

10 things your corporate event planner should know how to do, but probably doesn't

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When it comes to hiring an event planner for your corporate event, one takes it for granted that certain things are included in their mix of talents on offer, because 'they are the experts' and it's why you've hired them. Kind of like an unspoken list of skills left off of the written list of key deliverables you're about to sign, these opaque skills only come to the surface when the tire hits the tar, and you need them most.



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So, aside from being able to find a beautiful venue, arrange catering, and book a witty keynote speaker for your event, which, let's be honest, most assistants can do, the real reason why we hire corporate event planners is for their Einstein-like problem solving, I'll-do-anything-it-takes-to-make-this-event-work, teeth-gritting, sweetly-smiling set of ninja skills that only come with a few years of experience in the corporate event planner saddle. Here's what your event planner should know how to do, but probably doesn't.

1. They can reverse a delivery truck

As strange a skill as this may seem, if your event planner knows how to handle a big delivery truck, they will understand what it takes to manoeuvre a huge truck in narrow town streets, or onto the highway, or to that remote location.

Their knowledge will allow you to make better decisions when you are choosing a venue and give you insight into whether or not you can get your equipment into that location. This can save you a load of trouble (see what I did there?).

2. They are communicators (they listen, then talk)

The most effective event planners are good communicators. Corporate event planners who are worth their salt continuously communicate with their own team, with their suppliers, and with you. Event planners should have a high attention to detail.

The ability to communicate those details to the team, and then adjust the plan based on their feedback, will ensure a much more satisfying, smoother, stress-free event.

3. They can think and react quickly and are imaginative

Planning events can sometimes be a very straightforward, routine business. Anyone with a bit of time can handle a brief with clear deliverables. However, the event Jedi's are separated from the padawans when you need someone who can handle curve-balls at a live event without derailing, or you require an event that is not the same as every other cut-and-paste function and is authentically you.

4. They know how to handle a busy kitchen

Anyone who has waited as a student in a busy restaurant knows how many moving parts are involved in getting the food out of the windows, onto plates and onto tables. Your event planner should know too.

The art of expediting food from a busy kitchen is similar to an orchestra conductor; smart and hardworking, they are the main go-between for the waiters and the kitchen staff. This experience means your event planner can optimally match the venue's kitchen capabilities with your desired catering needs.

5. They can work the audio-visual equipment

This will save you a lot of red-faced moments at your event. Your event planner doesn't need to be a pro, but should have taken the time at some point to crawl under a table to find out how the A/V setup is connected to the network, or how microphones work, or how the big screens connect with the data source. They will better understand the differences between issues with the A/V booth, with the speaker's mic technique, or the equipment you have chosen, and will calmly find or provide solutions.

6. They can bartend

This is a rare and unusual skill. If your event planner has spent some time behind a bar at some point in their rising career, they will confidently be able to ascertain how many bartenders are required for the event in order to keep event attendees happy and well lubricated. And, should the need arise, they can step in and mix a mean cocktail to boot.

7. They can work your onsite registration

It is amazing to me how few event planners know how the badge printer works, or how the registration software or even the check-in process works. A whip-smart event planner walks through the registration process as an attendee, an hour before any event, to flag any issues, and to ensure all registration staff are capable, friendly, and informed.

8. They are zen-calm and can go with the flow

Unplanned things happen. Your event planner must be able to adapt and stay calm while bending the plan to these changes. This skill usually only comes with a fair amount of experience under the belt. The event planner has a reserve of options, alternative solutions, and suppliers to keep the show on the road without breaking a sweat. At least, not a visible sweat.

9. They love checklists

Most event planners work off of checklists, but those in the know do it a little differently. They delegate work within their team so that they can remain focused on the big picture and lead the event operations. They usually utilise software or an app to keep track of the budget, and visually show them progress to the deadline, so that they always have a helicopter view of the entire event.

10. They have a backup plan ready

Corporate event planners are prepared for the worst while aiming for your best event. They have backups of most things so that, should disaster strike, the two main elements of your event remain on track: A/V and catering. The presentation will go on! And the food and drinks will be served. No matter what. These are the two things that will keep your attendees happy and will ensure your event is a success.

ABOUT ZOE VAN DER VYVER

Zoe van der Vyver from RevelAfrica. Revel Africa is all about creating authentic, innovative, and memorable events. From the unorthodox to the more traditional, they will find a way to make your budget, theme, and required outcomes meet, and deliver on something that is stress-free, and a little magical. Contact them at info@revelafrica.co.za to initiate your unique experience.

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