

ASSESSMENT

We can make the trains run on time but if they are not going where we want them to go, why bother?

—Neil Postman, *American author (1931–2003)*

My husband told me once that he had been to hundreds of social, business, and cultural events in his life, but until I started my event company it never occurred to him that someone was in charge of organizing everything. Somehow, when he showed up, the decorations or food or tents or music were just there.

This is what *events* look like to the regular person, someone not involved in the world of professional event coordination. We, however, know better. We know that organizing an event involves hundreds, even thousands, of decisions about where we want to go, why, and what is needed to get us there. Choices must be made about what products, services, venues, equipment, and tactics will be most beneficial in achieving the desired outcomes of the event, and must be made within the confines of time, money, spatial, and human resource limitations.

The following four chapters address the structural foundation for an event, including strategic goals and objectives, project management, and the essential requirements needed for the decorations or food or tents or music to *just be there* for that regular person.



An event is a multidimensional experience delivered by people for people. *Photo courtesy of Harith Productions, Ltd., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

Anatomy of an Event

We rarely forget that which has made a deep
impression on our minds.

—Tryon Edwards, *American theologian* (1809–1894)

In this chapter you will learn how to:

- Define the breadth of event types and opportunities for professional event coordination.
- Appreciate the scope of responsibilities associated with professional event coordination.
- Identify the dimensions of an event experience.
- Recognize the interdependence of event elements in order to forecast potential gaps and discrepancies in an event plan.
- Develop a strategy for creating and coordinating a comprehensive event experience.

An event is an experience, carefully crafted to deliver an impact on the person in attendance. The activities, environment, and layers of multisensory effects are integrated into an event design that is staged and choreographed with precision and polish. The best event experience is one in which the mechanics are imperceptible to the attendee and the intended impact is delivered effectively and invisibly.

The Role and Scope of Professional Event Coordination

There is a reason for every event, and there can be an event for every reason. An event, any type of event, is held for a purpose. Public or private, commercial or charitable, celebratory or commemorative—events bring people together to share an experience and produce a measurable outcome. The event experience might be a civic celebration or a charity fundraiser, an anniversary or a wedding, a corporate product introduction or incentive program, a sports event, or a convention event. It might be a company picnic, a hospitality reception, a grand opening, or a family reunion. Professional event coordination is the integrated implementation of all the operational and logistical requirements of an event, based on the scope of event elements included in the event design. It is the job of the professional event coordinator to package and manage that event experience.

Professional event coordinators have different job titles, depending on the type of event or the company in which they are employed. These can include conference manager, convention planner, convention services manager, director of events, event manager, event organizer, event planner, event project manager, meeting manager, meeting planner, professional conference organizer, special events coordinator, special events manager, trade show coordinator, trade show manager, wedding consultant, and many more designations. In fact, numerous studies have shown that individuals performing this work often do not even have the words *event* (or type of event), *coordinator*, or *manager* in the job title (O'Toole 2005; Nelson and Silvers 2009).

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the scope of the event genre applicable to the event coordination profession. Professional event coordinators often specialize in specific types of events and event clientele, focusing on one or two primary event genres. However, you should have an understanding of the role and scope of all types of events to better serve your target market through the thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of the needs, resources, and physical requirements for an event. In other words, you might not need to incorporate all the facets and elements

Business and Corporate Events	Any event that supports business objectives, including management functions, corporate communications, training, marketing, incentives, employee relations, and customer relations, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Cause-Related and Fundraising Events	An event created by or for a charitable or cause-related group for the purpose of attracting revenue, support, and/or awareness, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Exhibitions, Expositions, and Fairs	An event bringing buyers and sellers and interested persons together to view and/or sell products, services, and other resources to a specific industry or the general public, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Entertainment and Leisure Events	A one-time or periodic, free or ticketed performance or exhibition event created for entertainment purposes, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Festivals	A cultural celebration, either secular or religious, created by and/or for the public, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events. (Many festivals include bringing buyer and seller together in a festive atmosphere.)
Government and Civic Events	An event comprised of or created by or for political parties, communities, or municipal or national government entities, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Marketing Events	A commerce-oriented event to facilitate bringing buyer and seller together or to create awareness of a commercial product or service, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Meeting and Convention Events	The assembly of people for the purpose of exchanging information, debate or discussion, consensus or decisions, education, and relationship building, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Social/Life-Cycle Events	A private event, [usually] by invitation only, celebrating or commemorating a cultural, religious, communal, societal, or life-cycle occasion, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.
Sports Events	A spectator or participatory event involving recreational or competitive sport activities, scheduled alone or in conjunction with other events.

Source: Reprinted with permission of Speaking of Events, <http://www.juliasilvers.com/embok.htm>

Figure 1.1

Event Genres

discussed in this book for every event, but you should analyze and consider each one for every event. You might discover a serious gap in your event plan. You might find a strategy for improving the event experience. You might find a feature that will facilitate a value-added experience.

A Complex Profession

Professional event coordination is a complex and comprehensive endeavor. In our conversation more than a decade ago, Janet Landey, CSEP, of Party Design CC in Johannesburg, South Africa, expressed her amazement at many customers' lack of understanding of the scope of an event: "What did you expect, a couple of

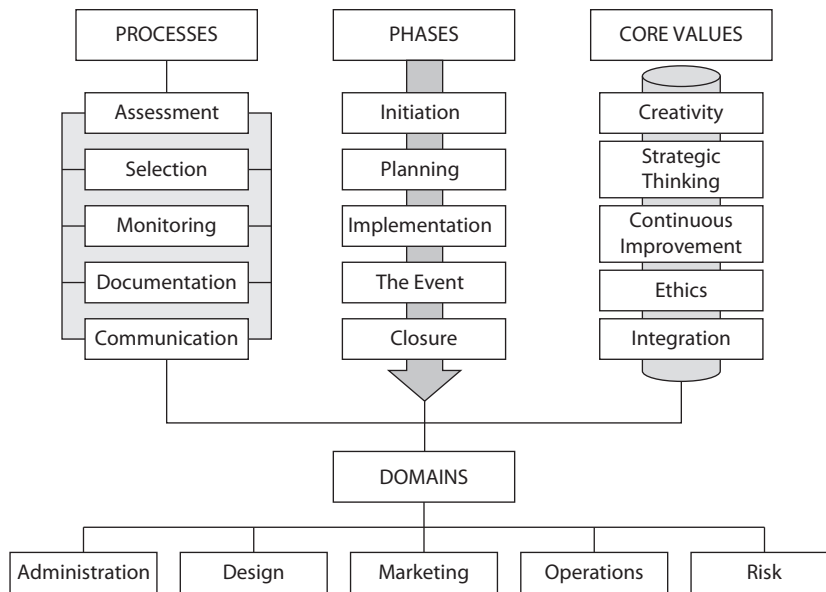
balloons in the boot [trunk] of my car?” You are making hundreds or even thousands of choices and decisions, then managing the details that emerge from those decisions. You must consider administrative matters, design parameters, marketing implications, logistical issues, legal questions, and risk management ramifications. You are managing time, money, people, information, and technology as well as the expectations of the event stakeholders including attendees, guests, hosts, clients, and sponsors.

