

INTERVIEWS WITH PLANNERS – SANDY SLOANE

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Interviews with Planners



Sandy Sloane has worked in special events, corporate communications, work-force training and development, team building, public relations, fundraising, media, and journalism. Utilizing her vast experience, her consultancy, Solutions by Sloane, helps companies grow their businesses via special events. She has also been a white-water river rafting guide, newspaper writer, occupational therapist, and even the owner of a singing telegram company!

Sloane has produced events for renowned companies including Comcast, Burger King, Walt Disney World, Macy's New York, NBC Universal, the Rochester Rhinos, Maxwell House Coffee, and many radio and television stations. She is equally comfortable working in the corporate, small business, and philanthropic worlds, creating custom solutions for all.

As a journalist, Sloane has written for The Miami Herald, The Sun-Sentinel, South Florida Parenting, Family Circle Magazine, The Democrat and Chronicle, and Rochester Magazine. She has authored and published four children's picture books and is currently completing "Eat, Drink, and Re-Marry" about her crazy dating stories. Graduating from Tufts University, Sloane has lived throughout the USA where she has produced hundreds of events for corporate clients and non-profit organizations. She currently resides in Rochester, NY and serves clients throughout the nation.

What is the best advice you have ever received as an event planner?

The best advice I have ever received is to expect the unexpected. Just because you have planned every single detail, that does not necessarily ensure things will unfold the way you are expecting. As the old Yiddish proverb states, "Man plans and God laughs." However, even though we cannot control what happens, we can control our reactions. By thinking about possibilities of what can go awry and always having a Plan B... and even a Plan C... we are better prepared to deal with any issues that inevitably will come up at our events.

What is the most unique location you have ever planned an event at?

What was great, what was challenging?

Planning several mobile events (Amazing Race style or Scavenger Hunts) for corporations and private groups was very challenging because of the many moving parts: traffic, limos, weather, cooperation of locations, and timing are all potential issues. But when everything comes together, there is no better feeling. Being prepared with written details for every group of participants is vital to ensuring success.

What advice would you give to someone entering the event planning business today?

Everyone is a potential contact and every location is a potential event venue. Be kind and respectful to everyone and always be helpful to others because one day, they will be helpful to you. Use your phone to jot down notes and ideas everywhere because they often turn into your next inspiration for a great event!

What do you see as the most challenging aspect of being an event planner, and how do you overcome that challenge?

The most challenging aspect of being an event planner is time management. I have juggled as many as 6 huge events at a time and have had them all come off flawlessly. Being organized is the key to success. I keep individual, color coded notebooks for every event and update them constantly. This method allows me to keep track of the minutiae that has the potential to derail events.

How do you think the event planning industry will evolve in the next five years?

Events are becoming more active and hands on than they have been in the past. Instead of passively watching a show, guests want to be part of the action. One of the most memorable events I have done was turning the tables on the guests and having them perform on stage, complete with a script, costumes, and musical numbers with their performances being taped! Or having a cooking class with a famous chef where the guests get to prepare their own dinners and then feast on their creations.

What makes you successful as an event planner?

Besides remaining calm through almost any challenge, I am very resourceful and know where to find just about anything. Having worked in a variety of industries during the past 30 years, my experience and my contacts help me get things done on a daily basis. Even more importantly, I know what I don't know and don't try to do everything. I am very willing to ask for help, as well as to give it!

In your opinion, what is the best and worst industry trend of the year?

BEST: I love the way more conferences are building fun free time activities into attendees' schedules. This gives them a chance to get to know others while bonding over shared passions and relaxing so they are more energized for the structured sessions.

WORST: I am not a fan of virtual sessions during conferences. Although these are being done more often as a cost cutting measure to give more people the chance to "attend" sessions, there is nothing like personal, one on one interactions.

What is the best industry book that has helped you as an event planner?

Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable, is a book that applies to every industry and I cite it constantly. The premise is to be remarkable and therefore memorable. I make sure every event I produce is one that gets the buzz started and keeps it going long after my guests have gone home.

What is the one tool or item you can't live without on a daily basis as you go about your event planning job?

My phone and color-coded notebooks.



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