Coronavirus: What You Need to Know About Postponing and Cancelling Events

Presenter: A.J. Steinberg, Nonprofit Event Producer, with Queen Bee Fundraising

The slides and bonus materials are in your CharityHowTo library:

www.charityhowto.com/library
Your Participation

Open and hide your control panel

Join audio:
- Choose “Computer audio”
- or
- Choose “Phone call” and dial using the information provided

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel
Coronavirus: What You Need to Know About Postponing and Cancelling Events

Presenter: A.J. Steinberg, Nonprofit Event Producer, with Queen Bee Fundraising

The slides and bonus materials are in your CharityHowTo library:

www.charityhowto.com/library
What We Will Cover Today

I. Factors to consider when deciding to postpone or cancel
II. How to include your board in the decision
III. How to work with your venue and vendors
IV. How to notify guests
V. How to manage requests for refunds
VI. How to stay in touch & keep relationships strong

The slides and bonus materials are in your CharityHowTo library: www.charityhowto.com/library
1. Sample cancellation email: AFP ICON
2. Sample cancellation email: California Winemasters
3. Sample postponement email: Inclusion Matters
5. The Webinar Recording & Slides
About the Topic Expert

- A.J. Steinberg, president of Malibu-based event planning company Masquerade Events in 1999
- Principal of Queen Bee Fundraising, a company dedicated to teaching nonprofits successful event planning strategies
- I have produced over 100 successful events over the past two decades and raised millions of dollars for organizations
- In my career I have faced many cancellations and postponements of events due to disasters

Coronavirus: What You Need to Know About Postponing and Cancelling Events
Disasters are a part of event planning

- 9/11
- Stock market plunge
- Devastating fires
- Mass shooting
This is not a place for scientific discussion

You can visit the CDC website for that information

www.cdc.gov
This is a place to learn about options and get professional expertise on cancelling or postponing fundraising events.
Section 1: Factors to consider when deciding to postpone or cancel
Sometimes the decision is out of your hands... like now
Community Mitigation Strategies

• Social distancing & bans on public gathering
• At least until March 31
• Most likely much longer
The further out from your event, the harder the call is to make
Section 1: Factors to Consider

- Check often with **both** your state and city to get updates about event & gathering restrictions

- Err on the side of caution! Better to cancel or postpone well in advance
Postpone or Cancel?

- Will we be forced to cancel
- When will regulations ease
- Will venue & vendors be available
- Are there too many moving parts
- When will supporters be ready
Communities take time to heal and grieve losses
If you postpone:

• When would be new optimal date
• Will venue & vendors & speakers be available
• Will guests and sponsors stay on board
• What will your new messaging be
If you cancel:

• What money will you lose
• Check what your insurance covers
• How will you offer guests option to donate
• What can you work out with sponsors
• How will you keep in touch
In the future:

Include a cancel/reschedule clause as a part of your ticket sales
How you handle this can be a defining moment
If cancelling think about…

• Printing the tribute book digitally
• Putting your auction online
• Lining up a virtual fundraiser
• Calling loyal supporters to check in
If postponing think about...

• Rescheduling on calendars
• Pivoting your messaging
• Staying engaged with guests
• How to promote sponsors during lull
• How you can improve your event

Check out my event planning webinars!!!
Section II:
How to Include Your Board in the Decision
Have your ducks in a row before contacting board
Have an advocate for your decision

- Discuss all options with them clearly
- Explain how you came to conclusion
- Ask them to stand by your decision
Clearly present decision to board

- Offer to phone conference or video meet
- Allow them questions and comments
- Show appreciation for their leadership
Section III: How to Work with Venues & Vendors
Check contracts for “Act of God”

“An event that directly and exclusively results from the occurrence of natural causes that could not have been prevented by the exercise of foresight or caution; an inevitable accident.”

Force Majeure
Who are your vendors?

