



DEDICATED AND EDUCATED TO DELIVER CREATIVE EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM IN SPECIAL EVENTS

in plain **w o r l d s**

Tricks of the Trade Show

By Matthew Trettel and Bruce Vassar

Trade shows are the No. 1 source for providing face-to-face business opportunities between buyers and sellers. But, let's face it—there often isn't much that's "special" about the trade show business.

Our business model doesn't stray from the traditional trade show of selling exhibit space, securing corporate sponsors, then marketing to your audience to maximize attendance. Yet our philosophy allows us to make magic for attending consumers.

Three times a year we face the exciting challenge of turning a 100,000-square-foot blank space into the ultimate shopping experience for 2,000 couples planning weddings. Brides attending the Wedding Fair™ don't want to walk a trade show floor. They dream of a boutique bridal experience, personalized to them.

To make magic for our guests—the consumers of our sponsors and exhibitors—we need to design something special. Knowing a few tricks of the trade helps turn our trade show into an experiential event.

SCRAP THE FLOOR PLAN Make your trade show floor feel less like a trade show. Layout is key. For years, our shows were set up in traditional form—long rows of 10-by-10-foot exhibits at one end of the hall and the fashion show experience at the other. We decided to change the entire show floor with cross aisles to break up the long rows.

Grouping exhibits on the floor into quads made it more approachable to guests and allowed exhibitors to create more dynamic displays. We created a department-store sensation with our exhibit areas by eliminating the 3-foot-high side panels and instead used 8-foot walls to separate exhibits. Offering a variety of tables and specialty linen options in place of the standard convention tables also helped eliminate the trade show feel.



Putting on a *show*: We used drape, a facade and a chandelier to craft a 1930s-style theater to stage our fashion show in its own contained space (top). Something *extra special*: More than 6,000 trade show attendees registered to win this \$200,000 "Trend Wedding" event (bottom).

STAGE YOUR SPACE Interactivity isn't limited just to the exhibits. The entire show can incorporate both interactive and thematic branding in the way the space is staged. Each of our shows features a 150-foot-long themed entrance experience staged as a ceremony setting, so brides stepping onto the show floor literally are walking down the aisle. Adding a dramatic centerpiece to the floor is an engaging way for guests to view and experience an entire decor concept. Our "Reception Rotunda" is a reception display complete with an orchestra and ballroom dancers.

PLACES TO PAUSE There is nothing worse than getting lost in myriad booths on the show floor. Instead, creating areas aimed at specific market segments, groups of guests or specific interests helps attendees navigate the floor. This feels less daunting to the attendees while helping your exhibitors maximize their efforts. Examples of boutique segments we use include: a high-end area branded as "Weddings Couture," an ultra-lounge atmosphere dubbed "Club Groom" and a cafe build-out called "Belle Sposa Bistro." Defining space is necessary; consider different colors of carpet or drape and include hardscape pieces, such as brand-able acrylic walls, to create and identify each area.

BIG DETAILS, SMALL STATEMENTS From the design perspective, scale is significant for any trade show. Less is more; but less has to be big! Anything floor-standing should be at least 10 feet tall, and 14 to 18 feet in most cases, while ceiling fixtures need to be at least 10 feet wide to fit the scale of a

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Top photo courtesy Adrienne Page, bottom courtesy MDR Video



Dynamic Event Pricing

By Damon W. Holditch, CSEP, CERP

Events tend to have a life of their own. Sometimes they develop from a small, intimate gathering into a large, elaborate event. Clients often begin with one idea, but with vendor input, it transforms into an entirely different concept.

As events change, so do their costs. To keep clients informed about the true cost of an event, vendors need accurate pricing.

As an event rental company, Marquee Event Group can produce up to 20 proposals for the same event over the course of its planning. We use Alert Management Systems rental software to track changes in our fixed rate rental items.

Variable rate costs, such as additional labor, are often overlooked and difficult to include—our largest overlooked cost is the labor to deliver and pick up equipment. Currently, our rates for rental items and delivery charges are easy to define. They are based on the purchase cost of rental items and the distance to the job site. For a 1,000-person party, the delivery labor is significantly different than it would be for a party of 250.

Three factors influence the variable costs in equipment rental: the distance to the job; the number of trucks required to make the delivery; and the amount of labor needed to deliver and pick up the rental equipment. Marquee uses ZIP codes to determine the truck cost. We allocate a charge for each truck needed to make the delivery. To include the labor required to move the equipment, we recently added a delivery labor charge as a percentage of the rental amount. The charge is the same percent for each client and grows as the order grows.

Marquee's Alert Management Systems rental software is an innovative tool for dynamic pricing. The software addresses the fixed and dynamic costs of a changing event. Current pricing is always shown correctly on each revision of the order. As a result, clients are not surprised when the delivery charge changes as their rental order expands. As we're compensated for all products and services supplied, customers also benefit from paying a fair price for a valuable product or service.

You can customize dynamic pricing for all cost/pricing inconsistencies—just identify your costs ahead of time, and you can accurately reflect the charges on each of the event's proposals.

Keeping rental rates low is a top priority. Dynamic pricing allows us to charge clients for services they request and equipment they use at a fair, competitive price. We have the security of knowing our costs are covered. As a result, we're not wondering why we didn't make a profit on the last event.

Do your client and yourself a favor, and identify each of your costs and charges. Next, charge a fair price for those services. Your customer will be happy, and your bottom line will be better!

Crystal clear: Marquee Event Group's dynamic pricing works to eliminate surprising expenses at an event's end (top).

A tent on a view: A glimpse of a Marquee Event Group country wedding on a Texas hill (bottom).



