

A
Training Manual
On
Events Decoration

By Debola Lewis

Manual Contents:

Introduction	4
• You really want to become an Events Decorator?	
• Who and what is an Events Decorator?	
• Benefits	
The Business	10
• Choosing your Title	
• Create your Brand	
• Make a Comprehensive Business Plan	
• What Materials do you really require?	
• Basics Start- Up Costs	
Training & Education	11
• Education and Experience	
Events Décor	12
• Weddings	
• Corporate Events	
• Parties	
• Funerals	
• Working with a Theme	
Lets Start the Work	22
• Drapes	
• Lights	
• Table Linen	
• Chair covers	
• Centerpieces	

- Top and Cake Tables
- Props
- Floral Arrangements

Marketing.....34

- Make yourself wanted
- Get Referrals
- Remain Relevant

Managing your Store.....36

- Delivery Checklist
- Store Inventory
- Investments Culture
- Accounting
- Sales

Empowering yourself against White Collar.....41

- Pros and Cons

Be Fruitful and Multiply.....43

- Stand your Brand
- Be Fruitful and Multiply

Wrap Up.....44

Introduction...

You really want to become an Events Decorator?

Life as an events decorator can be a most exciting experience. It is not only very rewarding, but also affords you the opportunity to meet with people from all strata of society. You get to go all sorts of places (venues, etc), and what's more... transforming those places into *breathhtaking sights*.

This training manual will:

- Set you on your marks
- Keep you on track (doing things the right way)
- Show a totally exciting world of business

The most important thing in business, is doing what exactly you love doing, the reward is getting paid for it...*How exciting.*

Starting out a new venture can become a disappointing experience, if you don't feel like you are accomplishing something worthwhile, and if you feel the fun.

This training aims at equipping your mindset, thinking pattern and skills. Even when things are not happening as fast as you expected, you will still have a positive spirit because you have understanding of some basic principles in life, business and God.

The important thing is starting out with a clear picture and plan in mind.

These are the Basics you need for starters!

Set Goals

The very first thing is to set goals for your self, then practice accomplishing those goals. This is the most important thing in starting out a career.

The phases in this business are a lot, but you can understand them easily and fast, if you take time out in the beginning setting up a plan.

Have a Vision

You must have a clear vision of what you want your life to look like once you have a job. Your vision is what keeps you motivated. You need to be able to see your life while in transition, and see the finished masterpiece (you in your new career, enjoying the lifestyle that a career in events decorating has to offer).

...Evelyn Rogers

Be Willing To Ask Others For Help

For this training to run smoothly, you must not hesitate in asking people to help you in any way. It could be from giving you contacts of people already in the business (these are the best to make friends with), to actually referring you. The truth is that people get more fulfillment and enjoyment from a successful venture, which had their contribution when it started.

When you get your family and friends involved, they will be just as excited about your new career as you are, and contribute greatly in helping you stay motivated. However some people are expert in dissuading you, be careful to avoid those ones.

Please don't try to do it all by yourself... asking for help doesn't make you less capable, it only makes you smarter. Imagine combining the wisdom of ten people... "Never underestimate the power of synergy" ...Toyorcey Akerele

We shall start by writing down eight people you can trust with helping you launch a new career. This is a very important step.

8 People I Can Trust With Helping Me Start My Business in Events Decorations

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

That was step 1 taken care of...step 2 is...

Why Do I Want To Become an Events Decorator???

There are 1 million and one reasons why you want to venture into events décor, **BUT** you must be very clear on your motivation level. This can be best achieved discussing with your family and closest friends. We will fill out the form on the next page, with all your reasons for your interest in events décor.

This step is very crucial because there are times when you just want to stay and do nothing, you just get tired and you just don't feel like moving forward. But if your reasons are very clear to you, you will remain motivated...even when you are not yet getting

the reward you imagined. Trust me...it may tarry, but it will surely come.

7 Personally Important Reasons Why Events Décor is what I Really Want To Do

1:

.....
.....
.....

2:

.....
.....
.....

3:

.....
.....
.....

