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

Country Clubs Events Pose Challenge, Rewards

By *Becky Harris, CSEP*

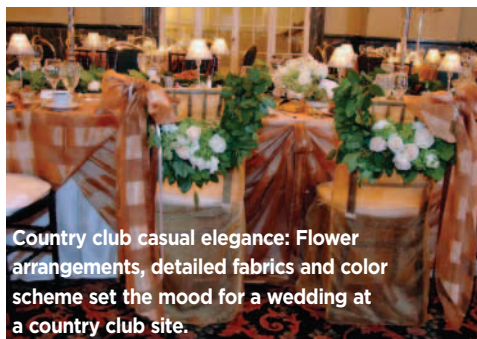
A call comes from an anxious bride wanting to meet about her upcoming wedding. She's having an August wedding at her country club, and we're thrilled.

Country clubs are beautiful venues. Their settings usually overlook majestic golf courses and manicured gardens, and the food and its presentation are often supplied from the best kitchens in town. Many clubs are historically significant with a seasoned staff that has logistics down to a science.

However, challenges often arise.

One in particular is the long tenure of catering decorators. Many country club decorators hold their position for years, perform their job the same predictable way year in and year out, and use the same vendors. It's hard to break into a club and be added to its vendor list. Catering managers have their list and rarely vary from it when calling for flowers, ice sculptures, entertainers, linen and ballroom decor.

But we love the challenge, though overcoming it takes poise. To gain staff trust, turn the ballroom into a space they've never seen before. Techniques include a new color scheme, a fresh



Country club casual elegance: Flower arrangements, detailed fabrics and color scheme set the mood for a wedding at a country club site.



An inclusive engagement: Opening up country club space for nonmember engagements is one way to meet revenue requirements.

way to drape fabric from the ceiling, unusual flowers arranged creatively, and fabrics and detailing on the table that set the mood for a mouth-watering meal.

Make the dining experience itself memorable. Event producers' goals include making sure the bride is completely enamored with her wedding, as well as impressing the country club with creativity, talent and respect for its space.

Many country clubs are updating their ballrooms, adding audiovisual installations to meeting rooms and creating separate entrances for nonmember events. Clubs are forgoing membership restrictions and allowing nonmembers to host events at the club for an increased fee.

The trend allows event planners to extend their venue selections and offer a location with great food and experienced staff. While the goal of country

clubs is to be a home away from home for members, they too have revenue requirements to meet. By opening up the space for nonmember engagements, private clubs can meet their financial goals without tapping into the pockets of members.



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Hors D'oeuvre as an Art Form

By Kelly Early, CSEP

At most events, hors d'oeuvre are guests' first impression of the caterer. These bite-size samplings can create excitement or make guests weary of the imminent meal's quality. Remember, people first taste with their eyes. I grew up with the expression, "If it looks good, it will taste good." If you create a visual thrill, taste buds will excite themselves.

How do we create excitement with a piece of food no bigger than a half dollar? It is all about the presentation. Imagine for a moment how your favorite painting or picture changes its appearance when you put it in a frame. The frame's size, color, texture or matting gives each picture a different look. Now, let's take that approach with hors d'oeuvre. Don't change your menu or throw a current list of hors d'oeuvre out the window. Instead, get rid of those silver trays and concentrate on framing your existing food.

Start with the tray. Anything that servers can balance on their hands and can be topped with food works as a tray, such as small framed mirrors, ceramic platters of any shape or color, shallow boxes with hinged lids and even diamond-plated metal sheets. One of my favorites is an 8-by-10-inch picture frame because the picture in the frame can be used in so many ways—try a photograph of the guest(s) of honor, a picture that relates to the theme of the event or even the description of the hors d'oeuvre printed down one side while the item is displayed on the other.

Take a look at each hors d'oeuvre as an individual. In today's market you can find a plethora of mini plastic serving pieces. Black cocktail spoons, 2-by-2-inch square plates, four-sided mini shot glasses or white Asian spoons can make a single hors d'oeuvre a presentation all its own. Read your current hors d'oeuvre menu and envision each item individually displayed on one of these tiny serving tools. For a traditional shrimp cocktail, start with a white Asian spoon, fill the spoon with cocktail sauce and display the shrimp standing up on its side in the sauce.