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Leading ISES to an Exciting Year of Growth and Education

By *Connie Riley, CSEP*

At August's Eventworld® 2007, an Institute for Professional Development, in Montreal, I will assume the role of ISES president. As ISES celebrates its 20th anniversary, I will take my turn at navigating the ISES strategic plan set in place by the International Board of Governors. I am truly thrilled to embark on a year already marked by such greatness.

Marty Janis, 2006-07 ISES president, thank you for allowing me to pick up where you left off. You set the stage for continued ISES success. I'm grateful to all previous volunteers who have donated countless hours of their time. ISES is indebted to every individual for providing the strength that has grown and developed this young association in a mere two decades.

The International Board of Governors identified the need to train volunteers and find better ways to recognize their service to ISES. A first for ISES was its inaugural Annual Chapter Leadership Conference in June. We're proud to now take the steps toward rewarding our members for their volunteer efforts.

In my 17 years as an ISES member, I've served in almost every volunteer position at the chapter level and, now, the international level. I have witnessed swift changes that would typically move much slower in the evolution of an association. Our ability to adapt to change and deliver premier services makes ISES stand apart.

We continued to elevate the level of education at Eventworld®. The advancement delivered educational tracks in Wellness and Executive Business Development.

The Certification Program Exam rollout has begun and, as a 1993 CSEP graduate, I encourage you to acknowledge the special recognition we owe the Certification Committee. Thank you for donating endless hours evaluating and moving this certification forward. Our partnership with the exam administrator, Schroeder Measurement

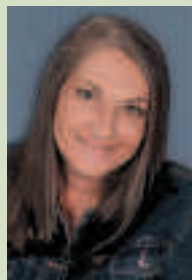
Technologies, allows for exam testing at computer centers in your local area. I encourage each of you to further your personal growth with continued study.

Another strong point for ISES is the International Affiliate Program, which builds locally based chapters worldwide. Its achievements wouldn't exist without the affiliate leaders. Their time and money to support the growth in their regions is invaluable.

Our International Board of Governors and chapter leaders, along with the ISES headquarters staff, have worked diligently to build a sound and effective plan for membership growth. Members are the core of ISES. That's why recruitment and retention, as well as the continuing pursuit for leading educational content, are our top priorities.

Can you see why I am excited to be a part of the future ISES? I am confident that we will accomplish the 2007-08 objectives while making strides in all areas of interest.

I look forward to meeting and becoming reacquainted with so many professionals at Eventworld in Montreal. The opportunity to advance your education and enjoy a great city is what ISES is all about!



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large exhibit hall.

For beyond big, the little details make the experience personal. Look for small statements, ones that tell your attendees they are very important. Our bistro uses white linen and floral on each of the dining tables. The "Weddings Couture" area features an ice bar serving champagne drinks. Our restrooms include small floral arrangements at each sink and a bowl of mints at the entrance. Often, the small elements, which cost practically nothing, stand out and are referenced by our attendees and exhibitors.

ADD IN A REAL SPECIAL EVENT Take the opportunity to create a unique event or promotion to excite your sponsors, exhibitors and guests. For us, this meant launching a trend wedding giveaway valued at nearly \$200,000; the fantastic opportunity allowed exhibitors and sponsors to showcase their talents. As a promotional concept, the wedding giveaway encouraged 6,000-plus couples to attend the show to register. The actual wedding received copious coverage in print and television media. While the wedding giveaway promoted the trade show, the trade show showcased the wedding. The trend of the trade show is a step toward the *show*: creating experiences and environments for guests to enjoy. By getting innovative, it's possible to trick any trade show out of its 10-by-10-foot box.



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did you
know?

New Face of ISES Leadership

An Interview with Paul Creighton, CSEP

Premier education was only one highlight for Paul Creighton, CSEP, of Orlando, Fla.-based T. Skorman Productions Inc. at Eventworld® 2007. The ISES Board of Governors welcomed Creighton to the organization's headship. Alongside 2007-08 ISES president Connie Riley, CSEP, also from T. Skorman Productions, Creighton begins his new professional role with high hopes. Read on to acquaint yourself with Creighton and learn what he sees in ISES' future.

Q: Tell me a little about your current position and role at T. Skorman Productions.

A: My official title is executive vice president; however, my real title since 1985 is Employee No. 1. Currently, I have the pleasure of directing the company's special events division with incoming ISES President Connie Riley, CSEP.

Q: What is your area of expertise in the special event industry?

A: I specialize in producing and creating entertainment for special events. I enjoy creating shows from scratch, producing celebrity talent on a regular basis and man-

aging several of our exclusive entertainment acts.

Q: How and when did you get involved with ISES?

A: Back in the early 1990s, Patti Coons, CSEP, of Wayne Lachman Productions Hawaii was one of my biggest clients. She told me that if I couldn't have her business if I didn't join. I joined! Since then, it's been Connie Riley who has mentored me on the importance of being involved and giving back to the industry.

Q: What has been the greatest value or highlight of being an ISES member?

A: I think that you can split the value of an ISES membership into two parts—one is what you get, and one is what you give. In the "getting" department, my ISES membership has opened me up to an international clientele who I wouldn't have acquired on my own. ISES has helped turn T. Skorman from an Orlando entertainment company into an internationally known entertainment company. As for giving back, one of the highlights is knowing that when we volunteer to teach or serve on a board, we're giving back to the industry that has been so good to us.

Q: Why are you interested in serving on the ISES Board of Governors?

A: Anyone who knows me knows that I'm not shy about offering my opinion. I'm a critical thinker, and I'm not afraid to shake up the status quo if it's appropriate. For all of those reasons, I thought it was time to contribute to the leadership of this organization. My main areas of interest coming in are continuing to improve and define the educational components of ISES as well as help strengthen the ISES brand within the industry.



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