

THE BOARD TABLE



Sharing One Root System

I am often impacted how those of us in IFEA are truly connected by this profession. It's like the aspen trees that can be found across the mountains here in Colorado. Did you know that entire forests of aspen trees that go on for miles are in fact one organism, sharing one root system?

I believe we share one root system. Our root system is comprised of the values and tenets we share as event leaders. Let's look at some of our common standards.

The first is a *Strong Work Ethic*. We are people who will do whatever it takes to get the job done. We never say, "That's not my job!" We have done it all from selling sponsorship to picking-up trash; from dealing with pre-Madonna headliners to holding down tents in thunderstorms. We're the first ones to arrive and the last to leave. Our mantra... "Get 'er Done!"

We have experienced the *Power of Many*. We know all too well, that ultimately our success, the success of our events is dependent upon the team. I am the sum of those around me. From board members to staff to volunteers, we know the only way to achieve success with our events is through teamwork.

We certainly all believe in the *Spirit of Innovation*. As the old adage goes... "Necessity is the mother of invention." And boy can festivals be a mother! Our festivals are like a blank canvas upon which we paint every year. Events require we look outside the box each and every day. Ever morphing challenges, opportunities, and the always popular "Acts of God" are the few constants we

have. And speaking of creativity...Is there anything we can't make...do...or fix with Duct tape and cable ties?

There is no doubt that we also share a *Love of Community*. I'm in sponsorship. I could be selling sponsorship for sport teams, museums and zoos, or musical acts. But over my career, I have gravitated to festivals and events. Why? I mean, there's a lot more money to be made selling a multi-million dollar deal for a professional sports team. I believe the reason I love representing festivals is that there is no more important activity that reflects the character, culture, energy and passions of a community than its special events.

I also believe festival producers have a *Serving Heart*. What a great calling it is to create community celebrations. We truly are contributing to the greater good. I would put our profession on the same par as teachers and social workers. We care about the people we serve. We want to assure that connections are nurtured... cultures celebrated...and that memories are being made. What we do makes a difference and contributes to our communities and we are filled by that.

Needless-to-say, we share a gift for *Laughter*. I have long said that if I cannot have fun doing something, I want to find something else to do. Not every day...but most of the time...what we do is FUN! And we express that through laughter. Lots of what we see and do is in fact quite funny. At other times, not so much. But whether you are raising kids or producing a festival, a sense of humor is essential because sometimes there is nothing else you can do but laugh.

I always try to keep an *Attitude of Gratitude*. "Thank you" is our mantra. We place great importance on expressing appreciation for those who help us achieve our vision. From the highest officials to those who do the most menial task,

a quick smile and thank you is our natural response. And it's not always easy. Even those who crucify our events on Facebook get a somewhat sarcastic "Thank you for your candid and colorful observations. We value the thoughts and opinions of our stakeholders in our ongoing effort to improve the event."

Crucial to our world is the *Importance of family*. What would we do without the love and support of our family and friends? They provide perspective, reprieve, distraction and affirmation for our work. I am quite sure that I would not have survived three decades in this industry without my family.

And one more important aspect of family...free event labor! I've had my family do everything from putting up banners, to sweeping streets, to security duty, to being "banner elves."

The final value I believe we share is *Joy*! I have yet to meet an event producer who does not have a child-like anticipation and excitement for planning and producing an event. Joy is that emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying. What could be better!

I hope that you revel in the creative...cooperative...laugh-filled... meaningful...and joyful nature of what we do and never forget the impact your career as an event professional has had on who YOU are.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your IFEA Board Chairman during the 2012 year. It has been a real privilege.

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