Or maybe you have a menu item like our sesame seed chicken finger with apricot dipping sauce; take a 4-ounce four-sided shot glass, fill it with 1 ounce of dipping sauce and stick the chicken finger

“Black cocktail spoons, 2-by-2-inch square plates, four-sided mini shot glasses or white Asian spoons can make a single hors d'oeuvre a presentation all its own.”



Turn tail: For a traditional shrimp cocktail, try an Asian spoon filled with cocktail sauce and stand the shrimp up on its side in the sauce.

in the glass. The concept is very simple: Add 10 cents to each item, and, presto, you have a new look for an old friend that guests will "ooh" and "aah" over.

When transitioning from passed hors d'oeuvre to displayed hors d'oeuvre, think bigger. Start by displaying these items the same way you would pass them. Or step out of the box and create interesting

displays all your own. The vertical display remains a favorite of mine. If you can get your hands on some LCD tabletops, display the description of the hors d'oeuvre electronically rotating on the table itself.

It's time to toss the old trays out and treat each hors d'oeuvre as an individual. With minimal effort you can transform your hors d'oeuvre from mundane to Monet.



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Facing the Crowd: How Professionals Win Over Industry

By Gloria Nelson, CSEP

Some of us are graduates of the School of Hard Knocks. We've been "around the block" and started planning events before special events became a recognized industry. Without using textbooks or curriculum, we helped lay the groundwork of higher education. But today is another world.

Today, a plethora of schools for higher learning allow students to garner certificates and associate's, bachelor's, master's and even doctoral degrees. Graduates possess a working knowledge of event management. This fact makes it that much harder to stand out, even as a working professional. Open the Yellow Pages or visit the local chamber of commerce or convention and visitors' bureau Web sites to learn how many new companies are born each year.

A Web site created by an "Am," or amateur with limited to no training, can easily be distinguished from a professional's. An example: I saw a new arrival

boasting a \$20-per-hour fee for planning events of all shapes, sizes and kinds.

With myriad like professionals, differentiation can come in all forms. Do we tout our experience or ISES membership? What about awards garnered, a CPR certification or Certified Special Events Professional designation to gain marketplace advantage?

It's essential to brand ourselves as professionals in the face of social media and platforms such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Second Life. To separate yourself from the masses, take the time to educate clients on what distinguishes you from those lacking experience, continued education or certification. You know you have expertise and provide superior programs—show clients how.

ISES MEMBERSHIP

I feel investing in ISES is an investment in your career. I've met clients both face-to-face, virtually through blogs, listservs and other mediums, but one aspect remains constant: ISES membership brings professional growth to any situation. Members have the opportunity to share best practices and sharpen our event management swords, no matter the discipline.

IN THE NEWS

Industry publications and mainstream media often quote profes-



Professionals unite: Chicago ISES members Lanie Hartman, BBJ Linen; Kathy Miller, Total Event Resources Inc.; and Barbara Lee Cohen, CMP, Productions USA Inc., network at Eventworld.

sionals. Use published articles to display your professional accomplishments and knowledge. It's a portfolio-builder for your clients to review. Adding a "News" tab to your Web site gives you a medium to post published articles in which you've been quoted.

