

Fun Factor Design Checklist

Building a Joyful Service Experience

When service feels like celebration, people come back - and they invite friends. Use this checklist to design joy on purpose, protect volunteer energy, and build momentum from arrival to send-off.

QUICK SETUP

Pick a few upgrades per section. Assign owners. Score it after the event (page 4).

Event: _____

Date: _____

1) Arrival

Parking lot, check-in, first impressions

CHECKLIST (mark what you will build into the plan)

- ☐ Make the entry point obvious (signage + volunteers who wave people in).
- ☐ Play music where people arrive (parking lot or check-in area).
- ☐ Greeters lead with energy: smiles, eye contact, high fives (no dead room).
- ☐ Check-in is fast: clear lines, QR codes ready, a human helping new people.
- ☐ Your one-sentence cause is visible at check-in (same words, big type).
- ☐ Hand out shirts/name tags early so teams feel unified immediately.
- ☐ Provide water + quick snacks before the work starts (protect joy).
- ☐ Orientation is short and confident: what we're doing, why it matters, what's next.

AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Long lines and vague directions. Confusion kills energy before it starts.

DESIGN QUESTION

What should a first-time guest feel in the first 90 seconds?

HIGH IMPACT / LOW COST

- One Bluetooth speaker + a pre-built playlist (assign a DJ, not 'someone').
- A single 24x36 foam board sign: cause sentence + where to go next.

2) Visual Environment

Shirts, colors, banners, photo ops, theme

CHECKLIST (mark what you will build into the plan)

- ☐ Choose one visual theme (colors + simple phrase) and stick with it everywhere.
- ☐ Shirts are bold, readable, and photo-friendly (no tiny text).
- ☐ Wayfinding is clean: arrows, station labels, and a simple map.
- ☐ Set one primary photo backdrop (logo + cause + measurable goal).
- ☐ Create a visible progress tracker (scoreboard, wall tally, meter).
- ☐ Keep supply areas tidy (bins, tape lines, labeled tables).
- ☐ Include kid-friendly visuals (lower signage, simple as possible).
- ☐ Post the social handle/hashtag once - big and clear - near photo spots.

AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Too many words and too many themes. Visual clutter makes the event feel chaotic.

DESIGN QUESTION

What will people photograph without being asked?

HIGH IMPACT / LOW COST

- Tablecloths + simple station signs (11x17) make everything feel intentional.
- A paper roll / DIY step-and-repeat backdrop + two clip lights.

3) Energy During the Work

Music, milestones, competitions, pacing

CHECKLIST (mark what you will build into the plan)

- ☐ Assign a Fun Captain (or small team) to own the vibe - not logistics.
- ☐ Keep music consistent and appropriate for the room and the community partner.
- ☐ Build milestone moments every 20-30 minutes (announce wins out loud).
- ☐ Use a visible scoreboard (meals packed, kits built, bags filled, etc.).
- ☐ Keep shifts reasonable with planned breaks (shorter + joyful beats long + drained).
- ☐ Rotate tasks when possible to prevent fatigue and bottlenecks.
- ☐ Leaders model energy: move, encourage, thank people by name.
- ☐ Capture quick stories while energy is high (30-second testimonies).

AVOID THIS MISTAKE

The long grind. If volunteers leave depleted, they won't come back next year.

DESIGN QUESTION

Where will energy dip - and what will we do before it does?

HIGH IMPACT / LOW COST

- Ring a bell/gong at every milestone - simple, loud, and motivating.
- Micro competitions: 'First team to 50 boxes' (only if it fits the culture).
- A 'shout-out' clipboard: write names + read 5 out loud every 30 minutes.

4) Celebration Moments

Impact stories, public thanks, wrap party feel

CHECKLIST (mark what you will build into the plan)

- ☐ Share impact numbers in real time (not just after it's over).
- ☐ Tell one short story of impact (60 seconds) to connect work to purpose.
- ☐ Publicly thank volunteers, partners, and first-time guests (name them).
- ☐ Create a 'we did it' moment at the end (big applause + final number).
- ☐ Make photos easy: gather teams, stage group shots, repeat the prompt.
- ☐ Celebrate first-time volunteers (a simple sticker, wristband, or shout-out).
- ☐ Keep food/hydration available as a reward, not an afterthought.
- ☐ End with a wrap-party feel: music up, smiles visible, leaders present.

AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Finishing with silent cleanup. If celebration is missing, momentum dies.

DESIGN QUESTION

How will we help volunteers feel like heroes at the finish line?

HIGH IMPACT / LOW COST

- A single 'We did it: ____' poster board for the final photo moment.
- A 1-minute 'highlight reel' captured on phones for Sunday and social.

5) Send-Off Experience

High-fives, tokens, next steps, momentum

CHECKLIST (mark what you will build into the plan)

- ☐ Create a high-five tunnel or leader send-off at the exit (end on a high).
- ☐ Hand every volunteer a simple thank-you token (card, sticker, small treat).
- ☐ Make the next step clear: invite to Sunday, next outreach, or follow-up party.
- ☐ Have a New Here table open (same as weekends) with a gift and contact capture.
- ☐ Send a follow-up message within 24 hours: wins, photos, next steps.
- ☐ Post photos fast and tag people (joy shared becomes invite fuel).
- ☐ Debrief while it's fresh: what felt fun, what dragged, what to fix.
- ☐ Thank community partners personally (protect relationships for next year).

AVOID THIS MISTAKE

Letting people drift out emotionally flat (no follow-up, no next step).

DESIGN QUESTION

What do we want people to say on the drive home?

HIGH IMPACT / LOW COST

- Pre-printed thank-you cards with a QR code for photos + next steps.
- A single exit sign: 'Before you go: grab a photo + take your next step.'
- Leaders on parking lot duty - last impression matters.

Fun Factor Scorecard (Rate 1-5)

Use during planning or after the event. Anything 3 or below becomes an upgrade list.

Category	1 2 3 4 5	Notes
Arrival	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Visual environment	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Energy during the work	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Celebration moments	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Send-off experience	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Volunteer joy	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Shareability	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

HOW TO USE

1) Pick upgrades. 2) Assign owners (below). 3) Follow up in 24 hours with photos + next steps.

Assign the Owners

If no one owns it, it won't happen.

Fun Captain: _____

Music / playlist: _____

Milestones + scoreboard: _____

Photo/video + stories: _____

Hospitality (water/snacks): _____

Send-off + next steps: _____

Guardrails

- Design fun early (not last minute).
- Protect energy: shorter shifts beat the long grind.
- Never compromise safety or dignity for hype.
- Plan follow-up: photos + thank-you + next step.



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