



Toasting an Event's Unsung Heroes

Association Insights
April 24, 2018

By: Matt Bradford

Behind the scenes of any event is a team that makes it happen. Yet aside from venue hosts and frontline staff, there's often a large portion of that team that goes unnoticed.

"There are so many moving parts and pieces," says Carrie Paolone, Director of Events with Scotiabank Convention Centre. "Once an event gets booked and the event file is passed from the sales team to the events team, that's actually when the real process begins."

That process is driven by any number of "unsung heroes" who make sure every component of a conference, meeting, or get-together goes off without a hitch. For example, says Paolone, the IT manager and their team may not always be seen shaking hands on the floor, but they are nonetheless essential to keeping attendees connected and key systems online.

"We usually take for granted how essential it is to be connected and stay connected; that is, until you're left with weak signal strength or no Wi-Fi at all," notes Paolone, noting, "When you stop and think about what it takes to deploy Wi-Fi for thousands of people in a 300,000 square foot building, it's no simple task."

The same applies to the audio-visual experts and third-party professionals (e.g., licensed electricians) who are often waiting just outside of view to save the day. It also goes for the food and beverage employees – either as part of an in-house team or catered service – who work from morning until midnight to satisfy crowds; or the cleaners, maintenance staff, venue assistants, and servers who tie up all the loose ends.

For Scotiabank Convention Centre specifically, Paolone shares, “It’s the people in blue shirts – those who represent our facilities staff – that largely go unnoticed. They make sure the Convention Centre always maintains a high standard of appearance, both on the inside and outside, by doing a lot of physically demanding tasks. They understand that how our facility looks is not only a reflection of us but of our clients as well.”

As for setting up and calling it a night, she continues, it’s once again the unsung heroes who step up to make sure everything goes according to strategy: “Even though we work with floor plans and layouts, event planners can rest assured our Facilities Team is efficient in adapting to the unexpected and any changes at the eleventh hour.”

On the same page

Event planners have much to gain from engaging a venue’s unsung heroes before, during, and after a show. Collaborating with kitchen staff, for example, can ensure a menu meets a group’s exact requirements, while including IT professionals in early planning sessions can uncover new opportunities (e.g., event apps, live streaming capabilities, gamification, etc.) or potential challenges that require upfront problem-solving.

Ultimately, the planner’s vision has to match the capabilities of the venue. That’s why it pays to involve all team members – both seen and unseen – in creating the vision for an event, and keep everyone in the loop with last minute changes or needs throughout the big day. After all, you may not see them much on the day of the big show, but there are plenty of people working behind the scenes to bring your vision to life.

Carrie Paolone is Director of Events with Scotiabank Convention Centre. For more information, visit www.fallsconventions.com.

Original Article: www.csae.com/Resources/Association-Insights/Post/6002/Toasting-an-Event-s-Unsung-Heroes