

PROCESS THREE: HOW TO PLAN YOUR CREATE EVENT

In this section of the notebook, we've provided some basic timelines and checklists for you to use **as you set up your Create step**, the event to kick off each challenge. First, review the five critical factors in ensuring your kick-off event is successful.

FIVE ESSENTIALS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

1. **A committed Event Director:** Find the person who will be excited to oversee volunteers, execute a plan, provide status updates to the pastor and other leaders, and communicate the vision and value of the kick-off event. Attention to detail, organization, and a passion to see men discipled are all great attributes for this role!
2. **An intentional strategy, using *No Man Left Behind*:** No Man Left Behind is a resource to help you maximize the effectiveness of your event, the follow-up groups, and everything you do. As part of your planning process prior to the event, take your team through a study of the book or the video-based Courseware.
3. **The support of the pastor:** Your pastor's support of the event is critical to its success. Show your pastor that this is a way for you to serve him and the men of the church and community. Ask him to invite men to attend the event on Sunday mornings and in other group settings to help build value. His influence is powerful!
4. **Personal invitation:** This is the single most significant factor in whether or not a man will attend. Form a plan for your team to personally invite each man in your church. Aim for every man to hear about the event five times; repetition gets results. Furthermore, have each man commit to bring someone from outside the church—make it an evangelistic opportunity!
5. **Follow-up groups:** Don't invest your time and resources in this event and then fail to capture the momentum with your men—before they even leave the event. Connect the men to the **Capture** step right there. Short-term follow-up groups are the recommended **Capture** step. These groups are vital to the discipleship process surrounding the event and will bring men into closer relationship with Christ and with one another. Be sure to find men to lead these groups *before* the event. *Hosting an event with no follow-up is like turning up the heat in winter and opening all the doors and windows—nothing to show for all the hard work.*

We've put together a basic timeline and checklist for you to use when in the **initial planning phase** of your event. It is designed to help you think through the primary things that need to be secured before you get too far down the process and begin to promote.

16 WEEKS OUT

- Begin recruiting new leaders to serve on the team for this challenge.
- Meet with your pastor to discuss what type of event you'd like to do. Ask for his blessing and support. Emphasize that you and your team are there to support his vision for the men in the church, NOT replace or rival it.

14 WEEKS OUT

- Choose desired event format (weekend retreat, evening, afternoon, etc.)
- Choose what event to do. Use the Straightforward Plan selection, one of the Flexible Plan options, or design your own event.
- Decide whether you will use an outside speaker or someone from the church.

13 WEEKS OUT

- Choose the date(s) and times for the event. Keep the church calendar in mind.
- Decide what resource to use for the short-term follow-up groups.
- Send in contracts and scheduling fees, if using an outside organization's event.
- Decide whether you will include worship; choose musicians and determine their corresponding audio/visual and room needs.
- Reserve room/venue for event.

11 WEEKS OUT

- Confirm that you have all technical needs and room requirements in place. For events with presentation and discussion, we recommend seating men at round tables, two-thirds full, so that no one has his back to the speaker. Decide what you will need: tables for food/beverages, a wireless mic, a screen and projector for PowerPoint, internet access, a flip chart pad and easel, etc. Reserve!
- Finalize the leadership team for the event and the challenge overall.
- Do you have email addresses and phone numbers for all the men in the church? Have the team start gathering this contact information.

10 WEEKS OUT

- Set your ticket price, if charging for the event. Build in an early bird incentive. Consider the costs of any food or refreshments, room rental fees, and the follow-up group resource.
- Customize your event promo plan. (See Process Four.)

9 WEEKS OUT

- Begin studying No Man Left Behind as a leadership team.
- Update your senior pastor on the event plans.
- Prepare to kick off promo plan, and make sure any printed materials are ready.