

Ask The Producer Column

Ask the Producers By The Moore Presentations Team

As we launch into 2007, a growing trend in the meetings industry is to bring in experts to handle specific aspects of an event. One area of expertise is event production, overseeing "the show" components within a program. In this edition, we respond to questions about creative consultants.



Dear Producers,

Question: I am planning a large sales conference for 400 attendees. Some suppliers have suggested I hire a "creative consultant." What does a creative consultant do and how would it benefit my program?

Answer: A creative consultant to a large meeting is what a "soccer mom" is to a busy family – the ever-knowing dynamo that keeps things moving forward.

The creative consultant (also known as an event producer, production manager or account manager) is part coordinator, liaison, diplomat, expert, task-master and advocate. He or she works closely with the client and production suppliers to execute the vision and achieve the goals of the meeting.

The consultant usually has a strong technical background and strategically coordinates the efforts of the various vendors – audio/visual, video, speech writing, entertainment, staging, etc. – to ensure consistent, corresponding messages. He or she also tracks the production timeline and budget, making sure progress is being made.

Follow-up Question: How should I determine whether or not to hire a creative consultant or handle the audio-visual components myself?

Answer: First, consider the size and scope of the event. A sales conference for 500 people will more likely need a creative consultant than a party for 50. A meeting requiring extensive audio-visual equipment, multiple speakers and/or entertainers, rehearsals and complex staging should probably invest in a consultant. And, as trade show exhibits become more high-tech, a creative consultant can be a valuable asset.

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But size isn't the only factor. High-profile conferences and meetings, even for as few as a dozen people, may require a creative consultant. When trying to impress important clients, investors, analysts, board members or the media, it is critical for all aspects of a program to appear seamless and professional. The consultant concentrates the efforts of all providers to make sure everything goes off without a hitch.

Follow-up Question: At what stage in the planning process should I bring in a creative consultant?

Answer: As soon as possible! Actually, it makes sense to include the consultant in initial planning stages, particularly the creative, since he or she will be responsible for making sure messages are consistent and coordinated. The consultant can provide guidance executing creative ideas while maintaining the budget.

When selecting a creative consultant, be sure to do your homework. Find out what projects he or she has worked on and get references. After all, your creative consultant can make the difference between a executing a successful event or creating a future "war" story.

Each issue, we try to answer your production-related questions – from logistics to creative and beyond. We find the answers and share the tricks of the trade to help you be better prepared for your next big event. No question is too small to handle. Please submit your queries to us at info@moorepresentations.com

Moore Presentations is a full-service presentation design and management company specializing in visual communications and event execution. James Moore, president of the company, has worked in video production, presentation design and event execution for more than 25 years. Mike Jorgensen, senior project director, has more than 20 years experience in multi-media technology. Terry Onustack, CMP, director of operations and marketing, spent nearly 14 years as a corporate meeting and event manager. ♦

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