One Important Thing I've Learned From Three Different-Sized Events

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I recently attended the PRSSA National Conference in Boston — which was three solid days of guest speakers, panels and workshops, and two days of lighter mixers and keynote addresses. The whole event was produced by students who run PRSSA nationally, and the committees formed to help just for the event, so the coordination logistics were impressive.

Before that, I attended an invitation-only LinkedIn event in downtown LA, mostly out of curiosity. It looked like a networking/career-building type of day, with free shuttle service there and back, breakfast and lunch *and* free professional headshots, so I said, "why not!"

And before that, I was a celebrity handler for the night at the Maxim Hot 100 party in Hollywood for my marketing internship with the producers of the event, Karma International. It was the 100 hottest women ranked by Maxim, boatloads of celebrities including Jamie Foxx, DJ Khaled (headlining), Nick Cannon, Wiz Kalifa, Floyd Mayweather, Stevie Wonder and scores more.

Something will always go wrong at an event — well-planned or not, it's acknowledged. But something I feel is lacking at all these events and others, is the most important component of planning *anything,* not just an event: Putting yourself in the attendee's/consumer's shoes! And I mean literally going through your event, product, etc. as if you were your consumer/audience. It's easy to get caught up in planning logistics and never being on the ground-level of operations. A lot of big brands get that issue after being blinded by revenue; they don't stop and realize their employees are being treated poorly and turnover is high, or they are continuously not selling "x" but sales for "y" are so high they don't notice the losses.

You need to stop and go back to ground level, at stages of planning or prosperity. That's why I think I will be extremely prepared for a job at Starbucks corporate—because I have been a barista for five years, and I am not going in as an executive that's never been behind the counter. It's why Starbucks stores with managers working behind the bar, and not solely behind a desk, run the best.

Walking through the Maxim party wearing tennis shoes, executives may not have noticed any issues. But most, if not all, the women attending were wearing high heels and the asphalt on the way into the venue was extremely cracked and rocky, and inside you had to walk over rubber mats with circular holes to get to the restrooms — where I tripped multiple times, my heel getting caught in the holes (water underneath was an added no-no). It's little things like this someone would have caught if they walked through the place as if they were attending it:

lights low, music blaring, crowded dance floor, high heels and long dresses (and booze, of course), etc.

For these reasons, I place extra importance on the *evaluation* step of a campaign/event/product. Mid-campaign, post-product launch, etc., there's always a reason to evaluate. When you think everything's going right and no one has any complaints — ask yourself: Have you stepped into your consumer's shoes?