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Making An Event Soar – Creating Las Vegas

Theme Development for “A Night on the Strip™” Designed and Produced by Skye N. Griffith, CFEE, Skyline Talent & Events

In our last article we explored the many details to consider when selecting a venue or location for an event.. The venue is one of the fixed elements that combines with the event’s *purpose* to form its context.

The purpose portion of context is basically the *reason* for an event, such as an employee recognition party, or celebrating a holiday like the Fourth of July. Purpose combines with the interrelated elements that contribute to the context. These include fixed elements such as venue, whether the event is indoors or outdoors, physical access, parking, time of year, hours of operation, and of course, budget. Non-fixed elements that will also impact an event include weather and competition for audience.

Once an event’s context is established, the most creative aspect of event development can begin, namely the selection, development and execution of a theme.

Theme is the event’s point of view, much like it is in a movie. For example, many people have seen the movie, *Titanic*. This film’s point of view comes from the character of Rose. The context of the movie is the sinking of a luxury ocean liner. But the theme of the movie, its point of view comes through the eyes of the young woman whose shipboard romance impacts the rest of her life. Consider how the theme would change if the viewpoint came from Rose’s mother or the captain of the ship. Each would be an entirely different story *without* changing the event’s context. The ship still sank regardless of who tells the story.

Such is the beauty of theme in an event. By changing an event’s theme we can keep the event fresh from year-to-year or even week-to-week without changing it’s context.

Skyline’s process in theme development begins with our clients. We work with them to determine the goal of the event, their taste, type of environment preferred (such as a formal or casual setting) and how they want to handle entertainment, food and beverage and décor. We determine if the theme is a primary focus or a background to enhance another activity.

In the case of the holiday party presented in this newsletter, our client wanted a somewhat formal event to include a short awards presentation, and casino-style gambling requested by their employees. Their preferred venue was the Colorado Convention Center. In response to these requests, Skyline developed the theme, “A Night on the Strip,” which referenced the popular name for the main drag in Las Vegas. We divided the Convention Center’s Korbel Ballroom into three sections—one that housed all the interactive casino games, a Las Vegas-style lounge that featured comfortable contemporary lounge furniture and a 40 ft. wide bar backed by a glitzy nighttime Las Vegas street scene. The main ballroom and presentation section divided these two areas.

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Since the Korbel Ballroom totals 50,000 square feet, it was appropriate to soften the atmosphere with the lighting design. Only the Korbel’s overhead twinkle lights were used in the main and lounge areas. These were combined with perimeter lighting in every room that added color and a warmer, festive look. In the casino, the house lights were set at about 50% allowing for sufficient illumination for gambling but still maintaining a party atmosphere. Both the casino and lounge had distinctly different entrances, each set between sections of the movable dividing walls.

Entertainment was selected to support the Las Vegas theme including flashy, feathered showgirls, “act alike” Vegas performers Elvis and Frank Sinatra and a great rock and roll/R&B band. Multiple food courts were set up featuring Asian, Mexican and American comfort food cuisine, much like guests would find in a Las Vegas hotel.

The overall effect supported the theme, created a fun environment and, above all, was well received by our client.