

Creativity

The best events will offer guests something **unexpected** and **unique**. You want them to remember your event and be excited about the prospect of coming back again. Don't host a rubber chicken affair; strive for a little more creativity in your offerings or their presentation. If you've seen it a million times, so has most of your audience. Some ways to develop creative ideas include:

Brainstorm

ABAHE

Sit down with others involved with your events business, and try to come up with as many new event ideas as you can. To brainstorm effectively, make sure that there is a continuous flowing of ideas **without** any judgment and that the ideas are not discussed until all ideas have been stated. (Ideally, one person should be keeping track of them and writing them down.) When you let yourself talk and blurt out ideas without thinking about them, the most amazing and creative ideas can start to come out. After you have your list of ideas, you can then discuss them and you will be surprised at how many good ideas come out as you discuss the list.

TIP: Let yourself go when coming up with ideas — you can always modify them later to come in line with your budget and objectives.

Leave a Note Pad by Your Bed

Write down any ideas that come to you as you are **drifting off to sleep** or when you **first awake** in the morning. It is proven that the brain is considered to be more creative when it is in the "Alpha" state (just before falling asleep and immediately after waking up and also while dreaming).

Read and Watch

As mentioned in chapter 2, a good way to come up with ideas for theme parties is by keeping up with what's hot on television. *Entertainment Weekly* magazine publishes top 10 lists in every issue to help you keep up with the most popular shows, movies, books, CDs, etc. Pick up an issue at your newsstand (to access their website you need to use AOL or sign in with a code that's published in each issue).

You will find a variety of resources mentioned throughout this guide, including the next section. Check out as many as you can and chances are you will find numerous excellent ideas that you can adapt.

One example of a fabulously creative event planner is **Anne Avery**, who is based in Toronto. You can see an example of a creative proposal at her website. (Click on **Our Approach** then click on **Creative Proposal**.) Note the level of detail provided, and how each item ties in beautifully to the overall theme.

Anne Avery Productions <http://www.aaprods.com>

Develop Plan Bs

It's a good idea to get into the habit of having a "Plan B" ready in case Plan A doesn't work out. As you saw in chapter 2, you can have **backup plans** ready in case of a crisis. However, you can't be prepared for **every** possible thing that could go wrong. For example, more than one event planner has received a call saying the speaker would not be able to make it. What would **you** do with 500 people showing up in an hour to hear the speaker?

Ask yourself "what if?" questions at every opportunity. For example, when you are at a restaurant, you might ask yourself "What would I do if I were the owner of this restaurant, and the chef quit in the middle of dinner hour?" Try to think of as many different solutions as you can to a variety of problems. Doing this exercise will develop your ability to roll with the punches, so that when something goes wrong in "real life" you will be capable of quickly finding a solution. This skill goes hand-in-hand with...

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