

# *GUIDE TO HAVING AN AMAZING EVENT*

By  
Betty Penny

Scugog Island Cruises Ltd.  
“Your One Stop Event Destination”

# INDEX

Chapter 1.	Getting Started	3
Chapter 2.	What you need to be organized	5
Chapter 3.	How far in advance do I need to plan	6
Chapter 4.	What should my invitation say	7
Chapter 5.	What should I expect	8
Chapter 6.	Deciding on a theme	9
Chapter 7.	Brainstorming for a theme idea	10
Chapter 8.	Scogog Island Cruises “ Six Steps to having an Amazing Party ”	11
Chapter 9.	Plan and make every week count	12
Conclusion	About Scugog Island Cruises	14

# 1 Getting Started

- Identify when you want to have the event
- Get your creativity going, start thinking of ideas early
- Think of whether you want to have a large or small gathering

Have you thought of throwing an event or party but just don't know where to start?

This guide is to assist you with some simple tips and guidelines, so that you can have an amazing event or fabulous party.

Going back through the years, I have never thought of myself being an event planner. Then again, thinking back, when I was setting up the various events on Scugog Island Cruises I was able to rely on my past experience.

My many years of entertaining, hosting dinner parties, planning pig roasts, family reunions and home parties serving 6 to 150 guests came in as good practice.

I profess that I am not an expert however I can share with you some of the tips and practical ideas that have made my events a success.

I am hoping that you can learn from my experiences to make it possible for you have a great party.

You will be pleased when your guests rave about what a fabulous party that you had for many months and perhaps years to come.

The secret that I have discovered about creating a great party is pared down to four simple things, planning, preparation, paying attention to your guests and smiling at all times.

Have you ever been to a party with a stressed out host who appeared to want everyone to leave as soon as they arrived, I know I have.

Parties are no longer reserved for just special occasions such as celebrations namely being birthdays, engagements and wedding parties, anniversaries.

It can be just an evening out of getting together with friends, neighbours, co-workers or family just for a fun night and for no other reasons.

These events can also be for tribute and special meaning purposes, as an example, we have held celebration life cruises in the passing of one's life.

It is a meaningful way to celebrate one's life who enjoyed life to the fullest to commemorate their celebration of life in their honor as if they were present.

Aside the social element, parties and social gatherings are used in the business world to increase productivity with staff and boost sales with customers. Having a fun event helps create team spirit with co-workers and build rapport with clients on a personal level.

Let's face it, pulling an event together is a lot of work, coordinating, planning and looking after details, then the cleaning up afterwards. The tips outlined in this guidebook will help make it easier for you.

Some venues, like Scugog Island Cruises Ltd. Can manage this entire process all for you, where you can just walk on board, have fun with your guests and leave right after the event.

Whether your party is on a limited budget or an all out budget, your goal is that want this party to be a amazing so that you guests will comment on what a good time they had.

The rewards can be great especially in motivating your staff in the workplace, with increasing your company's popularity with customers, and helping develop closer relationships with friends and family.

The planning doesn't need to be such a headache. You just have be organized and follow small simple checklists in this guide.

Having smaller checklists helps you feel accomplished after you have done a few things rather than feeling overwhelmed by having a never ending huge list.

Remember do everything in small steps.

With this guide it is designed to help start the planning process so that you can plan in six easy steps based my own personal party planning experiences.

Now, get your pen out, take notes and get ready to throw a ***"Fabulous Event"***.

## 2 What Do You Need To Be Organized

- Do everything in small steps.
- Get a “Binder” and “Blank Calendar” to get organized
- Develop “To Do Lists” and “Checklists”
- Save all your ideas and plans in your planning binder

You need to be organized when doing any planning. My first recommendation would be to purchase a three ring binder, a three ring hole puncher, lined paper, and a large envelope that can be hole punched to be inserted in binder for receipts/contracts. You will also need dividers to section off the binder in various sections to be organized.

This binder that will become your best friend for planning and organizing the event. Remember to put this binder in a safe place so that it is accessible at all times. You never know when you will come up with a great idea that can be put in the ideas section.

This binder will be used for all your planning, throwing in your thoughts, information, copies of your contracts, invoices etc. and anything that relates to your big event.

