

# The Guide to Understanding Sponsor Opportunities through Experience Design Planning

Add Creative Options. Keep Your Functional Format.



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*Dianne Devitt*  
Empowering Creativity  
[www.diannedevitt.com](http://www.diannedevitt.com)

Discover how to identify opportunities to improve your existing event that will increase attendance

Learn the six critical steps to identify, assess and guide you through the experience evolution and ROE

Identify sponsor expectations in the perfect event and how to exceed them without breaking the bank

Decrease event costs through sponsorship participation without compromising your attendee experience

Design the event using entertainment to attract sponsors, deliver a message and wow your audience

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# Dianne Devitt

## Experiential Event Strategist

Dianne Budion Devitt—described as dynamic, dramatic and distinctive—is an inspirational speaker, educator, personality, and event producer, known for her unique style which blends creativity, vision and leadership. Her 30 years of experience in planning and designing experiences in meetings, events and major productions has led her to her biggest passion, consulting and sharing what works when groups of people are gathered together to maximize engagement and return; to create *the experience*.

Over 20 years ago, Dianne challenged the meetings industry by asking them if they knew what their company's Advertising and Public Relations departments were involved with and if they consulted with one another before a prospective client, customer, employee or other event was produced. Dianne's belief then, and now, is that all is marketing as evident by the proliferation and results that live events bring.

### **A little more about her background and experience:**

Dianne is the Past President of the International Live Events Association Metro New York Chapter and a member of National Speakers Association.

She is past President of the Greater New York Meeting Professionals International chapter and has been on national boards.

Her experience includes managing teams for corporate and global events including the Clinton Global Initiative, First European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan, the Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Anniversary, and the Apollo 40<sup>th</sup> Commemorative for MIT.

Dianne is the creator and producer of the SenseUP!™ Summit. She teaches workshops on How to think creatively to maximize the experience, the excitement.

A best-selling author of *What Color is Your Event?* Dianne coined the term Event Stylist defining the need to entice attention.

She is an Adjunct Professor at NYU for over 25 years, and is a recipient of the NYU "Award for Teaching Excellence." Dianne currently teaches Undergraduates *Conference and Event Management and Event Design and Production*.

## Ten Signs You Should Work with an Experiential Event Strategist

- Has everything been the same for years?
- Has the format changed?
- Are the speakers the same?
- Are the sessions the same?
- Are you attracting your target audience?
- Are your Sponsors benefiting?
- Does the word creativity scare you?
- Do you like your booth designs? How are you using them?
- Has the floor plan changed?
- Is your staff equipped?

*"Thank you for giving your special touch to our conference! I had so many wonderful comments from attendees about your session! It really made them rethink how they should design their meetings/events!"*

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## Questions about Experiential Event Strategist Services

**Q: I don't know much about Experiential Event Strategists. What do they do?**

**A:** Experiential Event Strategists help you to balance the weight of your message with your investment using the elements of a well-planned event. They will work with your existing events and analyze from pre-event to post-event to identify opportunities to increase revenue and impact for both sponsors and your attendees. They are professionals experienced in designing live events with a focus on stimulating and engaging attendees to focus their attention and maximize the Return on Experience (ROE).

**Q: What kind of training do Experiential Event Strategists have?**

**A:** Ah! Because the event industry is about 40 years young, specialists uniquely qualified for this role have years of hands-on experience in planning and designing meetings and events. Their diverse backgrounds include advertising, public relations, theater, marketing, organizational behavior, sociology and in my case, Developmental Drama—using theatrical techniques for training and education. The Experiential (or Creative) Event Strategist is a new position developed in the Experience Economy, which combines an understanding of messaging, branding, interaction, human emotions and strategy to elicit reactions.

**Q: How are Experiential Event Strategists recommended?**

**A:** Word of mouth. The role is new, resulting from the convergence of integrated communication and events. It requires a specific talent for bridging the gaps between the planner, the production team, senior management and the venue. Focusing on engagement and the creative experience separately is not new but recognizing an authentically-designed and integrated experience is. How can it be identified? Like a designer bag. If you know the 'real deal,' you can recognize the fakes.