Venues
Caterers or banquet staff
Rental companies
Audio visual teams
Auctioneers and emcees
Florists
Printers
Entertainers
Take action with venue

• Call venue first
• Consider alternative dates
• Discuss contract obligations
• Check your event insurance
• Be patient
Case Study:
A California Speaker Series was ahead of the curve

- Was able to get alternative dates from hotel
- Was able to keep the same speakers
- Guests and sponsors were told of alternate plans
- Almost all attendees honoring new dates
Take action with vendors

- Caterers
- Rental companies
- Florists
- Auctioneers and emcees
- Entertainment and speakers
Take action with volunteers

• Inform them separately than guests
• Keep in touch with them
• Find other ways for them to help
Auctions & Raffles

• Check all expiration dates
• Contact donors to update
• Make sure donor isn’t going out of business
• Create an online auction if cancelling event
Section IV: How to Notify Guests
Be proactive and connected

• Use email blasts to acknowledge
• Follow up with information
• Notify of cancellation/postponement
• Notify publicly and privately
A Note to Our Donors

The Winemasters team has been working as hard as ever to prepare for our 31st successful edition of “A Culinary Evening with the California Winemasters,” benefiting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

The health and wellbeing of the cystic fibrosis community is our top priority. Out of an abundance of caution, we have made the decision to cancel the 31st Annual California Winemasters.

As public health officials assess the risk of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are closely monitoring the spread of the virus and evaluating the potential implications for people with cystic fibrosis. For the latest information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you have purchased Winemasters tickets, you will have the option of using your payment as a 100% tax deductible donation to the CF Foundation, or receiving a full refund. To discuss your options for any other questions, please call the Los Angeles office at 323-939-0758 or email Olivia at oyoounad@cf.org.

ONLINE AUCTION: We will be hosting an online auction around the original date of Winemasters, May 16, 2020. There will be more information to come about that and how to register to participate in the auction.

Please mark your calendar for May 15, 2021 down as we definitely want you with us. We are heartsick, but we know this is the only responsible action to take.

Thank you for all that you do to support people with CF and their families.

With best wishes for continued health for everyone,

The Winemasters Team

Donate

Join Newsletter
Inclusion Matters/ Shane’s Inspiration

From our Co-Founder/CEO:

It is with a very heavy heart that I am writing to inform you that, after extensive and thoughtful consideration, as well as many discussions with our honorees and guests, we feel we have no other choice but to POSTPONE our Lights, Camera, Inclusion Gala scheduled for Saturday, March 14th. As you are aware, the world is now officially in a state of pandemic with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). For the last two weeks, our Board Executive Committee has been diligently monitoring this situation as it pertains to the global spread, but more specifically, as it affects Los Angeles County residents. While the reported numbers are still minimal in our immediate community, the situation is presenting too many unknown variables and, as such, we are proactively making this decision to ensure the ultimate safety of all of our guests and families who would have been in attendance, as well as to ease the burden of any worry that our guests may have had regarding the decision to attend.

We will be rescheduling this fabulous event as soon as this situation is behind us and hope that you will join us for our new date. We can’t thank you enough for your generous support of this event and for your belief that INCLUSION MATTERS! Because of you, we are able to remain fiercely committed to this important mission and we look forward to celebrating with you very soon!

I want to leave you with this powerful message from one of our families that I was planning on sharing with you at the event...

"You know the feeling when you go somewhere and you just feel like you belong? Almost instantly the weight of worry about judgment or possibly seeming "too different," suddenly lifts and you can fully be free, so comfortable in your own skin you didn’t even know where to begin to try and describe it? Well, that’s what was going on inside us today at our first ever participating in Inclusion Matters by Shane’s Inspiration’s 2nd annual Run Walk Roll event that helps raise money for inclusive and adaptive playgrounds all across the globe. I cried countless tears of joy watching all the little superhero girls and boys proudly putting all their unique abilities on full display. It calmed some fears and reinforced that everything just might be okay after all."

Dustin Willis
Father of Brian/Assistant Professor at West Coast University

I too am confident that everything just might be okay after all... Godspeed!

With Extraordinary Gratitude,

Tiffany Harris
Co-Founder/CEO
Inclusion Matters by Shane’s Inspiration
818/998-5676
Coronavirus: What You Need to Know About Postponing and Cancelling Events

Section 4: How to Notify Guests

AFP ICON VIRTUAL and Your Options:

AFP ICON VIRTUAL is the online gathering that the fundraising community needs in these challenging times. Whether you’ve registered for AFP ICON and need to know your options (including transferring your registration to VIRTUAL), or want to check out everything VIRTUAL has to offer, click on the links below.