### **With 8 Tabs/Dividers – Separate into the following sections:**

- Section 1 - A To Do List
- Section 2 – Notes for Ideas
- Section 3 - The Itinerary for the event
- Section 4 – Blank Calendar to mark dates
- Section 5 – Budget Worksheet
- Section 6 - Guest List – contact list
- Section 7 – Vendor and supplier contacts
- Section 8 – Envelope for receipts and contracts

### 3 How Far in Advance Do I Plan Ahead

- The more formal the party the more advance planning.
- Casual Parties can be planned in less than 4 weeks
- Casual Parties and events for under 50 guests in 2 to 4 weeks
- Check with your suppliers for their timetable
- Plan, plan and plan even with last minute parties

When do you start planning for a party? The larger the event, the more extravagant the more that you want to plan in advance.

This holds true for larger events like weddings of 100 people or more are usually planned anywhere from 12 months or more in advance.

The reasoning behind this is the site availability, coordination of services such as the wedding officiant, the entertainment, the caterer, tuxedos rentals, flower arrangements, limo rental, the printing of invitations and the other items that need to be booked well in advance.

Smaller weddings can be planned from 2 to 4 months in advance of course everything is dependant on the suppliers availability in a shorter time-frame. We have planned an 80 person wedding within a 6 week time-frame, again, it is all based on availability.

For less formal events, holding a party for guests up to 100 people can be reasonably planned within a 4 to 8 week period. Under 50 guests on a more casual basis, you probably could plan and prepare within 3 to 4 weeks. It also depends on the event, if you have the time to prepare and need to rely on other resources and their timetables.

Guests usually prefer to receive anywhere from a 2 to 6 week notice to attend a party, depending on the formality.

Last minute parties can also be a big hit, but they have to be well thought-out behind the scenes. Remember if you pay attention to the details the big things take care of themselves.

At Scugog Cruises, we were given that task of throwing a CD launch cruise for a famous band with a radio station based on a short notice of 3 weeks for 100 guests and music executives.

We worked hard behind the scenes and it went off without a hitch with guests raving on the band's website and on the radio station's chat room, it looked like we had prepared months in advance. The secret of any successful party is planning.

## 4 What Should My Invitation Say

- Name of the Party Hosts or Sponsoring Organization
- Type of Event (Celebration, birthday, recognition, etc.)
- If meal is going to be served identify that it is a dinner party
- Place where event is being held
- Date of the event
- Time of the event
- RSVP Date and phone number or email address
- Any special attire from black-tie to casual dress
- Be specific who is invited, whether invitee and guest or with children
- If gifts are to be accepted or not
- If it is a cash bar or open bar
- Include a map and directions on how to get to the event
- Overnight accommodations if guests are coming from out of town

Your invitation should have as much information as possible to assist your guests. There have been many parties that I have been invited to where there was not enough information on the invitation and I have been embarrassed. I remember one event that was not identified that it was a cash bar and no refreshments were provided, the venue did take Visa and I did not bring any money with me. It was embarrassing to borrow money at an event even from someone I knew.

I also have been invited to parties where dinner was being served but it was not stated on the invitation and we would have dinner before going to the event. Or I have been overdressed thinking that the party was dressy and then was casual or have gotten lost as there were no directions on the invitation. As a host/hostess it is important to make your guests feel comfortable and not embarrassed, make sure that your invitations has as much information as possible.

## 5 What Should I Expect

- As a host always smile and take care of your guests
- If a guest does not know anyone introduce them to other guests
- Don't be disappointed with last minute cancellations and no shows.
- Also allow for last minute show ups, as their RSVP may have gotten lost
- Have Smart Serve Certified Staff Serving the Alcoholic Beverages
- Create the itinerary for the day of the event to avoid last minute surprises.

Don't be disappointed if people do commit and then do not show up, there may be last minute emergencies or other things that can happen where they are unable to keep the commitment. I usually allow for about a 8-10% ratio for no shows, even though they have committed.

Always allow for someone showing up who did not RSVP or someone who did RSVP and brought a guest at the last minute.

When ordering from caterers it is best to go with two to four more extra plates for allowances. It is always better to have more food than not enough. You do not want your guests to go home hungry especially if they have had a few alcoholic drinks.

