


A HANA PLANNING GUIDE · PHOENIX, AZ

# The Phoenix Corporate Event Planning Guide

What to lock first, what the desert changes & what to get in writing before you sign anything.

BEFORE YOU START

# Most events we get called into are already half planned.

The venue is signed, the date is set & somebody just realized the night needs a moment people will actually talk about on Monday. That's a fine place to start. It's an expensive place to finish.

This guide is what we walk planners through on a first call. It's built for Phoenix, because the desert changes the rules: the season, the heat, the permits & who books up first.

Use it on your own, hand it to your team, or bring it to a call & we'll go through your event line by line. Either way, you should finish it knowing exactly what to do next.

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## Inside


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01 · THE PHOENIX CALENDAR

# Your date decides more than your budget does.

In most cities the calendar is a scheduling question. In Phoenix it decides whether you're outside or in, what time doors open & how early you need to hold everything.

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|---|---|
| Late Oct to April | Outdoor season. Patios, resort lawns & rooftops are at their best, which is exactly why they go first. |
| January to April | Peak demand. Conferences, spring training & resort season all compete for the same venues, hotel blocks & crews. Hold your date early & get it in writing. |
| May to September | The heat moves the plan. Daytime highs regularly pass 105°F, so outdoor events start after sunset or move indoors, & crews load in early in the day. |
| Mid-June to September | Monsoon. Wind, dust & fast storms can roll in with little warning. Every outdoor plan needs a weather call time & an indoor backup that is actually held for you. |
| Nov & December | Holiday party season. Friday & Saturday nights in December are the first dates to disappear. |

**The takeaway:** if your date lands between January & April, or on a December weekend, start planning 6 to 12 months out instead of 3.

02 · WHAT TO LOCK FIRST

# The order you book in matters more than how early you start.

Most corporate events need 3 to 6 months of lead time at minimum. But planners rarely run out of time. They run out of options, because the two pieces with the fewest open dates got booked last.

01 **Venue & date.** Everything else is built around these, so they come first.

02 **Entertainment & experience design.** The best acts & crews in the Valley run out of dates before catering or décor does.

03 **AV, lighting & production.** Book them once you know the room, so the plan fits the space.

04 **Catering & bar.** Menus can be finalized late. The vendor can't.

05 **Décor, rentals & signage.** Easier to source, & better designed once the rest is set.

06 **Transportation, valet & guest logistics.** Last to book, first thing guests notice when it goes wrong.

**One team, one invoice.** Every vendor you book separately is another contract, another certificate of insurance & another phone call on event night. Ask whether one team can own the whole list.

03 · BEFORE YOU BOOK ENTERTAINMENT

# Four things to get in writing.

The contract looks fine, the performer is talented & the date isn't moving. That's usually the moment corners get cut, not because anyone means to, but because nobody told the planner what to check before signing.

01 **A signed technical rider.** Stage size, power, floor space & load-in needs, agreed with your venue before the night, not on it.

02 **A certificate of insurance** naming your venue as additional insured. Most venues won't let a vendor through the door without it.

03 **A stated backup plan** if a performer can't go on. Ask who replaces them & how fast.

04 **A clear cancellation policy** in the contract, covering weather, illness & date changes.

Skip any one of these & you become the person explaining what went wrong, not the vendor.

04 · FIRE & OPEN FLAME IN PHOENIX

Fire performance is one of the most requested moments in the Valley, & one of the most regulated. Inside the City of Phoenix, fire performers need a permit from the Phoenix Fire Department, filed at least 10 business days before the event.

The packet includes a site plan with audience distances, a $1 million certificate of insurance naming the City of Phoenix, a hold harmless agreement & a safety sheet for every fuel. An inspector walks the site before anything is lit. Scottsdale, Tempe & the other Valley cities each run their own process.

**The test:** ask your vendor who pulls the permit. If they can't answer right away, that's your answer.

05 · PLANNING AROUND THE HEAT

# An outdoor event from May to September.

- Start after sunset, not before.
- Shade & water stations in place before the first guest arrives.
- Power for fans or misters, marked on the site plan.
- Early load-in, so crews aren't building in peak heat.
- A weather call time & one person who makes the call.
- An indoor backup that is held for you, not just "available."

06 · HOW MUCH ENTERTAINMENT YOU NEED

## Guest count decides less than most planners think.

The length of the program & the energy of the night decide more. Plan the shape of the evening, not a headcount of acts.

| | |
|---|---|
| The arrival | Something people can walk up to while they find a drink & their coworkers. It breaks the ice so nobody has to. |
| The moment | One shared moment the whole room watches together. This is the part people describe to whoever didn't come. |
| The close | A reason to stay a little longer, so the night ends on a high instead of a slow drift to the parking lot. |

One strong moment beats three acts competing with dinner for attention.

07 · THE RUN OF SHOW

# Most events hit the same wall around hour two.

The speaker ran long, dinner came out slow & the band is waiting on a cue nobody agreed on. Meanwhile the person who planned the whole night is standing by the bar doing math instead of talking to their CEO. That isn't a talent problem or a venue problem. It's a timeline problem.

A run of show is a minute-by-minute timeline from doors open to the last guest out. For every segment it answers five questions:

01 **What happens.**

02 **When it starts & how long it runs.**

03 **Who owns it.** One name, not a department.

04 **What cue starts it.** A song, a mic handoff, a light change.

05 **What happens if it runs late.** Decide this now, not at 8:40 PM.

Send the final version to every vendor one week out, & bring printed copies on the night.

08 · YOUR COUNTDOWN CHECKLIST

# From 90 days out to doors open.

| | |
|---|---|
| 90 days | Venue, date, entertainment & experience design signed. Budget set line by line. |
| 60 days | AV, lighting & catering locked. Site visit done. Fire permit started if there's open flame. |
| 30 days | First draft of the run of show. Guest count estimate. Certificates of insurance collected from every vendor. |
| 14 days | Final guest count. Load-in times confirmed with the venue. Weather plan set. |
| 7 days | Final run of show to every vendor. Day-of contact list shared. |
| Day of | One point of contact on site who isn't you, so you get to be a guest at your own event. |

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NEXT STEP

# Want a second set of eyes on your event?

Book a planning call with our team. We'll walk through your date, your venue & the experience you want your guests to have. You'll leave with a clear next step, whether you work with us or not.

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Book a planning call

calendar.hana.events/event-discovery-call

Or reach us directly

hello@hana.events · 801-331-5852

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Hana Events + Experiences is a full-service event agency based in Phoenix, AZ. Event strategy & design, production, custom entertainment & the people who run it all on the night. Est. 2014.

PRESENCE + PURPOSE.