CARNIVAL & FESTIVAL PLANNER

Whether you have come to our showroom or you are reading this at a distance, we hope this guide will assist you in planning your carnival or festival.

We have included questions you need to answer and suggestions aimed at making your event run smoothly, so it will be as fun and profitable as possible.

We want to help you in every way possible to make your event the best it can be. We hope this checklist is helpful.

PLANNING GUIDE

GOALS: Everyone needs to be in agreement! Is your event…
1. Primarily a fund-raiser?
2. Primarily for fun?
3. For fun and profit?
4. Other __________________

TIMING: Set the date(s) ___________, time _____ and location______________
1. Indoors or outdoors?
TIP: If you are having an outdoor event, be sure to have a rain plan.

ESTIMATED SIZE OF EVENT: Do not start out too large your first year.
It is better to grow as you learn. Consider the following:
1. Number of workers available
2. Estimated attendance
3. Your budget
4. Type of space available. Is it suitable for your event?

ESTABLISH A THEME: Many organizations have a theme which carries through the decorations, booths, parade, merchandising, etc. Some themes we have seen used include: Mardi Gras, Looney Tunes, Sports, Halloween, Vegas, Rock ‘n Roll, Smile, Luau, Patriotic, Fiesta, etc...

TICKETS OR CASH?
Decide whether you will run your games and attractions for tickets, cash or both.

1. Many organizations prefer to run their event for cash.
   a. Games are generally more successful operating for cash.
   b. We recommend frequent cash pick-ups from the workers.
   c. Appoint someone in charge of cash control.
2. Many groups, particularly events catering to younger kids, prefer to run the events using tickets.
   a. Parents can buy tickets and not have to worry about their kids carrying cash.
   b. Can promote pre-sales and specials, etc.

TIPS:
   a. Consider a scale to assist in counting.
   b. Now is a good time to order special tickets if you want your own imprint or a special color.

INSTANT WIN OR PRIZE REDEMPTION?
Before starting prize selection, decide if you want prizes in the booths or a redemption area.

1. PRIZES IN THE BOOTH give instant gratification to winners. Your prize display attracts customers. It creates excitement in the booth when they win and the player knows exactly what they can win in that game. We highly recommend prizes in the booth!!

2. REDEMPTION OFFERS the ability to use larger prizes, i.e. if you are operating $.25 games and can only offer small instant win prizes. The players can save their tickets for a prize of better value.

   Some customers feel an advantage of redemption is that the prize display effort goes into one area (the redemption booth) rather than having to display prizes in each game. Extra workers are required to operate the redemption booth.

   If you decide to use redemption, please ask for our “How To” Redemption Tip Sheet.

SELECT AND RESERVE YOUR GAMES

SOURCES FOR GAMES:

1. RENTALS: We have a wide variety of games available for rental in the St. Louis area. Reserve early to get your top choices. Ask for our game price list.

2. DO-IT-YOURSELF (Homemade Games): They can be very successful. They do not look professional and everyone trusts them. Let your imagination be your guide. You are welcome to look at our idea book of what other organizations have done. We recommend some homemade games at every event to add uniqueness. Ask for a copy of our Do-It-Yourself Game List for some suggestions.

3. PURCHASE GAMES & SUPPLIES: We have new and used games for sale and the supplies required to make other games.
4. BORROW GAMES from neighboring schools and parishes. Visit their events and see what is available.

COMMENTS AND TIPS:

WE CAN PROVIDE OUR TIP SHEETS ON:
1. Our Top-Ten Money-Making Games
2. Our Top-Ten Fun Games
3. Recommended Ten Game Carnival for Fun and Profit
4. Game Theme Ideas

To assist you in your game selection, look through our photo album of games.

We have sheets available on our games with full details on how to run and operate them.

Our games are on display in our lower showroom from January 15 till April 15 to help you in your selection process.

We recommend using some new games and different prizes every year. Bring back the most popular but add something NEW each year so your game area stays interesting.

Be sure to consider the ages of those attending your event to help determine the number of games for younger kids, older kids, adults, etc.

RESERVE TENTS: Reserve your tents or booths as early as possible, particularly if your event is scheduled during the peak season, i.e. May 15-June 15 or September 15-October 15.