There are numerous ways to approach this complexity that allow the professional event coordinator to ensure that attention is given to the entire scope of the event and that it is structured and thorough. One resource is a framework for the Event Management Body of Knowledge, the International EMBOK Model, devised by a coalition of experts in event management (www.embok.org). This framework includes a definition of the phases, processes, and core values of event management, as well as the functional areas and categories to which these are applied (see Figure 1.2). It is the functional domains that provide a systematic and comprehensive approach to the responsibilities and opportunities associated with professional event coordination:

- **Administration**—financial, human resources, information, procurement, stakeholder, systems, and time management
- **Design**—content, entertainment, environment, food and beverage, production, program, and theme development and management
- **Marketing**—plan, materials, merchandise, promotions, public relations, sales, and sponsorship (donor) management
- **Operations**—attendee, communications, infrastructure, logistics, participant, site, and technical production management
- **Risk**—compliance, decision, emergency, health and safety, insurance, legal, and security management

The professional event coordinator uses a sequential system (as reflected primarily in the phases of the International EMBOK Model) to consistently produce events of any genre or scope that deliver the intended event experiences:

1. Conduct the necessary research to determine expectations and create a customer profile of the event attendees or participants.
2. Conceptualize the event, assessing the scope of the event required to meet expectations.
3. Determine which event elements and components will provide the features of the desired experience.
4. Visualize how all these event components will and must fit together, and design the strategy for implementation.
5. Select the best products and providers that are available and affordable.
6. Monitor the delivery of the experience.



Source: Adapted with permission from http://www.juliasilvers.com/embok/EMBOK_structure_update.htm, courtesy of Speaking of Events

Figure 1.2

Overview of the International EMBOK Model

Determine the Expectations

Start with the basic information: who, what, where, when, and, most important, why. Who are the intended guests or audience? What are the demographics? How many are expected? What type of function is it? What is the history of the event? What has worked before and what hasn't? What did the guests or attendees like and dislike?

When will the event take place? What date or dates, and at what times? What else will be happening concurrently and in conjunction with the event? Where is the event to be held? Where have the guests attended events in the past? Where are they from? What type of experience will fit their personalities and preferences?

Why is the event being held? The professional event coordinator must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the event, as well as the goals and objectives for the event. The goal or objective might be to express appreciation for a job well done or to celebrate a cultural heritage. It might be to increase sales or increase awareness. It does not matter whether the event experience is paid for with cash or with the investment of time and effort; the experience must have value.

Develop your evaluation strategy from the very beginning by specifying the measurements that will indicate success. Draw this information out of the client. Such measurements can include attendance figures, revenues, perceptions, or publicity. Even a family reunion, surprise birthday party, or wedding will have measurable objectives: having special people in attendance, guest enjoyment

levels, or having an event more lavish than that of a colleague, neighbor, or rival. Some clients will be very explicit about what they want to achieve with the event; others are unable to articulate their expectations.

Develop the Concept

The professional event coordinator must put together an overall picture of the final event, the concept, to be able to incorporate all the necessary elements and components, as well as to merge the logistical and operational parameters and practices into the event plan. Some professional event coordinators prefer to start with the concept, developing the theme or event name, in a manner similar to composing the title of a book or a film. Then they start filling in all the details, like roots growing from the base of a tree. Others begin with the event elements, building a pyramid with all the details until the complete picture or vision of the event emerges. Still others use both an inductive and deductive approach. It is important to recognize that the entire event must be envisioned and implemented in your head, and on paper, before the first step is taken.

Design the Experience

Remember that you are packaging and managing an experience. This means that you must envision that experience, from start to finish, from the attendees' point of view. Imagine every minute of their experience. Identify event elements and components that will enhance that experience. Identify elements that will build on previous successes, elements that will take advantage of opportunities and strengths, and elements that will mitigate challenges, weaknesses, and threats.

Deliver the Dream

The advice, “ruthlessly prepare for it, and flawlessly execute it” (LoCicero 2008, 215), suggests the zeal with which you need to approach your event project. Choreograph the experience by anticipating attendee needs, wants, and expectations, then arranging the elements and adding layers of detail that will provide a memorable experience. Think of everything so they don't have to. The best compliment a professional event coordinator can receive is that no one asked for directions or questioned what was happening. The best tribute a professional event coordinator can receive occurs when the host or client can take a bow for a fantastic and hugely successful event.

Virtually all events include six dimensions to the experience (see Figure 1.3). To deliver the dream—that value-added event experience—the professional event coordinator must incorporate these six dimensions into a cohesive whole, each one supporting the others, each integrated into a complete and progressive experience: anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, activity, appetite, and amenities. Making

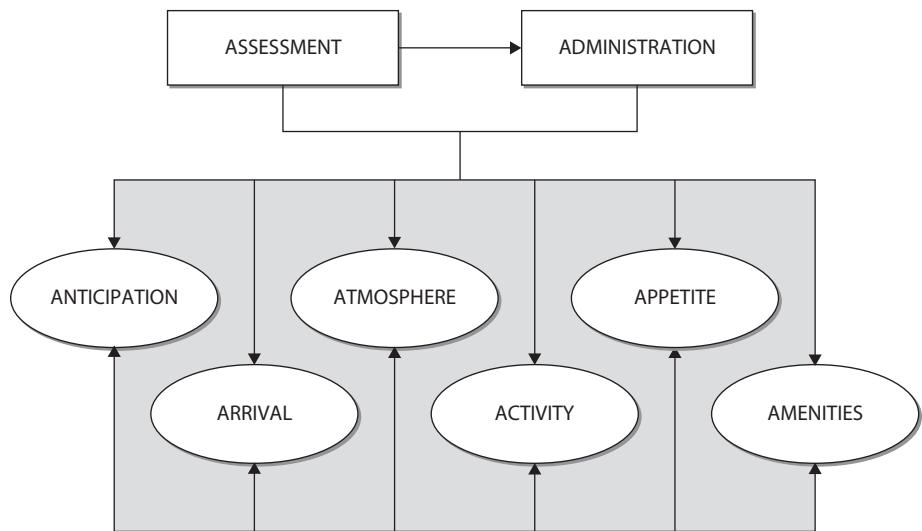


Figure 1.3
Silvers' Model of
Coordinating an
Event Experience

that dream a reality, however, depends on rigorously focusing on the needs identified in the assessment as well as the administrative necessities associated with all the resources required and acquired for the dream delivery.

