

IFEA - A WISE INVESTMENT WITH AN INCREDIBLE ROI



Happy New Year! Are we not glad that 2020 is in our rearview mirror? Yes, 2020 was brutal on the festival and event industry. Yet, like the creative professionals we are, we showed our resilience and fortitude to survive during these extremely difficult times. My pledge for 2021 is to not use the dreaded “C” word that put our entire world on pause for much of the year.

Having said that, it was my honor to serve as your Chair of the 2020 IFEA Foundation Board. It was also my pleasure to work with IFEA President & CEO, Steve Schmader, CFEE, the IFEA staff and more importantly, you - the dedicated event professionals who make up the IFEA membership during the past 12 months.

Steve Schmader and his team not only created new programs that helped guide our industry when we did not know what tomorrow would bring, but was there to support us with resources and education. Words can not express my gratitude for the generous support the IFEA membership showed in return during IFEA Day and the IFEA Foundation Celebration in October.

I often joke that I drew the short straw in 2020 by being the IFEA Foundation Board Chair. If that was the case, then I'm not sure what happened in 2021 as myself and the entire IFEA Foundation Board return to serve as your Foundation Board of Directors once again!

Seriously though, I totally understand that my main responsibility as IFEA Foundation Board Chair is assist the organization generate funds for IFEA and our worthy Scholarship Programs. I, along with my fellow board members accept this challenge and look forward to working with many of you in ensuring the financial viability of IFEA.

Last January, 2020, I wrote, “Here’s my hope: just maybe this year you realize there’s more to IFEA than you were aware of or have taken advantage. And just maybe, when you hear that ‘sales pitch’ you are more inclined to support an organization that provided tremendous value for your investment.”

While these words in retrospect are a bit scary, they are also so very, very true. I am sure we all learned the true value of IFEA last year. So, I do not think you need to hear another sales pitch or plea. Instead let’s take a moment to reflect on the ways IFEA can assist our very own festivals and events.

Networking

I have said it before, but it is worth repeating. I have never met a group of professionals more willing to share than those in the festival and event industry. We treat each other like family, even if it has been months or even years since we have connected. Set a goal to meet five new people in 2021. Do not be afraid to email an IFEA staff or association member. We have all experienced many successes and unfortunately, failures. While we can learn from other’s success stories we can also teach and help our peers avoid the mistakes we made. The great part is, IFEA has always had tremendous networking opportunities and added more in 2020.

Affinity Groups

Here is an easy way to network with your peers in the festival and event industry. IFEA created virtual Affinity Groups last year and were a huge success. They are one-hour, monthly Zoom calls, broken into the following categories: CEOs, Marketing & Promotion, Parades, Volunteers, Sponsorship, Arts and Cities, Operations. The Affinity Groups are a great way to discuss issues and ask questions that others in the industry are also facing. Best of all it is included with your IFEA Membership!

Webinars

Last summer, IFEA expanded their Webinar series to deal with...wait I promised not to use that word. You get the point. IFEA has always used Webinars as a way to bring the classroom to you. This is an efficient way to learn from industry leaders on a variety of topics. You save on travel costs and several staff members can gather around the computer. This year is no different as they continue a great series of Webinars. Again, best of all, the live presentations are included in your IFEA Membership!

Newsletters and Magazines

Take time to read the IFEA newsletters and magazines. They have articles on the latest trends and happenings in the event industry. Understand you may not read every single article, but my guess is you will find at least one article of interest in every issue if you just make time to read.

Professional Products and Resources

IFEA offers a myriad of other resources that can assist your organization. Below are just a few examples:

- Job Bank
- Economic Impact Study
- Safety, Security and Risk Management Audit
- Sponsorship Audit

So, let’s start 2021 on a positive note and let’s all renew our IFEA Membership. As you can see, it is a wise investment with an incredible ROI!

Here’s to a successful 2021!

Kevin Grothe, CFEE

IFEA Foundation Board Chair
Vice President of Sponsorships
Memphis in May International Festival
Memphis, TN