

Your corporate function: disaster / success

Reasons why you should use a professional event organiser:

If your secretary or assistant is not 'event competent', here are a few examples of worst-case scenarios where the experience of an accredited professional would have been invaluable:

You decided on the venue – the brochure was glossy and glamorous and the rates were within your budget.

- Your heart drops when you arrive at the venue on the day of your special event.
- There was not sufficient parking for all your cars.
- The ceiling in the hall was very low and it felt claustrophobic
- The flowers on the tables were garish.
- The special meals organised for your VIP vegetarian was served after everyone else had eaten.
- Your secretary had booked her favourite DJ who played Rap and R & B to your upmarket management clients.
- A delegate has a heart attack on site.

Has any of the above happened to you?

You would have been better off not hosting this event at all as it will cost you far more in a tarnished reputation for your company and your brand. The following checklist would give you a good indication whether your in-house event organiser or PA can cope with your event.

Will your event be managed as a professional project?

- Consider the planning process,
- The budget
- The objective
- Feasibility
- The stakeholders and their expectations
- Responsibility and accountability
- Logistics
- Crisis management

Do you have adequate systems in place?

Most event processes these days are automated either via your own website or a website dedicated to the event. Who will facilitate and control on-line registration, RSVP'S, payments and correspondence with delegates?

What is the programme for the event?

Adaptability of the programme in case of a crisis.

What equipment will be required for your event?

Equipment requirements for the entertainment, speeches and presentations and the installation thereof.

Compatibility of the audiovisual and technical equipment with all presenters' material.

Technical back-up in case of a breakdown or malfunction.

What will the event be remembered for?

- People always remember the "WOW" factor.
- Your event should be unique.
- Creatively themed décor and entertainment
- Effective branding.
- People always remember the FOOD.
- The menu selection is critical in terms of choosing dishes for all multicultural groups.

Regardless of how well an event has been planned – chances are that the unexpected will happen. Can you cope?

It is the core business of the professional event manager to anticipate and solve these issues without you, the client, being aware that there is a problem. With their experience and access to a vast array of resources and expertise you can be assured that the outcome of your event will be successfully achieved. They will provide you with a professional service, from conceptualisation to the finalisation of your project with all the relevant contracts in place, minimizing your liability.

Please go to www.saaci.co.za and you will find a list of all companies. The International Special Events Society (ISES) www.ises.co.za will provide you with a list of production companies, entertainment agencies and technical specialists.

Written by Leora Berger, Director of Conference Africa, an Accredited Professional Conference and Event Management Company. Leora Berger is a National Board Member of SAACI and President of ISES South Africa Chapter.