**Q: What are the advantages of professional Creative or Experiential Event Strategist's services?**

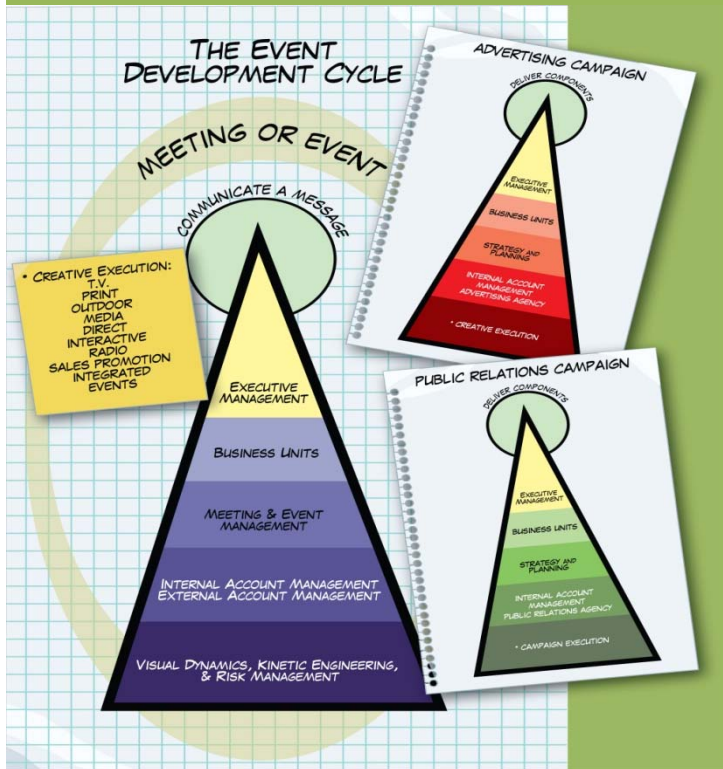
**A:** Many! It varies based on individual needs. There is great value in defining objectives and goals which clearly translate into the live experience. Once defined, those goals and objectives guide how you utilize your time, financial and human capital investment effectively and efficiently. Producers, agency account managers and all others responsible for planning are primarily focused on servicing stakeholders and logistics. Production companies and experiential agencies are focused on the stage and content. The experience expert (Event Strategist) plays the liaison, and connects the multiple facets of event planning to identify opportunities to increase attendee experience, customer experience, and venue experience—the ROE of it all!

**Q: Are there any risks?**

**A:** Not if you work with the right person. You only risk missed opportunities to increase your revenue.

## The Event Development Cycle™

model takes the form of a pyramid that demonstrates the interrelation of vision, strategy, design, execution and logistics.



## 10 Reasons to Call Your Experiential Event Strategist

1. Your meeting, conference or event is lacking something
2. You think you know how to plan an event because Thanksgiving goes so well
3. Your investment is substantial in time and finance but you want to increase Return on Experience (ROE)
4. You are tasked with making next time better for sponsors
5. Your staff are skilled in logistics and operations but need to be creatively challenged
6. You consult with outside creative teams for advertising campaigns; why not events?
7. You understand that the value of face to face is incomparable in results with any integrated campaign
8. You know that more than 80% of people crave sensory experiences
9. You know what you want, but aren't truly clear on exactly why a meeting or event is being held
10. You worked with an experienced, creative Experience Strategist and the results were noticeably outstanding with a rise in meeting evaluations feedback

## How to Choose a Creative Event Strategist

- ✓ Research credentials on line
  - How long has this person been in the industry?
  - What is their background?
  - What do past clients and colleagues say?
- ✓ Find out if they have any credentials or accreditations
- ✓ Ensure the person has well-rounded experience that can help your specific situation
- ✓ Verify active involvement in an industry association for references and ethics
- ✓ Confirm that they understand that the concepts discussed may not cure an alphabet soup of dysfunctional conditions
- ✓ Credible professionals will provide an initial consultation free-of-charge

You can also find referrals on the International Live Events Association site, [www.ileahub.org](http://www.ileahub.org) from professional Event Producers. Similarly, National Speakers Association offers talent in the Creative Thinking area but this is distinctly different from experiential event strategy. Meeting Design and approaching meetings and events from a strategic and creative viewpoint is a new methodology. I call it the **Theater of Meetings™**.



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## Clarifications about Roles, Sponsors, Experience and Entertainment

**Q: Why is the Experiential (Creative) Event Strategist role important to communication?**

**A:** More and more, the communication industry is recognizing that *all* marketing includes events, activations, or some form of live interaction. There is a distinctly different set of talents and skills involved in live engagement versus traditional advertising and public relations in marketing an overall experience. Using elements of design, Visual Dynamics™ and Kinetic Engineering™ combine the look, feel, flow, interaction and brand experience into one. It is not about being creative—it is about knowing how and when to implement a creative concept for impact.

