



YOUR RETRO-SASSY CHEAT SHEET FOR STAGING, TIMING, AND EXECUTING THE PERFECT HOLIDAY SURPRISE — WITHOUT THE CHAOS.

Staging Prep

- ☐ Choose & style the reveal backdrop
- ☐ Set lighting, candles, ambiance
- ☐ Style your focal decor area
- ☐ Prep distraction zone or cover story
- ☐ Design signs or props for the reveal

Timing Strategy

- ☐ Choose reveal moment in the event flow
- ☐ Assign cues for lighting, music, or crowd movement
- ☐ Create a playlist for cue reveal
- ☐ Ensure camera/ photog is ready & positioned
- ☐ Prepare a stall tactic if the guest of honor arrives early

Team Roles

- ☐ Distraction Lead - keeps recipient busy
- ☐ Reveal Captain - cues the moment
- ☐ Photog - captures the reaction
- ☐ Helper Elf - manages props or lighting

Emotional Impact Prep

- ☐ Plan reveal pacing (slow build, then big moment)
- ☐ Have tissues on stand-by
- ☐ Prepare a follow-up moment (toast, hug circle, music change)
- ☐ Set props: bow, sign, ornament, keepsake

Trouble Shooting and Final Checks

- ☐ Everyone in Position
- ☐ Charge all speakers & backup devices
- ☐ Music queued and ready
- ☐ Have second photog at the ready
- ☐ Lights dimmed or set
- ☐ Prep alternate location in case of weather issues
- ☐ Recipient guided to the right spot
- ☐ Ensure everyone knows timing to avoid early cues
- ☐ Countdown or cue initiated
- ☐ Have back-up lighting or candles in case of failure