positions are created, determine who will oversee that position and how it relates to other program responsibilities

THE DIRECTOR'S TEAM & THEIR INTER-RELATIONSHIPS	CONFERENCE DIRECTOR	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	PROGRAM DIRECTOR
PROVIDES	VISION	SUPPORT	ACTION
OVERSEES	WHAT IS RELATED TO THE VISION	THE DETAILS THAT MAKES THE VISION REAL	THE ACTIVITIES THAT FULFILL THE VISION
PERSONNEL	RELATED TO VISION AND TOME	SUPPORT, BEHIND THE SCENES	UP FRONT, VISIBLE

RELATIONSHIPS



THE CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

Role

The Conference Director is the leader, overseer and guide for the conference. The Director supplies the vision and leadership necessary to carry out that vision.

Responsibilities

- Bring vision, faith, and courage to a coordinated effort
- Delegate as much work as possible so that the focus is on supervision, training, and feedback
- Decide who will lead each responsibility and communicate to each person their responsibilities, budgets, and deadlines.
- Provide on going training, help, supervision, and feedback to each person with responsibility.
- Lead planning meetings:
 - Initial planning meeting where goals and vision are determined and review the previous conference.
 - Any meetings determined as necessary for planning the conference.
 - On site visit one month before conference. (Walk through)
 - Evaluation of conference afterwards.
- Select conference site and take care of all contract details
- Train the Assistant Director in leading a conference
- Select conference speaker(s)
- Generate Prayer support for conference
- Determine Offering Project
- Determine Final Budget
- Lead any special fund raising for the conference
- Oversee recruiting to the conference
- Have final say in any decision regarding the planning and choices for the conference

Relationships

Work closely with the Assistant Director and Program Director. Get their counsel and input on decisions. Provide leadership to them and their needs

Directly oversee: Offering Coordinator, Brochure Designer, Speakers, Workshop Coordinator

Provide supervision and guidance to all those involved in the conference.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Role

The Assistant Director provides the details necessary to carry out the vision and direction of the conference given by the Director.

Responsibilities

- Assist the conference director with every aspect of planning and oversight.
- Be the liaison with the conference site staff and the conference planning team
- Be responsible for the insurance for the conference and all the forms involved with providing insurance for the conferees
- Help the Director with recruiting to the conference and generating prayer support.
- Oversee the conference notebook and everything in it
- Communicate with conference site numbers for housing; Communicate with Navigator staff to estimation numbers
- Oversee the finances (either by overseeing the Financial Director or by taking charge of the financial responsibilities)
- Oversee the facility needs (either by overseeing the facilities director or by taking charge of the facilities responsibilities)
- Provide a conference nurse
- Be on site for the conference as an evaluator and trouble shooter.

Relationships

Work closely with the Conference Director. Assist their needs and give counsel to the directors responsibilities.

Work with the program Director- primarily in terms of facilities needs.

Oversee: Registration, Financier, Facilities, Nurse



BROCHURE

Role

Provide tools for recruiting and registering for the conference.

Responsibilities

- Design brochures that are relevant to those coming
- Obtain and check all information for the brochure
- Be responsible for the proof-reading, printing and distribution of the brochures
- Distribute all brochures by time set up by Conference Director
- Work off of a master checklist to ensure that all information is on there
- Be able to submit everything for use on the web Consider working with Registration Director on developing Web based registration)

Relationships

Answer to the Conference Director. The Director will give oversight and direction for the brochure. The Director will assist in obtaining all information needed.

Work with Registration Director. Make sure the information they want is on there.

Financier- for budget requirements for the design, printing and distribution of the brochures

BROCHURE CHECKLIST

- Cover art
- Title
- The Navigators Logo
- Dates & Times
- Map
- Speaker (who and bio)
- Why come?
- Workshops available
- Will readers understand what this is about?
- Cost of conference
- What to bring/ what is provided
- Questions
- Spell check
- Design check (how does it look, is it readable, etc.)
- Conference start time, registration start
- Registration form:
 - name
 - school address
 - phone
 - e-mail
 - campus
 - workshop selection
 - deposit
 - office use
 - special needs
 - gender/ marital status
 - deadlines
 - when registration starts
 - year in school/ staff/ alumni
- Reviewed by 2 others
- Starting Times and location

BANNER AND SIGNS

Role

Providing signage and banners for the conference

Responsibilities

- Make banners and signs for the conference as requested by the Director's Team
- Have signs to direct Conferees to registration and Main Meetings
- Develop signs and Banners that are aesthetically pleasing and clear to read/ understand
- Work with the Workshop Director to determine sign needs for workshop locations
- Participate in a site visit or talk with Director's Team to find out what kind of signs are needed for the conference site
- Find out what the policies are as set up by the conference site in regards to what kinds of signs are permissible and how they might be displayed

Relationships

Answers to the Assistant Director

Works with Director's Team, Workshop Director, Registration Coordinator to know their needs

HOSPITALITY

Role

Setting the conference tone through hospitality and snacks. This role may be sub-divided into groups: Greeters, Snacks, etc.

