

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR PLANNING
THE BEST **CORPORATE EVENT**
IN TORONTO ■ ■ ■ ■ ■





Toronto's seen a burst in popularity over the last decade as a hot-spot destination for entertainment and business. The city's growing entertainment scene combined with its corporate demeanor has created the perfect balance of creativity and professionalism.

With the city evolving into a cultural hub on the global stage, companies are focusing their attention on Toronto. Whether it's a summit, corporate getaway, product launch or something as simple as an ice-breaking cocktail reception, event planners across the city are hosting events for high-end corporate clients.

If you're a corporate social event planner or coordinator for your company, you'll want to use this guide as a reference for your next event!

We've collaborated with 9 of Toronto's premier event planners to provide you with tips on throwing the best corporate event for your company that will surely leave a lasting impression on your guests!

We've consulted experts in large-scale planning, to event design, to staffing agencies, so that we could provide you with this informative reference guide.



MONICA GOMEZ

www.theconciergeclub.ca



Monica Gomez founded The Concierge Club in 2011 and has quickly established the company as one of Toronto's premier staffing and event management leaders. Her entrepreneurial spirit and focus on excellence has allowed her company to quickly become the go-to resource for big brands across a wide variety of industries. Monica and her team at The Concierge Club specialize in Event Planning, Event Production, Corporate Event Staffing, Promotional Models, Brand Ambassadors & Service Staff.

What are the most important things to consider when selecting a venue for a corporate social event?

The most important thing would be to know your attendees. If this is a corporate crowd you would want to find something close to the financial district or King West is a great choice!

Based on your feedback from previous clients, what do you think makes the most memorable impression from an event?

We always get praised for our decor ideas and entertainment. You want to make sure the event has "social media worthy" components and leaves guests talking about it for a long time. It's like the [Justin Bieber event](#) that we did, we had everything from superheroes, live animals, fire performers to opera singers. Every corner of the event had something happening. As if that wasn't enough, Justin hopped on the piano to play a few songs and danced with guests into the late-night hours.

What is it about a client that makes you happy to work with them?

It's not the organization that impresses me, it's the people that impress me. We are all about good energy at my agency and if something isn't jiving well then we walk away. Money isn't worth being stressed out for – you need to love what you do!



LYNZIE KENT

www.lovebylynzie.com



Lynzie Kent has been involved with Event Planning for over 15 years and has established her team as a premier company in Toronto's wedding and event planning industry. She specializes in weddings, event design & activations. When she's not running around the city planning events, you can find her on-stage singing for [Electric Blonde!](#)

What advice do you have for someone who is coordinating their company's quarterly or year-end social?

I would suggest that they strongly focus on the guest experience. I think, honestly, that is where an event's success begins and ends. A seamless guest experience that is comfortable for your attendees and makes them feel warm and welcome the entire time, that's number one.

Second, most people have been to so many events that they've become almost used to them. So, you need to find a way to associate the brand with an experience. That's how you create a successful event.

What are some things that people forget about when creating a budget for their event?

I think people are always surprised by the cost of floral and décor. Considering we live in Canada, the majority of our floral is imported. So, subtle costs like that catch people off guard.

Another one is rentals. Bringing simple items such as glassware and utensils adds up and is often overlooked on budgets.

There's also landmark fees which is essentially a fee charged by the venue to bring in rental & catering services that you'll need for an event. This fee goes toward the additional cost to the venue for additional labour and the managing that's involved when collaborating with external contractors. Sometimes it's completely necessary...but sometimes it's unreasonable. Either way it's something that can't be avoided and needs to be considered.



EMILY LYONS

www.femme fatale media.com

Femme fatale
PROMOTIONS & MEDIA

Emily Lyons is a Toronto-based entrepreneur who founded Femme Fatale Media. Her company has become a leader in North America for event staffing and brand ambassadors, teaming up with recognized global brands like MTV, Calvin Klein, Warner Bros., Playboy, Sony & Budweiser.

