How NOT to Do Program

Put program together at the last minute. (Hey! The con's not until Friday!)

Don't ask for any help.

Don't tell any of the rest of the committee what you're planning. (Buncha nosey people, anyway.)

(Choose one)
Send invitation letters just before the convention.
Don't bother sending invitation letters at all.

Send invitation letters without the date of the convention. Or the wrong date. Or the wrong place…..

Don't ask people what they would like to do at the convention (especially Guests.)

Schedule people who aren't going to be at the convention. (It's not your fault they aren't coming.)

Schedule people for events on days/times they are not at the convention.

Schedule people for early morning panels or late night panels, even if they have indicated they don't want to be scheduled at these times. (Double points for scheduling them for both late and early panels within the same 24 hours.)

Schedule people for more than two consecutive items.

Schedule people for back-to-back items, preferably at opposite ends of your convention space. (It's fun watching them jog down the corridor!)

Schedule people for more than one item at the same time.

Schedule people for items when they are going to be busy doing something else. (This works much better if they told you, of course.)

Schedule people for items they have no connection with, or don't want to talk about.

Leave off the obvious people to discuss items while picking people who don't know what they are doing to take their places.

Put people who can't stand each other on the same panel. (Maybe they'll get in an entertaining fight!)

Tell your Guest of Honor that you are going to do an interview with him/her. Then change it at the last minute. (It keep 'em awake!)

Schedule your program participants (and particularly your GoHs) for a solid block from 10:00-2:00.

Tell someone he is doing a program item that requires lots of research and preparation with as little time left as possible (or, just don't bother telling him.)

Assume that if a program participant sends you a suggested program item complete with a list of panelists that all of those panelists have been contacted (and/or will be attending the convention.)

Create track programming in which the head of each track has complete autonomy.

Ensure that the heads of each track of programming are coming up with (and communicating with) their own sets of program participants.

Don't bother sending preliminary schedules to program participants prior to the convention. (They'll find out when the rest of us do.)

Don't bother responding to program participants' queries in a timely manner. (See nosey, above.)

If potential program participants contact you about coming and you don't respond, don't assume they will be in attendance. (Alternately, put them on program but don't tell them ahead of time.)

Don't bother issuing program participant letters to the program participants when they arrive at the con. (Why should they know more than anyone else anyway?)

Don't tell Registration or Green Room who is on the program.

Don't tell Tech of the special requirements for an item.

Schedule two items that require the same unique piece of tech for the same time (or, schedule two items at consecutive times at the far end of the site (or even better, in different buildings with at least two staircases in the way) from each other that require the same piece of unique tech….)

Schedule items for non-existent rooms.

Schedule two items in the same room at the same time. (Have program participants fight it out.)

Schedule items for rooms that you're not allowed to use at that time.

Schedule all the items of a similar type for the same time. (Think: the Art Program Hour!)

Schedule the most interesting items for the smallest rooms.

Schedule the most interesting items for early in the day.

Schedule the most interesting items for consecutive time slots but at opposite ends of the site (or in different buildings if possible) and ensure the first item overruns. (See jogging, above.)

Just name all your program items things like "Science Fiction", "Mandatory Buffy item", "Quiz", "Books", "Auction" or just "Item", "Another Item."

Give program items clever names, which are perfectly clear to everyone on your programming team.

If you have to move a program item, try to make it to earlier in the day or a previous day, and try to avoid getting it in a newsletter in time or putting up big notices. (Well, *sure.* Anyone can deal with a move to later in the convention!)

If you can find two program rooms with bad soundproofing between them, put a noisy item in one against a quiet item in the other. (See fight it out, above….and below…..)

Don't assign a moderator to panel items, let them fight it out, it's more fun for the audience.

Find someone opinionated who won't discuss things rationally to "moderate" a program item by actually doing most of the talking, insulting the other panel members or being rude to the audience.

Don't tell the moderator or program participants if you change when an item is, and move it so that at least one participant will no longer be able to be on the item.

Understand that your most important job as the program ops managers is to take room counts.

Schedule the sword fighting workshop in a room with a low ceiling or one with dangling chandeliers.

Send "thank you for being on the program" letters to people you've never asked. (People love getting "thank you: notes!)

Don't bother sending "thank you" letters to fans who were on program, or to anyone on your staff. They're not really *important*, anyway.

Moan about how horribly everyone on the committee treated you, and swear never to work with them again. (That'll show them.)