4:

.....
.....
.....

5:

.....
.....
.....

6:

.....
.....
.....

7:

.....

.....
.....
Congratulations, now that you are well convinced about your chosen career, let's get into action.

Who And What Is An Events Decorator?

Decorating an event is the art of transforming a reception venue into something that was only imagined, by individuals. It is the end result of a painstaking effort to creatively beautifying a place, from wedding receptions and conference seminars to funeral ceremonies.

Events Décor is a little related to event planning, because it also involves coordinating aspect of an event in order to achieve a premeditated ambience. The major difference is that it is not fully involved in the detailing and follow-up on event crew. Décor is more concerned with the beauty of tables, the chairs being well set and sometimes covered, the focus (stage), flowers and arrangement types, color coordination...anything to lift the aesthetic of an event.

An Events Decorator is someone who has an obsession for creating a wow effect at any kind of event. The first thing that catches attention, at an event, before the food, drinks etc, is the ambience...which is created by the décor. A lot of individuals and even corporate bodies usually spend substantial amount of money on their events decor, because to large extent it portrays their style and taste (nobody wants to look cheap).

To be successful as an events decorator, you must possess some certain characteristics....

Benefits

There are a lot of benefits in events décor as a business or career.

1. You are your own boss, you decide when you want to work
2. You get to meet people from various social backgrounds. The more creative your work is, the more sophisticated clients you'll meet.
3. You get to create your own brand and be recognized for it
4. You help Nigeria create employment

The Business...

Choosing your Title

Now you are about to get started, you need a name for people to call you by...**A BUSINESS NAME**. It is advisable that your name should be simple and easy to remember. It should nevertheless be catchy (this makes potential clients curious). Your business name should give an insight into the kind of service you are offering, without saying it verbally.

Create your Brand

Your brand is the strongest weapon you have in a competitive market. Your brand distinguishes you from the rest. Your brand is what makes you sought after and preferred to your competition.

Make a Comprehensive Business Plan

Making a business plan is very crucial to establishing any business of any sort. It gives you a sense of direction and makes you attractive to a potential investor.

What Materials do I Really Require?

The real truth is that in the Décor business, you don't need to have a heart thinking of a sophisticated office, state of the art equipment etc. What you need are the basics:

1. A personal computer
2. An all in one printer
3. Mobile phones
4. Basic office supplies (desk, chair, stationery, etc)

Start up Costs

1. You will need a separate home office space and a store to keep your décor materials.
2. Some money to spend on letter head, business cards, brochure, etc
3. Getting internet access is a must in today's world. It keeps you informed and lots of research can be done with it.
4. Business registration fees, graphic designs etc.

Training And Experience...

You definitely need training to be a successful events decorator. Events décor can be broken down into sections in designs apart

form operations. You should endeavor to take seasonal training sessions before you start off and when you have had some experience, you must continually recreate your knowledge and skill.

Your true teacher is your passion and creativity... just about anything you can lay your hands on may create that effect you want.

Events Décor

Weddings

Weddings are very emotional events. It involves a lot of things like personality, family background, social preference, budget etc. It is usually advisable when decorating weddings, to speak with the bride in person. If it was the mother of the bride who hired you, need to make sure you also talk to the bride.

In decorating a wedding reception, first thing to discuss with your "*bride*" is the venue, date and time of reception. Venues to a large extent determine your creativity. Some venues are flexible and can accommodate any design at any time, while others can be very rigid in structure and are run by difficult individuals. It is always a good idea to go take a look at the venue, to ascertain to number of chairs and tables and also types of tables. Time is of the essence, so that you will know how much time you have to turn around your venue into something spectacular.

Having got the venue and time sorted, you can now get personal with your bride. The details you will need from your clients are:

The number of guests to be entertained, choice of colors, wedding theme. To do this effectively you must be very knowledgeable and very creative with color combinations and themes. Colors automatically decide how attractive your venue will look. Usually a bride will hire you months ahead to wedding. Professional decorators prefer this, as they can play around with different concepts and color combinations before narrowing it down.