If alcohol is being served, you should ensure that your servers are "Smart Serve Certified" and have a bar tender to monitor and control alcoholic drink consumption.

As host/hostess you are responsible for your guest's alcohol consumption to ensure that they do not leave your party or event intoxicated.

If one of your guests does one too many to drink, make sure that you have the available transportation to take the guest home safe and sound.

Have phone numbers of local taxi services available or hire services that will transport guests home safely.

## 6 Deciding on a Theme

- A theme adds more excitement to the party.
- Making it fun helps build the event up in advance.
- Jot down notes of different theme ideas.

Having a party with a theme adds more to the fun, it helps you build and create an instant setting.

With a fun atmosphere in mind, people can start to get into the mood before the big day. If you choose a theme, such as a tropical paradise, you may want to ask your guests to dress up with colorful shirts or blouses on the invitation.

If you want to play it on the safe side and have not done this before, you may want offer an alternative for guests who don't dress up.

Ask guests to bring items instead that relate to the theme and give a prize for the best outfit or item brought to the party. This makes dressing up optional and everyone can participate in the fun. Enticing guests with fun theme prizes also helps lead the night.

There are many types of themes that you can choose from or you can make one up on your own that can be different.

How about a national made up holiday dedicated to your company, neighborhood, etc. example ABC Company's National Holiday party. You would have this holiday party the same time each year for the staff or friends.

Think of all the things that you can do on this holiday and build the theme from just a few ideas that you get from the staff or friends. Offer a grand prize for the best ideas.

The ideas can be endless you just got to put on your creative thinking cap to get the juices flowing.

If you can't think of any ideas, go to the next chapter on how to Brain Storm.

## 7 Brain Storming for a Theme Idea

- Start thinking of ideas by visiting Party Supply Stores
- What do you think most of your guests will enjoy doing
- Start looking around and save all your ideas and plan in your planning binder.
- Think of fun things, that everyone can participate in

Let me help you with a little brainstorming, here is a list of themes that can get you started with and then you can dream up one of your own themes. You can get other ideas by visiting party supply stores or looking at the games and toys section of any department store:

Tropical Paradise theme	Martinis and Lounge Music Night
50's /60's Dance	Big Band Swing Party
Girls Night Out	Jazz and Smooze Party
Hollywood/Movie Night	Murder Mystery
Mexican/Salsa	Moody Blues Party
Marilyn Monroe Birthday Bash	Elvis Tribute Party
Disco Party	Karaoke – Canadian Idol
Bon Voyage Party	Rock and Roll Party
Beach Party	Latino Party
Pizza/Dance Party	Casino Night
Mardi Gras	

## 8 Scugog Island Cruise's Six Steps to a Great Party

- Invitations.
- Decorations
- Food/Drinks
- Music/Entertainment
- Games
- Party Favors

Here is an example of planning a theme night and the six steps to make your theme a hit.

We will use a Tropical Paradise Party Theme as an example. This is a great theme that is casual that your guests will enjoy and have fun with.

Scugog Island Cruises has been hosting this type of theme cruise for many seasons. Being on the water, while cruising and dancing creates the perfect atmosphere for a tropical paradise theme. A mini get away that allows people think that they are cruising somewhere in the islands with a great mixture of tropical music. It's the Canadian version of Tropical Paradise.

Try our six-step process to conjure up your own "paradise away from home."

### 1.) Invitations

Start with colorful invitations available at any party supply store or create your own with a card making program. Get people in the mood right away with a teaser of what they can expect in the way of some exotic drinks and offer a prize for the wildest or most colorful shirt or the best dressed.

### 2.) Decorations

Think of Gillian's Island, decorate with rented palm trees or cut outs, make as tropical as possible. Each guest should be provided with leis when they arrive. Draping tables and your bar in grass skirts and party area with string lights creates a great setting.

### **3.) Food/Drinks**

On your buffet food table place lots of tropical fruit around the table, such as pineapples, bananas, mangoes, add kiwi for additional flair. In reference to the main meal it should not be too exotic, we would suggest not to stray too far away from what people are normally accustomed to. Have a few exotic drinks to add to the event – Margaritas, Piña Colodas, or make up your own.

### **4.) Music/Entertainment**

There are lots of Tropical/Caribbean Music CDs available at music stores, many party supply stores also have been known to carry party music.

