



EVENT ACADEMY

The Essential Guide to a Career in Event Management

Considering a Career in Events and want to know more? Then read our essential guide.



Contents

Introduction	3
How to Get into Event Management	4
Diversity and opportunity in the events industry	5
The question is: how to get started?	6
1. Volunteering	7
2. Getting the right event management qualification	8
3. Event industry placements	9
4. Networking	10
5. Use your transferable skills	11
6. Put your personality to work	12
Make a start today	13
What Are Your Career Prospects In Event Management?	14
What skills do event managers need?	15
Where could I work? Sectors and employers	16
1. Event management agencies	17
2. The corporate path	18
3. Festivals, culture, music and fashion	19
4. Make a difference: work for a charity	20
5. Sporting Events	21
6. Weddings and Private Parties	22
7. Entrepreneurs: your own events business	23
Next Steps	24
Attend an Open Evening	24
The student experience: find out more	24
What happens after your course?	24
The future is bright	24
Event Academy Open Evenings	25

Introduction

Thank you for downloading The Essential Guide to a Career in Event Management. Like many people we speak to, you may be unsure what event management actually is, or whether it is the right career path for you. We hope that our guide will help make things clearer.

You may be in a situation where you're thinking "What will I do after college?" Or maybe you've been out of education for a while and are looking for the next step on a new career path. This Essential Guide will offer you the advice you need, whatever your background.

There are now more ways than ever to qualify for a career in Event Management with our CIM accredited courses. We're really proud that 92% of our students find work in the event industry within 6 months of graduation: **do take a look at our course offering.**

Regards,

Lorne Armstrong
MD. The Event Academy

How to Get into Event Management

“It took me 10 years of false starts and distractions before I finally made my way into the event industry.”

To be fair I didn't even know that the events business existed when I left university. If it did no one in the careers office let on. Instead, I dabbled in TV production and script writing, even made some wildlife documentaries before getting a proper job in 'corporate communications'. But it wasn't until I had a chance encounter with an old friend that I found myself as part of a management team in a new live events business. From one week to the next my career changed. I've now been involved with events for over 20 years and I've loved every crazy, creative minute of it.

My route to a career in events is not unique. I know that if you were to speak with other leaders in the events industry their stories will be the same. They didn't plan to be in events. They certainly didn't qualify or train to be in events. One

thing led to another and now they find themselves running a leading venue/festival/corporate agency/wedding planning business/sports management company... How?

Sadly the rambling route that some of us took into the events world is probably over. There are still random connections and opportunities to be made, but the industry has matured beyond chance and nepotism. What worked 10 or even 5 years ago is not a route that event job seekers can safely follow in 2017. There are now defined career paths within established networks. There are qualifications to be acquired and entry level training courses to be experienced... not surprising considering that the events industry is the UK's 15th largest employer, bringing in £50bn of direct spend over 5 years to the economy



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However, despite the opportunities and pathways available, many trying to break into the events industry find themselves stuck in a 'hospitality backwater'. You may find some seasonal work but struggle to make the move into a job in the main body of the events world. It's a big jump from running a club night to designing and delivering a corporate brand engagement experience.

The good news is that there are some formal tried and tested routes into a career in events if that is your ambition.

Diversity and opportunity in the events industry

The events business is a complex and broad-backed beast. Many outsiders only see the industry from one perspective. Over half of the students coming onto our courses are set on

getting into a specific sector, such as weddings or corporate. Within a few weeks, however, many change their minds, as they begin to understand the endless opportunities out there. Within Europe alone there are an estimated 10 million people employed in creating and delivering live experiences. There are 2 million in the US, and many of the 'emerging' economies are growing their events services exponentially.

From fashion show to festival, from sporting event to wedding, from charity ball to corporate roadshow, from party planner to venue manager, from producer to creative, from techie to luvvy... there is almost unlimited variety in the events industry once you are qualified and have enough experience.

The question is: how to get started?

