



DISCOVER A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES: YOUR CAREER IN MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

SPONSORED BY

VISIT
Detroit

CONTENTS

What is the Meeting and Event Industry?	2
Considering a Career in Meetings and Events	3
Skills and Abilities	4
Career Profiles	
Event Planner/Coordinator	5
Venue Manager	6
Catering Manager	7
Audiovisual Technician	8
Convention Sales Manager	9
Destination Marketer	10
Hotel Sales Manager	11
Career Resources	12



WHAT IS THE MEETING & EVENT INDUSTRY?

The meeting and event industry, sometimes referred to as MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), encompasses a wide range of activities and services related to planning, organizing and executing various types of gatherings, events and conferences. These events can vary in size, purpose and scope, and the industry plays a crucial role in facilitating communication, collaboration and engagement among individuals and businesses.

Meetings and events can range from business events such as small meetings to large-scale conferences to social events like parties, weddings and more. Organizations and individuals host meetings to motivate team members, conduct business, share ideas, learn, hold discussions, build community or socialize.

The meeting and event industry serves various sectors, including corporate, government, nonprofit organizations and associations. This also includes SMERF events (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal groups). It spans industries such as technology, healthcare, finance, education, tourism and entertainment. The services provided by the meeting industry professionals are diverse and include event planning, venue selection, logistics management, marketing and promotion, technology integration and more.

There are many different types of meetings and events.

- **Meetings:** Gatherings of people for discussions, information sharing, decision-making and problem-solving. Meetings can range from small internal team meetings to larger company-wide assemblies.
- **Incentives:** Incentive events are designed to motivate and reward employees, partners or clients for achieving specific goals. These events can include incentive trips, recognition ceremonies and performance-based incentives.
- **Conferences:** Conferences focus on specific topics, industries or fields of interest. They often feature keynote speakers, workshops, presentations and networking opportunities for attendees to learn and exchange insights.
- **Exhibitions and Trade Shows:** These events provide a platform for businesses and organizations to showcase their products, services and innovations to a targeted audience. Attendees can explore exhibits, learn about industry trends and network with potential partners.
- **Special/Social Events:** Special/social events are unique and memorable occasions that are organized for a specific purpose, audience or celebration. They include everything from weddings, graduations and family reunions to cultural, religious and music festivals.

QUICK FACTS: THE GLOBAL MEETING AND EVENT INDUSTRY

1.6 BILLION – Number of people worldwide who participate in business events every year

\$1.15 TRILLION – Business events spending globally per year

10.9 MILLION – Direct jobs

\$707 – Average spending by business event attendees



WHY CONSIDER A CAREER IN MEETINGS & EVENTS?

A career in the meeting and event industry offers an exciting and dynamic path with a wide range of opportunities for growth, creativity and personal fulfillment. Here are several reasons why a career in the meeting industry can be incredibly exciting.

- 1. Creativity and Innovation:** Designing unique event themes, décor, unique formats and experiences showcases your imaginative ideas and turns them into reality.
- 2. Diverse Projects:** The meeting industry encompasses a variety of events, from corporate conferences to weddings to trade shows. This diversity ensures that no two projects are the same and keeps the work engaging and stimulating.
- 3. Impactful Experiences:** You create memorable and meaningful experiences for individuals and groups. Your work contributes to shaping moments that people remember and cherish. Contributing to successful gatherings that bring people together is highly rewarding.
- 4. Collaborative Environment:** Event planning requires working with diverse teams, including clients, vendors and fellow professionals. Collaboration enhances networking and exposes you to new perspectives and ideas.
- 5. Constant Learning:** The meeting industry is ever evolving, with new technologies, trends and tools emerging regularly. This environment encourages continuous learning and adaptation.
- 6. Travel & International Opportunities:** Events are held regionally, nationally and globally and you can explore opportunities to work on national and international projects, visit different places and experience other cultures.
- 7. Growth Potential:** Events are essential parts of various industries, so there are many opportunities for career growth and advancement.

Careers in meetings and events combine creativity and organizational and interpersonal skills to craft successful events of all kinds. If you're intrigued by the prospect of planning and executing events that leave a lasting impact, this is a fantastic field for you to explore.