- Registered for ICON and Want to Know Your Options? >>
- Learn More about AFP ICON VIRTUAL >>
- Register for AFP ICON VIRTUAL >>

PLEASE NOTE: If you have not registered for an AFP webinar or E-Club yet, you will need to create a free account in Blue Linz (Our learning management system for AFP ICON VIRTUAL). This login is different than your AFP member login.
Section V: How to manage requests for ticket & sponsorship refunds
California Winemasters for Cystic Fibrosis

If you have purchased Winemasters tickets, you will have the option of using your payment as a 100% tax deductible donation to the CF Foundation, or receiving a full refund. To discuss your options or for any other questions, please call the Los Angeles office at 323-939-0758 or email Olivia at oyounan@cff.org.

ONLINE AUCTION: We will be hosting an online auction around the original date of Winemasters, May 16, 2020. There will be more information to come about that and how to register to participate in the auction.

Please mark your calendar for May 15, 2021 down as we definitely want you with us. We are heartsick, but we know this is the only responsible action to take.
Hi, it's Mike Geiger from AFP, your president and CEO. Our world is changing constantly due to the impact of COVID-19, and AFP's work has changed as we shift to AFP ICON VIRTUAL, our new online conference. We developed AFP ICON VIRTUAL (and continue to create our conference app) so that we may still come together to learn, discuss, share, commiserate, laugh and inspire.

So, where are we right now, and what are your choices as someone who registered for AFP ICON?

Please note: If you've already submitted a request to Customer Service, please sit tight and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. If not, your options are below.

1. Transfer your registration to AFP ICON VIRTUAL. For $799 (and $999 for nonmembers) you'll experience AFP ICON VIRTUAL, featuring 10 education sessions (all submitted for CFRE education points) plus interviews with leading fundraisers, all emceed by Alice Ferris, CFRE, ACFRE.

If you paid more for ICON, you can donate the difference paid to the AFP Foundations for Philanthropy to help fund scholarships to AFP ICON VIRTUAL, or we'll automatically refund the difference.

Either way, you'll look forward to an amazing online program.
Inclusion Matters/ Shane’s Inspiration

We will be rescheduling this fabulous event as soon as this situation is behind us and hope that you will join us for our new date. We can’t thank you enough for your generous support of this event and for your belief that INCLUSION MATTERS! Because of you, we are able to remain fiercely committed to this important mission and we look forward to celebrating with you very soon!

I want to leave you with this powerful message from one of our families that I was planning on sharing with you at the event....

“ You know the feeling when you go somewhere and you just feel like you belong? Almost instantly the weight of worry about judgement or possibly seeming “too different” suddenly is lifted and you can fully be free, so comfortable in your own skin you don’t even know where to begin to try and describe it? Well, that’s what was going on inside us today at our first time participating in Inclusion Matters by Shane’s Inspiration’s 22nd annual Run Walk Roll event that helps raise money for inclusive and adaptive playgrounds all across the globe. I cried countless tears of joy watching all the little superhero girls and boys proudly putting all their unicorn abilities on full display. It calmed some fears and reinforced that everything just might be okay after all.”

Dustin Willis
Father of Dorian/Assistant Professor at West Coast University
Section VI: How to stay in touch & keep relationships strong
Why is this moment so important for your organization?
It is an opportunity...

• To stand out from the crowd
• To use creativity to show you care
• To improve your email system
• To use the phone
Stand out from the crowd

• Stay in touch
• Provide useful information
• Become a good listener
• Be a cheerleader
Be creative to show you care

• Have staff members make personal videos
• Send links to helpful articles
• Write hand-written thank you notes and photograph them
• Send suggestions for recipes & favorite videos to watch
Improve your email system

• Clean up your mailing list & update
• Check your segmentations
• Learn how to write better emails
• Create and schedule email blasts
Become a telephone pro

- Reach as many donors as possible
- Ask how they are doing
- Show appreciation
- Give them assurance
- Follow up with an email
One of my favorites...

Tweet

Tom Ahern @thattomahern · 21h
If OUR FAVE charities said, "Sorry. This is awful, the virus. But demand for the services you support & care so much about is high & may well increase." Would we? 😭 It's ALWAYS a bad time to ask. It's ALWAYS a good time to ask. It ALL depends on HOW you ask: w/ heart or w/out?

Replies

6️⃣ 10️⃣ 54️⃣
Another favorite...

Coronavirus E-Appeal
With Steven Screen

Courtesy of Chris Davenport
Another one of my favorites...
Now go out there and find amazing success with your events!
Have more questions about your nonprofit events? Give A.J. a buzz at AJ@QueenBeeFundraising.com
Join our Facebook Group

Everything Events With AJ