Decorating a wedding venue can be very overwhelming and detailed. It involves the use of drapes, lights, chair covers table linen, centerpieces, and flowers, etc. these must be properly coordinated to create the desired effect. You must be careful not to overdo it.

A typical setting for a wedding is as follows:

1. The Top table (high table)

This has three major settings. The most conventional is having a very long table that would sit the couple, flanked by parents, the chairman and his wife, and other special guests as deemed by the family. The table should skirted and draped with fabric of choice and have a floral arrangement in the middle, just in front of the couple. The floral arrangement could also on the length of the table, depending on the budget.



Another type is having a table at the center, for the couple with the groom's man and maid of honor. Flanking this table are tables for the parents, chairman and special guests.



The setting I like most is having just the couple on the table with the groom's man and maid of honor. This makes the top table less crowded, and also makes it look very romantic. I always advise, on choosing this setting. The cake is traditionally place to the right in front of the to table (it can be altered to suit your venue arrangement)





1. Seating Plan

First thing to do is agree on the center of the venue where the top table should be. It could be on either the length or breadth side of the venue (the venue could be a hall or marquee). From the top table, you can determine the walkway/aisle. Chairs and tables should be arranged in a balance on either side of the aisle. The walkway may have a red carpet running through, if desired by the bride.



2. Table setting.

Always discuss the number of chairs that should go round a table. Chairs are of various sizes and types, and same goes for tables. In a venue with round banquet tables, 10 armless chairs or 8 cozy chairs can go round it. Rectangular banquet tables, seats 8 or 12 people, depending on the length of the table. You also need to talk about the ambience preference, which is the type and color of table linen, chair covers, centerpieces etc. it is advisable to liaise with the caterer to achieve perfect coordination. You would want to have set your lovely table linen, and have somebody from somewhere put some funny colored stuff on it. Caterers are usually the ones to add that finishing effect with their wine glasses, cutlery placement etc.



Dressing a wedding venue is every decorator's excitement because, when the money is right there's no limit to your creativity and lavishness. But it is very important to keep in mind that a wedding is extremely personal but has definite budgetary constraints. These can often be conflicting situations. The bride

and her mother (usually the two most involved) will have a clear image of how they want the reception to look, which might not always be realistic with their budget. You must be able to sit with the client, get a complete understanding of what they want, and provide them with options that will fit both their vision and budget.

Corporate Events

Corporate events are what I call "small work, big money". Corporate events range from simple seminars, Annual General Meetings (AGM) and product launches, to investors' forum and end of year celebrations.

Corporate parties are somewhat straight forward. You always have to work with the company colors, logo etc. the use of flowers is very minimal, instead you work more with candles, tea light and other creative touches. Corporate events are very prone to themes because they are straighter forward to manage.

Corporate clients expect you to be very confident and professional about your business. When meeting corporate client clients, it's very different from meeting brides. Your language and style must be as professional as creative. This is solely because getting corporate events usually takes a bidding process and since you don't know who your competition is, you just have to be at your very best. What differentiates you is your ability to convince the client that money spent in hiring you is money spent wisely.

It is very useful to have presentation skills, even if they are basic. You can always build up on them as you move on. In designing corporate events, you must understand the following:

- A. What the event is exactly about.(type of event)
- B. What kind of entertainment to expect.
- C. What kind of guests was invited?
- D. What is the budget?

Decorating a corporate event can earn you a very good income, and if you provide comprehensive service and deliver an outstanding event, your client will most likely utilize your service again and even refer you to others.



Parties

A party can be anything from a 10th wedding anniversary, a surprise birthday party to a thanksgiving dinner. Decorating

parties can be a lot of fun; it usually is not as demanding as weddings and corporate events. Most clients like to keep their party simple and nice, nothing to elaborate. Some clients however like to make a statement by having a grand ball, or an especially themed event. This is common in 40th, 50th and 60th birthday celebrations.

Pool parties are also common with parties (any kind of party actually). Surprise parties are sometimes held in the convenience of a living room, or an intimate restaurant. The use of helium balloons works well with surprise parties.

