

## Have Big Fun on a Small Budget?

Careful spending and a tough economy might inspire you to find creative and inexpensive ways to entertain this summer. On Point Event Planners, LLC wants to share steps to help you to shine and save money as you host a party or event. One big hit with our clients is a trivia game-party based on movies, sports, television series or fun and harmless details about your friends and family members. This is a fun way for people to get acquainted. Here are five simple ways to have big fun on a small budget.

First, determine why you want to host a party? Getting people together for food and laughs is a great reason for a party. Do you want to invite a few friends or would you like to introduce groups of people? Your friends might be diverse with varied interests and styles. Be careful if you plan to mix groups of friends. You want a fun blend of guests who will mingle and not a situation of "us" and "them". Would you like your guests to dress up or wear costumes like character roles for a murder mystery party or American Idol Rewind party? Would you like a theme party? Would guests wear variations of a style (the 60's, 70's, 80's)? Do you want something romantic? Would you like to surprise a loved one with dinner? An invitation filled with rose petals, hearts, or even smiley faces are fun to send and receive. We helped a client to surprise his wife on a small budget. We set a trail of flower petals from the front door to

the dinner table. The table was set with heart-shaped place settings and a pile of heart-shaped peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. This was his wife's favorite snack. He was the dessert.

Second, decide on the details and try to be flexible. When and where you choose to host your party can impact cost. Take a few minutes to visualize or imagine from start to finish, how you would like your party to flow. If you choose a favorite eatery, let the business-owner know in advance the date and time of your party. We host networking social events at select restaurants in major cities in New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Washington, D.C. It is an ideal way to catch up with friends and colleagues. Working with the business owners several weeks in advance ensures that our guests are treated with extra care.

Third, consider the decorations, the menu, and the time of your party. Really try to be flexible. One client learned this lesson when six of her relatives made a surprise appearance just two days before her dinner party. With extra people staying with her our client worried about money. We contacted each of her guests and to note a change. The dinner party was now a casual "Pajama & Pizza Party". Using yellow, our client's favorite color, we decorated her loft with yellow blinking lights hung behind sheer white curtains to distract from clutter and her relatives' luggage. Throw pillows, unscented

candles and music were arranged along with yellow and cream colored balloons and streamers that hung from the ceiling. Guests wore pajamas made of silk and cotton. Some even wore cartoon characters as they enjoyed lemon-drop martinis and different types of pizza.

Fourth, develop an A-List and a B-List of people to invite. The A-List should include people who will absolutely attend your party. Others people might have to arrange for a babysitter or work around a busy schedule. List these people on your B-List. This will help you to track the number of responses and who might need more time to reply. After you ask your guests to save-the-date and decide on your invite, remember to give a firm deadline to RSVP. Try to follow-up and follow-through with your guests and vendors.

Follow up with a quick telephone call to remind non-responders to attend. Evite.com is one of my favorite tools to casually invite and gently remind friends and family to reply. Follow through with vendors and be sure to pay deposits and installments on-time. It is a good idea to be kind to your vendors. We once sent a payment to the caterer on behalf of a client. On the check we noted "payment for our favorite caterer". For the event, the caterer supplied extra portions of appetizers and dessert at no additional cost to our client.

Fifth, on the day of your party it is important to take time to prep, host and have fun. Prep time means allowing you enough time to decorate and add finishing touches, unless you took care of that the night before. This should also allow your vendors time to arrive and set up based on your decorations and furniture arrangements. Give yourself enough time to get dressed and catch your breath. Try to be ready at least 30 minutes before guests are expected to arrive. That way you will be ready to greet the one or two eager guests who might arrive early. If guests offer to help, let them. It will ease your load and

allow one-on-one time to chat. If something goes a bit off track, don't stress it – go with the flow. So what if the dip recipe did not turn out well. No worries. Ditch the dip. Show your guests that you are heart-healthy and serve a simple veggie platter. Parties are meant to be fun so do try not to stress or worry. Remember the reason you chose to host your party, and simply have a great time!

Lisa Bullard is the founder of On Point Event Planners, LLC, an event planning and meeting management company, offering personalized service and attention to detail whether your event is for

2 or 200 people. Consultant services on hosting an event of your own are also available.

Lisa is also a real estate agent in New Jersey and combines her expertise and services to manage creative open houses, agent networking galas, and house-warming events. Contact an event planner or meeting manager today at 888-876-1117. Send an email to [info@onpointplanners.com](mailto:info@onpointplanners.com). Tell us about an event you or party that you have in mind. Visit our website at [www.onpointplanners.com](http://www.onpointplanners.com) and we will partner with you to plan your event... your way.