SKILLS & ABILITIES

The meeting and event industry plays a crucial role in bringing people together and requires a blend of creativity, organizational skills, attention to detail, grace under pressure, problem solving and strong communication.

- **Creativity:** Designing an event's theme, format, schedule of activities and atmosphere requires creative thinking. Event planners come up with innovative ideas to make each event distinctive and engaging while delivering value to the event host organization or event owner.
- **Logistics:** Behind-the-scenes work involves coordinating schedules, managing budgets, arranging transportation and ensuring all necessary resources are in place. Attention to detail is vital to ensuring everything runs smoothly.
- **Communication:** Effective communication is essential, with clients, attendees and the various vendors and teams involved in executing an event. Clear communication helps in understanding client expectations and delivering on them.
- **Adaptability:** The event industry is known for its fast-paced nature and unpredictability. Event professionals must be adaptable and quick thinkers to handle unexpected challenges that may arise during an event.
- **Networking:** Building a network of contacts within the industry is crucial. This network includes vendors, suppliers and fellow event professionals, all of which help in finding the right resources for each event.

QUICK FACTS: MEETING, CONVENTION AND EVENT PLANNERS

Median Pay: \$49,470/year (bls.gov) to \$92,500/year (pcma.org)*

Typical Entry-Level Education: Bachelor's degree

Number of U.S. Jobs (2021): 128,200

Job Outlook 2021-2031: 18% (much faster than average)

Employment Change 2021-31: +22,900

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & PCMA Salary Survey

* Individuals with credentials earn \$10,000+ more per year than those without credentials

CAREER PROFILES

CAREER PROFILE

Event Planner/Coordinator

An event planner is responsible for coordinating and executing various types of events, conferences, meetings and gatherings for organizations or clients. They ensure that every detail is planned and executed to create seamless and successful events.

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in event management, hospitality, business administration or a related field is often preferred but people can land entry-level roles without a degree.
- **Certification:** Professional certifications, such as [Certified Meeting Professional](#) (CMP), can enhance job prospects and demonstrate expertise in the field. Senior-level professionals often earn their [Certificate in Meeting Management](#) (CMM) from MPI. Individuals who are just starting can also earn an [Emerging Meeting Professional](#) designation from MPI. Specialize as an [incentive](#) or [exhibitions](#) professional.
- **Skills:** Strong organizational, communication, negotiation, time management and problem-solving skills are essential. Proficiency in event management software and familiarity with industry trends is also beneficial.

Typical roles and responsibilities for event planners include the following.

Event Strategy & Planning	Budget Management	Program Development	Promotion & Marketing
Venue & Site Selection	Logistics Management	Onsite Coordination	Attendee Management
Contract Negotiations	Safety & Preparedness	Food and Beverage	Post-Event Evaluation

Event planners have many career growth opportunities.

- **Senior Meeting Planner:** With experience, meeting planners can take on more complex and larger-scale events. They can oversee teams and lead event planning efforts and focus on event design and business strategy.
- **Event Director/Vice President/CEO:** In this senior leadership role, individuals manage strategic event planning, budgets and teams on a departmental or organizational level and often oversee large portfolios of meetings and events.
- **Freelance/Consultant:** Experienced meeting planners can become self-employed, own businesses or work as consultants, managing events for various clients.
- **Specialization:** Some meeting planners choose to specialize in specific event types, such as weddings, corporate conferences or trade shows. Meeting planners can also specialize in areas of event design, like sustainability, catering (food, beverage and menu design), inclusion and diversity.

Event planners can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [International Association of Exhibitions and Events](#) (trade shows and expositions)
- [International Live Events Association](#) (special events)
- [Meeting Professionals International](#) (all meeting and event types)
- [Professional Convention Management Association](#) (business events)
- [SITE Global](#) (incentive events)

CAREER PROFILE

Venue Manager

Venue managers oversee the operations, maintenance and overall management of venue or event spaces. This role requires a blend of leadership, organizational skills, customer service and attention to detail to ensure that events run smoothly, and guests have a positive experience.