You know you've got a passion for events. Maybe you've organised a party, wedding or charity fundraiser and totally loved the whole experience.

Maybe you're even working in the industry - hospitality, music, a venue - but can't figure out how to turn a job into a career.

Or maybe you've finished school and / or university and are slowly realising that being stuck at a desk just isn't you. You want something with energy, creativity and variety.

How, though, can you get a foot in the door? The event industry is now bigger and more complex than ever.



We recommend six essential strategies:

1. Volunteering

Volunteering is key to your success as an event manager. From your perspective, you'll learn which part of the industry is (or is not) for you. From an employer's perspective, you'll have essential experience and impressive references.

As you may already have realised, however, quality opportunities aren't all that easy to source. The advantage of choosing an Event Academy course is that we use our extensive industry networks to offer a range of high

quality volunteer positions. You won't be exploited; you will meet the movers and shakers of the industry; and you will add skill after skill to your CV.

Volunteering can also be a lot of fun, of course. For example, each year we send a group of students to The Brits. Not only do they notch up experience of a huge live global event, they also literally rub shoulders with celebs, rock stars and music business royalty.





2. Getting the right event management qualification

These days having a qualification is pretty much essential to set you apart from the competition. Getting a good one under your belt is likely to save you years stuck in lower-level roles because you lack the right skills and networks.

There are many different training routes to choose from, and many different suppliers. The available qualifications usually split into the following levels:

- Certificate – Level 3, the equivalent to A level.
- Diploma – Level 4
- Degree – Level
- Postgraduate – Level 7 (note, you won't always need a degree for a 'postgraduate' course).



How, though, do you choose the right course? Here are some questions you'll need to answer:

- Am I looking for a **hands-on course**, or would I prefer a more theoretical approach?
- **Who accredits the course** and are they credible?
- **Budget:** what's the very best course that I can afford?
- Does the course offer high quality **volunteering** opportunities?
- Will the course provide me with an industry **placement**?
- Who will be teaching me? The best courses will be taught by **lecturers who are high achievers** in the industry.
- **Flexibility** – do I need a course that will work around a current job or caring responsibilities? Are there online options?
- Alumni / current students – can I meet them? Are credible, **positive course reviews** available?
- **Responsiveness** – when you make contact, are all your questions answered? Do you get a sense of enthusiasm and dynamism? Your intuition can be very important.

At the Event Academy we give you the full range of courses and options, all of which are accredited by the CIM. You can take a look at some of our course reviews [here](#). For other lists of courses check out [findcourses](#) and [prospects](#) online.

3. Event industry placements

A great route into the events business is through a placement or an internship. Placements allow you to get a really good insight into an events business, but more importantly they also allow the business to get a really good look at you.

Placements are a real strength of our Postgraduate and Degree Alternative courses.

We work hard to get to know each individual student as they progress through their course. Once we understand what sort of role and organisation will suit their skills and

experience, we carefully match them to one of over 500 companies that we have working relationships with.

The effectiveness of our placements is illustrated by the fact that over 80% of them lead to an offer of full-time work.

Our students have secured jobs with some of the most prestigious event businesses around including Netjets, First Protocol, The Department, Jack Morton, GPJ, Imagination, Rhubarb and Quintessentially, to name just a few. See the video.





4. Networking

Every event professional has their 'black book' of industry contacts. If you don't make it into anyone's black book, it will be tough to achieve the career you dream of. Don't be afraid of networking: it's just about making sure your own personal story gets heard, and that the people who matter know about you.

Our top tips for networking:

- Volunteering - the crucial starting-point for your industry network.
- Placements - employers get a good long look at your skills, talent and enthusiasm.
- Build a strong LinkedIn profile and use social media to build a personal brand online.
- Attend events: you'll learn a lot at industry events like Confex, for example.
- Your peers will be your future network: get to know them and their skill base.
- Get to know and stay in touch with your course lecturers; and make the most of your school's alumni network
- Be creative and fearless: approach 'important people' and introduce yourself and your story.
- Practice an 'elevator pitch'. Can you describe your skills and goals in 30 seconds?
- Ask questions: if you struggle with the idea of networking, a good approach can be to focus on asking questions and learning something from everyone you meet. This takes the onus off you slightly, and you'll find that you get remembered, as everyone loves a good listener!

