



# The Grand Plan

This Agenda is Adapted from the  
Best-Selling Book,

## **Nonprofit Fundraising 101**

by Darian Rodriguez Heyman

**W**ell before event day, it's very helpful to map out a detailed timeline for your program, including time for both preparation and breakdown. Map out a realistic agenda and leave in cushions, because things almost always run late.

Note that this agenda can be modified to accommodate what makes your event unique. Consider this agenda a basic framework to help you organize all your event efforts so they run smoothly and successfully.

Thanks to Darian's interviews with industry experts Tracy Kosolcharoen, marketing manager and nonprofit lead at Eventbrite, and Daniel Lurie and Jen Pitts at Tipping Point Community, here's a typical sample agenda for a donor event, including a few tips for each component:



## **Welcoming Reception**

This allows guests time to arrive and unwind to light background music and enjoy cocktails and light appetizers. If you have a VIP reception, the welcoming reception typically happens in a private room.

## **Food Service**

A buffet is the-go to options if your event is casual, but consider serving a sit-down dinner should you go for a more formal affair. It's ideal to wait until plates are cleared before starting the program to avoid background noise.

## **Welcoming Remarks**

A key board member, MC, or sponsor can deliver this two-to-three-minute welcome or you can opt for a short video.

## Client Testimonial/Mission Moment

Allow your mission to take center stage for a few minutes. A client can share the impact of your work on his or her life, personalizing your work. This can also be a brief partner report speaking to your effectiveness and the impact of a compelling program/project, or once again, you can opt for a video.

## Live Auction

Use an experienced auctioneer if possible, and secure minimum bids ahead of time to ensure responses and kick-starter momentum. Offer packages revolving around unique prizes that will drive interest.

## Presentation from Executive Director

This short presentation should outline the history and impact of the organization and share the event's purpose and fundraising goal and the overall impact the goal will make if guests can help your organization achieve it.

## The Ask

A text-to-give service comes in handy for your event ask. (We'll explain more in the e-book chapter called Fun(ds) and Games.) You can also send volunteers into the crowd with mobile devices to collect donations and point out areas where guests can give cash donations.

## Announce the Results

Thank the audience and let them know how much was raised and what these funds will allow you to accomplish.

## Keep the Talking to a Minimum

After years of experimentation, Tipping Point Community recommends limiting the spoken portion of your program to 15 to 45 minutes. If you're hosting a small, casual event—especially one where people remain standing—keep it to no more than 15 to 20 minutes. If it's a larger, more formal event like a gala or luncheon, keep your presentation under 45 minutes.



## If you talk for too long, you'll lose people's attention.

Give your speakers and presenters clear guidance and provide them with key messages and talking points in advance. And definitely take the time to rehearse with them before the big day.

### Learn More

If you found this agenda helpful, you'll benefit from all the helpful tips, expert interviews, and insightful data in Darian Rodriguez Heyman's best-selling book, *Nonprofit Fundraising 101* (Wiley & Sons). [Get your copy here!](#)

