

100 WAYS TO CREATE A MORE IMPACTFUL EVENT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION



A Performer's Guide to Filling
the Hall & Inspiring your
Donors

Ariella Zeitzlin is a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, wearing a blue top and a large, decorative white floral headpiece. She is smiling and playing a violin. The background is dark.

Hey I'm Ariella

After performing at hundreds of events around the world, from intimate gatherings to large-scale fundraisers, I've learned that impactful events don't happen by chance.

They are crafted with intention, emotion, and alignment between planners, performers, and donors. This guide brings you behind the scenes of what I've seen works and what doesn't, so your audience leaves on a high and your donors are itching to collaborate with you on more projects.

After several successful crowdfunding campaigns and being involved in projects that have earned millions for the organizations I am passionate about, I am excited to be able to share my expertise with you so your event can hit all the right notes.

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The Essentials

1. Pick a Theme and stick to it with your marketing, branding, and theme
2. The way you open the event is kind of like a prophecy, in that it tells the audience who they get to become.
3. Donors don't give because you ask. They give because they feel something real.
4. Choose performers who embody your mission, not just match your timeline.
5. Momentum is your secret weapon — keep the emotional arc alive.
6. People don't remember speeches; they remember sensations.
7. Atmosphere is more important than budget. Always.
8. Create one moment that's so powerful it rewires someone's identity.
9. Smooth production = instant donor confidence.
10. The ending is what sticks with them - Leave them in uplift, unity, and light.

Setting up the Emotions

11. Every event needs one positive emotion pulsing through it. Even if it is an event that is focused on tragedy.
12. Focus on where you are vulnerable as an organization and who you serve - Vulnerability isn't weakness, it's the doorway to generosity.
13. Hope activates more giving than fear ever will.
14. Craft a moment where every single person feels seen.
15. Music is like emotional architecture, use performances to craft the emotional journey.
16. Emotional transitions matter. Don't jerk people around.
17. Shared laughter bonds faster than shared background.
18. Tell stories that sound like they belong to everyone in the room.
19. Silence can be used intentionally, such as a moment of silence for the fallen.
20. Build your night like a journey: warm → open → deep → rise → triumph.

Setting up the Emotions

Part 2

21. Donors want to be heroes, not wallets.

22. The more personal the story, the more universal the impact. If you can get people who have been affected by your organization to speak, it will impact donors in a huge way

23. Don't just talk about community, include moments in the event that make them experience it, such as turning to each other and saying something nice or incorporating a group activity

24. When people laugh AND cry in one night, you've won.

25. Incorporate some type of ritual, like a specific handshake or a certain phrase into the event, so that when people who attended see each other later they feel like part of a secret club.

Audience Psychology

26. People decide in 7 seconds if they trust you. That's why it's a great idea to use someone who is either the face of the organization, or a well known person from your community as the MC

27. The room mirrors your energy, so be bold, alive, and unapologetic. If this is a fundraising event, you should be so clear on your mission with your work.

28. Belonging opens hearts. Hearts open wallets.

29. Confident leadership makes the audience feel safe. Be very intentional about the people you put on stage

30. Reignite attention every 7 minutes and surprise the audience! In our generation, people get bored easily

31. Ask questions that activate identity, and make your audience feel like the hero

32 Surprise breaks resistance and lights up curiosity.

33. Humor helps people to drop the ego

Audience Psychology

34. Be the guide people didn't know they needed. I've done this very effectively by emphasizing how charity opens the channels of abundance in our lives
35. Give people permission to feel something deeper than the program.
36. Create audience-to-audience connection, not just stage-to-audience.
37. The more that the people in charge speak from their souls, the more people feel like they are "real"
38. Trust grows through tiny, real moments, so while you should plan things out, it's also ok to go off script a little bit
39. If you want them to remember it, attach meaning to it. Incorporate legacy projects into what you are doing
40. People don't want perfect. They want real.

Production Magic

41. Lighting is emotional engineering, and doesn't need to be expensive to be effective

42. Good sound = instant professionalism.

43. Transitions are part of the event. Treat them like choreography.

44. Everyone needs timing. Everyone.

45. If possible, Practice entrances because it is in the transitions that the momentum can get lost.

46. Screens should enhance, not distract.

47. Clean visuals → clear message → stronger impact.

48. A brilliant stage manager is a gift from heaven.

Production Magic 2

49. Movement on stage should feel intentional, not accidental.

50. Pre-event music sets the emotional temperature before you even start.

51. Countdown timers build anticipation.

52. Short speeches are better than long ones.

53. Check microphones like your event depends on it — it does.

54. A calm backstage creates a calm performance.

55. Always rehearse your “tech glitch reset” moment.

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black dress and a black headband, is playing a violin on a stage. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is dark blue with yellow spotlights and white confetti or light particles.

Story Time:

I had a performance that the electricity where the electricity for the whole building got shorted from the stage equipment. I came out and hung out with the audience for 30 minutes, telling jokes and playing music until they found a generator and made it all work out.

The fact is, that the reason that I know so much about audience psychology and production magic is because I have been involved in hundreds of productions from start to finish and have witnessed every possible thing that could go wrong.

I have produced my own shows as well as being involved in every aspect of production, and when things are done badly, I can almost always pinpoint exactly why. So if you need some support to get through this, reach out. I would love to help you

Donor Experience



71. Donors want to feel needed but never pressured.
72. Personal stories beat statistics every time.
73. Transparency builds spiritual and financial trust. Talk about exactly where their money is going
74. Let donors hear directly from the lives they've changed.
75. Make giving ridiculously easy.
76. Public acknowledgment makes giving feel like identity.
77. Private acknowledgement makes giving feel like love.
78. Give donors a private moment before or after.
79. Let donors meet the performers. It humanizes the mission.
80. Make donors feel like PARTNERS, not spectators.
81. Show impact visually, people believe what they see.
82. If you hand out a booklet, make it ridiculously easy to donate with a QR code or links
83. Anchor giving in legacy: "This is who we are, and who you are as a result of partnering with us."
84. Use sensory elements — they bypass logic and go straight to the soul.
85. Connect giving to purpose, destiny, and identity.

Advanced Event Impact

86. Make check-in feel luxurious and effortless.

87. Use subtle scent if possible, atmosphere has layers.

88. Create photo opportunities that scream pride and belonging.

89. Give people something meaningful to hold (candles, cards, blessings).

90. Add a live creative moment art performed in real time is electric. This can be music (obviously my favorite) but I have been involved in events where they incorporated dancers, live painting, or sand sculpting

91. Invite people bless each other as part of the event. This never fails to surprise me how important this is.

92. Invite the room sing together. This can be unforgettable, and unity becomes sound.

93. Include intergenerational elements it feels like legacy when you can incorporate children or teens in the event.

94. Honor someone in a soft, elegant, emotional way.

95. Every segment should earn its place.

96. Place a huge emphasis on stories!

97. Another emphasis on moments of silence

98. Leave room for spontaneity. The best moments aren't scripted.

99. Don't be afraid of joy. Joy opens hearts faster than guilt.

100. Remember that the ultimate goal is to send them home changed - in their identity, their energy, their purpose, their faith, and their pride.

Your event should feel like transformation.

Like joy.

Like identity.

Like purpose.

Like something people remember for the rest of
their lives.

If you're not here to play small, let's create your
unforgettable night together

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