

*Help! I need somebody!
How to get help (that will want to help again).*

Warm-Up Questions

1. Whom do you help? (higher ranking people, friends, officials ...)
2. Why do you help in preparing / at an event? (fun, duty, guilt, recognition ...)
3. When was the last time you saw someone help? And what did this person do?

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Event planning - Where to start

First things first: structure the tasks of the event.
Which tasks are there? Which can be given away?

Important here: Self-assessment:
In which fields do I excel, in which fields not, which task would I never give out of my hands, which ones do I despise?

Modularization of the tasks:

- Tasks during the event:
 - Single tasks:
 - check toilet paper (over the course of the weekend)
 - put up banners (once)
 - server at feast
 - Complex tasks:
 - Head Cook (organise, delegate yourself, lead a team)
 - Royal Liason (communicate beforehand, make own decisions)
- Tasks that can be done beforehand / off-site
 - Single tasks
 - Creation of site tokens
 - Complex tasks:
 - Planning of the campground (complex)

Be prepared for the worst: Have a fallback option and, if all else fails, a minimal version.
What would happen if you hadn't a head cook? Potluck? (consider the announcement time) Pizza Service? (at least people wouldn't go hungry)

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Event planning – the mental walkthrough (aka what did I forget?)

Imagine you are a completely new guest at the party and go through the days in your head. How do you hear of the event? How do you pay? How do you get to the site? What do you need first? What do you expect? Which things can happen? How do you leave the site?

Some things that will regularly pop up, because people ask about it:

- toilet paper, soap, warm dinner, drinks, parking space, extra blankets, accommodation, power sockets, pens

One other thing that you don't need to worry about:

- a detailed schedule

Most of the time people are perfectly happy and capable of organizing themselves once they have the room and facilities for it.

Make notes during the walkthrough to see where you need additional help and/or material.

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Looking for candidates (note: [attach org chart coronation](#))

Once you know which jobs there are, now:

Look for candidates for the differently structured jobs among those you know. Be it your friends, your group, or even people you've seen at other events (example: [Duncan](#)). Write down the names.

Track your possible helpers (aka "stalking"). What are they writing about the event? Are they relaxed? Are they busy otherwise in life? Are they interested, but reluctant? LISTEN to them, to the small things they say in between sentences, and their feelings. (example: [Alenn](#)) Bonus: Do you find new people who seem keen to join and help?

Adapt the workload of the tasks to the possible helpers - depending on which person is reliable, who is stressed, who is busy otherwise etc.

Then:

Ask them nicely. Tell them exactly which job you'd like them to do and why you chose them in particular.

Have a backup. There'll always be candidates dropping out.

Should this happen, and your desired candidate drops out, let the original person know, that there is a backup for them, so they don't have a bad conscience. Let them also know you'd like to work with them the next time (keep the door open). Or offer them other jobs, if it's just the particular job they don't want to or can't do.

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You have a team!

If you have your team: Let them always know:

- where you're at (transparency) (which tasks are still to do/which tasks are done)
- what you expect of whom (clarity) (peer pressure works) (but also always think of the open back door if people have to drop out)
- how stressed you are and why (not in all detail, but to give them a feeling of where this event goes to)
- that you're thankful for their help, because they take a burden from you (even if that's not the case)

Make it personal.

You can never say "thank you" enough.

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At the event

Have a notebook. Write down the names of your team and their tasks. Watch them. Make sure, that you have time at court or feast to name each of them and thank them. Don't forget to include those you might have forgotten (you will always forget people. Ask your team to point you to them, so you can go to them and thank them later on).

Offer niceties to your team. For example free drinks during the event, a gift at the end, a public thank you.

Keep in touch with your people to give them the feeling that you're there, should they need you. Don't supervise and micromanage them (unless wanted, which is rarely the case).

If people feel that their personal work is seen, they are much more likely to be motivated.

If spontaneous tasks occur, dare to ask any of the guests. Nicely. ;)

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Leading in general:

They are YOUR team. So whenever YOU get praise, direct it to your team. You wouldn't get it if not for them. If you get shit, keep it to yourself. Or maybe, if needed, talk about it with your inner circle of event people.

Watch them. YOU'RE the Mama Duck. Take care of the various energy levels of your helpers. Check on them regularly: Are you okay? Do you need something? Can I get you anything? But also: When can I expect the task to be done? Do you need help with that?

Esp. have a look on the overachievers who want to do all themselves and „are fine“. Take them out, if necessary. Not with force, but find a replacement and tell them you would be really happy if that person would sit down for a glass of wine for thirty minutes (back door) or attend a specific class (which you know he wanted to attend, because you did your stalking ;)). ([Example Agilmar/Elffin](#))

Have an open eye for people and their different ways and possibilities of help.

If you see people help, thank them!
(Even if you're not the steward or responsible. People will remember you seeing them.)

Bonus insight:

Less signs! People only read a third of the signs, so make it as easy as possible without too many restrictions, explanations etc. No booklets, if not really necessary. Put signs, where they're necessary and keep them as short as possible.

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It's all about you

YOU ARE NOT WORKING YOURSELF.

This is important. People rely on you to have the overview and to organize and delegate. So you don't cut carrots or clean toilets. Look for people who can do that for you because there's always people who WANT to help (but sometimes are too shy to ask) and, more important, there'll always be the next disaster or the next crew member around the corner which needs your attention. Make sure Mama Duck is available then.

Have a space for yourself.

Seriously. **You are the most important person.** If you break down or even if you are not having a good time it will be much harder for others to take over and it will make them feel extremely bad. You just need to be there and give them the good feeling that you have everything under control (even if you haven't - don't give them a bad perception, rather say „I'll see to that and see if I can find a solution“.)

Plan (and make) breaks.

Have at least one time during the day off (be it a class, breakfast, a nap during the afternoon, feast, whichever is your desired time to have some time off. [\(example Malin\)](#))

Have a friend who takes care of you and watches you should you ignore your signs of exhaustion.

And, finally:

**Organizing an event is like organizing a birthday party.
All attendants want to have fun and be relaxed.
PS. **That includes YOU!****