Funerals

There's nothing spectacular about funerals. So we won't flog it. Funerals basically entail decorating the lying in state. Colors are predominantly purple. Other colors are lilac and white. A floral gazebo can make a lying in state look spectacular.

Working with a Theme

Working with a theme is as exciting as demanding. It involves a very high level of imagination and creativity. There are various event themes like oldies theme, nautical theme, earthy romantic theme, aqua theme, winter wonderland, forest theme, traditional theme and many more.

For example, aqua theme would require swaging drapes of voile in aqua and white. The use of strung sea shells as mobiles will give an underwater effect. For the tables, very pale blue linen would be

use to cover the tables. On them would be centerpieces of gold fish in bowls, surrounded by tea light candles or floating carnations in fish bowls.

The title of a theme usually dictates the colors to be used and accessories to match. A good events decorator must be willing to learn and adapt to suit all types of clients.

Let's Start The work

Drapes

We shall take from the basics: Types of fabrics

1. **Cotton:** this is the most ordinary and cheapest of fabrics. It is never used by seasoned professionals; however it can be used for low budget décor. It can be used for swaging on outdoor canopies (not tents). It comes in bundles of 30yards each.
2. **Satin:** Satin is the most flexible of the fabrics, it can be used for almost anything. It has a silky feel and bounces beautifully when swaged. It is often used because it is affordable and flexible; however satin, when not properly managed and ironed can be a disaster to use. It could also be heavy to work with. It is best appreciated when it is brand new. Satin comes in bundles of 50yards each.

- 3. Organza:** This is a very cool material, very transparent, light to work with and has a shiny look with creates effects. Organza is not as flexible as satin, though more expensive. It is best used for stretch designs (backdrops, ceiling drapes), and skirting. Managing organza is very tasking, and once rough can be an eye sore. Organza however does not swag properly. It is used usually for particular designs. It comes in irregular bundles, and is sold per yard.
- 4. Voile:** This is the most expensive of decorative fabrics. It has a transparent but pale look, which gives heavenly effects when used. It is quite flexible, but can be clumsy to work with due to its width (120/ twice satin's). It is used by experienced and seasoned professionals, and for high budget décor. Voile can be used for any kind of design, and always leaves a wow effect. It comes in bundles of 100yards.

Draping a hall is the first step in changing the look of the venue. You choose what type of fabric to use and design you intend to create. See pictures below.



Lights

Lights give a lift to the ambience. They make the venue come alive, the same effect you feel when electricity sized is returned. Lights create a romantic feel, especially for weddings. There all

kinds of lights; fairy lights, rope lights, curtain lights, joy lights, rice lights etc.

Fairy lights are the most flexible for venue décor. They have a stable golden glow, which gives a lift to the ambience. Curtain lights are just like the name says "curtain". They drop down from a focal point and are good for backdrop, depending on the event. Rope lights are runners and are very convenient for Christmas décor. They can be used to create characters on wall due to the flexible nature.





Table Linen

Table linen enhances the quality of your décor. They add a great deal of effect to the set. Tables can be covered in different ways:

1. White or colored brocade with runners
2. white cotton underlay, with an organza overlay (coordinated)
3. white cotton underlay with damask overlay (coordinated)

The type of table linen you choose to use is dependent on:

- your client's budget
- your concept design
- how far you want to go with your creativity and lavishness

Chair covers

Chairs covers were formally seen as wasteful extravagance, but because of the pace of change in perception, taste and exposure to the western culture, it is fast becoming a standard at events. In fact, a wedding without covered chairs may be classified as a bland setting by social standards.

There are two types of chair covers:

- The Fitted: it is sewn to fit a chair perfectly. It looks very graceful, and does not drag on the ground. It is however not flexible as it might not fit various types of chairs and can be expensive to make and maintain.
- The Sack: it is sewn as the name implies...like a sack, usually in satin. It is very flexible and can be worn on any type of chair, but drags at the base of the seat and can get clumsy at times.



