

*Special Events, Meetings, Corporate Events, Fundraising Galas, Conferences,*

*Meetings, Corporate Events, Fundraising Galas, Conferences, Conventions,*

**TIME MANAGEMENT FOR**

*Special Events, Meetings, Corporate Events, Fundraising Galas, Conferences,*

# **event** *planners*

Expert Techniques and Time-Saving Tips for  
Organizing Your Workload,  
Prioritizing Your Day,  
and Taking Control of  
Your Schedule

**JUDY ALLEN**

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Western Regional Sales Director, Marriott Incentive Awards

“Written for anyone who has to prepare dynamite meetings and special events, *The Business of Event Planning* is your bible and a must-have desk-top reference. Thanks, Judy Allen! You saved the day!”

—Susan Fenner Ph.D., Manager, Education and Professional Development,  
International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP)

“Guidance for new planners, reminders for experienced ones, and useful tips for everyone. This book has it all! It’s the key that unlocks the mystery behind event planning, and should be mandatory reading for planners everywhere.”

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—Marta Pawych, CMM, CMP, CSEP; Director Meetings, Events & Sponsorships, Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario

“This is a must-read not only for event professionals, but also for small-business people conceiving product introductions and conference appearances.”

—Harvard Business School, Working Knowledge

“[An] outstanding book on ethics and business etiquette in the events industry...This is an extremely timely and much-needed book.”

—Patti J. Shock, Professor and Chair, Tourism and Convention  
Administration Department, Harrah College of Hotel Administration,  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

“Judy Allen strikes again. The veteran event planner...writes with the voice of experience and offers readers guidelines for establishing ethical policies in the office and on-site at events...a good refresher, and excellent reading for novices who need to know how to keep personal and professional boundaries from being crossed.”

—Corporate Meetings & Incentives Magazine

“This book contains invaluable information for anyone who handles events for their organization. A host of real-world stories from the field—the good, the bad, and the ugly—serve as examples of codes of conduct (or lack thereof) as well as cautionary tales of what can happen when ethics and etiquette fall to the wayside. Allen thoroughly examines many scenarios and provides practical advice that any planner would be foolish not to heed.”

—Charity Village

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## *A Creative Approach to Gaining the Competitive Edge*

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“For event planners who are tired of being a well-kept secret, *Marketing Your Event Planning Business* offers invaluable advice on targeting talents and targeting clients. It’s a wonderful boost for event planners looking to expand their client base.”

—Lisa Hurley, Editor, Special Events Magazine

“Judy Allen has crafted another meaningful book in her series on event practices. Every business owner must immediately add this treasure chest of useful ideas to their bookshelf.”

—Richard Aaron, CMP, CSEP, President of BiZBash Media, NYC

“In an ever-competitive marketplace, a meeting practitioner must know the niche in which she or he wants to establish credibility. Once established, marketing oneself and one’s services becomes an exciting challenge. Judy Allen’s tips, provided with the insight of experience, and with humor, allow the reader to look differently at the opportunities available.”

—Joan L. Eisenstodt, Chief Strategist, Eisenstodt Associates, LLC,  
Conference Consulting, Facilitation & Training; and 2004 Hall of  
Leaders Inductee

“Judy Allen has given us the ultimate resource guide to event planning. It’s everything you need to know to launch successful company.”

—Ramey Warren Black, Partner, Media-Savvy

## **ALSO BY JUDY ALLEN**

### ***Event Planning***

*The Ultimate Guide to Successful Meetings, Corporate Events, Fundraising Galas, Conferences, Conventions, Incentives and Other Events*

### ***The Business of Event Planning***

*Behind-the-Scenes Secrets of Successful Special Events*

### ***Event Planning Ethics and Etiquette***

*A Principled Approach to the Business of Special Event Management*

### ***Marketing Your Event Planning Business***

*A Creative Approach to Gaining the Competitive Edge*

### ***Your Stress Free Wedding Planner***

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**JUDY ALLEN**



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Each event—whether it is designed to entertain, educate or enlighten—becomes someone’s lasting memory. It is not unheard of in this business to have clients and/or guests still celebrating an event that happened over 10 years ago and able to recollect the tiniest of details because it really captivated their complete attention and respect. Producing such results takes talent, teamwork and a commitment to mastering time management so that no minute part ever goes unchecked, no great idea is bypassed, and no personal or professional learning or growth opportunities are missed due to a lack of time caused through inefficiency or ineffectual use of time.

This book is dedicated to event planning professionals around the world who give their time, energy, expertise and creativity to producing events that are meaningful, memorable and magical, and who use their time wisely to become masters of their day and of their craft.

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# PREFACE

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Event planning, hospitality and related fields, such as public relations, are industries that operate 24/7, 365 days of the year. They are enterprises where those involved often find themselves working down to the wire against seemingly crushing deadlines and a mountain of obstacles that impede their progress, leaving no time for personal and professional pursuits. And for many involved, there is the extra dimension of travel to factor in, as well as learning how to juggle working on a daily basis within a multitude of time zones.

