

EVENT DESIGN: THE GAME

Overview:

A social gaming experience that allows individuals to meet and join forces with other event professionals in a variety of specialty areas (design, production, hospitality, marketing) to design and create an event that meets specific criteria while simultaneously gaining new knowledge.

Key Points:

Education: Opportunity to learn about different areas of specialization within the event industry and what it takes to put an event together

Event Design: Development of a successful event plan that could be elevated to the execution phase. Other build-ins possible (televised competition etc).

Collaborative Learning: Team members using their expertise to learn from one another towards a common outcome.

Creating Dialogue: Encouragement to network in an attempt to build a “dream team”

Role Playing: Opportunity to step outside comfort zone and improve creative flow by suspending reality.

Competition: Healthy competition against other teams to inspire great results.

Set Up:

This social gaming experience has two distinct manifestations. The first is to be executed in a conference setting on a short term basis while the second is a long-term activity executed over the course of a semester in an event education program.

Short Term Conference Version:

Attendees are given a list of participants as well as their areas of specialization. Attendees are asked to network with other participants and build their “dream team” comprised of one person from each area of specialization (design, production, hospitality, marketing). Time allotted is based on the length of the conference and could be comprised of a single session or an entire day. In the conference setting this could also be in the form of a design lab.

Long Term Education Version:

At the beginning of the semester, students are given a role from a pre-set list of 4 specialities. Then, they are given the opportunity to network with their classmates to build their 4 person “dream team.”

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For the first month of the semester, it is the student's responsibility to learn as much as possible about their specific area. This can be built into the curriculum and assigned projects.

The Game in Action:

Once each team has come together and had the chance to learn about each other's areas of expertise the entire group will convene to learn their task. Depending on the situation, the task can be open ended (i.e create any event you like provided it meets the following criteria) or specific (i.e design a fashion show, gala, sporting event etc). A timeline and rubric will be provided indicating the necessary components for the event and specific hints as to what the judging panel is looking for.

Using the knowledge of each of the team members, acting in the role they have been provided, the team will conceptualize an event from start to finish.

If this is the long term version "catastrophes" can be doled out at random intervals to see how the team reacts and for the opportunity to earn bonus points.

All teams will come together for a final presentation of their concepts at the end of the allotted time.

Outcome:

At the end of this activity participants will have had the opportunity to work together for a predetermined set of time to share knowledge and conceptualize an event. They will have increased their knowledge base, their networks and their ability to work within a team. Official judges will provide a SWOT analysis for the event plan identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and judge the teams on creative output. The winner of the challenge will be rewarded with a scholarship for further event education.

Other Possibilities:

One of the greatest opportunities for this game is to take it beyond the paper and into the real world. Teams could actually come together to produce live events based on the plans that they created. Another opportunity would be to televise the process and turn it into an apprentice-style show with celebrity judges and the creme de la creme of the event world. Ultimately what comes out of this is the chance to conceptualize and execute while increasing knowledge, expanding networks and collaborating with peers.