Fitted seat covers



Sack seat covers

Centerpieces

A table centerpiece can be anything from petals in a glass vase to flowers on a wrought iron stand. It is totally a reflection of your creative imagination. There is no clear cut rule as to how a centerpiece must look. These are some suggestions on table centerpieces:

- Fish bowl with gold fish
- Fish bowl with floating candles and petals
- Fish bowl with floral posy
- Martini vases with the above options
- Candles with floral base
- High ball vases with floral posy
- Wrought iron stands with floral posy
- Etc

Centerpieces complete the wow effects to an events décor. Different centerpieces are created to suite the appropriate events. E.g. a wedding cannot go wrong with plenty of flowers; and for corporate events, less busy centerpieces such as petals in vases are appropriate.

Never forget to use candle lights for dinners, they are a must.



Top and Cake Tables

Top tables are the focus tables. In a conference or a corporate function, the top table seats the facilitators, guest speakers, special guests and the likes. For social events, you have the celebrants and their special guests on the top tables.



Props

Props are different effects used to spice up a venue. Like centerpieces, they are also a reflection of the decorator's creativity. There are various types of prop:

- Chinese lanterns
- Paper lanterns
- Chinese umbrellas
- Candelabras
- Light cones
- Mobiles
- Earthen pots
- Roman pillars
- Etc

Floral Arrangements

Floral arrangements can be made with either silk flowers (artificial) or life flowers. When flowers are well arranged, they give a magical fairy land look to events; there are various types of floral arrangements, ranging from pedestals to posies and bouquets. Flowers are selected according the design you want to achieve, and also the events colors because flowers have exclusive purposes and messages. Amongst the popular types of flowers are:

Foreign

- Chrysanthemums (various types)
- Roses
- Orchids
- Carnation (standard and spray)
- Gladiolas

- Lilies (various types)
- Star gazers
- Ivy leaves

When arranging flowers, local greens are used as fillers, before the flower buds are arranged in place.

Some of the greens are:

- Togo Fichus
- Moriah
- ferns
- palms
- etc.

Other materials needed for floral arrangements are floral oasis and wire mesh. The steps to arranging a posy are simple and basic:

1. cut your oasis to preferred size
2. cut the wire mesh and wrap round the oasis
3. use short stems of greens to fill the oasis
4. cut to desired shape
5. Fill with flower buds, to flow with the shape of fillers.



Marketing

Make your self wanted

For you to succeed in the décor business you will definitely need customers and your level of success depend on how much you are sought after. Being sought after is a result of the combination of both your work and personality. It is good for people to appreciate your décor, but it is even better for them to appreciate your person. This is what gives you the edge over your competition, however in a corporate scene, you are expected to look and act very professional. Always have a presentation if possible. Your potential clients expect you to know exactly what you are doing and also possess the ability to convince them that they can be comfortable with your judgment.

Your clients will be either from the corporate or social categories. It can be resourceful to find contacts in the corporate world, and word of mouth as mentioned earlier is your best bet for social clients. Promoting yourself for free (through seminars, magazines, etc) is a cost effective way of marketing yourself.

The most important thing is simply to get out and talk to many people as you can. You must be able to sell your abilities, services and personality. The more contacts you develop, the more you are likely to increase your business.

Plan to attend trade shows, join clubs and organizations and socialize as much as possible to meet potential client and business contacts. Get comfortable talking about what you do to every one you meet, and always hand out business cards. Effective

marketing involves networking, advertising, developing your website, and listing your company in news papers that specialize in events.

Plan how you want to sell your company and yourself before you begin. Image is very important in this business.

Get Referrals

Always try to get referrals and testimonials from clients, especially those that were very pleased with your work. The most reliable way of getting more clients is actually through word of mouth referrals. Clients feel more comfortable working with a decorator whose work has been commended by a friend, sister, colleague, etc.

Some organizations require that you present a list of testimonial from previous clients, to make them more comfortable.