**Q: How can you find ways to enhance the attendee experience and develop brand loyalty and engagement?**

**A:** Your existing loyal sponsors will always be open for new benefits, opportunities or ideas that will showcase their brand's message and experience. Offering a choice of participation throughout a conference from pre-event to post-event can enhance any sponsor's benefit package. Often times, a sponsor's internal messaging changes, which can complement a live experience.

**Q: What are sponsors expectations in the perfect event and how can I meet or exceed them without breaking the bank?**

**A:** It doesn't take long for you to know what works and doesn't work. People just won't show up (or invest). When a sponsor invests, it is implied that the WIIFT (What's In It For Them) has been identified. The event is your stage; there are many areas to offer a sponsor opportunity and design specific to a sponsor's specs without costing you – anything. In fact, you will increase your revenue through creative choices that are offered.

**Q: Is it true that any meeting or event can be analyzed to improve effectiveness?**

**A:** Yes. After identifying your pain points and condition, an assessment will be made determining which area needs the most attention to gain immediate return. Prioritizing based on timelines, budgets, objectives and goals, will determine the strategy and position which your meeting or event can take to better align itself for success. More importantly: What is your message, and are the existing sponsor benefits and opportunities supporting this, including your theme, vision and overall experience?

**Q: How can entertainment be used to attract sponsors, wow an audience, and make your event profitable and impactful?**

**A:** Whether your event calls for James Corden interviewing Paul McCartney or a stilt walker, the energy of a strategic entertainment selection can make an impact that is 85-90% lasting through visual and sensory recall. Don't underestimate the power of a performer as a first or last impression.

## The Scope of Experiential Event Strategy Services

Experiential event strategy services can optimize your event in many ways. However, they cannot compensate for:

- ✘ Poor management
  - ✘ Lack of wanting to understand the power of the event as a communication tool
  - ✘ No (absolutely no) budget
  - ✘ Incompetent staff
  - ✘ Poor time management
  - ✘ Not enough time to meet expectations (add on budget, resources, etc.)
- ✘ Egos – although we try
  - ✘ Poorly negotiated contracts
  - ✘ Choosing inappropriate vendor support or entertainers
  - ✘ A poorly designed menu
  - ✘ Lack of taste
  - ✘ Airfares or transportation to/from the event
  - ✘ Personalities – especially love triangles

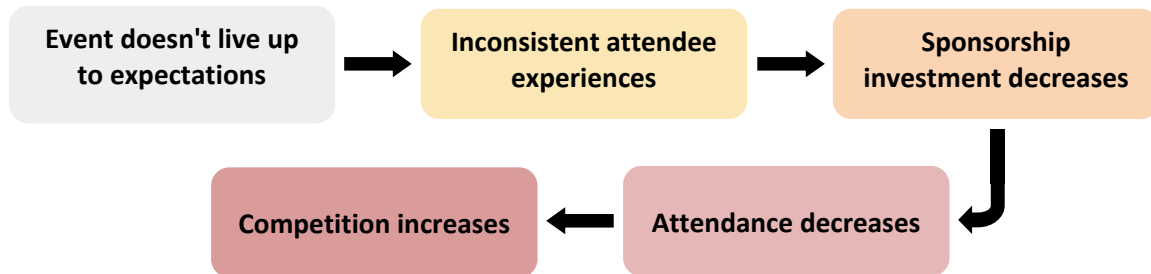
## How We Work

Experiential Event Strategists work in different ways. We combine your vision and hidden trigger objectives with the unique power of the event. We understand human nature, live interaction and how to use elements to reinforce your message and exceed your hidden objectives. Below are some choices to consider which works best for you.