Anticipation

It is human nature to want something to look forward to. The first dimension of the event experience is the anticipation created with the announcement of the event. You might create the foundation for an entire marketing strategy, such as with an incentive program, or set the stage for a spectator spectacle such as an entertainment or sports event. You are thereby establishing expectations and building excitement for the event through the initial communications.

The invitations, notices, brochures, publicity, advertising, and/or promotions that will create this anticipation must be planned from the very inception of the

<input type="checkbox"/> Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Notices/Memos
<input type="checkbox"/> Agendas	<input type="checkbox"/> Flyers	<input type="checkbox"/> Posters
<input type="checkbox"/> Brochures	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructions/Directions	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cards/Letters	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet Web Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Catalogues	<input type="checkbox"/> Invitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Materials

Figure 1.4
Anticipation
Element Checklist

event and incorporated into the budget and the timeline (see Figure 1.4). These materials must be designed to prepare the individual for the event experience. They must be timed appropriately to reach the recipient in enough time to inform, yet should not be so early that the anticipation wanes. Sometimes numerous impressions will be required to build and sustain anticipation.

Marketing the Experience

You are always selling something—a product, a service, an idea. You’re trying to create interest and desire so another person will want it, accept it, or invest in it. In this case, it is an event and an event experience you are selling. In designing an invitation to a charity gala or a brochure for a conference, you must create interest in the event, enticing the guest or attendee to invest time, and probably money, to attend the event. Whether sending out handcrafted invitations for a bar mitzvah, direct mail flyers for a civic festival, or agendas for a meeting, the principle is the same. You must influence the targeted “customer” to make the decision to attend or participate.

To provide effective preevent communications, you must understand what will motivate the guests or attendees—why they would or should want to attend—and incorporate those inducements into a compelling format. You must understand their purchase decision processes. Remember that the decision to purchase relates not only to exchanging money for a product. It refers to exchanging resources, such as time and emotional investment, for the event experience—“buying into” the purpose of the event.

A Communications Issue

Determine where, when, why, and how these purchase decisions are made so you can develop the appropriate strategy to create interest and anticipation for the event. Does the first conference brochure need to reach attendees prior to their annual budget process so that costs can be incorporated into that budget? Does the first poster or flyer for the community arts festival need to be prepared a month prior to the event, or a year before the event, so these materials can be distributed through the local tourism agencies to potential visitors and commercial tour operators?

Provide the information required to facilitate successful participation in the event experience. Communicate the basics—who, what, when, where, why, how, and how much. Prepare the attendees or guests for the experience, furnishing the directions, instructions, and recommendations that will enhance their experience. Convey and reinforce the purpose of the event, the reason the event is being held and the reasons the guests will benefit from attending. Find ways to intensify the anticipation factor, building the excitement and commitment to attend, participate, and enjoy the event experience.

Arrival

The journey begins the moment the decision is made to attend an event. Plans are formed, tickets are purchased, reservations are made, schedules are established, and hundreds of other personal and professional details are put in motion in order for the attendee to arrive at the right time and place for the event. As the professional event coordinator, you may or may not be responsible for arranging such details for the attendee or guest, but you should consider all these aspects to determine what you can do to facilitate the logistics of the arrival (see Figure 1.5).

Travel and Transportation

The guest or attendee might be traveling across town or around the world to attend the event. How can the professional event coordinator enhance and improve this facet of the event experience? Understand the resources that will be available and how the attendee will likely utilize them. When looking at travel to an event site, particularly from another country, city, or locale, consider the options the traveler might use: trains, airplanes, boats, buses, and/or private automobiles.

Analyze the potential arrival schedules and evaluate the arrival facilities to determine what attendees will likely encounter. Will they need rental cars? Will they need directional maps sent to them prior to their departure? Do you need to prepare a fact sheet on passports, visas, and customs regulations? Provide the information they will need to have as smooth a travel experience as possible, preparing them for what to expect.

Arrival patterns must also be taken into account. Are all the attendees expected to arrive at the same time? What will be needed to make certain they will be accommodated efficiently and effectively? Do you need more entrances to the event site? Can you arrange for more personnel at the check-in desk at the hotel? Should you alert the taxi and rental car companies so they will be appropriately staffed and their inventory sufficient?

Ground transportation must be considered for attendees arriving at their destination. How will they transfer from place to place? You must know the customer. Some people wish to be in complete control of their comings and goings, others expect to be chauffeured and shuttled. If all persons attending the event

<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructions/Maps	<input type="checkbox"/> Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreters/Translators	<input type="checkbox"/> Signs
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet and Greet	<input type="checkbox"/> Support Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Guides/Ushers	<input type="checkbox"/> Parking Facilities/Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel Arrangements

Figure 1.5

Arrival Element
Checklist

are expected to provide their own transportation to the event site, you must still anticipate and facilitate that experience, perhaps by providing traffic control, parking facilities, or valet parking services. You might need to arrange for motor coaches or shuttle buses. You might be organizing limousine services or antique automobiles, or even a fleet of motorcycles.

Meeting and Greeting

Travel, both to and at an event location, can set the tone for the attendee's experience. The professional event coordinator must understand that no matter how excited the guest or attendee is or how intense the anticipation may be, travel is hard work. It is fraught with potential minor and major disasters and distractions. Lost luggage, long lines, and tedious layovers can quickly turn anticipation into frustration, which is not the way an event coordinator wants the experience to be remembered.

Many aspects of a frustrating travel experience could be mitigated with a warm welcome that redefines that first impression. This can include anything from welcome signs and personnel at the airport and banners around town to a welcome basket in a guest's hotel room. You want to communicate that the travelers are in the right place and you are glad they are here.