Remain Relevant

Competition is very high in events décor, almost every one wants to become a decorator. It is vital to identify your competition, and what they offer, and be able to offer more. Events décor is quite personal, so if you are able to show your clients different levels of creativity, they most likely be comfortable working with you(since they get something different all the time). The message is to constantly strive to recreate new ideas and concepts. This will be your greatest weapon.

You must develop a listening ear for your clients, be able to understand the image they have about their event, their personality, the type of guests expected to attend and budget.

You must possess a creative flair and an artistic nature that sets your skills apart from the rest.

Managing your Store

Delivery Checklist

Decorating an event is very detailed in terms of materials to be used. When you have a job, you should follow a detailed checklist to help you get everything organized. You might not remember everything thing you want to deliver. A delivery checklist is very handy. It not only helps in ensuring that you deliver the right things, but also helps in keeping track of your materials in the event of loss or damages. The table below is a useful checklist to help you get started.

Date/client	Item	Type	Color	Quantity delivered	Quantity returned
01-01-08	Drapes fabric	satin	Blue	5bundles	
Sola Ademo	Chair covers	fitted	Gold	300	
Muson	Tie backs	organza	Blue	300	
	Table linen	cotton	Gold	30	
	Centerpieces	High ball	-	30	
	Bridal chairs	wrought	Gold	2	
	Props	Light box	-	8	
	Carpet	stage	Red	1	
	Candles	Tea light	Blue	60	

Store Inventory

Keeping inventory of your store is as important as being in business at all. Your store is your investment and everything that goes in and out of your store should be recorded. This helps you in many ways:

- you can keep track of your materials
- It will help you prioritize your to get list
- It intimates you of your growth rate
- It keeps you in order

It is advisable to take an inventory of your store once a month or once in two months, depending on how frequent the store traffic is. Below is a form which can be adapted or modified to suit your purpose.

Inventory Checklist

	Candelabra	Silver	40	Needs replacement
Item	Types	Color	Quantity	Comments
Fabrics				
	Satin (50yards)	Green	5 bundles	Pieces left for bows & cake table
		Purple	3 bundles	
		White	4 bundles	
	Organza (100yards)	Blue	3 bundles	
		Pink	1 bundle	
		lilac	6 bundles	
	Voile (100 yards)			
	Chiffon			
Table linen				
	Cotton (banquet)			
	Cotton (regular)	white		
	Damask (banquet)			
		Gold	100	5 badly stained
		Coffee	50	
	Guinea			
		yellow		10 needs repairs
		black		
Centerpieces				
	Fish bowls	-	50	
	Martini vases	-	70	
	High ball vases	-	20	To get 20more
	Wrought iron	Gold	40	

Investment Culture

When in business, is good to understand the law of delayed gratification. The first two or three years should be spent saving and investing. Returns on investment usually take a while, but secures your business and future. You should focus more on building your stock and acquiring more materials. In décor business, the truth is you cannot stop investing. Trends and tastes in the social world change with time each new day, thus continuous savings will afford you the power to acquire new and more creative materials. When you've matured to an extent, your can also broaden your horizon, by buying stocks in your company name and other feasible business. This would ensure a steady income for the company even in a *down time*.

Record keeping and Accounting

Keeping track of your financial records is the key to managing a successful business. You should set a system or structure that effectively keeps track of all your records. It is very important to establish an area (a file cabinet will do) for all your invoices, bills, expenses and clients' itineraries. Set up files for different paperwork, it allows you easy access to information needed.

Accounting can very tricky, especially if you don't have an accounting background. I believe the following steps will make it simple enough:

- Open a file for each client
- Make a list of what you need to purchase including miscellaneous (for every job, the amount of money you want to spend is totally dependent on you).
- Fix the market prices to it.
- Determine your profit margin
- Adjust expenditure where necessary, as suitable.
- Disburse your profit according to your finance structure.
- Document every transaction or purchase made in clients' files.

Sales

Determining how much to charge for your services is entirely up to you, but must consider a lot of things:

1. Who you are marketing your services to. It helps establish a competitive price, at the same time making it affordable.
2. Don't set your prices too low, or you will depreciate the value of your service and appear cheap.
3. Find a price in which you profit, that would also be comfortable with your clients.
4. Do a research on how much your competition charges.

