

PEOPLE

Ira L. Rosen, CFEE

Entertainment On Location (EOL) is a full-service event production and consulting company offering cost-effective creative solutions to the challenges faced by events and companies large and small. We have provided services to clients around the world. Some of our current major projects include all of the production work for Wawa, Inc. a regional convenience store chain with 600 stores in 5 states, the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show, the Gettysburg Festival and Temple University's Event Leadership Certificate program. I also provide professional services to the IFEA by acting as a Regional Coordinator and Associate Director of New Business Development.



IN CONVERSATION

How did you get into events?

I started out wanting to be a high school English teacher, but changed career choices after taking a class in teaching English at the high school level taught by someone who had not been inside a high school for 30 years! I discovered my College's concert committee and after working as a stage manager at a concert, I was hooked on what I thought was the entertainment business. From there, I spent my time figuring out to make a living in an industry that was so new, it didn't really have a name or focus.

What has been your biggest professional challenge?

Starting an entrepreneurial venture in a bad economy and keeping it together during good and bad times. We have succeeded in this by never changing our true business values – honesty, integrity and communication. We always tried to have a number of small to medium clients vs. one or two large ones, as with only a few large clients our revenue would be so tied to their success or failure. Paying the bills every Friday is always a challenge for any small business, but our key has been to persevere and never lose sight of our goals. The second challenge is to remain relevant after more than three decades in the industry. I do this by continuously trying to learn more.

Teaching undergraduates has been a great way to do this, as they are constantly asking "why?" and challenging me intellectually. Comfortable is good; complacency is bad! Steve Schmader has a great quote about succeeding in this business by always being a teacher and always being a learner.

What do you do to relax?

My wife and I both love the beach and have traveled around the world looking for the perfect island. (Current favorites are Maui and St. John, USVI). When on vacation, I read a lot and try not to answer my e-mail or cell phone too often!

Other Background Experience

I worked as a Director of College Activities for a number of colleges, then left education and worked at Radio City Music Hall in New York for almost 8 years before starting Entertainment On Location in 1989. In addition to operating EOL, I am back in education, teaching an undergraduate course in Sustainable Event Management at Temple University in Philadelphia.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

One of my first mentors was the late Don Whitely, a fellow member of the IFEA Hall of Fame and the King of Parades. He taught me to always take

FACTS ON FILE

Years in the Business:

35

Degree:

BA – English

MA – Communications

Family:

Married to Ellen Schreck - Rosen

Last book read:

"Fall of Giants"

by Ken Follett

Last business book read:

"Complete Guide to Greener Meetings and Events"

by Sam Goldblatt

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the time to look at the people at my events and recognize the joy that we were bringing to them. This was later reiterated to me by Jean McFaddin, another IFEA Hall of Fame member

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and former Executive Producer of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and the Queen of Parades.

What is your personal philosophy?

The only difference between a CEO and a janitor is circumstances. There are CEOs who are miserable people and janitors who are great people. Treat everyone, no matter what they do for a living, with respect and honesty. Always under promise and over deliver. In spite of everything that we face and all the stresses we encounter in our events, keep smiling and try to find the humor in the worst situations. We exist to provide entertainment to people and after all, that's not a bad thing to do.