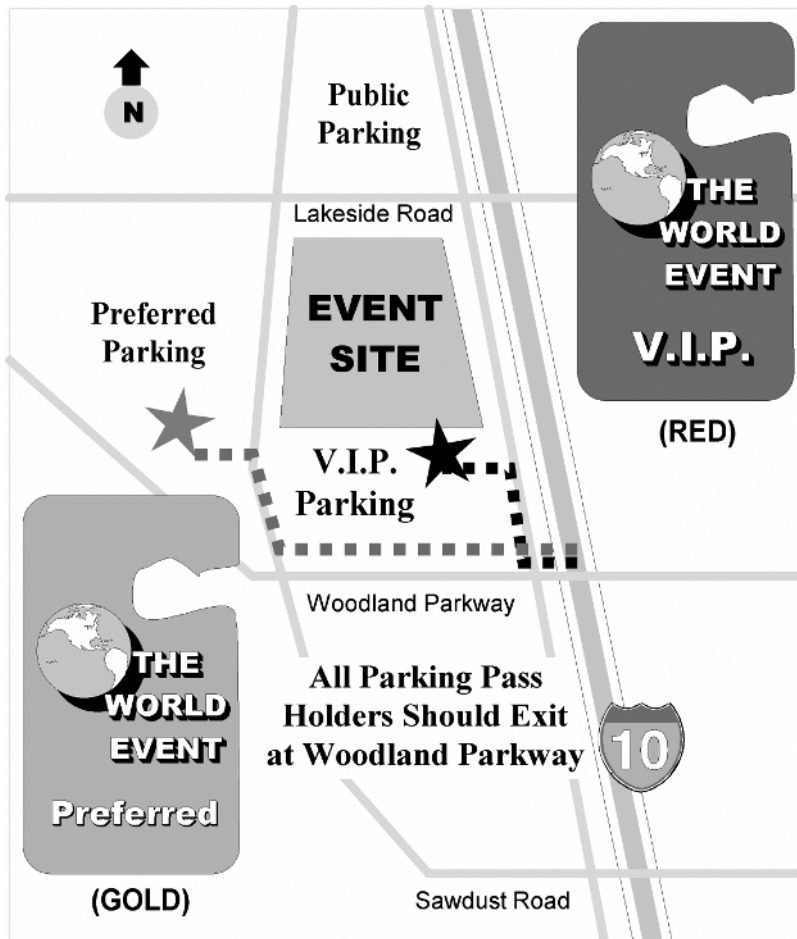
Navigation and Directional Signs

The professional event coordinator must ensure that the attendees or guests can navigate their way to and through the event site. Such help should start with the information provided in the invitation or instructions, including maps and directions (see Figure 1.6), but it usually must be supplemented with on-site signs. It is, again, a matter of anticipating the attendee's needs and providing answers to questions before they have to be asked.

Assume that you are new to the city, and consider how you would find your way from the train station to the event grounds. How will you find your way if you do not speak or read the language? How will you find your way to the first aid station at an outdoor festival or to your assigned table in a gigantic banquet hall? How will you find your way to the right meeting room in a huge convention center? At every point along the route where a decision can or must be made, determine how you can communicate the information needed for the attendee or guest to make the right directional choice.

Welcoming Entrances

Welcoming entrances will reestablish the expectations of event attendees. A brightly decorated entrance to the festival grounds will bring attendees back into the excitement and anticipation felt when the decision was made to attend. A well-designed registration area will communicate to conference-goers that the

**Figure 1.6**

V.I.P. and Preferred
Parking Pass
Directions

event will be well run and worthwhile. A themed entryway will help guests at a theme party to make the transition from the real world outside into the fantasy world to be experienced inside.

Sometimes decorations and signs alone are not enough. The professional event coordinator should also consider incorporating personnel and performers into the entrance design. According to Anton Shone (2001, 223), people arriving at an unfamiliar location will first seek a person to ask directions from before referring to signs. It is important always to provide someone who can answer questions about the event and the event site, either at the entrance or at a well-positioned hospitality desk or information station. Costumed characters, sight acts or variety performers, hosts and hostesses, and other individuals can add that human connection between the guest and the event experience.

Don't Forget the Departure

Give the same consideration to the departure as you do to the arrival. The same requirements apply—signs, instructions and directions, transportation and travel. The last impression of an event experience will be just as powerful as, if not more than, the first impression. It is often said that most guests remember the entrance and the dessert. Consider the memories you are creating if there are long lines of cars trying to get out of the parking lot or crowded shuttles to the hotel or if attendees have no idea where it is safe to go to dinner after the conference program ends that afternoon. The event experience must be considered from start to finish, and it is not finished until the attendees or guests are back home safe and sound. Exercise the same care and creativity for their departure as you do for their arrival.

Atmosphere

The atmosphere of an event relies on the physical environment, both inherent in and imposed on the venue or event site. Each component of the physical site, from theme décor and props to the location of the toilet facilities, will have an impact on the experience (see Figure 1.7).

The Physical Environment Basics

The environment of an event is developed to meet and serve the physical needs of the attendee while enhancing the style and substance of the event experience. Temperature will affect comfort levels and enjoyment. The actual space allotment per person will affect the satisfaction level. The physical layout of venue features and furnishings can contribute to the achievement of event goals and objectives.

The layout of the event should promote the desired choreography of the event experience. If guests are expected to mingle, fewer chairs will be required than for a spectator event where everyone is to be seated. If attendees are expected to move

<input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Heating/Cooling	<input type="checkbox"/> Soundscaping
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance Floor	<input type="checkbox"/> House Lighting/Controls	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Effects
<input type="checkbox"/> Decorations/Props	<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting – Theatrical	<input type="checkbox"/> Staging
<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Rentals	<input type="checkbox"/> Linens/Napery	<input type="checkbox"/> Tables and Chairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Floor/Ceiling Décor	<input type="checkbox"/> Potable Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Tents/Shelters
<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/> Seating Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Furnishings	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Selection	<input type="checkbox"/> Waste Control

Figure 1.7
Atmosphere Element
Checklist

through the event space, such as at an exposition or street fair, then positioning of event elements can facilitate traffic flow. The guests must be able to see and hear what is going on, and this can require technical augmentation such as lighting and sound systems. Lighting and sound can also be used to create a new reality for an event space, establishing a particular ambiance or fantasy setting.

The professional event coordinator must consider all the physical needs of the guest or attendee. Drinking water should always be available, especially in a hot climate. Sheltered areas should be provided at outdoor events in any weather. A coat check area should be considered for any event at which the guests will be arriving wearing bulky outerwear. Of course, toilet facilities must be sufficient for the volume of guests or attendees expected and should be fully accessible to those with disabilities.

Safety and security must be considered in terms of ingress, access, and egress. Guests and attendees must be able to get in, get around, and get out of a venue quickly and safely. Entrances and exits must be visible and obvious; often they must be protected from unlawful or unauthorized entry.

The Venue—Embrace the Place or Surprise Their Eyes

The venue, the site of an event, has an inherent atmosphere. This can be an asset or a liability. Some venues are fully functional and others require extensive site development. It is incumbent upon the professional event coordinator to arrange for everything needed to create the desired ambiance and meet the physical requirements.

Unusual or unique venues offer numerous creative opportunities and challenges. For example, hosting a high school reunion in the school gymnasium reinforces the nostalgia of the event. However, you might face restrictions on what equipment may be placed on the gymnasium floor and whether alcoholic beverages may be served on school property.