Make sure that you have at least 10 CDs on hand before the party and selected to be play in order. I have been to many parties where the music stopped as the host/hostess was not available to start the music again. Make sure that this does not happen.

If you are hiring entertainment, make sure that they will be playing music that relates to the theme, you may ask them to dress up as well.

### **5.) Games**

Be creative and make up some games, like using trivia questions that are related to your theme. Example: Name all the cast members in Gillian's Island and what did they do professionally before they were stranded. Make sure that you give prizes for the correct answer.

### **6.) Party Favors**

Although party favors are not usually given to guests, unless it is a formal event such as a wedding or anniversary. It certainly is a nice added touch for any event. Depending on your budget, it should be tasteful and not one that will be thrown out after the event.

If we are looking at a tropical theme, you might purchase some cups and small drink umbrellas, fill with candies and wrap up with cellophane and add the umbrella as decoration, run off labels of the event and attach, give it as a departing gift.

Another example, might be digital pictures taken at the event with people dressed and posted up for guests to take home right after the event.

## 9 Plan and make every week count

- Keep updating your planner with new ideas and thoughts.
- Book your entertainment and caterers early.
- Start creating the itinerary for the day of the event
- Keep the buzz, happening before the event with updates.

Planning an event can be very time consuming it can almost be like a full-time job depending on the size of the event.

On the day that you have scheduled to host your event you don't want to look after the little details while mingling with your guests.

The day of the event is the day you listen to your guests, it's where you make them feel special, let them celebrate with you and let them have fun. Get hired help to assist you on that special day. You want to host the ultimate event and not be running around looking after last minute details.

If you find that planning a party is an overwhelming experience you may want to consider Scugog Island Cruises for your next party place. It is an easy way to host (we can even do the hosting if you like) an event where everything is taken of and you just mingle with the guests.

You don't have be worried about preparation before and cleaning up after the event, we just need a head count and you are set. Think of the award winning Scugog Island Cruises as your one stop event destination venue.

I hope that this guide has been helpful for you and appreciate any comments.

Now you can start your planning to have an "AMAZING PARTY OR EVENT".

Warmly yours,

*Betty Penny*



**Scugog Island Cruises Ltd.** 16100 Old Simcoe Road, Port Perry, Ontario Canada L9L 1P3 905.982-1106

## **I Wish I Could Have A Great Event Without Spending A Lot Of Time Doing Everything.**

If you or someone you know is considering in planning an outing from 40 to 100 people – in search of a unique venue, perhaps a cruise boat to handle their needs, but is skeptical or concerned about:

1. Whether there really is someone to help you ... coordinate and organize your event for you.
2. Making sure that everything runs smoothly so that you can mingle with your guests
3. What happens if it rains?
4. How much will this cost you?

My name is Betty Penny; I am the president of Scugog Island Cruises Ltd. owner of the MV Woodman 100 passenger licensed and fully enclosed Cruise Boat located in lovely downtown Port Perry at Palmer Park from May to October. Since 2003, our business has been providing award-winning, entertaining, fun and safe cruises on Lake Scugog.

In our short history we have serviced more than 28,000 passengers; we have had over 100 private charters from weddings, special celebrations, themed dinner dance cruises with satisfied customers and have been profiled in the Toronto Star in addition to receiving a national cruise innovation award from the Canadian Passenger Vessel Association and 2005 Business of Year Award from the Oshawa Chamber of Commerce.

## **Having a great event without using too Much of Your Own Time... Scugog Island Cruises Uses A Combination Of 4 Proven Planning Techniques To Design Your Event That Actually Works To Help You....**

### **Here's What Our One Of Happy Customers Have Said**

Your crew remained flexible with our huge technical requirements and even took care of the itinerary! Best of all, you were quick to reserve the date we required for our private charter. We simply left with an outstanding evening we were proud to welcome record executives, an award winning band (Doc Walker) and, most of all our listeners to enjoy!" ~ *Adriane Vogel, KX96 Artist Liaison*

**How Often Do You Hear Yourself Saying: I want to have a fabulous party, "But I just don't have the time to do it."**

**CALL 905.982-1106 NOW**

Find out why we have so many repeat and happy customers.

***Betty Penny***

Betty Penny, BA, MBA  
President