Responsibilities

- Communicate with the Director's Team about the tone of the Conference and what their expectations are for setting the Conference tone
- Work with Program Director for establishing greeters and ushers at every meeting
- Determine amount of snacks/ refreshments needed for the conference
- Provide snacks, drinks, water for each meeting
- Recruit workers for snack table
- Recruit people to bring snacks

Relationships

Answers to the Program Director

Communicates with Financier about budget, Facilities for room needs/ food storage

OPERATIONS

Role

Provide the support necessary for carrying out the activities and program of the conference. This is a team position and individuals may fill various responsibilities.

Responsibilities

- The Operations Director is responsible for recruiting personnel necessary to fulfill all the duties of Operations
- Work with the Program Director in terms of room set-up/ clean-up. This includes being there at the time designated by the Program Director and knowing what the set-up needs are
- Be available to help: Registration, Signs, Hospitality with their set-up/ clean-up needs
- Assist Facilities with room set-up/ acquisitions A/V equipment, etc.
- Carry out all duties with an attitude of serving

Relationships

Answers to the Program Director. Determine how many personnel are needed for carrying out the Operations work

Communicates with Facilities, and any person whom Operations is serving

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

Role

Planning and overseeing activities outside of the meetings and workshop times

Responsibilities

- Work with the Program director to know when Activities/ Sports/ Free time will be held
- Plan activities and have approval from Director Team for the activities
- Plan optional activities- since not everything (i.e. various sports) will be enjoyed by all participants
- Plan with safety in mind
- Obtain all necessary equipment for activities

Relationships

Answers to the Program Director.

Communicates with Financier about budget, Facilities for room needs.

THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Role

The Program Director directs the schedule, meetings and flow of the conference. Where the Assistant Director is involved behind the scenes, the Program Director is in charge of what is seen.

Responsibilities

- Work with the Conference Director to determine the conference schedule.
- Plan every meeting. Determine and set the tone for each meeting.
- Select, train, and supervise all people who have responsibilities related to the program.
- Communicate parameters and expectations to everyone involved in meetings.
- Determine needs for main meeting room (e.g.. sound equipment, A/V, etc.) and communicate with the facilities person.
- Oversee every meeting.
- Ensure that schedules, events, activities, and announcements are clearly communicated at the meetings.
- Approve the content of speakers' messages. Discuss this with Conference Director.

Relationships

Work closely with the Conference Director. Keep the Director updated on program plans.

Pre-Conference Planning: work with Assistant director, Registration, Finances, Facilities as needed.

Conference personnel: Speaker, Emcees, Music Team, Drama, Testimonies, Offering Project and anyone else who is related to the meetings. Communicate before hand with each person and work with them through the duration of the conference.

Oversee: Activities Director, Hospitality, Emcee, Music Team, Operations

FACILITIES

Role

Oversee the facilities of the conference. Coordinate room needs.

Responsibilities

- Work with Director's Team to determine all the room needs for the conference
- Be the liaison between the staff working on the conference and the Conference Site (in conjunction with the Assistant Director)
- Coordinate the room assignments and room needs
- Communicate room assignments with staff

Relationships

Answers to the Assistant Director

Communicates with anyone with facility needs

Works with Operations for room set-up/ clean-up

Works with the Assistant Director to communicate with the Conference Site regard facility needs

FINANCES

Role

Oversee the finances of the conference.

Responsibilities

- Work with Director's Team to establish a budget for the conference
- Communicate with those whose conference responsibilities include budget items
- Make sure all money is collected and deposited properly
- Work with headquarters regarding any policies regarding the handling of finances and offering projects
- Ensure that reimbursements and transfers are handled in a timely fashion
- Make recommendations to Director Team about the conference planning when it relates to the budget
- Set the standard for maintaining godly and biblical guidelines regarding the handling of the monies

Relationships

Answers to the Assistant Director

Communicates with anyone with financial ties to the conference

WORKSHOP COORDINATOR

Role

Oversee the workshops for the conference

Responsibilities

- Work with Director's Team to determine what the workshops will be. Make sure information for the brochure is passed on to the Brochure Designer and Registration Director
- Select the workshop leaders
- Communicate with the Program Director as to when workshops are and how much time is allocated for the workshop times
- Communicate with Facilities and Finances regarding the room availability, budgeted items, etc. for the workshop leaders. Acts as a liaison between the workshop leaders and Finances and Facilities
- Set the standard for workshop presentations, and train any workshop leaders to bring them to level that meets those standards.
- Provide evaluators for each workshop leader so they can receive feedback and constructive criticism
- Have Workshop Leaders provide outlines and handouts in advance of the conference. Give feedback as seen fit
- Communicate with Registration as to numbers of people registered for each workshop and pass these numbers along to Workshop Leaders
- Communicate with Workshop Leaders as to expectations, their needs, budget items, room needs, etc.
- Discuss with Conference Director options for workshops that are by invitation only or staff only workshops

Relationships

Answers to the Conference Director

Relates strongly to the Workshop Leaders.