There are two approaches to the utilization of an event venue. You can “embrace the place,” highlighting its intrinsic features, or you can “surprise their eyes,” completely transforming the facility or site into a totally unexpected environment. To embrace the place, you might use dramatic lighting to enhance architectural features of a building’s interior or exterior for a grand opening, or perhaps create sculptural buffet displays on pedestals for a charity reception in a museum. To surprise their eyes, you might transform an empty warehouse into a trendy nightclub atmosphere, or turn a hotel ballroom into a hot, steamy jungle.

Form Follows Function

The dictum *form follows function*, coined by American architect Louis Sullivan (Sullivan 1896), suggests that the event site must be functional, meeting the requirements for fulfilling the function of the event—its purpose, goals, and objectives. Educational events require appropriate learning environments. Entertainment

and spectator events require sufficient and controlled seating systems. Gala dinner dances require enough space for dining tables, a dance floor, and a stage for an orchestra.

Yet this perspective does not preclude creative use of a traditional event space or unique venues. With a little imagination, and sometimes a lot of logistical expertise, a site can accommodate nearly any function. Assorted tables can be fashioned into unusual configurations to create an effective schoolroom setting in a cocktail lounge or an elegant dinner along the passageways of an office building. You should also keep in mind that with today's tent technology, you can create an event space practically anywhere.

ON-SITE INSIGHT

Can you create a stunning gala awards party in a parking lot? Certainly! That's where Richard Carbotti, founder of Newport, Rhode Island-based Perfect Surroundings Inc., had to create the setting for the after party for the Trinity Repertory Company's 12th annual Pell Awards Gala in July 2008.

The awards ceremony was held in Trinity Repertory's Chace Theater in downtown Providence, Rhode Island. The 500 guests then walked about a quarter of a mile, first to the rehearsal space for champagne cocktails and then along a roped-off street to the city-block-sized tent covering the parking lot. Carbotti explained that they "decorated and choreographed the movement with lighting and entertainment, making one of the busiest and worst parts of the city glamorous, worthy of the \$500–\$1,000 ticket price."

The tent was set up with different thematic regions—European, Asian, and Latin—to create "Continental Dining Bars" featuring open lounge-style seating and food stations and bars serving region-specific menus and cocktails. Each region was decorated with different lighting schemes; murals, fabrics, and side-wall draping; chandeliers and draping rigged from the tent's ceiling; and furnishings and props gathered from antique stores and the theater company's prop department.

Converting a parking lot to a sumptuous event venue is no small undertaking. First, Carbotti noted, "We had to paint the entire lot gray because there was no tent flooring and we had to cover up the white lines. Then we positioned the bars, tables, gardens, and other décor to cover any hazardous parts of the lot such as cracked cement and potholes." They also had to factor in power generators for tent and pathway lighting and fans for cooling, a

continues

full catering tent, and a “toilet tent” with high-end portable toilet trailers and decorated waiting areas. “This involved a lot of logistics with the city, including street closure and other permits, scheduling deliveries, and police and security. But a unique venue such as this is an incredible opportunity to create an environment that exceeds expectations.”

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Finding the Best Fit

The event site selected should fit the character of the event as well as the character of the host. Selecting the best destination and the best venue is a matter of understanding the goals and objectives for the event, as well as the budgetary and regulatory constraints. An exotic island might seem like the best place for an executive retreat or a destination wedding, but can the attendees or guests afford to get there? Remember that affordability involves more than money; it also includes time away from the office or the public relations impact. A football stadium might be the perfect venue for the political rally or rock concert you are coordinating, but will the facility management allow you to roll extensive and extremely heavy staging onto its precious turf? You might be looking at expensive field insurance or replacement costs.

The great outdoors, whether urban, rural, or extremely remote, can provide interesting settings for a broad variety of events. The professional event coordinator must carefully assess all the functional needs of the event and event attendees to be sure that the experience is appropriate. Festivals, fairs, fun runs, and family or company picnics are natural events to be staged outdoors, but the event coordinator might also consider a gala banquet or hospitality reception under the stars on the rooftop of a corporate headquarters. What about the top level of a parking garage, or the apple orchard on the host’s property?

Activity

Without exception, there is always something to do at an event. There is always some sort of action or activity (see Figure 1.8). It may be as simple as conversation with fellow guests or as complex as a showy multimedia production incorporating music, dancing, laser shows, ceremonies, and interactive demonstrations. It may be passive, with the attendees or guests as spectators, or it may be active, with the

Figure 1.8
Activity Element
Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Auctions	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentations
<input type="checkbox"/> Bands	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits	<input type="checkbox"/> Pyrotechnics Shows
<input type="checkbox"/> Buying and Selling	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> Reunions
<input type="checkbox"/> Casino Games	<input type="checkbox"/> Film/Video	<input type="checkbox"/> Rides
<input type="checkbox"/> Celebrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Game Shows	<input type="checkbox"/> Robots
<input type="checkbox"/> Ceremonies	<input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable Games	<input type="checkbox"/> Seminars
<input type="checkbox"/> Charity Projects	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Showcases
<input type="checkbox"/> Cirque-Style Shows	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser/Light Shows	<input type="checkbox"/> Speeches
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Lectures	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports and Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Contests	<input type="checkbox"/> Karaoke	<input type="checkbox"/> Stiltwalker Puppets
<input type="checkbox"/> Costumed Characters	<input type="checkbox"/> Multimedia Shows	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytellers
<input type="checkbox"/> Craft Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Murder Mysteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Strolling Musicians
<input type="checkbox"/> Dancing	<input type="checkbox"/> Networking	<input type="checkbox"/> Tournaments
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Pageants	<input type="checkbox"/> Tours
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> Parades	<input type="checkbox"/> Training
<input type="checkbox"/> Drumming Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Performances	<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Tattoos
<input type="checkbox"/> Eating and Drinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Stations	<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality

guests participating in the action. The task for the professional event coordinator is to incorporate and choreograph the appropriate activities so they increase the value of the event experience.

Collectable Experiences

Futurist Alvin Toffler (1970, 203) wrote, “Consumers [will] begin to collect experiences as consciously and passionately as they once collected things.” Event experiences must have value to the customers. They must be worthwhile—worth their time and money. You must go back to the customer profile to determine what the customer wants, needs, and expects in order to determine what, where, when, and how entertainment and activities should be incorporated into the event plan.

Agendas are used to plan and monitor the activity of a meeting. Variety entertainment is employed to direct and redirect attendee focus. Special effects are utilized to add emphasis to an awards presentation. Pyrotechnics create an electrifying finale to a hallmark event. Kiddie craft areas and inflatable bounce cages allow children to enjoy a civic celebration. Opening and closing ceremonies enhance the spirit of sports events. Dramatic light shows and multimedia productions intensify the impact of a product introduction. The right activity will increase the value of the experience.