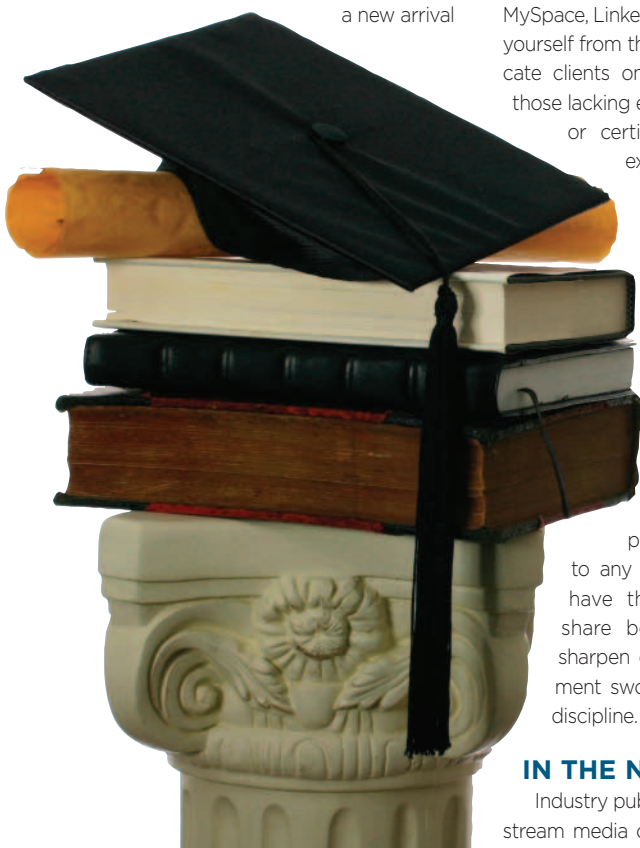
WORK YOUR TOOLBOX

It is also beneficial to maintain a curriculum vitae—a running resume not restricted to credentials but that includes all industry activities. Submit it with your personal resume for client perusal. If you follow the guidelines in the CSEP application process, you will lay out a robust document with association involvement, leadership, education and professional development, industry experience, professional industry contributions, award recognition and community service.

Each tool acts as a branding device in the marketplace. They are sources to help winnow out those who don't have the qualifications or ability to produce safe, sound events. Start filling your industry toolbox today!



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ISES Eventworld 2008 Goes Green with Sustainable Event

For all industries, sustainability is important. Green-friendly words such as “organic,” “natural” and “recycled” bring awareness to the Earth’s finite resource reserve. At ISES Eventworld® 2008, taking place Aug. 21-23 in St. Petersburg, Fla., sustainability has found its place.

Sustainability and green meetings are the industry’s current buzzwords. Now is the time to examine how your business can green the special event industry. ISES is thinking green as it plans Eventworld 2008 and is proud to bring its attendees to St. Petersburg for an environmentally conscious event.

Meetings geared toward sustainability have three main goals: They are good for business, are good for the earth and benefit host communities. From local to global, anything can inspire sustainability. A sampling of the many green initiatives you’ll see leading up to and during Eventworld include:

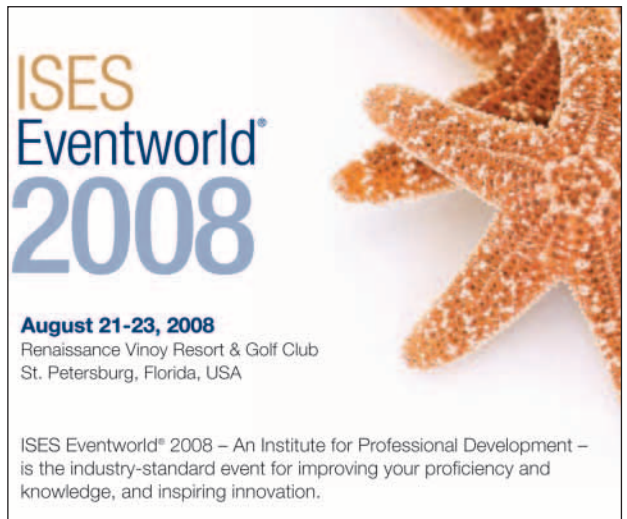
- An abbreviated advance program on recycled paper.
- No hard-copy speaker handouts.
- An abbreviated pocket guide on-site.
- Recycled badge stock.

Conference planners are pinning down another resource facet: locally grown/organic produce. Along with food, Eventworld’s venue, the Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, and its parent company, Marriott, are operating green.

Marriott’s Environmentally Conscious Hospitality Operations pro-

gram (ECHO) focuses on water and energy conservation, clean-air initiatives, wildlife preservation, reduce-reuse-and-recycle waste management and cleanup campaigns. Marriott is the first hospitality management company to join the Environmental Protection Agency’s Climate Leaders program and is on track to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by nearly one-fifth over the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010—approaching one million tons of climate warming gases.

ISES hopes to unite this vision globally. Think sustainable and plan to attend the Eventworld 2008. Visit www.ises.com for more information.



ISES Eventworld® 2008

August 21-23, 2008
Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club
St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

ISES Eventworld® 2008 – An Institute for Professional Development – is the industry-standard event for improving your proficiency and knowledge, and inspiring innovation.

the credits

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