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in hospitality management, event management, business administration or a related field is often preferred.
- **Certification:** Relevant certifications in venue management enhance qualifications. They include the [Certified Venue Professional](#) (CVP) and [Certified Venue Executive](#) (CVE) designations.
- **Skills:** Strong communication, leadership, problem-solving and multitasking abilities are crucial. Proficiency in managing teams, customer service and working with vendors are also essential.

Typical roles and responsibilities for venue managers include the following.

Venue Operations	Customer Relations	Event Coordination	Staff Management
Budget Management	Health & Safety	Contract Negotiation	Marketing & Promotion
Client Feedback	Compliance	Logistical Planning	Ticketing

Venue managers have many career growth opportunities.

- **Senior Venue Manager:** With experience, venue managers can advance to senior positions overseeing larger and more complex venues.
- **Hospitality Management:** Venue managers may expand into broader roles within the hospitality industry, such as hotel or resort management.
- **Consulting/Freelancing:** Experienced venue managers can become consultants, providing expertise to other venues or event management companies.
- **Specialization:** Some venue managers specialize in specific types of venues, such as wedding venues, performing arts centers, conference and convention centers or sports facilities.
- **Ownership:** Experienced professionals may choose to become entrepreneurs by owning and operating their own event venues.

Venue managers can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [International Association of Venue Managers](#) (auditoriums, arenas, convention centers, stadiums, performing arts centers, university complexes and amphitheaters)
- [National Independent Venue Association](#) (independent music and comedy venues and performing arts centers)
- [IACC](#) (purpose-built education conference centers)

CAREER PROFILE

Catering Manager

Catering managers handle food and beverage services for events. They coordinate with chefs, create menus and ensure a seamless dining experience. A catering manager is responsible for overseeing all aspects of catering operations, including menu planning, food preparation, staffing and ensuring exceptional customer service.

- **Education:** A bachelor’s degree in hospitality management, culinary arts, business administration or a related field is preferred.
- **Certification:** Certifications for catering managers include [Certified Professional in Catering and Events](#) (CPCE) and the [Certified Meeting Professional](#) (CMP), which serves all types of event professionals.
- **Skills:** Strong communication, organization, leadership, problem-solving and customer service skills are essential. Knowledge of food safety regulations and culinary trends is also important.

Typical roles and responsibilities for catering managers include the following.

Menu Planning	Logistics Coordination	Client Communication	Food Safety Compliance
Food Preparation	Budget Management	Event Execution	Post-Event Evaluation
Staff Management	Vendor Coordination		

Catering managers have many career growth opportunities.

- **Senior Catering Manager:** With experience, catering managers can advance to oversee larger teams, more complex events and broader operations.
- **Event Planning:** Transitioning into event planning roles can provide a broader understanding of event logistics and coordination.
- **Hospitality Management:** Progressing into roles such as restaurant or hotel management allows for a broader scope of responsibilities within the hospitality industry.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Some catering managers choose to start their own catering businesses, offering specialized menus and services to clients.
- **Culinary Arts:** Transitioning into culinary roles, such as executive chef or culinary instructor, can leverage the culinary expertise gained as a catering manager.

Catering managers can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [National Association of Catering & Events](#) (catering and event professionals)
- [International Caterers Association](#) (caterers)

CAREER PROFILE

Audiovisual Technician

An audiovisual technician is responsible for setting up, operating and maintaining audio and visual equipment used in various events, presentations and productions. This role ensures that sound, lighting and visual elements are of high quality, enhancing the overall experience for attendees and participants.

- **Education:** A high school diploma or equivalent is often the minimum requirement.
- **Certification:** [Certified Technology Specialist](#) holders demonstrate knowledge in general technology solutions.
- **Skills:** Strong technical skills in audio, lighting and visual equipment operation are essential. Problem-solving, attention to detail, communication and teamwork skills are also important.

Typical roles and responsibilities for audiovisual technicians include the following.

Equipment Setup	Operation Management	Collaboration	Equipment Inventory
Systems Testing	Troubleshooting	Maintenance	Safety

Audiovisual technicians have many career growth opportunities.

