

PRESENTER FORM
AFP Central PA Chapter “Vignettes” Program

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Vignette Title: “The Ride Home”

Principle: This vignette is intended to illustrate the importance of evaluation after a special fundraising event.

Vignette text:

As fundraisers, most of us have been involved in planning and executing special events. And as you will agree, in order to be successful, these endeavors require months of preparation, a huge commitment of time and a host of resources. And of all the critical components of special event fundraising, perhaps the most important is the evaluation.

For me, that process begins on the ride home. On the way home after a special event, after the annual golf tournament, after Elegant Progressions, our black tie fundraiser, a movie reel replays in my head of every minute of the event, from when the first guest arrives to when the last lights are lowered. The ride home is a good time for me to decompress after all the excitement and anxiety that surrounds managing a special fundraising event.

We all know instinctually the importance of taking time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh. And there are those in our industry who view this step as an investment in your organization’s future success.

Some general evaluative criteria include: Did the event fulfill its goals and objectives? Was the mission of our organization clearly articulated? Why or why not? Identify what worked and what needs fine-tuning. Which vendors should be used again? What items were missing on the checklist? Was the event well attended? Was informal and formal feedback about the event positive? Given all that went into staging, was it worth doing?

And while this very personal rewind doesn’t take the place of a more formal and structured post-event discussion with your staff and volunteers, it is a good way for me evaluate my own thoughts and feelings about my contributions to the activity. Did I remember to introduce my staff? Did I appropriately and correctly recognize the event sponsors? Why didn’t we catch those typos in the program?

The rewind should also be an opportunity to discover what mattered most to your guests and supporters. Was it the fresh cut flowers on table and the sterling silver pate knife? Or was it the fact that you took the time to personally greet your guests, shake their hands, and thank them for their support of your mission? My guess is that was the latter.

Finally, it is important to remember to celebrate your successes with all who contributed.