5. Use your transferable skills

If you're currently working in another industry, or if you've just emerged from a long period of academic study, you'll have transferable skills. It's important to identify them, put them to use, and make sure you can highlight them to employers.

Valuable transferable skills might come from:

- Your education: graduates have lots to offer. School-leavers might also have studied relevant subject areas.
- Current job and experience
- Previous jobs and experience
- Voluntary roles
- Hobbies and social events

To give you an example, one of our most successful alumni started out her career as a teacher and a volunteer Girl Guide leader. When she made her big career leap into event management, she brought with her leadership skills, the confidence learnt standing in front of a classroom for years, plus loads of experience organising trips, student shows, events, team-building exercises and fundraisers.

All of this, plus her knowledge of child safety and risk management, gave her a number of ready-made areas of expertise which employers leapt on. It's certainly worth considering how your own experience can enhance your career prospects in event management.



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6. Put your personality to work

Whatever you have in the way of skills and experience, it's also worth remembering that these won't enhance your career in event management unless you have certain personal qualities too.

You'll need to be confident in:

- Meeting, greeting and communicating with people;
- Creative thinking and communicating ideas;
- Negotiating and problem solving;

Of course, you'll notice that the common thread here is communication.

A job in events is essentially a job with people from all walks of life. The better you are with people, the better your career prospects.





Make a start today

The event industry is thriving – employers are crying out for skilled event professionals. Your options are many: just focus on your skills, your passion, your experiences, and make a start! And if you'd like a friendly career chat, we're always at hand.

It can be easy to overthink life's big decisions (which definitely include starting or changing your career). If you're feeling a bit overwhelmed, here are some practical ways to start making your events career a reality:

- Do your own event, however small. You will learn the most from your mistakes.
- Research and choose a recognised accredited qualification/training (the best you can afford)
- Start a blog or vlog about your passion for events and your developing industry experience. This will help crystallise your thinking and importantly, stand out from the crowd.
- Use social media to build your personal brand and your professional network.
- Build a creative CV and target your search.

What Are Your Career Prospects In Event Management?

Event management is a boom industry. It is currently one of the biggest employers in the UK:

- The industry is worth around **£42.3bn** to the UK economy
- It supports **570 thousand** full-time jobs
- In 2018, **67%** of event professionals expect growth on 2017 (according to Eventbrite research)
- **57%** of event professionals expect to hold more events in 2018 than in 2017.

You'll also want to research your earning prospects as an events professional. As with any sector, event management salaries vary between companies,

but generally starting salaries in the events industry range from £15,000 to £23,000 for events assistants, although event managers in specialist fields can command salaries from £24,000 to £28,000 depending on experience.

You should also consider that in a growth industry like events, promotion prospects are excellent. Those who succeed in specialist fields and remain in the industry for over 10 years are likely to progress quickly, earning great salaries that average £54,000 per annum.





What skills do event managers need?

The event industry is changing fast. Today's event managers need to master an ever-increasing range of skills and responsibilities. The following are just some of the huge variety of tasks you might be given:

- Creating original ideas and experiences
- Sourcing venues, equipment, entertainment
- Staying on trend with event technology
- Publicity, promotion, marketing, PR
- Social media and digital marketing
- Pitching and presenting to clients and stakeholders
- Timetabling and planning events, project management.
- Measuring whether an event was successful
- Financial management: budgets and negotiation
- Health and safety; insurance and risk management.

As you start out on your career, you'll find that you're a natural at some of these tasks, while others leave you a bit cold. You'll need to nail the basics, but after that many event professionals carve out brilliant careers by specialising in a particular niche - like event technology, marketing, venue sourcing - while others define themselves by sector - weddings, corporate, festivals etc.

