



TUMI'S
DESIGN

PREPARING YOUR CONFERENCE DESIGN NEEDS

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This paper is intended to assist organizers in developing successful grassroots/community level conferences within 5 months. It is written from a designer's perspective to help you complete your tasks for maximum impact and minimum stress.

CHOOSE A DESIGN FIRM

Your conference needs a brand, a look that will define and convey the objectives of the event. This is the identity of the conference and will communicate the effectiveness and professionalism of your organization. It will also determine the demographics of your attendees, and to an extent the caliber of your presenters. The identity will be carried through on everything from outreach materials to press kits, signage to handouts.

Your designer must understand what are your organization's long-term objectives, how the conference fits into this strategy, which is the target audience, what must be communicated to them, and how to carry an identity across all your materials. If your designer does not comprehend these things, select another designer.

PLAN YOUR CALENDAR

This paper is based on a five-month timeline working backwards from the event date (e.g. 2 months means 2 months before the date). Conferences planned in less than 3 months have been disorganized. Give your team time. Delays result in rush fees, errors, lesser quality, missed opportunities and STRESS! Proper planning will prevent all of these.

WHAT YOU NEED

This is a list of materials you will need. Prices aren't listed because these vary by quantities, paper types, dimensions, etc. When planning your conference, call Tumi's Design for a free estimate. We can help you prioritize your needs, and offer discounts on large packages. Our design team specializes in developing the identity of the conference so it can easily be adapted for all your materials, reducing your design costs and rush fees. We can also handle nearly all your needs in-house, reducing your logistics headaches!

Item	Content Due to designer	Design Due for printing	Printing Due in hand
Marketing Materials			
Announcements	5 months	4.5 months	4 months
Brochures	4 months	3.5 months	3 months
Posters*	3 months	2.5 months	2 months
Postcards*	3 months	2.5 months	2 months
Mailing Lists*	-	-	4 month
Postage*	-	-	4 month
Registration forms*	4 months	3.5 months	3 months
Newsletters	3.5 months	3 months	2.5 months
Advertising	3 months	2 months	-
Website (Registration Form, Credit Card Acceptance, Join ListServ , Workshops & Presenters, Lodging & Eateries, Directions, Air/Car/Hotel discounts, Call for papers)	4 months	3 months	-
Press Kits Interviews at local, small, college stations	1.5 months	1 month	3 weeks
On-Site Materials			
Registration Materials	6 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks
Badges	2 weeks	1 week	1 week
Tickets	3 months	2.5 months	2 months
Signs* (Parking, Arrows, Registration, Schedule & list of speakers/panels)	1 month	3 weeks	2 weeks
Program booklets*	1.5 months	1 month	2 weeks
Banners (Front of tables or behind panelists, front of podiums, in large meeting halls)	1.5 months	1 month	3 weeks
Handouts	1 month	2 weeks	1 week
Certificates	1 month	2 weeks	1 week
T-shirts (Staff/security t-shirts, Tote Bags, Participant t-shirts)	1 month	3 weeks	1 week
Training Materials	7 weeks	5 weeks	3 weeks
Follow up Surveys*	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week

Items with an * are must-have items. If you are on a tight budget, you must at least get these.

Turnaround Times (in business days, with buffer time included)	
Printing: Announcements, Brochures, Programs	10-12 days
Printing: Postcards, Posters	5-6 days
Printing: T-shirts & tote bags	7-10 days
Printing: Banners, Stickers, Signage	3-5 days
Photocopying	2-3 days
Printing: Identity	4-5 weeks
Printing: Brochures, Programs	7-10 days
Printing: Postcards, Posters, Announcements & Press Kits	4-8 days
Design: Signage	3-5 days
Design: Website (robust)	6-9 weeks
Design: Website (minimal)	2-4 weeks
Design: Newsletter	10 days

Miscellaneous Tips

1. The best way to research your site is to go there. Are the rooms big enough? Are the halls wide enough? Are there eateries within walking distance? Will you be able to reserve enough extra rooms for breakouts?
2. In the early stages of planning, set ways for attendees to network and help each other in their future work. This must be clearly defined in the goals of the conference. You can share a database of contact information or have attendees fill out forms explaining their strengths, offerings, and needs.
3. Allow adequate breaks between sessions for people to network, relax, or use the bathrooms.
4. If you can afford it, hire a company that prepares food and handles clean up. This takes hours of laborious stress off your overworked team. It will also free your team to be more focused during the conference.
5. Having all materials designed, printed and on-hand prior to the conference will free your staff during the event of unnecessary stress. Instead of running around coordinating deliveries and dissemination of materials, staff can focus on the needs of attendees and presenters. You want to make a professional presentation. Stressing out over many last minute details (that could have been accounted for early on) in front of attendees will leave an impression of disorganization.
6. Have two people walk through the site prior to having signs made. This way you will know what signs are needed for which locations and which way arrows need to point. This scout needs to record: where are signs needed, what size, how will they be mounted, what information needs to be posted at each location, where are the bathrooms.

Conferences package from Tumi's Design for Tell it Like it Is: Target Hollywood, Third World Majority's youth media justice training and conference. Package included posters, postcards, stickers, banners and t-shirts.



7. Selling ad space in your program is a good way to generate at least enough funds to cover the cost of printing the program. This is a good tactic to afford better quality printing for the program.
8. T-shirts are a good fundraiser only if the design on it is good. People want a souvenir from the event. If you are selling them, calculate that 25% of the attendees will want a shirt. If you are giving t-shirts or tote bags to each attendee, include the printing costs into the registration and/or fundraising breakdowns. Remember, putting this off until the last minute will result in printing rush fees from the printer.
9. Clearly post a big schedule and list of presenters on every floor or hall where people are most likely to enter or gather. It would be even better to have these at every entrance. Include the room numbers for each workshop. I can't tell you how many conferences neglect these signs, resulting in lower numbers of participants or frustrated, lost participants.
10. Hanging banners in many of the halls is a great way to define the conference environment. These banners should convey the mission and culture of the conference and inspire the attendees. Banners are much more affordable than people expect. Photos and videos that people shoot during the conference will include these banners. This will help brand the conference.
11. One of the goals in designing the conference is to make it simple for attendees to get around, find every event, and attend to their daily needs (food, restrooms, etc.). Someone must design the conference from the attendees' perspective.
12. Follow up the conference with surveys for participants to fill out. Distribute them on the second-to-last day because people will be leaving early on the last day.

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