- **Lead Audiovisual Technician:** With experience, technicians can take on leadership roles, overseeing a team of technicians and coordinating technical aspects of larger events.
- **Audiovisual Specialist:** Specializing in specific areas such as lighting design, sound engineering or projection mapping can open doors to more specialized roles.
- **Event Production Manager:** Transitioning into event production involves managing the technical aspects of entire events, including coordination with multiple teams.
- **Corporate Audiovisual Technician:** In corporate settings, technicians can work in-house, managing audiovisual needs for presentations, meetings, and conferences.
- **Technology Integration:** Moving into roles related to technology integration, such as IT support or systems integration, leverages technical skills gained as an audiovisual technician.

Audiovisual technicians can join a professional association to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [Audiovisual and Integrated Experiences Association](#) (tech companies and managers)

Convention Services Manager

A convention services manager is typically a venue employee responsible for helping clients coordinate and manage all logistical aspects of conventions, conferences and large-scale events. This role involves collaborating with clients, vendors and internal teams to ensure that client events run smoothly, meet expectations and provide seamless experiences for attendees.

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in hospitality management, event planning, business administration or a related field is preferred.
- **Certification:** Convention services managers can earn their [Certified Meeting Professional](#) (CMP) designation. Individuals who are just starting may also want to consider the [Emerging Meeting Professional](#).
- **Skills:** Strong organizational, communication, negotiation, problem-solving and multitasking skills are essential.

Typical roles and responsibilities for convention service managers include the following.

Client Collaboration	Event Planning	Attendee Experience	Internal Collaboration
Logistics Coordination	Budget Management	Risk Management	Post-Event Evaluation
Vendor Management	Onsite Management		

Convention services managers have many career growth opportunities.

- **Senior Convention Services Manager:** With experience, convention services managers can take on larger events, more complex logistics and increased responsibilities.
- **Event Director:** Transitioning into an event director role involves overseeing a portfolio of events and managing teams of convention services managers.
- **Venue Management:** Progressing into roles focused on managing event venues or facilities provides a broader understanding of event logistics and operations.
- **Hospitality Management:** Advancing into broader roles within the hospitality industry, such as hotel or resort management, can leverage event planning skills.

Convention services managers can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [International Association of Exhibitions and Events](#) (trade shows and expositions)
- [Meeting Professionals International](#) (all meeting and event types)

Destination Marketer

A destination marketer is responsible for promoting and marketing a specific location, such as a city, region or tourist destination, to attract leisure and business travelers and meetings and events. This role involves creating compelling marketing campaigns, showcasing unique attractions and collaborating with stakeholders to boost tourism and economic growth.

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in marketing, tourism management, hospitality, communications or a related field is common.
- **Certification:** Destination marketers can earn certifications as a [Professional in Destination Management](#) and a [Certified Destination Management Executive](#).
- **Skills:** Strong marketing, communication, project management, creativity and analytical skills are essential. Familiarity with digital marketing tools and trends is also valuable.

Typical roles and responsibilities for destination marketers include the following.

Marketing Strategy	Content Creation	Public Relations	Market Research
Campaign Development	Stakeholder Collaboration	Digital Marketing	Event Promotion
Tourism Development	Performance Measurement		

Destination marketers have many career growth opportunities.

- **Executive Director/CEO:** With experience, destination marketers can advance to executive leadership roles, overseeing large teams and organizations.
- **Director of Tourism Marketing:** Transitioning into this role involves overseeing all marketing efforts for a destination, including strategic planning and collaboration with various stakeholders.
- **Tourism Board Executive:** Progressing into roles within local or regional tourism boards allows for broader involvement in tourism strategy and economic development.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Some professionals choose to start their own marketing agencies or businesses focused on destination marketing and tourism promotion.

Destination marketers can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [Destinations International](#) (destination sales and executives)
- [Travel and Tourism Research Association](#) (destination data and research professionals)

Hotel Sales Manager

A hotel sales manager drives revenue through the sale of hotel rooms, event spaces and related services. They are responsible for developing and executing sales strategies to attract guests and groups, meeting revenue targets and ensuring the overall success of the hotel.