How can event staff create an exceptional guest experience during an event?

Our clients have always loved articulate, energetic brand ambassadors and promotional models! While food and gift bags can make a marginal impact on the minds of guests, it's ultimately people – whether brand ambassadors, corporate event staff, and so on – that make the most lasting, most memorable impression.

What tip would you give to someone planning an event such as a product launch or a cocktail reception, for the first time?

Be very clear on who your target audience is. A lot of first-time event planners try to cater to everyone and make the event appealing to as many people as possible (this is especially true for product launches). Instead, tailor the event to the most relevant audience; your event is much more likely to be a success if you do that.

What is one of the most important things to focus on during the live operation of an event?

Most people overlook how difficult communicating with third parties can be. While logistical nightmares might suddenly pop up, or something unexpected might happen to your anticipated event venue – all of these can be worked around with a sufficiently motivated and tactical team. However, failing to communicate properly with guest attendees (in social media, website copy, promotions, and so on) can completely upend the event; and the same is true when communicating with a client for whom you are planning the event. Clear communication is absolutely critical, but most people overlook the importance of this in event planning.

What's important to keep in mind when planning an event?

Location is of exceptional importance, as this determines how easy it is for guests to arrive at the event; situating an event far from basic accommodations (such as hotels), for instance, may not be suitable for an event that attracts a large number of out-of-city professionals.



DIANA PIRES

www.trulyyoursplanning.com



Diana Pires is the Founder and Creative Director at Truly Yours Planning. After making the decision to invest in her own business full-time in 2011, her business has taken off and Diana and her Truly Yours team are among some of the most in-demand planning teams in the city.

What do people often overlook when planning an event?

The Overall Experience; events should be memorable. You want your guests to talk about your event and host another one soon. Not too many people know how to do that, and when they do it's an event they will remember for a life time, and when they don't it's an event they will forget the very next day. Keep that in mind when planning an event. Make it memorable for the client, spend time on

brainstorming ideas, creating a vision board and draw a story board that illustrates from beginning to end.

What do you think is the most difficult event for a company's social to coordinate?

Networking Event - The only reason I mention a Networking event, is I feel it is only successful when 85% of guests engage in conversation and network with one another. I find that anyone whom is hosting a networking event should come up with creative ideas to get the conversation rolling between different groups of people. A successful networking event includes great conversation between people whom have never chatted together.

What should a planner do to make a great first impression at an event to their guests?

A great entrance sets the tone for an amazing event: valet service, welcoming beverages & gift bags. Great food circulation & beverage circulation - guests do not want to hunt for food, they want it to come directly to them, so ensuring the service is on point is very important!

What should an event planner focus on when planning a corporate event?

Focus on representation of the brand. Understand the brand and the expectations of the company; know who you are working for and ensure you keep all the elements that make them unique transpire into an amazing event they will be happy with.



JACQUELINE MARSON

www.uniqhospitality.ca



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Jacqueline Marson is one of Toronto's busiest event planners who is constantly putting together exciting, memorable events for her clients. Jacqueline's attention to detail has gained her a reputation for being one of the most sought-after event planners in Toronto!

If there were two things you could tell a new event planner when it comes to picking a venue, what two aspects would you tell them to focus on?

Guest demographic and the occasion for the event are two important aspects when selecting a venue. Some want a party, some want a soiree, and some may just need a quiet space for a presentation-led meeting. Whatever the occasion, it's crucial that you first consider the group and the reason for the event before selecting the right venue.

Name the first thing an Event Planner needs to consider when putting together an event.

The very first thing a person should do is establish their maximum budget. A close second would be to establish the must-haves of the event, to determine how feasible their budget really is. This could be their date (Fridays are always more expensive!) or it could be a brand activation that's non-negotiable. Once these things are considered, it's easy to make amendments and refocus.

What makes you excited when working with a client?

I love working with clients who have a specific event vision. It allows us to get creative together and really delve deep into the experiential possibilities.