An Event Is Theater

Designing an event is similar to writing a theatrical play or movie screenplay. It requires a plot (goals and objectives), a message (theme), and characters (event components). The action, activities, and entertainment at an event must be carefully scripted. There should be a strong opening, peaks and respites, surprises and discoveries, and an exciting finale—all advancing at the appropriate pace and in a natural progression. There is always a beginning, a middle, and an ending to an experience, which must be clear to the attendee or guest.

The event experience should have multiple dimensions and layers, providing something of interest for each attendee or participant. Live entertainers might be incorporated into the environment, such as “talking heads” on a buffet table or costumed characters providing walk-around local color. Recorded music or sounds might be used to establish a theme environment, such as a flamenco guitar to suggest a Spanish cantina atmosphere or the sound of crickets to reinforce a nightscape.

Carnival or casino-style games (such as a ring toss, balloon darts, roulette table, or wheel of fortune) can be the focus of a charity fundraiser. A strolling violinist might add just the right touch to a foundation fête. An interactive presentation by a South African drum group might highlight the teambuilding message for a corporate event. Whatever entertainment and activities are selected, they should contribute to the event choreography, moving the experience through its required progression.

Participant or Spectator

In order to accomplish the purpose of an event, the professional event coordinator must determine whether the attendees or guests are participatory or passive. Would it be advisable to force active types to sit and watch something? Perhaps. Would it be appropriate to go against type and provide interactive attractions for a usually passive audience? If done correctly, this can be an exciting and effective approach.

You might slowly introduce action into passive entertainment, such as having dancers at a 1950s rock-and-roll theme party start with an exhibition of jitterbug dancing, then move into the crowd and draw guests as partners onto the dance floor. You might provide some participatory aspects to a spectator event, such as bringing audience members up onstage to assist a magician or into the arena to compete in a chicken wrangling event at an exhibition rodeo. The spectators may become participants, such as in performing “card tricks” in which the audience in the grandstands hold up various colored cards to form a massive mosaic picture.

Consider the entirety of the event when developing the agenda. Incentive planners do not schedule an important program or expansive entertainment spectacle the first night of the incentive trip, because the guests are probably tired and might be affected by jet lag. If normally energetic attendees have been in a classroom setting

all day at a conference, the evening event will probably need some sort of active options to allow them to expend some of their pent-up energy.

Education versus Entertainment

Education can be defined as activities for imparting and acquiring knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, judgment, preferences, or understanding. Learning is a universal endeavor pursued, either incidentally or purposefully, for personal and professional reasons. Many events are convened specifically for the purpose of learning new things and gathering information on trends, tactics, tools, and techniques. Other events are designed specifically to create awareness, provide insights, and build excitement, commitment, or communities through education and persuasion—in other words, communication. In fact, virtually all events could be considered “live communication” events, even the “virtual events” delivered in a web-based environment such as webinars.

Learning is achieved by one’s interaction with the environment and those within it. People learn from what they see, what they hear, what they do, and whom they meet. Learning is enhanced when the educational activities are designed in such a way that the messages delivered within that environment, and by those in it, are entertaining and engaging. This is where education and entertainment merge into what has been termed *edutainment*. James P. Hogg, PhD, of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida advises the following (Hogg 2010):

It’s important to recognize that most learners have a 10- to 15-minute maximum attention span for educational content; therefore, people need to be entertained while being educated. The next generations of learners use laptops and multitask to give themselves the level of immersion into edutainment if not provided by the facilitator.

Therefore, educational programming needs to be designed to facilitate this interaction with the learner’s environment by employing suitable production techniques and technology, and by developing situations and settings that foster interpersonal connection.

You might wish to explore innovative seating arrangements that provide more eye contact between attendees and interaction with presenters. You might select seminar formats that give the audience more opportunity to contribute to the content or share their opinions and personal experiences. Scheduling of sessions might be adjusted to allow more time for “in the hall” interaction or lounge areas might be set up for attendees to gather and reflect on the information they have acquired. Social networking technology has become ubiquitous, so consider incorporating that into the design of the learning activities.

Diversion and Recreation

Interactive activities and amusements are often used to please both the guest and the guest's guest, such as companion programs during a convention or optional tours and sports activities during an incentive program. Recreational activities are usually included at company picnics, corporate team-building programs, and reunion outings. Fairs and festivals frequently include interactive games and rides interspersed with the food stalls, exhibits, and other entertainment.

Active people such as baby boomers and generation Xers want activity and adventure. They want something to do. It is important to arrange for suitable recreational activities and meaningful diversions. You might consider incorporating a charitable project into a corporate training conference, such as organizing the painting of a community center during the free afternoon. You can add cultural enrichment to the optional tour offerings by organizing a visit to an artist's studio or an exhibition planning session at an anthropology museum. Help the attendees to become immersed in the experience, and it will become truly memorable.

Appetite

Food and beverage constitute an integral part of an event experience—any event experience. There is always some type of refreshment at an event, even if it is simply a water station in a meeting room or at an outdoor athletic event (see Figure 1.9). Food service must be incorporated into the event plan so that it meets the needs of the guests and serves the purpose of the event. It should never be an afterthought. Consider the comment of a disgruntled guest leaving a hospitality reception after seeing the long lines at the buffet: “Even free food is only worth so much.”

Nutrition, Nurturing, and Human Nature

As dining etiquette expert Margaret Visser (1991, 171) asserts, “Eating together is a potent expression of community.” Food is a symbol of nurturing. It is synonymous with most social gatherings. The food and beverages served at an event should be

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol and Beverages	<input type="checkbox"/> Concession Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Rental Service Ware
<input type="checkbox"/> Bar Setups and Bartenders	<input type="checkbox"/> Dinners	<input type="checkbox"/> Serving Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfasts	<input type="checkbox"/> Disposable Service Ware	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty Foods
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet Displays	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice and Ice Sculptures	<input type="checkbox"/> Staffing/Labor
<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee and Energy Breaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunches	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Stations

Figure 1.9

Appetite Element
Checklist

nutritious, but they must feed both the body and the soul. Despite the current emphasis on a healthy lifestyle, it seems everyone still wants a luscious and rich dessert at a banquet.

The event experience relies on utilizing all five senses. This provides an opportunity to heighten the sense of taste and smell through the menu design for any event. However, you should not discount the importance of how the food looks and sounds. The presentation should be pleasing to the eye as well as the palate, and the textures of the food should be consistent with freshness and form—a fresh apple should be crunchy and a chocolate mousse should be smooth.