Relates to the Program Director, Finances, Facilities and Registration as it pertains to the needs of the workshop leaders

OFFERING PROJECT

Role

Lead the Offering Project for the Conference.

Responsibilities

- Work with Conference Director to determine what the Offering Project will be and what the desired goals for the project will be
- Determine who will be presenting the project
- Be responsible for all the offering project details including the offering cards, envelopes, collection buckets, A/V needs, ushers, etc.
- Communicate with Program Director about times of presentation, the use of Operations for collection, A/V arrangements in the meeting room
- Communicate with Staff before the conference regarding the project and their contribution to the project
- Be responsible for all follow-up letters to money pledged
- Communicate with Finances and Headquarters as to any policies regarding the collection of money at the conference

Relationships

Answers to the Conference Director

Relates to the Program Director in terms of how the Offering Project fits into the meetings
Coordinates with Finances on the handling of money

REGISTRATION DIRECTOR

Role

Oversee the Conference registration

Responsibilities

- Set up the plan for handling the Conference registration
- Work with the Brochure Designer to have all required information on the Brochure as it pertains to the registration
- Collect, record and maintain all registrations as they are collected
- Communicate with Field Staff regarding expected numbers for conference
- Be able to provide any data to those who need it before the conference (e.g.. Registration numbers for housing, workshop numbers, etc.)
- Handle registration questions
- Work with Director's Team to establish policies regarding registration (i.e.: cost, early registration cost breaks, couples rate, partial conference rates, etc.)
- Organize and oversee the registration at the conference
- Recruit and train workers to assist at the conference
- Responsible for having everything on hand for the registration process (e.g.. room keys, information packets, registration reports)
- Assigns housing for conferees

Relationships

Answers to the Assistant Director

Relates to Facilities for registration set up needs.

Works with Finances for money handling.

WORDS OF ADVICE

Vision

The Vision is the driving factor of your planning. Unclear goals will lead to unclear plans. Have a Vision which is attainable and pushes the limits of your faith.

Recruiting

Look at your pool of people to recruit from. What are some ways you can expand that list? What if you recruit from other ministries, churches or campuses outside of your original set of campuses?

Get everyone who is planning to be involved in recruiting in one way or another.

Registration

Registration is what people will see first when they arrive. You are setting the initial tone. A disorganized, sloppy job with registration might be enough to set people off for the entire conference.

Have your records in order before showing up to the conference. Make sure the Director's Team knows how you are planning on running the registration- and get their input on the flow of things.

In making the registration efficient and run smoothly, think about those you are serving. The fewer people a conferee needs to talk with will make it easier for them.

Setting the Tone

Here are some words that could help you think through how you're setting the tone:

Fun	Boring	Loud
Serious	Christ-likeness	Sacrificial
Laid-back	Vision	Social
Reflective	Community	
High Energy	Memorable	
Exciting	Quiet	

Program

Think about how each piece influences the other pieces.

Map out each meeting- know how much time is allocated to each activity. When estimating times, over budget (allot more time) so that if someone runs over on time, it doesn't push the length of a meeting back too far.

As you map out the program, think about the tone of each component. Think about if people are sitting, standing, mingling, etc. Avoid having too much time sitting.

Personality Types and Conference Planning

Realize that you'll have differing types of people participating in your conference (unless you've geared to one particular group). Think about how what you're doing to accommodate a wide range of people.

Extroverts and Introverts. Is there group interaction? Is there down time? Are there opportunities to interact and mingle with one another? Will people have the chance to process alone the things learning?

Different learning styles. People learn differently- visually, auditory, hands-on, interactive, etc.

Structured and Spontaneous. Is there a way to blend the two? How would a structured person feel if there was no organization to a conference? How would a spontaneous person feel if every activity was stacked right on top of each other?

Communication

Clear communication is paramount to a successful conference. It begins with the initial planning of the conference. How the team communicates and works together will set the tone and pace for how things come together.

To the conferees, you need to make sure that everything is communicated well. A simple rule is this: Assume they know nothing. Don't assume that they'll intuitively know where to go, what to bring, how to prepare for things. Show them a map, post a schedule, have emcees tell what is happening. As you are doing a walk through, ask yourself what it would be like to be in the shoes of those attending, Ask yourself how will they know where to go and how to get there.

Prayer

Pray. Pray. Pray some more.