**The event industry
is changing fast.**

Where could I work? Sectors and employers

Once you've decided a career in event management is for you, take a moment to research the key sectors and high profile companies in the industry.

Event management applies to almost every sector you can think of. You may find a job in an events agency, which can be a fantastic way to establish your name and expertise in the industry (**take a look at some of the event**

management agencies where our Postgraduate students have done work placements). Or you might follow your passion to work in sporting events, charity fundraising or in culture or music.

Following is a brief guide to key sectors and employers in the event industry, with links to resources that will help you plan your career journey.



Sectors and employers:

1. Event management agencies

Working in an agency is an exciting way to develop as an event professional, fast. Agencies will give you experience of a range of clients and roles, and you'll quickly build your skills base and your network of contacts.

Event agencies are huge players in the national economy: did you know, according to Eventbrite, that the top ten UK agencies have a turnover of over £3.5bn?

Agencies vary in their specialisation and expertise. Some focus on weddings; others on the corporate sector; others on exhibition and trade. Some are small, bespoke and friendly; others are large companies where you can rapidly make a name for yourself.

It's a great idea to familiarise yourself with some of the big-name agencies. Get a working idea of how they operate and how they brand themselves. Here are some of the best to get you started (we have offered **student placements** at all of these agencies to students on our postgrad course):

- **Clarion Events**
- **Jack Morton**
- **WRG**
- **GSP**



2. The corporate path

The days of bored office workers staring at Powerpoint slides are definitely over. Corporate events can actually be some of the most cutting-edge, experimental and innovative, especially when it comes to event technology.

Working in the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions) field is great if you're creative, deadline-focused, good at research, strong on verbal and written communication, and great at client relations.

Corporate work can sound dull, but many of our students hone in on this sector when they start to understand the

scope for travel, responsibility, career progression and creativity (especially where big client budgets are involved).

Here are some starting points if this is something you'd like to know more about:

- [Event Academy blog on working as a conference producer](#)
- [Banks Sadler](#)
- [Ashfield Meetings and Events](#)
- [Adoreum](#)



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3. Festivals, culture, music and fashion

Many of our students share a love of music, festivals, theatre, culture or fashion: they want to turn this passion into a career. This need not remain a dream: these are growing areas of the industry. In 2015, for example, an astonishing 27.7 million people attended British music events.

Career paths are many, but might include starting out as an event assistant, becoming a venue manager, progressing to directing festivals, becoming an event PR specialist, or developing expertise in event technology.

Of course, volunteering is an essential aspect of your career journey in this sector. Luckily, it's also likely to be great fun! Volunteering is the only way to develop your network of contacts and your understanding of the kinds of roles out there.

Take a look at some of these websites and resources: they're a great indication of the variety of career options in this part of the industry. The Event Academy has offered placements and / or volunteering opportunities at all the events listed here.

- **Event Academy blog: becoming a festival director**
- **John Empson, MAMA Festivals Director, on succeeding in the music festival sector**
- **Wilderness Festival**
- **The Byline Festival**
- **Event Academy blog: finding work at London Fashion Week**
- **Josef Jammerbund, Event Academy lecturer, on teaching London Fashion Week**
- **Event Academy blog: becoming a music venue manager**
- **Secret Cinema**
- **The BRITs Awards**

4. Make a difference: work for a charity

Charities are increasingly competing for donors and for publicity. Your skills will be in demand if you can bring a creative, energetic approach to fundraising events. According to EventBrite, the number of charitable fundraising events has increased by 700% since 2007, and participant numbers have doubled.

With experience, you can expect to earn a good salary as a charity event manager - [see our blog](#).

Working in this sector you'll master campaign management, volunteer management, reporting, the ability to generate a stream of creative new ideas, budgeting, press and PR and potentially corporate strategy too.

