

## ORCHESTRATING EVENTS

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THE DAYS OF PLANNING YOUR OWN EVENTS ARE PAST. PROFESSIONAL EVENT MANAGEMENT FIRMS HAVE TAKEN OVER, AND HOW! IN FACT, HAVING MOVED BEYOND PARTIES AND FASHION SHOWS, EVENT MANAGEMENT IS NOW PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN THE CORPORATE ARENA TOO. **MANISHA DHINGRA** CHRONICLES THE CHANGING FACE OF THIS CHALLENGING CAREER

BIRTHDAY parties and weddings are ‘work as usual’. The latest development is organising mega events such as B2B seminars, dealers’ meet, road shows, exhibitions, international sports and cricketing events, awards ceremonies, wine or book launches...you name it and they deliver. Goes without saying then that event managers today are in great demand.

The numbers speak for themselves. If Kolkata-based Rajesh Kishanpuria, Chief Strategist, Ideazfirst Consulting, is to be believed, the sector boasts an annual turnover of Rs 5,000 crores in India alone! And this is apart from an annual growth rate of 20 per cent. Clearly, this is not something one can ignore - even in today’s media-saturated times.

### UPSWING

For a career that requires one to make things work like clockwork, event management wasn’t such a big deal a few years ago. Up until the mid-90s, there would be no special team for handling corporate events such as trade fairs, product launches, et al. It was only when these events began to be seen as a way of creating a brand identity that large organisations woke up to the need for specialised professionals. Now, the scenario is such that some have gone so far as to create permanent in-house departments to take care of the same.

All this means boom time for those who jumped on to the bandwagon as it was picking up speed. Among them is Gurgaon-based H Rajesh who, a couple of years after having stepped into the field, has quit his nine-to-six job to start his own event management firm. “I completed a one-year Diploma in Event Management while I was still working as a bank receptionist,” Rajesh confides, adding, “I enrolled a few of my friends as partners in the venture and though we are yet to formally announce our presence in the market, I’m very positive that the concept will do well. After all, there is a lot of untapped potential out there. There is room for everyone.”

### TOEING THE NEW LINE

Reminisces Bharath Sankar, CEO of Chennai's IMI Eventz, "Earlier, companies would only focus on above-the-line marketing which meant spending on traditional mass media such as television, radio and print advertising, among others. Of late, however, there's a sense of wanting to reach out to customers and provide a complete interactive experience." Sankar cites the example of a mobile phone brand that wished to allow potential customers to experience its crystal-clear voice quality. They organised a road show to facilitate such a one-to-one encounter and "met with tremendous success."

Deepak Choudhary, Managing Director, Event Management Development Institute (EMDI), Mumbai, seconds this. "Below-the-line activities such as organising special events and promotions never received the attention they deserved. Companies would earmark only around ten to 15 per cent of their promotion budget for events, which has recently leaped to as high as 40 per cent in some cases," he elaborates.

## DIVISION OF LABOUR

For those wanting to make a career in the field, there are primarily three options to choose from (some companies, though, have four or more departments). "The Creative department comes up with new and innovative ideas or properties," shares Choudhary, adding, "Marketing goes about raising funds and finding sponsors for the events, Production/ Operations/ Logistics looks after the nittygritties and executes all the plans Creative comes up with."

At IMI Eventz, for instance, "We have a Business Development department which represents our company to clients," says Sankar. "The Event Planning department comes up with a comprehensive strategic plan for the event. Here, we generally look for people with an MBA in Marketing or Sales since they need to have a clear understanding of the market conditions and match these with what the client demands. Many of the employees are also constantly involved in market research so that they can stay in tune with the latest in the business. The Operations department is full of people who know how to deliver under tremendous pressure. They execute all the procedures, right from sending out invitations to lighting to stall designing to finding the right technicians – everything!" he exclaims.

Besides these, there are a number of professionals involved in creative designing (both print and production), human resources and finance as well.

## TRAINING TIMES

You can head for a course in event management armed with just a Bachelor's degree or a class 12 'pass' certificate. There are many part-time diploma and certificate courses which are easy to balance alongside a full-time job or your regular Bachelor's or Master's degree.

Be that as it may, Sankar still does not lay much emphasis on completing a degree or a diploma from an event management institute, believing instead in the value of on-the-job learning.

Choudhary, however, points out the experience factor as being crucial to the making of a good event manager. "Theoretical learning is not of much use here. It is practical

exposure that counts a lot – which is exactly what most event management institutes offer through interaction with industry professionals, opportunities to assist them on live events, etc,” he says.

Kishanpuria, meanwhile, roots for different qualifications for employees from different departments: “For Client Servicing, an MBA with marketing specialization is preferred. A 2D/ 3D graphics designer would be perfect for the Creative department, while a B.Com degree is a must for those wishing to work in the Finance department, and so on.” He feels that an event management degree helps candidates understand the basics of any assignment, which helps during the planning stage.

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

Experts agree that confidence and excellent communication skills go a long way in event management. In addition, knowledge of branding and advertising, creativity, capacity for teamwork, out-of-the-box thinking, extraordinary powers of observation, leadership and networking abilities as well as strong analytical skills are other in-demand traits of a prospective event manager.

## EMERGING HORIZONS

“Exciting opportunities exist in the television and radio media, with over 100 TV channels and a growing number of FM stations already making their presence felt. Each TV channel hosts game shows, dance events, fashion events, singing competitions, awards ceremonies, etc, which was not prevalent even about three years ago. All of these mean even more business for this growing industry,” Kishanpuria concludes.

## INSTITUTES (INDICATIVE LISTING):

COLLEGE OF EVENT & MANAGEMENT (COEM), PUNE  
([HTTP://COEMINDIA.COM](http://COEMINDIA.COM))

PG Diploma in Event Management  
Diploma in Event Management  
Special Diploma in Event Management

INSTITUTE OF TOURISM & FUTURE MANAGEMENT TRENDS (ITFT),  
CHANDIGARH ([WWW.ITFTINDIA.COM](http://WWW.ITFTINDIA.COM))

PG Diploma in Event Management and Conference  
Three-month Certificate Course in Conference and Event Management (correspondence)

EVENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (EMDI), BANDRA,  
MUMBAI ([WWW.EMDIWORLD.COM](http://WWW.EMDIWORLD.COM)). BRANCHES IN PUNE AND BANGALORE

Post Graduate Diploma in Event Management & Public Relations (PGDEMPR)  
Post Graduate Diploma in Event Management (PGDEM)

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR EVENT MARKETING & MANAGEMENT  
(ICEM), NEW DELHI ([WWW.IEMINDIA.COM](http://WWW.IEMINDIA.COM))

Six-month, part-time Certificate course in Event Marketing and Management

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA STUDIES, AHMEDABAD  
([WWW.NIFMS.COM](http://WWW.NIFMS.COM))

12-month, part-time Diploma in Event Management (DEM)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EVENT MANAGEMENT (NIEM),  
MUMBAI([WWW.NIEMINDIA.COM](http://WWW.NIEMINDIA.COM)) BRANCHES IN PUNE AND HYDERABAD

11-month, part-time Diploma in Event Management (DEM)

11-month, part-time PG Diploma in Event Management (PGDEM)

PG Diploma in Advertising, Media and Event Management (PGDAME)