



Growing The Right Way: How to let go of some aspects of event planning, without giving up control of the event

A Question-and-Answer session with Kim Jefferies,
Executive Director, Brighton Center

KMAC: There was a point when you and your staff realized you had to move some of the management of Taste of the Northside “out of the house.” Describe the evolution of the event from an organizational standpoint.

Kim Jefferies: **Yes. We decided that the event just got too big for us to handle internally without support. While we still maintain all decision making, partner solicitation, in-kind donations and major vendor relations, we realized the logistics, restaurant solicitations and event day management were too burdensome for me and one development person to handle.**

KMAC: Can you describe the pros and cons you experienced by moving the event preparation off-campus?

Kim Jefferies: **For us, at the event, we get to focus on ensuring our partners are taken care of, instead of having to worry about the details, which is a huge plus. Additionally we get to tap into the resources and expertise of the event company to help ensure we are planning appropriately and keeping up with the growth of the event. There are definitely some cons as well. Having a for profit company**

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work on your event takes a lot of education regarding budget and working hard to get in-kind donations. Helping them understand the mission helps. It's also difficult to transfer control of certain aspects of the event to an outside source, such as some vendor relations, working with in-kind partners on logistics and restaurant solicitations. Additionally, we have no control on who from the company works on our event, and over the years we have had 3 different people leading the logistics. That kind of turnover requires us to invest more significant time in ensuring that the new person is up to speed.

KMAC: What shouldn't be contracted out?

Kim Jefferies: Sponsor solicitations should never be contracted out, as the agency needs to maintain and build those relationships. The event company could be used to help build a sponsorship packet that will be appealing, and make recommendations on what to offer partners, but the event company should never do the solicitations.

KMAC: And, when turning over logistics to an event planning company, where does the buck stop, so to speak?

Kim Jefferies: The buck stops with us... it's a partnership, and when things aren't working we sit down together and figure out how we can make it better. We continue to improve our relationship and ability to work together everyday. It takes a lot of communication!