Here are some useful links if you think this sector might be for you:

- [The UK's 25 biggest fundraising events](#)
- [10 Unique, Unusual and Fantastic Fundraising Ideas](#)
- [Macmillan Coffee Mornings](#)
- [Save the Children Christmas Jumper day](#)
- [Breast Cancer Care Pink Ribbon Walk](#)

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5. Sporting Events

If you love sport, this is one of the most exciting and challenging careers you'll find. The Olympics, the city marathons, Wembley Stadium: they all need big teams of skilled and professional event managers.

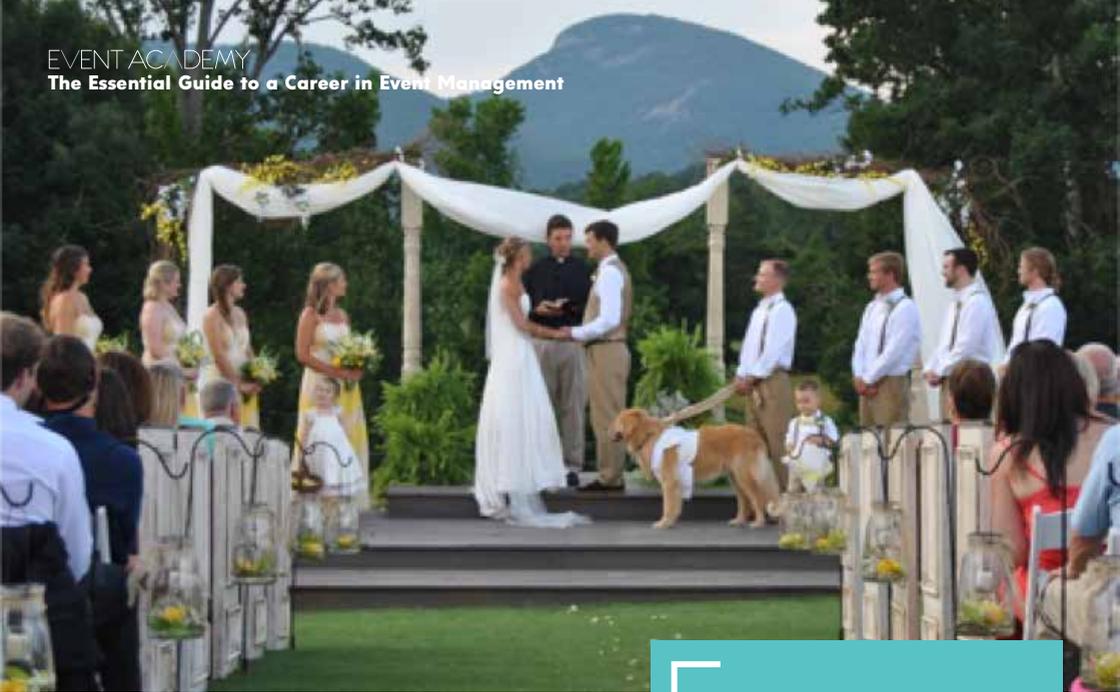
Build your skill set, and you'll command an impressive salary: successful sports event consultants can earn over £51,000 a year, and senior events and operations managers over £74,000 according to [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com).

You'll need a natural capacity for logistics, communication and planning. You'll master risk management, marketing, procurement and event tech. Of course, a passion for sport is also an essential.

Here are some starting points for further research:

- [Event Academy blog on becoming a sports event coordinator](#)
- [Synergy Sports and Entertainment Marketing](#)
- [CSM Sports and Entertainment Agency](#)
- [M&C Saatchi Sport and Entertainment](#)
- [Virgin Money London Marathon](#)





6. Weddings and Private Parties

Are you always the life of the party (in a good way)? Are you the go-to person when someone has a hen or stag do to organise? You might be perfect for a role as a wedding or party planner.