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in hospitality management, business administration, marketing or a related field is typically preferred.
- **Certification:** Hotel sales managers can earn certifications such as [Certified Hospitality Sales Professional \(CHSP\)](#) and a number of [specialty certifications](#) from HSMAI.
- **Skills:** Excellent verbal and written communication skills, negotiation, customer focus, sales techniques (like prospecting, lead generation and closing deals), teamwork and technology.

Typical roles and responsibilities for hotel sales managers include the following

Sales Strategy	Proposal Creation	Customer Feedback	Team Leadership
Client Acquisition	Revenue Management	Budget Management	Event Promotion
Relationship Building	Market Analysis		

Hotel sales managers have many career growth opportunities.

- **Senior Sales Manager:** Progress to a more senior sales management role with increased responsibilities, overseeing multiple properties or larger market segments.
- **Director of Sales:** Gain responsibility for the sales department of a hotel or a hotel chain, developing and implementing sales strategies at a higher level.
- **Regional Sales Manager:** Manage sales efforts across multiple hotels in a specific region.
- **General Manager:** Transition into a broader hotel management role overseeing all aspects of hotel operations.
- **Hospitality Sales Consultant:** Utilize expertise to provide consulting services to hotels or start your own consulting business.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Explore opportunities to own or operate your own hotel or hospitality-related business.

Hotel sales managers can join professional associations to hone their skills, meet their peers and network and build relationships with vendors and suppliers.

- [HSMAI](#) (hotel sales and marketing executives)
- [American Hotel & Lodging Association](#)



CAREER RESOURCES

Embarking on a career path is a big decision, so here are some additional resources about the meeting and event industry, such as hospitality and event programs, courses, job search sites and more. The more you learn and explore, the better equipped you'll be to make informed decisions that align with your passions, skills and goals. Let these resources be your companion as you embark on the exciting journey of self-discovery and career exploration!

The [International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education](#) (ICHRIE) offers a free guide to accredited programs in hospitality and tourism including those at two-year, four-year and graduate-level hospitality, tourism, events, culinary arts and related programs all over the world. It includes program features, admission and graduation requirements and financial aid sources.

ICHRIE also supports the [Eta Sigma Delta Honor Society](#) for hospitality students that recognizes exceptional academic achievement among hospitality and tourism students at the baccalaureate and master levels. The organization has 90 chapters.

Your job search can start on typical job search sites like [LinkedIn](#) or you can find careers, job types and salary information on industry association websites, like [MPI's Career Center](#).

Many meeting industry organizations offer low-cost memberships for students. Students can join [Meeting Professionals International](#) for \$40/year, the [International Association of Exhibitions and Events](#) for \$35/year or [SITE](#) (incentive professionals) for \$50/year.

Consider additional training courses, like those provided by MPI, including the [Basics Boot Camp: Meeting Fundamentals](#) class or earning your [Emerging Meeting Professional](#) certificate.

The meeting and event industry's associations have regularly scheduled education and networking events hosted by regional and local chapters. The [MPI Michigan Chapter's](#) upcoming events are listed on its website. MPI global also hosts free and low-cost [webinars](#) and has an [on-demand library](#) that is free for members.

Other career tools are available through the industry's many newsletters and [blogs](#). Subscribe to [The Meeting Professional](#), [Meetings Today](#) and [Successful Meetings](#) magazines. Browse this [glossary](#) of industry terms to learn more about the meeting and event role.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This Career Exploration Guide was developed through a partnership of Meeting Professionals International and Visit Detroit to raise awareness among young individuals about the diverse and rewarding career opportunities within the meeting and event field.



Meeting Professionals International (MPI) is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. The organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI has a global community of 60,000 meeting and event professionals including nearly 13,000 engaged members. It has nearly 70 chapters, clubs and members in more than 75 countries worldwide. When we meet, we change the world. Visit mpi.org for more information.



Visit Detroit is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to market and sell the metropolitan Detroit area on a worldwide basis as a destination for leisure and business travel including conventions, trade shows, corporate meetings, tours and incentive travel to maximize additional visitors, visitor expenditures, state and local tax revenues and job opportunities. More than 700 businesses are represented in Visit Detroit's membership. Visit Detroit was founded in 1896 as the world's first convention and visitors bureau (CVB). Visit visitdetroit.com for more information.