You must be very careful not to sell yourself short. The following formula will give you a better insight.

$$\text{Direct Costs} + \text{Overhead} + \text{Profit} = \text{Your Price}$$

- ⇒ Direct costs imply the actual cost of purchasing materials, flowers, fabrics, table linen etc. Remember to include fringe benefits like transportation.
- ⇒ Overhead refers to the cost of doing business: rent, equipment, utilities, office expenses and administrative costs, marketing and adverts etc.
- ⇒ Profit is an amount calculated over and above direct and indirect expenses; the standard is 15 - 20 percent.

Empowering yourself

The choice you make in becoming self employed is often based on certain basic issues - personal and family needs, financial requirements

Good thing about being self employed is that it affords you the liberty to set your work schedule. You can also have greater flexibility with your family and personal life.

You must however be careful to recognize its disadvantages, so that you can overcome them:

1. The Financial pressure inherent in producing your own income.
2. The absence corporate provided benefits and insurance.
3. The absence of a social working environment
4. Low motivation, due to absence of managerial or corporate pressure.

Even if you have a small office outside of the home, it takes a lot of effort and dedication for you to success as a business man.

The earnings of an events decorator depend largely on their ability to network, socialize and be creative so that your clients always want to use you and also refer you to potential clients. Earnings also depend on the season, festive seasons record higher income for decorators than during Length and Ramadan periods, so it is advisable to imbibe a savings on investment culture (make hay while the sun shines).

The beauty of it all lies in the knowledge that every great thing started small, and your business will

definitely out grow “these disadvantages” having fully empowered yourself with knowledge and zeal.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

Stand your Brand

Being in business is all about building your image. For a client to trust you, it is essential that you present an image of professionalism, creativity and intelligence. You must have a standard of unarguable quality delivery. Try to have signature effects which will be associated with you, and soon your image and reputation will grow.

In addition to creating mind blowing ambience for events, it is important that you dress in a professional manner. A client will be more likely to feel comfortable entrusting you with a large budget if they feel you are experienced enough and trust the professionalism you exhibit through your mannerisms and your dress.

Your brand should project from all your presentations... business cards, letter heads, literature, brochure, staff work clothes (on field). Whatever you do, your brand must represent what you are trying to sell and you **MUST** live up to it. Your brand is your greatest arsenal.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

Now that the business is fully operational, prepare ahead for its growth in an organized manner. If you grow without structure, it is like building a house with poor foundations. No matter how nice it looks, it cannot withstand a storm.

- ✓ Have up to date systems
- ✓ Develop a website
- ✓ Establish your business plan with your attorney
- ✓ Ensure professional accounting is in place

To keep your business going, you should:

- ✓ Posses the ability to sell your skills
- ✓ Enhance your personality and friendliness
- ✓ Improve your communication and computer skills
- ✓ Maintain good relationships with your clients
- ✓ Maintain your integrity

Wrap Up

Starting and maintaining any business in a difficult task. It "separates the boys from the men". You should be receptive to things that can go wrong and opportunities to move to the next level. Your greatest asset is to continually research and learn as much as possible. To be successful requires hard work, motivation and a go getter spirit. Your personality, sales ability and friendly demeanor go a very long way in the industry.

You must be able to give reasons why you should be preferred and defend your creativity, as some client might just put the pressure on you just to see how you'd handle it.

To have a strong business going, don't forget the following:

1. Open a business checking account; never use your personal account for business.
2. Pay all bills by check and note on each what was purchased. This enables analysis of expenditure.
3. Use petty cash sparingly, but keep receipts if you have to. Periodically, write a check to petty cash to keep your records complete.
4. Record all income. Use receipts and invoice to itemize payments received.
5. Deposit receipts often and label your deposit slips. Don't keep cash or checks hanging around, they invite theft and they get lost.
6. Balance your account monthly.
7. Practice good record hygiene. Keep clean, neat and regular records.