



Angela Zaltsman, CMP A TO Z Event Management

Tell us about yourself

I love people, food, wine, travel, details, learning and being creative! It is why I do what I do today.

Fifteen years ago when I realized it was time for me to start my career path, I made the big move from Winnipeg, Man., to Toronto, which offered me more opportunities. I wasn't sure what it was that I was going to do, but I knew that I wanted to be involved in the hospitality world.

I believe strongly in "giving back" to my profession. I have been fortunate enough to have met some truly dynamic and generous people who have taken the time to help me and to answer any number of my questions, so it is truly my pleasure to help others benefit from my experiences. I am always willing to sit down with students interested in my field - I'm happy to mentor them and to answer any questions that I can. I live in Toronto with my husband and my son, surrounded by wonderful friends and family.

Tell us about your work.

My goal is to consistently apply everything I have learned over the past 15 years and to create a business of which I can be proud. Working towards that goal consists of ensuring that I am up to date on any developments and changes in my field, networking, making sales calls, preparing creative and

innovative proposals, business development and planning events and meetings throughout the GTA.

How did you get to where you are today?

My first job was as a hostess at the Olive Garden in Winnipeg. I continued to work in hospitality while going to school. When I arrived in Toronto, I found a job as a server at a popular restaurant in the Yonge and Eglinton area. Before I knew it, I was promoted to general manager, and took on the responsibilities associated with that position. As general manager, I managed a team of 50 or so, and got some hands-on training in the hospitality industry. I had the opportunity to learn about cuisine, wine, negotiation and managing people.

I realized, however, that while I really enjoyed working in hospitality, I didn't want to continue with the long weekend and weekday hours that the restaurant world brought to my life. I accepted a position as catering manager at the Park Hyatt, and I went on to work there for five years. I was twice nominated for Manager of the Year, something which makes me proud to this day.

After the Park Hyatt, I accepted another wonderful opportunity as director of sales and catering at the Executive Learning Centre at the Schulich School of Business.

Name: Angela Zaltsman, CMP

Present: Principal of A to Z Event Management; Humber College Program Advisory Committee Member

Past: Director of Sales at the Holiday Inn; Director of Sales and Catering, The Executive Learning Centre at the Schulich School of Business, York University; Catering Manager, Park Hyatt Hotel

Expertise: Over 15 years in Sales, Marketing and Food and Beverage

Specialty: Offering personalized service and creative, out-of-the-box solutions. A planner dedicated to the process of client satisfaction, of understanding client needs and of creating value-driven events through integral relationships with suppliers.

I spent three years at Schulich, managing a team, planning conferences and meetings. My next opportunity was at the Holiday Inn, where I was the director of sales, but it wasn't long before I decided that I didn't want find myself looking back on my life and asking myself why I had not started my own event management firm. So I launched A TO Z Event Management – "Creating Extraordinary Events From Start to Finish!"

Walk us through a typical day at work.

Every day is a new challenge. I focus on my goals and putting an action plan together for the various components of my day: networking, sales calls, planning and executing events for my clients, and finding new business opportunities.

Last year, I also took some time to study for my Certified Meeting Professional exam. It was a great learning experience and I feel a sense of accomplishment at having obtained my certification.

Some days I work on proposals, and some days I just work on what needs to be done. Since I am building my own business I must be diligent in following up with people and in setting time aside to visit different venues. I am a true believer in face-to-face meetings and it is important to me to arrange personal visits with clients and with prospective clients alike. I believe that nothing compares to personal attention and eye-contact when establishing and sustaining good working relationships.

What are some of your challenges?

Most events now being booked have a much shorter lead time, so hearing back from a potential venue or from suppliers is very

important. I like to keep clients informed and follow up with them as soon as possible. If that can't be accomplished by phone, I normally send an email to say that I will follow up the next day. Unfortunately, not everyone believes in, or can meet, that level of responsiveness to client requests. My follow-up with the venue or with suppliers becomes extremely important, so that I can fulfill my timing commitments to my clients. Clients request answers immediately in this day and age and it is simply no longer acceptable to get back to someone two days later.

Why are you good at what you do?

I enjoy learning from others and my chosen profession enables me to be in touch with a lot of people. Everyone has something to teach me. It may be a new insight into a situation, or a new way of handling an RSVP list.

I am first to admit when I don't know something, but I will find the answer and get back to a client immediately. Most importantly, I am dedicated and am always looking for new and creative ways to plan events.

Who are some of your notable clients?

Shania Twain, Lauren Holly, Dan Aykroyd, York University, Canadian International Council, Mount Sinai Hospital, Harry Rosen, Bombardier, Imperial Oil and Loblaw, to name a few.

What do you like best about the industry?

The people in it! There are so many different scenarios in hosting a meeting or an event. Each event has its own unique aspects. This means that there is always a new challenge ahead of me, and I always enjoy rising to the occasion. ■

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