It is critically important to pay attention to the physical needs and restrictions that accompany food and beverage selection. You must determine whether guests or attendees have particular food allergies or dietary restrictions—physical, philosophical, or religious. The last thing you want is to have someone rushed to the hospital in anaphylactic shock because a life-threatening allergy to nuts was triggered by the peanut oil used in a recipe. Collect the information you need, from both the attendees and the chef, and be prepared to offer appropriate options. Also keep in mind that water and other fluids should always be available at any and every event and that alcohol service will usually have regulatory requirements.

Meals to Match the Occasion

Menu selection is a dimension in which the professional event coordinator can exercise considerable creativity. The menu can influence the entire theme or tone of an event. Hot dogs, hamburgers, and beans would signify a casual atmosphere; chateaubriand and Cherries Jubilee suggest a formal dining experience. The fun part is that these two menus can be switched to add a surprising twist to an event.

The type and style of an event will determine the direction to be taken in planning the menu. Athletes at a sports event will probably require different foods than guests at a wedding reception. Attendees at a multiday conference, having all their meals on-site, will want something different for lunch and dinner each day. Incentive winners enjoying an exotic destination expect to try the local cuisine. Menus based on an ethnic cuisine or historical record can add authenticity to a theme event. Indigenous ingredients will add a flavorful feature for those experiencing a new locale. Certain food items are closely associated with specific occasions, such as wedding and birthday cakes, or certain rituals, such as matzo at the Seder dinner at Passover.

Concessions, Catering, or Bring Your Own

Different events require different food and beverage purveyors. Concession stands are completely appropriate for public festivals, but probably not for

an upscale hospitality reception, unless, of course, they fit with the theme. Concessionaires might operate out of permanent facilities within a venue or from temporary facilities at an event site. Some have exclusive or specific licensing or franchise agreements with a venue. However, the professional event coordinator should make certain that any purveyor is fully licensed and carries appropriate insurance.

Caterers can provide anything from a lavish 12-course banquet to a backyard barbecue. Many facilities, particularly hotels and convention centers, have exclusive in-house food service providers that the professional event coordinator must use. Other facilities have preferred caterers, usually catering firms that have provided excellent references to the facility and excellent service to their users. Again, the professional event coordinator must verify that the caterer is fully licensed and insured, as well as qualified to handle the scope and type of event being planned.

Most facilities and professional caterers have restrictions on what the client or guest may bring to the event for consumption, because of liability concerns, but compromise is often possible. Of course, picnics, socials, and private events are a natural for the “potluck,” with guests bringing their favorite dishes to share with everyone, but make sure you have removed yourself from legal liability.

Beverages are another matter. The serving of alcohol is strictly regulated in most places. The professional event coordinator must become familiar with the rules and regulations in a jurisdiction before making any arrangements regarding alcohol service. Some places are more restrictive than others regarding licenses and liability issues; some locations prohibit alcohol altogether.

If serving alcohol, the professional event coordinator can incorporate the drink menu into the theme or event experience. Martini bars serving flavored martinis or drinks poured through an elaborate ice sculpture can become an interesting and decorative focus to an event. Wine tasting can be the main attraction for a fundraiser. Serving local wines at a banquet can celebrate the site and opens up sponsorship opportunities.

Other beverages present occasions for creativity as well. Fruit smoothies are fun for tropical themes or health-oriented events. Restaurant patrons are often offered a selection of flavored teas, so why not at an event? Flavored coffees and coffee drinks are very popular at a broad spectrum of events; in fact, such fare has become an experience industry unto itself.

Serving with Style

How the food and beverages are served can significantly affect the event experience. (*Even free food is only worth so much.*) There are countless ways to serve food and beverages: massive or minuscule buffet stations, cafeteria lines, waitpersons placing course after course in front of diners, platters placed family-style on the table,

buckets of shellfish and barrels of beer, or hors d'oeuvres placed on cascading levels of a Southern belle's hoop skirt.

Food service can determine and improve the choreography and flow of an event. A variety of food stations can help move guests through an event space and encourage networking. A food court can create trade show traffic in a remote area of an exhibition hall. Butlers passing trays of edibles and champagne add glamour to a charity reception without taking up floor space for food stations. Gourmet box lunches can accompany participants on a tour of the destination or feed executives in a strategic planning meeting. Certain civic festivals are all about food, and attendees wander from booth to booth tasting the best a city's restaurant community has to offer.

Palate and Pocketbook

Food choices are based on the palate and the pocketbook. The professional event coordinator must establish the budgetary and dietary parameters with the host or client. Certain groups will be hungry for a gastronomical adventure, whereas others will not respond to a locality's spicy cuisine and subdued choices will have to be offered. The chef should be able to design a menu full of flavor that will delight the taste buds and still reflect the theme cuisine.

Kendall Collier, CSEP, of Magic Moments, Inc. in Norcross, Georgia, notes that menu items requiring a great deal of preparation will be far more expensive than those more easily prepared and served, and the style of service requested and the location of the event will determine the number of requisite waitstaff that must be paid for. To save money at a welcome reception, you might select fewer hors d'oeuvre items but in greater volume. Perhaps you will eliminate the dessert from the luncheon at the conference and serve it during the afternoon break. You might choose the food vendors for a street fair so that there will be a variety of food and beverage choices as well as price points. There are always options to overcome the challenges of a tight budget or a finicky palate.

Amenities

Once the event is over, all that is left are the memories. These memories can be enhanced through the employment of layers of detail and numerous tokens of acknowledgment and appreciation (see Figure 1.10). These details do not necessarily need to be costly; they just need to be thoughtful. These are the niceties and features of the event experience that add to the comfort of the guest and provide a physical reminder of the experience after the event.

<input type="checkbox"/> Albums	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Food/Beverage Items	<input type="checkbox"/> Restroom Upgrades (soaps, colognes, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Audio/Videotapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Imprinted Items	<input type="checkbox"/> Souvenir Items
<input type="checkbox"/> Awards	<input type="checkbox"/> Logo Merchandise	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker Gifts
<input type="checkbox"/> Badge Holders	<input type="checkbox"/> Luggage Tags	<input type="checkbox"/> Table Gifts
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificates	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorabilia	<input type="checkbox"/> Tote Bags
<input type="checkbox"/> Clothing Items	<input type="checkbox"/> Menus/Place Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> T-Shirts
<input type="checkbox"/> Commemorative Pins	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/> USB Drive of Proceedings
<input type="checkbox"/> Conference Binders	<input type="checkbox"/> Pillow Gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Baskets
<input type="checkbox"/> Custom Label Beverages	<input type="checkbox"/> Prizes	

Figure 1.10Amenities Element
Checklist

Walk-Away Value

An event is an ephemeral thing. There is no lasting substance to it without something physical one walks away with, so the professional event coordinator should always find something for the attendees or guests to take away. Meeting and conference attendees might be given a USB flash drive loaded with all the conference presentations and handouts. Visitors to a tourism event can be given programs with information on the destination. Guests at a corporate hospitality function can be given logo-imprinted mementos. Award winners should be given customized trophies, certificates, or plaques.