SOURCES FOR TENTS OR BOOTHs:
1. Rent our easy-up tents - Easy to put up - Easy to take down. Available for local rentals only.

2. Build your own. Many organizations own their own booths and use them year after year. After a few years they can pay for themselves. A good idea if you have the storage space and someone to maintain them.

3. Borrow or rent from other schools or parishes.

4. Rent booths from a booth or tent rental company.

SUGGESTION: Rent a “Big Tent”. There are many advantages to renting a “Big Tent” (i.e. 40’ x 60’) to cover all your games. Some groups use our tents under a ‘big tent’ or build simple frames or use tables for their games. We can recommend a rental company and help you plan your layout.

Many groups cover the cost of their tents and games by selling sponsorships for each game to local merchants.
**SCHEDULE DELIVERY/PICK-UP DATE:**

We offer free delivery & pick-up in the St. Louis metropolitan area on orders of games and prizes of $2,000 or more (after returns). We charge $50 for pick-up or delivery on orders under the minimum.

1. We offer after-hour or weekend pick-ups/deliveries for an extra charge. Please ask for a quote and availability.

2. Be sure to provide a safe and secure place to accept delivery of the games and prizes and to store your returns. Keep in mind that you are responsible for the games and merchandise until they are returned.

**NOTE:** We have 6’ x 12’ storage trailers available for rent to store your games, prizes and rental tents. During your event, the trailer can serve as your warehouse. The rental charge is determined by your purchase amount.

**SIGNAGE:**

**WE CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF SIGNAGE!**

Once you have decided which games you will be using, you need to have signs to explain how much it costs to play, how to play, and how to win the game. These signs make it easy for players and workers to understand the game. We have signs for each of our rental games which you can purchase or use for reference to create your own.

Your signs need to include the following:

1. **GAME NAME:** We recommend that each booth has a sign on the front with the name of the game, (Fish Pond, Roll Down, etc.) you may wish to include the Price Per Play on this sign.

2. **GAME RULES:** We recommend an inside sign telling the rules of the game. Players should quickly understand what they have to do to win.

3. **PRICE PER PLAY:** The price per play can be on the game sign out front, on the rule sign, or as a separate sign, i.e. price in cash or tickets.

4. **WINNER LIMIT**: We always recommend that you limit the number of winners on games of skill, so a skillful player doesn’t clean out the game, i.e. limit 1 choice prize per player.

5. **SPECIAL FEATURE SIGN:** “Winner Every Time”, “Booth Sponsored By..”, “Prizes Donated By..”, etc.)

**NOTES:** Some Schools/Churches have their students make the signs and give awards for creativity.

Promote your event with banners or large signs at your organization and in areas where there is traffic near your event. Check local regulations about signage.
**DECORATIONS:**

Add a festive air to your event. Consider the following:

1. **CUSTOM BANNERS** - To promote your event or decorate your booths.

2. **BALLOONS** – We offer both mylar and latex balloons either inflated or deflated. Helium tanks and packages with balloons are available for rent.

3. **PENNANT STRINGS** – We have a wide variety of pennant strings and fringes or triangles and different decorations.

4. **RED/WHITE/BLUE BUNTING** can be used to wrap food stands, stages, booths, etc.

5. We have a wide variety of crepe paper, paper cut-outs and other decorating supplies. Take time to look through our showroom.

6. We can custom order bunting, flags, and signs to meet your needs.

**TIP:** Some customers assign each booth chairman the responsibility of decorating their booth. Prizes are given for the chairmen who do the best jobs.

You may or may not wish to give the chairmen a budget for their decorating supplies.

**SCHEDULE WORKERS:**

Try to get enough workers so they only have to work a few hours at a time so they will be able to enjoy the event too. Be sure to have a few extras available in case they are needed.

Try to assign workers to games based on what they are physically able to do, and what they would enjoy doing. Put the younger people at the games that involve picking up balls and rings, and older folks to the wheels and table games.

Type or write a schedule for each game. Give a copy to your workers and post it in the game booth so everyone knows when they should be at their game.

Reward your workers with a Free Drink and Snack after their shift is done.

Don’t forget to schedule people for setting up and tearing down the tents, games, and prizes after the event is over.

