

# Discovering Hospitality and Tourism

The World's Greatest Industry

## PROFILE OF A SPECIAL EVENTS COMPANY

Most businesses providing special events services are independently owned and provide opportunities for creative persons to identify and serve the special events needs of selected markets. Here's an example.

VP Events, Inc., is a full-service event, design, and production company. The firm was founded in 1994 as Vintage Productions, specializing in vintage weddings and social events. Since that time, the company has evolved into an award-winning design and production firm specializing in a broad range of entertainment, corporate, and social events. Clients look to VP Events, Inc., for something different and unique that allows them to emphasize their individual expressions. While the firm has enjoyed notoriety for its specialty, unique wedding design and other off-premise events, the true focus is on elegance, style, and individuality.



*Mary Litzsinger*

President and owner Mary N. Litzsinger, CSEP, has a bachelor's degree in marketing. She received the designation CSEP (Certified Special Events Professional) in 2001 from the International Special Events Society. She has served on the faculty of the UCLA Extension Program, where she encouraged students to join the special events planning industry. For the



*Karey Williams*

past 15 years, she has developed and produced events, fund-raising opportunities, public relations, and corporate branding programs for local, regional, and national organizations.

Karey Williams graduated from the University of Southern California and serves as event and marketing manager. She has been a full-time event and marketing manager for over four years. Her first major wedding received high reviews and earned a featured spot in a national publication. She brings a background in the cosmetics and fashion industry to the firm. Karey uses her knowledge and experience to help clients with their specific needs related to dress design and hair and makeup consultations. In addition to working with social clients of VP Events, Inc., Karey develops opportunities for the firm in corporate, sports, and fund-raising events.



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SECOND EDITION

JACK D. NINEMEIER  
JOE PERDUE

approval, the town of West Warwick, and the state of Rhode Island. In the future, event planners will more consistently and adequately address risk management concerns to assure that they are doing their part to provide a safe environment for event guests.

### Raising the Level of Professionalism

Historically, the special events industry has comprised small entrepreneurial businesses who learned the business from experience, rather than through formal education and professional development. Experience is absolutely critical to the success of an event planner; however, so is more formalized training. The primary professional association for the International Special Events Society (ISES) has developed an effective certification program that is driven by excellent professional development programs in increasingly successful efforts to raise the standard of excellence in the industry.

### Marketing Issues

The goals and objectives for many events have shifted to cause-related events. This poses marketing challenges for event companies who need to reinvent themselves. Also, the events industry rises and falls in concert with the economy. Consider, for example, the September 11, 2001, tragedy. Special events companies lost all or most of the business on their books after that event, and it was more than a year before planning for new events began.

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## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1. Define the term *special events management*.**  
Special events management is the profession that plans and controls public assemblies gathered for the reasons of celebration, entertainment, and education (among other purposes). Activities integral to the process include those related to event research, design, planning, coordination, and evaluation.
- 2. Provide a brief history of special events.**  
Celebration of special events has been part of human history. The special events management profession originated within the discipline of public relations when specialists became necessary to manage activities that creative organizations used to obtain publicity and to build corporate images. The term *special events* was coined by Robert Jani (a Walt Disney imaginer) in 1955 when he used it to describe the Main Street Electric Parade in Disneyland.
- 3. Describe the type of markets in which special events are conducted.**  
Special events markets are those sponsored by associations; corporations; casinos and hotels; cause-related and retail organizations; sporting events; fairs, festivals, and parades; and social and tourism-related activities.
- 4. Explain recent trends in the special events industry.**  
Recent trends include sponsorship (the merging of corporate and public events) and an increased interest in professionalism within the special events industry.
- 5. Review a flow chart of the activities required to plan a special event.**  
The purpose of the event and its budget are initially established. Then the guest list and transportation requirements can be considered. At the same time, the event's theme may determine its location (which will also affect transportation). When the event site is known, general and specific event planning activities can begin. A postevent evaluation should be undertaken at its conclusion.
- 6. Review some major responsibilities that are part of positions within the special events industry.**  
Numerous positions within the special events industry involve their coordination, management, and production. Design, decorative arts, and technical service and products specialists may also be needed. Related positions include hardware rental, construction personnel, entertainment, foodservices, location management, travel and transportation, and event public relations and marketing specialists.
- 7. Discuss significant challenges confronting the special events industry.**  
Challenges confronting the special events industry include concerns about risk management, raising the level of professionalism within the industry, and marketing concerns relating to the need for event companies to reinvent in a new age or in a weak economy.