



International Festivals & Events Association

Lesa Ukman 2000 IFEA Hall of Fame Inductee IEG, Inc.



Co-founder of sponsorship consulting company, IEG, Inc., Lesa Ukman has worked for years to convince sponsors that smaller community festivals are worthwhile investments. She states she's continually working to give companies the idea that they can get a huge payoff by aligning with the community festival as 'local almost always gives a better pay-off than national.'

Calling festivals her love and her passion, Ukman said being selected to the IFEA Miller Brewing Company Hall of Fame is the most significant sign of her contributions to date.

"First I was shocked and surprised. I'm terribly honored," Ukman said. "I can't think of anything that could have more meaning professionally. My roots and my background are all in festivals."

When Ukman began her work nearly 20 years ago, few companies saw the marketing benefits of sponsorship. But Ukman knew what was coming. With funding from the publisher of *Advertising Age*, and later on her own, Ukman launched a fledgling industry's first sponsorship newsletter now titled the *IEG Sponsorship Report*. In 1981, she and her brother Jon Ukman co-founded IEG, Inc.

Stating one of her greatest accomplishments was getting the idea of sponsorship accepted in corporate America, Ukman's newsletter is now considered to be the bible of sponsorship and cause-related marketing and her company has branched out into sponsorship consulting. In the future, Ukman hopes to help launch a third-part polling study of festival marketing similar to Cone and Roper's study of cause-related marketing published in 1999.

"I think festivals have a better story to tell even than cause marketing," Ukman said. "The event industry is more and more relevant because everyone is increasingly digitized. They're seeking, ironically, human connections. That's IFEA's business, providing these touch points for people that are not all mediated by the web."