



✓ Checklist

The Ultimate Commercial Real Estate Groundbreaking Guide

You may think that dirt, a few shovels and a few executives are all you need to bring a groundbreaking to life.

However, an effective groundbreaking should be so much more. This is not just a photo opp but an opportunity to set the foundation for a project, both literally and figuratively, that will shape the narrative for years to come.

Follow this checklist to make sure your groundbreaking is a success from start to finish.

Pre-Event

- ✓ **Set a date, time and invite list:** Dignitaries like Mayors or Council Members often have busy schedules. Work with their administrative team, internal teams and important project partners to find a date and time that they can make it before any other elements of the day are set in stone
- ✓ **Determine site logistics and rental needs:** Depending on the season you may need a tent, temporary flooring (high heels and rocky construction sites don't mix), chairs, a podium, temporary heating or cooling solutions, and bathrooms. Also, for a larger event, it can be helpful to rent A/V equipment to ensure guests can hear your speakers. Take into account any accommodations needed for handicapped guests and secure any permits as needed.
- ✓ **Secure catering:** Food is a critical part of any good party. Your guests feel the same way. Depending on your budget, simple coffee and pastry service can work or a larger-scale project might call for more extravagant catering.
- ✓ **Confirm parking arrangements and signage:** You do not want anyone to miss the event because they cannot find a parking spot. This is an especially important consideration in dense urban redevelopment areas that might lack nearby structured parking. Local police departments or parking enforcement agencies can usually lend a helping hand with temporary parking setups. Signage can help guests identify parking and event locations.
- ✓ **Order shovels, hardhats and favors:** It might sound self-explanatory but make sure you have the shovels and other branded pieces of the event ordered well (most lead times are a minimum two weeks) in advance.
- ✓ **Find your photographer and videographer:** The phrase - "I can take pictures and videos on my iPhone" - rarely ends with polished and professional photos and videos. Hire professionals to oversee both photography and videography to ensure your photos and videos are ready for primetime. Photos and video are critical in ensuring that your project is positioned for long-term success long after the dirt toss settles.



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- ✓ **Identify media outlets and send an invite:** Identify which local, regional and relevant trade outlets have covered events similar to yours in the past. Send them a well-crafted media alert with the most vital information about the project and an official invitation to attend the groundbreaking.
- ✓ **Draft post-event press release:** You'll thank yourself after the event. Drafting and sourcing approvals on the post-event press release before the event ensures you aren't scrambling to put it together and can distribute it immediately after the event.
- ✓ **Create a long-term content strategy:** While planning the physical event is critical, it's equally important to maximize the impact beyond those in attendance. Consider how you are planning to use all of the pieces of content you create at the event. How will you use video assets? How does the program fit into your overall marketing strategy for the project?

Day of Event

- ✓ **Confirm program:** Check with your dignitaries to make sure they are comfortable with the order of speakers.
- ✓ **Set the scene:** Place shovels, hard hats and any other materials to be used for the ceremony at the site. Depending on ground conditions, the construction team might want to dig up some loose dirt at the ceremony site.
- ✓ **Keep an eye out for media:** Invited media sometimes may not RSVP. Keep an eye out for people with notepads or cameras and offer to arrange interviews with key executives.
- ✓ **Stay on time:** Everyone is busy. Try to stay on schedule as best as you can.
- ✓ **Get photos and video footage:** Organize group shots and video footage of the event. Secure images and video files to send out with the post-event press release

Post-Event

- ✓ **Distribute the press release and visual assets:** Timely distribution of the press release to relevant outlets will lead to more coverage. Include photos and videos from the event as well as renderings of the finished product.
- ✓ **Share on social media and encourage employees to share:** Posts should not only be shared on corporate social media but executive and employee accounts to maximize reach.
- ✓ **Build on success:** Now that the project has kicked off, you don't want to go dark until the topping off or ribbon cutting. Identify ways to share updates on the project to keep stakeholders informed.

Looking for inspiration?

Learn more about how we recently transformed a client's groundbreaking event.

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Need help?

Contact us to learn more about how we can help transform your next groundbreaking event.