These walk-away items may be given away or may be revenue-generating products. Many conferences and conventions provide audiotapes of the various sessions for sale at and after the events. Many also provide or sell custom-imprinted tote bags for the session materials and marketing materials collected at a trade show. Name badge holders have become fashion items, featuring zippered pockets for event tickets, room keys, and business cards. Lanyards for badges are woven with a sponsor's logo or the event name and date.

Legacy Items

Prizes, gifts, mementos, and souvenirs are the physical items that the attendee or guest will keep to remember the event experience. The more substantial and appropriate the item, the longer the legacy will be. Most sporting events offer an expansive assortment of team-oriented souvenirs for sale at the venue and year-round at sporting goods outlets. Nearly all festivals sell commemorative clothing or posters, and some sell or give out commemorative drinking cups to support recycling objectives.

Volunteers might be given jackets, caps, or commemorative lapel pins to show appreciation for their contribution to the success of an event. Incentive winners could be treated to expensive pillow gifts, indigenous to the locale, each night of their trip. Participants in a marathon or walk-a-thon could receive T-shirts emblazoned with the event name and sponsor logos. Anniversary dinner guests might find a framed menu at their place settings, or the napkins might be imprinted with a photo of the happy couple.

Showing You Care

There are thousands of ways you can show you care about the guest or attendee's experience. Full-size logo-imprinted tablets and pens on the tables at a meeting or educational session show attention to detail. Speakers and special guests appreciate welcome baskets with some tasty treats and simple souvenirs in their guest rooms. Souvenir sunglasses are great for a beach party. Colorful imprinted hand towels are a wonderful touch for a golf tournament. Something as simple as bottled water with a custom label will be noted and appreciated by participants in a parade or on a photo safari. Custom labels on wine bottles will add a special touch to a charity banquet; they can even be engraved with the event logo.

You might have noted that many of these amenities are excellent candidates for sponsorship and opportunities for sponsor recognition. As a professional event coordinator, you should always find ways to integrate the event's marketing objectives into the event elements.

Personalize the Experience

Capturing and incorporating the attendee's or guest's image in a souvenir or memento will put the person in the context of the experience. A photographer strolling through an event is standard at social gatherings and virtually mandatory at any marketing event. The photograph of the company president presenting the employee of the year with his or her award will go in the company newsletter, and a framed copy will go on the winner's wall.

Many theme events include a photo station where guests can have their images inserted into an appropriate setting via a digital camera or have their portraits done, dressed in appropriate slip-on costumes. Caricature artists are always popular. Commemorative newspapers or magazine covers can be printed with funny headlines or posed pictures taken with a video camera. Wanted posters can be created by digitally capturing the guest's image with a Web camera and then electronically pasting it into a customized poster designed with a space for the digital desperado's image. How about hopping on a Harley Davidson motorcycle to have a picture taken at a Route 66 reception or in the winner's circle at a road rally?

Many private life-cycle events such as birthday parties, anniversaries, and casual wedding events provide a disposable camera at every table for guests to take candid photos during the festivities. These and other photographs may be scanned and put up on a private, controlled-access event Web site for all the guests to see and download as desired. Conference photographers often have their work processed quickly and offer the pictures for sale at events. Trade show exhibitors sponsoring a convention reception may have the photos taken at the party available for pickup at their exhibit the following day, ensuring that the guests will come by and see their displays.

Wrap Up

Professional event coordination is a complex job that encompasses a broad scope of responsibilities and opportunities. The professional event coordinator must conduct the necessary research to determine the purpose, goals, and objectives of an event. He or she must examine all potential elements of an event to determine which are necessary, appropriate, or advantageous, and which should be incorporated into the event plan.

The professional event coordinator will work with the host or client to develop a strategy for creating and coordinating a comprehensive event experience. Every event should be designed to incorporate the six critical dimensions of an experience, including anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, activity, appetite, and amenities.

All facets, components, and elements of an event are interdependent. The professional event coordinator merges each component and its inherent logistics together with all the others and facilitates a smooth and seamless operation. Each dimension of the event experience is crafted to support the whole and is designed to meet the needs, wants, and expectations of the consumer.

REVIEW CHECKPOINTS

1. What are the similarities and differences between the various event genres, and how might you transfer your expertise from one to another?
2. How would you explain the scope of responsibilities and complexity of professional event coordination to a potential client?
3. In what ways are the six dimensions of an event experience interrelated?
4. How do you approach a task? From overall concept to details (deductive) or details to overall concept (inductive)?

- 5. Do you find an overview framework such as the EMBOK helpful for understanding the profession of event management?
- 6. Of the five functional domains of the EMBOK (administration, design, marketing, operations, and risk), in which would you say you have the most experience or expertise?
- 7. What is the most memorable example (good or bad) you have ever experienced of each of the event dimensions (anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity, and amenities)? Why was it so memorable?

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EXERCISES IN PROFESSIONAL EVENT COORDINATION

Design and write a description for each of the following events, incorporating the six critical dimensions of an event experience including anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity, and amenities.

- A. The local art museum foundation wants a fundraising gala for 300 patrons held in the sculpture garden on the grounds of the museum.
- B. A couple wants their wedding on a remote tropical island, and they will be inviting 100 of their family and friends to this three-day celebration.
- C. A pharmaceutical company exhibiting at a medical convention trade show in your city wants to host an off-site evening hospitality reception for 200 of its best customers, featuring a theme that celebrates the local culture.

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CYBERSPACE CONNECTION

The EMBOK Project	http://www.juliasilvers.com/embok.htm
APEX Industry Glossary	http://www.conventionindustry.org/glossary/
<i>Special Events</i> magazine	http://specialevents.com/
<i>Event Solutions</i> magazine	http://www.event-solutions.com/
BizBash	http://www.bizbash.com/
Successful Meetings	http://www.mimegasite.com/
Exhibitor Online	http://www.exhibitoronline.com/
<i>Event Marketer</i> magazine	http://www.eventmarketer.com/
The Knot	http://www.theknot.com/

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Allen, J. (2009). *Event Planning: The Ultimate Guide to Successful Meetings, Corporate Events, Fundraising Galas, Conferences, Conventions, Incentives and Other Special Events, 2nd ed.* Ontario: John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.
- Bowdin, G. A. J., J. Allen, W. O'Toole, R. Harris, and I. McDonnell (2010). *Events Management, 3rd ed.* Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Goldblatt, J. (2010). *Special Events: A New Generation and the Next Frontier, 6th ed.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.