For smooth event implementation, planners must know how to manage their time as well as they manage an event. This is a skill that many individuals lack despite being proficient at planning events. With an event, they are in control of the event elements and timing, but in the office, in meetings and on-site, their time and how it is being spent is seemingly often out of their control—with precious time eaten up while catering to the demands of others. Without the tools to better organize their workload, prioritize their day and take control of the demands on their time, event

planners may walk into a timing minefield every morning, never knowing in advance what has the potential to trip them up, put the event they are planning in jeopardy and place them and their company at financial risk, or even throw their office into crisis management overload. And not being able to manage time and workloads wisely can have serious repercussions not only on an individual's professional success and status in the industry but on their company's reputation, and can greatly affect their home and family life and health. Operating daily at high stress levels will take a toll on planners personally and professionally, and adversely impact the event planning company they work for, their clients and their suppliers.

*Time Management for Event Planners* will teach planners—and those in related service industry fields, such as hospitality, communications and public relations—how to successfully manage their workload and do what matters most when it matters most, by offering time-saving tips, techniques and expert insight into time management as it relates specifically to these specialized areas.

The book provides information on what you need to know in order to analyze your tasks, prioritize and organize your day, and identify key actions and subsequent steps to manage your time efficiently and effectively. *Time Management for Event Planners* offers proven ways to reduce stress-producing time crunches and work with, rather than against, timing deadlines.

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I would like to thank the dedicated publishing team at John Wiley & Sons for all their hard work and effort in the production of the fifth book in the Event Planning series, *Time Management for Event Planners*.

Special thanks to William Zerter (Chief Operating Officer); Robert Harris (General Manager); Karen Milner (Executive Editor); Elizabeth McCurdy (Project Manager); Juanita Korpan (Editorial Assistant); Jennifer Smith (Director of Sales and Marketing); Meghan Brousseau (Publicity Manager); Erin Kelly (Publicist); Lucas Wilk (Associate Channel Marketing Manager); Parisa Michailidis (Corporate Account Manager); Joan Trinidad (Accountant); and Natalia Burobina (Graphic Designer) for the part each of them played in taking this book from creative concept to actuality.

I have now worked closely with Daphne Hart, my literary agent, Helen Heller Agency Inc., on the publication of seven books in five years—the five professional Event Planning books and two wedding planning books: *Your Stress-Free Wedding Planner*,

published by Sourcebooks, Inc. and a second wedding planner to be released in 2006—for the consumer market and the event/wedding planning industry. Daphne has provided me with amazing learning experiences in the world of publishing and she has been a wonderful teacher. I look forward to working with both Daphne and Helen Heller on future book projects.

Working with Michelle Bullard on the structure and copy edit of this book has been a true pleasure. Her knowledge and advice on how readers will interpret what is being said is extremely valuable and helps me to bring forth a book that is the very best it can be. Michelle is an expert at what she does and working with her on the edit process electronically makes the task a time-saving endeavor—effortless and efficient.

Once again, I would like to thank all of the magazine and newspaper reviewers and radio hosts who have helped to spread awareness of the Event Planning series of books around the world. It is indeed an honor that *The Business of Event Planning* is now being published in Chinese and Russian.

I would also like to thank my family—my parents, Walter and Ruth; my sister, Marilyn; my nieces, Natasha and Jasmine; Hans; Blair; and my extended family—and my friends for their continued love and support.

# 1

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## TAKING STOCK

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Poor time management can be crippling to both a company and, professionally and personally, to an individual. It can sabotage a company's growth and prevent it from being able to move forward fast, damage business reputations, paralyze personal professional growth and play havoc with relationships both in and outside the office. It can create an atmosphere of stress and high anxiety in an arena where it is most important to convey to suppliers, business peers, and clients and their guests an attitude of calm and total control.

Executing events flawlessly means precision timing, but too many times precision timing is applied only on the day of the actual event. Planners often find themselves scrambling right down to the wire to bring all the elements together seamlessly. While the client sees a cool façade, behind the scenes can be frenzied and frantic up to the last minute. And this applies equally to sales and marketing, business development, product research and development, proposal planning, client presentations, client meetings,

supplier presentations, site inspections, operations, program advance, on-site execution and event reconciliation.

An added dimension of pressure for those involved in the planning industry—be it in event planning, hospitality, communications or public relations—is that they are expected to wear many hats, be able to switch gears in a minute (preferably less) and, because they are in a “service business,” be available at any given time to meet the wants and whims of customers, clients, suppliers and coworkers. And there are many times when projects collide, deadlines are staggering and it all can come perilously close to crashing down. It is not uncommon for planners to work through the night, be in before dawn, work seven days a week and occasionally dissolve into tears.

The focus that planners have on minute details, intent on creating the perfect event, is yet another pressure. Planners know that letting one item slip through the cracks can produce a domino effect and send their event spiraling out of control. Their focus becomes centered on what they are working on in that minute, so that they can make sure that every “i” has been dotted and “t” has been crossed, and nothing has been missed. They have learned that overlooking key elements can produce not only timing and logistical repercussions but also major financial and legal ones that can greatly impact their customers, company, suppliers and themselves. Taking the time to manage time is often not at the top of their list, as they are more intent on just getting through what is directly in front of them, which is why they can frequently be found coming in early, working late into the night, or working from home, when and where it is quieter and they can work without major interruptions.