**DELEGATE AUTHORITY & COMMUNICATE:**

Delegate individuals to be in charge of the workers, the running of the games, the dispensing of the prizes, and the collection and counting of tickets and money so you can float around as an overall manager. Have your managers come to you with any problems to resolve. We suggest you use walkie talkies or cell phones to communicate quickly with your Managers.
MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES:
Instruct your assistants what their responsibilities are.

Worker Manager: Set up schedule, hand-out schedule, follow-up with workers the
day before to verify they will be where they should be. Walk around the day of
the event to be sure every game is manned properly and there are personnel
available for set-up and tear-down. Be sure to thank your workers at the end of
their shift.

Games Manager: Develop a layout of the booths and attractions so set up will be
quick and efficient. Be sure booths are set up and, if necessary, weighted down.
Make sure signs and decorations are properly displayed and game is operating
properly. (You may want to delegate making signs and putting up signs to some-
one). Determine your needs for water, nets, tables, backdrops, electricity, exten-
sion cords, tape, etc. and have them available the evening before the event in a
storage area. Have workers set up tents, backdrops, nets, tables, electricity. Have
a meeting the night before your event or the morning of the event to explain to
workers how much the game costs, how to play the game, how to win the game,
and how to award prizes. Be sure the game is operating properly and you have
all the materials needed for the game. During the event, walk around and check
that the game is being played properly and prizes are being awarded correctly.
Make changes in the way a game is being played immediately if too many prizes
are being given out. At the end of the event make sure you have all the materi-
als (i.e. balls, rings, etc.) that came with the game and the game is in good work-
ing condition still. Have the games moved to your storage area until either you
return them to us or we pick them up from you.

Prizes Manager: Distribute the prizes to the proper games or to the redemption
center and show game worker how to display (flash) the prizes to make people
want to play the game for the prize. Mark the packages and instruct workers
which prizes are for what level. Be sure the display is replenished as the event
progresses. Only open package when the display needs to be replenished so you
can return unopened items. At the end of the event make a list of the number
of prizes left, and box up the unopened packages for return. Communicate with
Games Manager to be sure you have nets, electricity, water or whatever you
need to display your prizes properly.

Food Manager: Work with the Games Manager to set up tables and booths as
appropriate. Be sure you have everything you need i.e. cones, syrup, scoop, etc.
when the food equipment arrives. When the event is over, be sure to clean the
equipment properly or there will be an additional charge for clean-up. Check
to be sure all parts that came with the food machine are returned. Move equip-
ment to a storage area.

Tickets & Money Manager: Have a secure place that you can store your tickets and
money. Give each game a box to collect either tickets or cash. If using cash, be
sure to have sufficient change on hand and have hourly collections from each
game. If using tickets, provide a large bag or box that can be kept under the
table or in an inconspicuous and not easily accessible location. At the end of the
event, tally the tickets or cash from each game and overall total.
**Promotion Manager:** Ask for people to help in going out in the community and soliciting sponsorships for your games. You can make a sign, or we can make them for you, with the sponsor’s name and address or phone number, or an individual’s name. Promote your event in the church bulletin, in the local paper or journal at least the week before the event. Offer discounted tickets if they are purchased up to the week or day before the event. Contact your local radio station and ask if they have a community billboard to post your event on. See if your community has a web site that you can list your event on. Check with local authorities and see if you can put up signs in areas surrounding your event a few weeks before your event. If you put up the signs, be sure to take them down the day after your event and store them for next year’s use. At the end of the event send a letter or visit with your sponsor’s and personally thank them for their support and let them know how you did.

**RETURNS:**
At the end of your event all equipment and supplies must be returned according to your rental agreement. Be sure any prizes you wish to return are in unopened packages. Please return your prizes within the week after your event so we can credit your account quickly and properly.

**REVIEW:**
After you have determined your profits, gather your managers together and congratulate them and tell them how much profit you made. Thank them for their contribution and ask for and record any suggestions and problems they have for you to review next year.

**LET US KNOW HOW IT WENT:**
We love to know how events work. We visit many of them in our area and take pictures and offer suggestions. If you have any pictures or suggestions, problems or compliments you would like to share with us, we would love to have them.

**THANKS! SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!**
We hope you will make this an annual event. A reason for your community or organization to gather at least once a year for comraderie, for fun, and for profit if you so choose. We hope you’ll choose to work with us again.