# GO/NO-GO Analysis for Launch and New Events

Go/No-Go decisions are unique to each individual event. Factors that may greatly impact one event might be less impactful for others. Timing and costs will be unique to each event. When determining to continue to move forward--or not--with an event, there are many factors to take into consideration beyond financial risks. It may also be important to consider intangible outcomes such as how terminating the event may affect client, industry, association and/or partner relationships. Additionally, you should ask if your decision will cause you to lose or strengthen future industry opportunities. Be cognizant that cancelling or postponing an event may be seen as a good thing by industry stakeholders. Likewise, are there future, new opportunities that could arise from completing the project, or would be impacted by cancellation.

While this document serves as a template to measure Go/No-Go decisions, event managers must also use their knowledge, resources and judge the uniqueness of each event to establish which decision is right for each event.

## *Criteria Outline*

This list is your checklist and outlines areas and costs that may be incurred. Measuring the areas noted below will help you to seek ways to mitigate costs and risks, where applicable. The accompanying spreadsheet details each of the expense items need to best use in your calculated measurements. Additionally, it notes revenues and cash flow and how those are regularly measured against the corresponding expenses. When factoring Expense and Revenue, the following major categories should be factored:

**Expenses**

- Facility Agreements
- Vendor Agreements
- Speaker Agreements
- Travel & Entertainment
- Staff G&A

**Revenue**

- Contracts in hand
- Collections to date
- Pending Collections
- Pending Contracts/Commitments

**Intangibles**

- Interest of potential clients
- Impact of your decision on clients, event partners, association, industry leaders
- Reputation in industry and your future desire to return to industry
- Be sure to conduct due diligence of your pipeline analysis from your sales CMS

**Timing**
The Go/No-Go decision will be different for every event.

*For new/launch events*: a decision may be needed within the 9-12-month timeframe, prior to the event. Others may be able to push those decisions to 6-9 months, while still others could go to as late as three months from the launch.

*For existing events:* a decision may be needed within the 9-12-month timeframe, prior to the event. These decisions are typically due to macro issues within the marketplace or economy. Most Go/No-Go decisions for existing events are made due to changing conditions within 12 months of the event. The exhibitor/sponsor community may decide to pull out of the event. Other conditions, such as natural disasters, can cause a decision to be made much closer to the event date. A decision will typically need to be made at a minimum of 2 weeks out from the event to avoid/reduce travel costs by the audience.

Waiting closer to the event may help to give you a clearer picture – and collect revenues (for launch events), but it likely also means you are incurring additional expenses. Therefore, you will need to do your cost-revenue analysis at each interval. It's also important to recognize that at each interval you will not only re-evaluate decisions made at an earlier timeframe, but also, you will likely have new decisions to evaluate as the event gets closer. We recommend Go/No-Go decision intervals of 9 months, 6 months and 3 months for launch events.

**Risk and Cost Mitigation**
Launching a new event has inherent risk. There is no historical data to measure the event against, nor any data or anecdotal information to calculate. However, there are some practices that can help to alleviate risk and minimize loss.

Knowing there are risks going into the event, your plan should be for a cautious entry into the market. Don't lock in long term contracts, or contracts that include large deposits or cancellation clauses. Be open and communicate with your vendors and partners that it is a new event. If they are willing, maybe even include them in the risk/reward of the growth of the event. Do regular check-ins with your sales team to ensure your sales and pipeline activity are progressing. Note red flags and ask your team to honest about the event progress. One of the biggest mistakes in analyzing the Go/No-Go decision, is the human nature of not wanting to deliver bad news. Be sure your team understands that they must provide an honest evaluation so you can accurately make decisions, course correct where necessary and mitigate loss, if necessary.