

Event planning

Business



Career Exploration Paper Anytime a group of people come together for a singular purpose, whether it be professional or personal, the need arises to have someone to oversee the details. That someone is an event planner. Many industries from small businesses to large corporations hire event planners for a variety of different reasons.

Ranging from a bachelor degree in hospitality management to a masters program East Carolina University provide the knowledge and experience needed to succeed in the event planning industry.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the programs East Carolina University offers to future event planners as well as examine the various roles and functions of an event planner. The College of Human Ecology at East Carolina University offers a degree in hospitality management with a concentration in conventions and special event management for the student who wishes to be an event planner. Along with the 42 semester hours of foundations curriculum requirements, the bachelor degree requires a minimum 2. GPA be maintain while completing 45 semester hours in core hospitality classes, 18 semester hours in the concentration area of conventions and special event management as well as 26 semester hours of business classes (ECU). This course of study provides the basic knowledge of the hospitality management industry while providing specialized courses on event management.

While completing the required courses for a bachelor degree in hospitality management, students are also able to participate in an accelerated two semester program to obtain a masters of business administration (ECU).

East Carolina also offers the chance to become a member of the Eta Sigma Delta international hospitality honors society. The North Carolina Hospitality Education Foundation (NCHEF) offers a scholarship to North Carolina residents who are enrolled in a masters program that is related to the hospitality field. The NCHEF is a non-profit group whose mission is to build an “educated, strong and committed workforce for the hospitality and tourism industry in North Carolina” (NCRLA).

This advanced degree will produce a well rounded event planner capable of keeping up with needs of clients.

As Judy Allen notes, events are evolving from serving a primary business function such as planning business meetings and conferences, events now serve the means of corporations sales and marketing teams. Current trends expanding events to meet multiple company objectives require a planner not only proficient in event design and strategic planning but also need one who can use the event to also market their company (Allen).

In 2006, the Brookings Institution released a report stating that the “conventions and meetings industry in the United States is in a permanent state of decline” due to the fundamental change of the market (Raj and Musgrave). Fundamental change responsible for the decline in revenue for conventions and meeting industry led to the rise in event planning industry. As reported by the Trade show and event planning services quarterly update, the event planning industry consists of over 4, 000 companies with a combined revenue of close to 10 billion dollars in annual revenues.

The effect of the modern freelance event planners on traditional large corporate and associate event planner can be seen in the distribution of revenue in the industry. The top 50 companies in the event planning industry only account for 45% of total revenue (“ Trade Show”). While providing competition against corporate and associate event planners in the arena for project bids, the independent planner was no competition during the job cuts of 2009. Morning News survey of event planners found that independent event planners suffered the most when the economy was down.

Due to the uniqueness of the purpose and size each event, event management takes traditional management ideas and uses them to react to the unique needs of each event. Julie Silvers points out that no matter how specialized each event may be the following process may be used to coordinate a successful event.

First the event planner must conduct the necessary research on the event as well as the client expectations. Next they must conceptualize the event as well as determine the event elements. This is followed by the planner designing a strategy to implement these elements.

Lastly it is the responsibility of the event planner to select the most affordable products from available providers. Ivanovic, Galicic and Mikinac suggest that the constant monitoring of progress and communication is key to achieving the event objective.

The current evolution of the event planning industry is changing the function of the event planner as much as it is the event. This uncertainty of the future roles and tasks event planners will have to fulfill to meet the expectation of

clients as well as the introduction of freelance planners will provide a constant challenge to anyone going into the industry.