This is a lucrative sector of the UK event industry. In 2017, 17% of all couples getting married had over 100 guests at their weddings (confetti.co.uk). These large, big-budget weddings are increasingly where professional wedding planners are being hired.

To be successful at running weddings and private parties, you'll be strong on budgeting skills and client management. You'll have that knack for translating someone's very personal wedding or party vision into a manageable and beautiful reality on the day. You'll also need great logistics and scheduling skills, and a strong network of quality, affordable suppliers such as photographers, caterers and venues.

In 2017, 17% of all couples getting married had over 100 guests at their weddings.

Here are some starting points for further research:

- [Event Academy blog on becoming a party planner](#)
- [The Bespoke Wedding Co](#)
- [The Proposers](#)
- [The booming UK industry in Indian weddings \(Business Insider\)](#)
- [The best party planners in London \(Evening Standard\)](#)



7. Entrepreneurs: your own events business

Being your own boss, realising a dream, building a brand with your own unique talents. In the digital age, entrepreneurs are increasingly celebrated, and can be found across all demographics.

Sadly, 70% of start-up event businesses either fold or dissolve within their first 3 years. Starting your own business is risky, stressful and just very, very difficult. Not only will you need an amazing set of event management skills; you'll also need a separate group of skills in setting up and running a business.

If this is really what you want to do, however, you need to give yourself the best possible chance. We would advise at least 2-3 years of industry experience before striking out alone. Consider running a 'side hustle' alongside your

main job: test out your idea before going for broke. And crucially, arm yourself with a really strong qualification at degree or postgraduate level. Here are some resources if you're keen to know more:

- [10 Startup Founders share their best pieces of advice \(The Muse\)](#)
- [Starting a Successful Side Project \(Fast Company\)](#)
- [23 Event Startups To Watch This Spring \(Event Manager Blog\)](#)
- [The Business Startup Show, London](#)

Next steps

We hope our Essential Guide answered lots of questions for you. Of course, if you now feel strongly that this is the career for you, it may actually have raised many more! Here are some ideas if you'd like to take the next step:

Attend an Open Evening

If you do have further questions, you may want to come along to one of our **regular Open Evenings** for prospective students. These are informal, fun events where you can chat with course directors, lecturers and current students in person.

If you can't make it to London, **follow our Facebook page**, as we are now live-streaming Open Evenings via Facebook Live. Take a look, too, at some of the most **common questions** asked about events education at our Open Evenings.

The student experience: find out more

Don't miss **this video** on a typical day in the life of an Event Academy student: you'll get current students' thoughts on our courses, and you'll also see some of the amazing venues and events that are crucial to our experiential learning approach.

Seeking out the views of current students and recent graduates is definitely key to choosing the right events course for you. Take a look at our **course review page** and also **this blog** by our Postgraduate student Jen Trevorrow. We love Jen's positive approach and impressive work ethic:

'My advice for aspiring event professionals would be to work really hard and be prepared to leave your ego at the door. Whether you have a professional background or not, everyone is equal. The person with least experience could end up being most successful, and serve as a useful contact down the line. Also, volunteer as much as possible as you could meet a future employer that way.'

What happens after your course?

Your event industry qualification is about much more than the weeks or months you spend studying with us. After graduating, you will join our alumni: a network of over 2,000 former students who are out there working in the industry.

As an alumni you will also have ongoing access to all of our volunteering, internship and job opportunities, our LinkedIn alumni network, and our regular alumni events.

If you'd like to see our alumni in action, **check out this video** of our recent networking event at l'Escargot in London. You'll hear about some of the impressively successful careers our recent students have already launched (many with their placement partners). You can also visit our **alumni page**.

The future is bright

We wish you the very best of luck with your future and your career. If you do join the ranks of the UK's event professionals, we promise you that your life will be busier than you can imagine; you will be challenged at every turn, but you will most certainly never be bored!



EVENT ACADEMY

Event Academy Open Evenings

We'd love to see you there!

[Book your space](#)

We would love to hear from you,
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