

TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA / MORONGO BASIN / FREE TO REUSE

THE JOSHUA TREE CORPORATE RETREAT PLANNING KIT

A working checklist for planning a team offsite in the high desert — timeline, budget, logistics, and the questions people forget to ask until it is too late.

WHY THE HIGH DESERT WORKS FOR OFFSITES

Teams come here for the same reason artists have for a century: the distance does something. Phones lose signal on the drive in. The landscape gives people a reason to look up from a laptop. And unlike a hotel conference floor in a city, nobody slips out to run errands — the group stays a group.

It is also unusually affordable. A two-day offsite here typically lands well under the cost of the same event in Los Angeles or Palm Springs, before anyone has booked a flight.

START HERE: FIVE QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU BOOK ANYTHING



How many people, and how many are traveling? Local versus flying in changes your entire budget and your arrival day.

02 What has to come out of it? A decision, a plan, a repaired relationship, or morale. Offsites without a deliverable are vacations that people resent paying for with their weekend.

03 How many hours are actually working hours? Be honest. Most teams plan twelve and use five.

04 Who is running the room? If the answer is the same person who planned the logistics, expect both to suffer.

05 What is the weather plan? Summer highs here regularly exceed 105°F. October through April is the comfortable window.

BACKWARDS TIMELINE

Work from the date and move left. The items that sink offsites are almost always the ones with lead times.

8–12 WEEKS OUT

Lock the dates. Confirm headcount range.

Lodging in the Joshua Tree area books out early for weekends and holiday weeks.

8 WEEKS OUT

Book lodging and the meeting space.

These are the two hardest things to change later.

6 WEEKS OUT

Set the agenda and name the facilitator.

An agenda written the week before produces a weak offsite.

4 WEEKS OUT

Confirm catering and dietary needs. Arrange ground transport.

Rideshare coverage out here is thin and unreliable after dark.

2 WEEKS OUT

Send the run-of-show, address, parking and packing notes.

Cell coverage varies. People need the details before they arrive.

1 WEEK OUT

Walk the space. Test the A/V and the internet yourself.

The single most common day-one failure is a video call that will not connect.

DAY BEFORE

Print what matters. Stage supplies on site.

There is no office supply store open late nearby.

AFTER

Send notes and owners within 48 hours.

The decisions decay fast once everyone is back in their inbox.

BUDGET WORKSHEET

Fill in your own numbers, estimate and actual. The categories are what matters — these are the lines teams forget.

LINE ITEM	ESTIMATE	ACTUAL
Meeting space		
Lodging		
Catering — meals		
Catering — coffee and snacks		
Ground transport and fuel		
Facilitation		
Printing, supplies, whiteboards		
A group activity or excursion		
Contingency — add 10 to 15 percent		
TOTAL		

LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

SPACE AND SETUP

- ☐ Room confirmed in writing, with the hours you actually need
- ☐ Internet tested — by you, on a real video call, not a speed test
- ☐ Display or projector confirmed, with the correct adapters on hand
- ☐ Whiteboard or wall space for work that needs to stay up
- ☐ Parking confirmed for the number of vehicles arriving
- ☐ A quiet corner for the person who needs to take one call

PEOPLE

- ☐ Dietary restrictions collected — ask, do not assume
- ☐ Accessibility needs collected and accommodated
- ☐ Arrival and departure times mapped against the agenda
- ☐ Someone named as the on-the-ground contact with a working phone

THE DESERT SPECIFICS

- ☐ Water — more than you think, especially April through October
- ☐ Sun protection communicated in advance
- ☐ Layers — the temperature swing between afternoon and evening is severe
- ☐ Fuel plan — stations are sparse between towns
- ☐ Offline copies of the address and agenda for anyone losing signal
- ☐ Nearest urgent care identified before you need it

COMMON FAILURE MODES

OVER-SCHEDULING

Teams plan back-to-back sessions and then spend day two exhausted and irritable. Build in real breaks.

NO DECISION OWNER

The offsite generates twenty ideas and nobody leaves owning any of them.

BOOKING SUMMER

Heat here is not an inconvenience, it is a constraint on what your group can physically do.

ASSUMING CONNECTIVITY

Confirm it yourself. Every location claims high-speed internet.

SKIPPING THE WALKTHROUGH

Fifteen minutes in the room the week before prevents most day-one problems.

IF YOU NEED A ROOM

TEN MINUTES FROM THE PARK'S NORTH ENTRANCE

Black Cactus is a co-working space in downtown Twentynine Palms with a private conference room, internet built for video calls, printing, and free parking. We host groups by the half day, the full day, or across several days, and we can point you toward lodging and catering that have not let people down.

Tell us the dates and a rough headcount and we will tell you honestly whether we are the right fit.

(760) 910-9422

TERENCE@CACTUSPACE.COM

This kit is offered free. Reuse it, adapt it, hand it to a colleague. Blessings, and #KeepGoing.