

Employers That Hire Event Planners

As you will read below, there are many types of organizations that hire event planners. These employers fall into three major categories:

- Event planning companies
- Hospitality industry
- Corporate employers

Event Planning Companies

As an employee of one of the companies in this category, you would work on events for a variety of **client** companies that have hired the company you work for. While some of the companies that provide this service call themselves an “event planning company,” there are actually a number of different types of companies that provide event planning services.

Incentive Houses

An incentive house (also known as **incentive company**) specializes in developing programs to **motivate employees**. For example, an insurance company may hire an incentive house to plan a trip and meeting at a Caribbean resort to reward insurance agents who have accomplished sales goals.

According to **Wendy Spivak**, principal of the Boston, Massachusetts-based Castle Group, sales contests are the most popular event marketed by incentive houses and “**travel is the top motivator.**” Incentive companies offer fabulous opportunities in the event planning business due to large budgets and the events tend to be large as well.

The **Society of Incentive and Travel Executives** (SITE) offers a variety of links and articles at their website. You can click the “Guest Access” link, or you can become a registered user of the site by completing a free registration process.

Society of Incentive and Travel Executives <http://www.site-intl.org>

Destination Management Companies

Destination management companies (DMCs) provide local event planning services for companies that want to hold an event in a different city. They essentially handle all the details once a group arrives at their destination. They are hired for their local knowledge and resources to plan **tours, meetings, conventions** and other events. These companies offer a variety of entry level job opportunities, ranging from sales to hosting tours.

The Association of Destination Management Executives has information on destination management opportunities and about what’s happening in the

business:

Association of Destination Management Executives <http://www.adme.org>

Other good sites with helpful information and links are the following: (destination Management Resources offers a directory that lists **hundreds** of destination management companies).

Global Events Partners <http://www.globaleventspartners.com>

Destination Management Resources

<http://www.dmc-net.com/cfmpages/search1.cfm>

Event Planning Firms

For variety and excitement, consider working for an established event planner. You'll learn the ropes from the ground up and gain valuable contacts.



You may find local event planning company listings through the phone directory (check the Yellow Pages under "event planners"), your local Chamber of Commerce, or by doing an Internet search for "**event planner**" and your city. Although there is no complete online directory of event planners, you can find some listed at:

International Special Events Society (ISES)

Click on **Find an Event Professional In Your Area** <http://www.ises.com>

A national event company to check into is PGI, Inc. voted as the Best DMC in 2004 at the Annual Planners' Best Bet Award, their clients include big guns such as Nestle,

Ford, IBM, and MetLife. They were founded in 1990, and in 2005 were acquired by TBA Global Events, although they plan to operate independently for the foreseeable future. They have 14 offices in the U.S. and 3 in Canada.

You can find contact information for each office at their website, or you can contact their corporate headquarters in Alexandria, VA at (703) 528-8484.

Click on **Locations** <http://www.pgi.com>

Marcia Bradley, General Manager of PGI in San Diego, has these words of advice

on breaking into the event planner business:

“Work at a destination management company (DMC) first. Giving events is only a fraction of what the business entails. Get into a DMC or event company any way you can. Then, make yourself invaluable so they will give you opportunities in all areas. Be an intern or receptionist or sales coordinator—whatever it takes. You’ve got to start somewhere and it’s an easy business to move ‘up’ in.”

Public Relation Firms

Many, but not all, public relations firms handle event planning. There is a difference between an “event” and a “publicity stunt.” So do not immediately assume that every PR firm out there handles events.

According to **Dianne Chase**, president of A La Carte PR, located in Charlotte, North Carolina, event planning within the PR industry really “runs the gamut.” Chase says that events could be anything from sponsoring a **public service project** such as a walk-a-thon to holding a **special event** for your clients.

You can find local public relations firms in the Yellow Pages (under “public relations”), by doing an Internet search for “**public relations agency**” or “**public relations firm**” and your city, or through a professional organization.

The **Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)** is the professional organization for U.S. public relations professionals, while the Canadian Public Relations Society is the national organization for Canadian public relations practitioners. Both organizations have chapters across the country.

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

<http://www.prsa.org>

Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS)

<http://www.cprs.ca>

Advertising Agencies

Ad agencies, similar to public relations firms, organize a variety of events for their clients. A typical event focuses on promoting a client’s products or services. Since some ad agencies only design and buy advertising, look for a “full service” advertising agency to find one that also plans events.

Like public relations agencies, you can find local advertising agencies in the Yellow Pages (under “advertising agencies”), by doing an Internet search for “**advertising agency**” and your city, or by getting involved with a professional organization.

American Association of Advertising Agencies <http://www.aaaa.org>

American Advertising Federation <http://www.aaf.org>

Institute of Communications and Advertising (Canada)

<http://www.ica-ad.com>

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