Some companies just expect, as a matter of course, that their employees will be working around the clock. Instead of trying to resolve the issue of time management as a company and as individuals, their solution is to provide their staff with unlimited coffee and a fridge full of caffeinated beverages and sugary snacks to help them work through the night. One company had showers and a mini-gym installed so that employees could freshen up after

working long hours. And while having a private gym facility at work is a nice perk, this particular company's main objective was to enable staff working overnight to meet deadlines, be able to shower, change clothes and begin a new day without leaving the office. The company also had a couch to curl up on if staff needed to catch a couple of hours of sleep before resuming work. The company owner was often overheard commenting on how she had devised a means to keep her staff chained to their desks 24/7 with no need to go home. Unfortunately, in offices where poor time management practices are the rule, not the exception, and part of the corporate culture, hearing stories of staff crashing on the floor, on their desk or in the boardroom in order to catch some sleep, striving to meet pressing deadlines, is not uncommon.

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Scheduling a class, personal or professional commitment at the end of your workday helps to keep you focused on time during the day and helps you commit to ending your workday. One company owner used his in-office gym as a means to encourage time management practices. He knew that many of his employees loved the stress release that exercise brought, but that they were busy at work and at home and found it difficult to fit time for exercise into their day. He decided to schedule a personal trainer to come in every day at the end of the workday to work with his staff for an hour. He found that providing this service focused his staff's attention on getting through their workload as efficiently as possible so that they could work out and then go home relaxed. They returned to their families energized and feeling good about having done something nurturing for themselves, totally decompressed from the stresses of their workday. The owner made it clear that he expected everyone to leave work after the workout and return the next day refreshed and ready to take on a new day, and not go back to work immediately following the workout. This was good for the planners, *and* good for business.

The fact that rarely in the event planning, hospitality, communications and public relations industries are job descriptions cut

and dry, or for that matter even laid out in writing, doesn't help either. The industry norm is that you become a jack of all trades and an expert at adeptly handling them all. You are often asked to step into unfamiliar roles as new circumstances come up and are expected to manage different aspects of the business while juggling your own work responsibilities. What is good about this practice, from a professional perspective, is that you become highly skilled in many diverse areas, which enables you to become a master of your craft. For example, planners who also have expertise in operations and on-site orchestration can design a better program from the beginning—they know what to cost and incorporate into the program from the start and can predict with great accuracy how each event element will impact the next with respect to timing, logistics and budget management. Because of their depth of understanding and cross-training, they are also in a better position to bring strategic planning into play in order to produce targeted results and meet client objectives. The downside is the strain it puts on their ability to effectively prevail over their time.

While there will always be days when it may be necessary to work long hours to meet a time crunch, these times should be the exception and not the rule. If you find yourself always racing to meet deadlines, take it as a clear sign that how you are managing your time and your workload are out of sync and it is time to take control.

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An added benefit to always being on top of your time and your workload is that you are in a better position to take advantage of the both unexpected and numerous educational and client bonding experiences that present themselves to you on the job. Developing your time management skills allows you to benefit from these opportunities when they appear and say yes to on the job training instead of excusing yourself because you are drowning in deadlines.

If you do not learn to take control of your hours, your days, your weeks and your months, you will likely become overtired and

stressed from trying to meet the demands of many, without seemingly enough minutes in your day to get to what matters most. You'll end up drained of creative energy, which will greatly affect your productivity and quickly lead to burnout.

Poor time management can hinder professional advancement, which will in turn limit your earning potential. If you are not on top of your day and your work, you will not be sought out to take on new areas of responsibility. Developing a reputation in the industry as a procrastinator or someone who never meets a deadline will reduce your chances of promotion or being recommended for new job openings by your peers. You also run the risk of clients or their in-house staff specifically requesting that you are not assigned to their project, and that will not sit well with the powers that be within your company. Event planning companies are looking to link themselves with the best of the best in their field. Today, many sales proposals from event planning companies to their clients include the names of their staff members who will be assigned to work with the clients. They know that having staff who are on top of their game can be used as a sales tool to potential clients. Clients are looking to work with companies who will help them succeed at what they do and not cause untimely disruption to their day and their staff.

How you are perceived in business is up to you and is presented to the world in your day-to-day actions. Productivity can be measured and so can timely responses, on-time delivery and how often you are available to step up and take on added work, as can delays and frustrations you cause others when you don't complete your work on time. Your company, coworkers, industry peers, suppliers, clients and even their guests can and will hold you accountable for how you spend your time. Guests are not shy about picking up the telephone and letting both their company—your client—and your company know about any dissatisfaction they have experienced through your untimely delays in answering their questions or responding to their concerns.

Going from good to better to best in what you do is tied to how well you manage your time. And choosing to excel in time