

Evaluating an Event from the Event Team`s Perspective

A good debrief needs three things. First, it needs to happen within a week of the event. Not a month later when everyone's memories have softened. Not "when things calm down," because they never do.

Second, it needs specific hooks. Not "how did the event go?" but "where did the schedule break down?" and "what decision was made without the right person in the room?" and "what would we refuse to repeat?" Those hooks force specificity. They stop the meeting from becoming a complaints session or a congratulations session.

Third, and this is the part most people miss, the outputs need to be connected to the next event's planning process. If you capture that the gate plan failed because suppliers ignored their access windows, that finding needs to appear as an action item in the next event's scheduling kick off. Not in a separate document. In the operational plan itself.

You need a room, a date, and the willingness to be honest about what went wrong and what you'd refuse to do again. The hard part isn't the structure. It's protecting the time. Your team will always have a reason not to debrief. Your job as a leader is to make it non-negotiable.

Your events will keep repeating the same problems until you build a system that captures what went wrong and connects it to what happens next. The debrief is where that system starts.

Adapted from Iain Morrison, April 2026