Type	Rate	Duration	Additional Information
<b>Initial Consultation</b>	Free of charge	Up to 60 mins	Prior to your free consultation, a series of questions will be sent to you to review. It's important to give thorough answers, even if you're not sure of the outcomes or objectives and goals of a specific event or future event. This will enable your Experiential Event Strategist to rule out options that aren't appropriate for you.
<b>One-time Consultation</b>	Flat Rate	Up to 3 hours	Follow-ups to the initial consultation
<b>One Week Intensity Program</b>	Flat Rate		Focused on a Major Event development including and focusing on Sponsor Opportunities
<b>Monthly Retainer</b>	Fee-based		Includes weekly office visits
<b>On-Site Analysis</b>	Fee-based		Includes attending an existing conference, meeting, event and providing an in-depth analysis in four areas including pre-event marketing, on-site Visual Dynamics™ (Sponsor Opportunities) and Kinetic Engineering™

## How It Works and Why It's Difficult

You are responsible for marketing, sponsorship and creating vehicles that will effectively work for a launch or activation. It's your back on the line and you have an important job. In most cases, the meetings and events you plan generate revenue to support your organization. The stakes are high. The challenges lie in the need to understand nuance and how to use your event to function as all things for all people, while still keeping it interesting, educational, and inviting.



You can't see creative concepts, but you can plan moments that will evoke emotional reactions through creative elements. These touch points make lasting impressions. The tools that a designer or strategist uses are based on an understanding of human reaction using sensory stimulants and a series of well-planned, scripted, deliberate elements that evoke reactions based on your key objectives and goals.

This is the **Theater of Events™** and understanding the full potential can increase your **Return on Experience** (or **Return on Event**).

Working with an Experience Expert allows you to take a step-by-step approach and use the power of the live experience and increase the reach of your events regardless of the type, size, budget, location, or objectives.

## The Six E's to Enhance Attendee Experience

1. **ENVISION** the Outcome through identifying solid objectives and goals
2. **EXCITE** through emotional connections and touch point opportunities
3. **ENGAGE** people instantly
4. **EXCHANGE** is the point where energy is interwoven and interaction takes place
5. **EXTEND** the experience after the physical event
6. **EXPAND** the outcomes by developing a plan based on results



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COMMON PROBLEM	STRATEGY
<p><b>Your staff knows what is needed and senior management doesn't—or doesn't want to</b></p> <p>Very often the pain you feel or the void you identified that could be filled is obvious to the team who works for you; Pain that originates in their experience of day to day operations.</p>	<p><b>You meet with the Executive Management team and define the objectives and goals.</b></p> <p>Why this event is intrinsic to the business, and what needs to be accomplished? How we implement this information is the key and it informs the Experience design process which comes next.</p>

## Design and Logistics

Designing an experience is like assembling a puzzle. There are many pieces and they all come together given the dynamics, the politics, and sensitivities in relation to it. The budget, the timing, the support and how to use the technology best suited for your event will influence its design the most.

Planning is the architecture of it all. It combines the vision, objectives and goals and designs a scenario, a moment that will inspire change through human interaction. Deliberately planning where people stand, sit, eat, talk, and move all while focusing on your brand impact is powerful.

Logistics is the engineering behind your event. Logistics focuses on project management and implementing your vision into action to create the attendee experience and sponsor return on investment.

## Resources

[www.diannedevitt.com](http://www.diannedevitt.com)

***What Color is Your Event?*** book by Dianne Devitt available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR004)

IACC Blog: Measuring the Meeting Experience:

<https://www.iacconline.org/iacc-blog/essential-elements-for-measuring-the-meeting-experience>

“TIME AND TIME AGAIN, WHEN I SIT WITH THE C-SUITE AND EXPLAIN THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT LIVE AROUND THE MEETING AND EVENT TO INCREASE REVENUE, TO INCREASE SPONSOR BENEFITS, TO INCREASE ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE, THE REACTION IS THE SAME. SOME GET IT, SOME DON'T. THOSE WHO DO MAXIMIZE IT ALL.”

## Quiz Your Knowledge of Event Strategy

1. T or F Transportation, including motorcycles, has no impact on an event
2. T or F There are over 50 books written about event planning, but only one on how to be creative
3. T or F Marketing is everything
4. T or F I've planned events before and made money; I don't need an expert
5. T or F The sponsors at our meeting are satisfied even though they are investing in competition
6. T or F Events are easy to plan with few details to incorporate – food doesn't matter

1. True Transportation could be the focus of your event and using vehicles wisely makes an impact
2. True Many textbooks have been written, but *What Color is Your Event?* tests creative application
3. True You're in the business—do you believe this? There is a convergence of Advertising, PR, Meetings and Events—it's all ONE in an integrated platform.
4. False I've done my taxes before, but I'm not an Accountant
5. False If they're investing in competition, how much and why is your concern? WILLIT?
6. False I'd rather plan an Olympics than a small meeting and food is critical to any meeting, any where

Answers to Quiz: Test your knowledge of Event Strategy