Karen Kitchen

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EVENTS & CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT | SPONSORHIPS | EVENT OPERATIONS

Experienced events and partnerships leader with 20+ years delivering conferences, experiential events, sponsorship activations, and stakeholder programs across corporate, nonprofit, hospitality, and destination sectors. Proven in end-to-end event management including planning, budgets, sponsorship, logistics, vendors, production, and on-site execution. Known for building strong relationships and bringing complex events together with a practical, hands-on approach.

Career Highlights

LARGE SCALE EVENT & CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

- Directed the planning, delivery, and operational oversight of 150+ events annually, ranging from meetings and networking functions to multi-day conferences, trade shows, and experiential activations.
- Managed all phases of event delivery including workback planning, budgeting, sponsorship, programming, logistics, production, transportation, accommodations, vendor coordination, staffing, on-site execution, and post-event evaluation.
- Led the planning and delivery of a national three-day buying show featuring 170 vendors and 200+ attendees, including educational sessions, product showcases, awards programming, transportation, entertainment, and off-site activations.

EVENT OPERATIONS & STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

- Coordinated complex event logistics across venues, vendors, sponsors, internal teams, volunteers, contractors, and external partners to ensure timelines and event deliverables remained on track.
- Managed production schedules, vendor requirements, transportation, accommodations, staffing, programming, and on-site logistics while responding to changing priorities and operational issues.
- Worked directly with venues, suppliers, community partners, government organizations, and internal teams to coordinate event requirements and deliver a seamless attendee experience.
- Coordinated speakers, presenters and program participants, including scheduling, communications, presentation requirements, transportation and on-site support.

SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Negotiated and activated sponsorship opportunities, managing partner deliverables and creating meaningful brand and attendee experiences.
- Developed sponsorship packages, experiential activations, partnership opportunities, and event marketing strategies across multiple sectors and event formats.
- Served as a primary relationship lead for sponsors, vendors, venues, stakeholders, and external partners throughout planning and event delivery.

TEAM & OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Led cross-functional teams of staff, volunteers, vendors, and contractors through event planning, setup, execution, and post-event activities.
- Collaborated with operational, sales, marketing, executive, and event teams to coordinate priorities, troubleshoot issues, and maintain a high-quality attendee experience.

- Managed operational budgets exceeding $900K and negotiated vendor agreements, production services, accommodations, transportation, and event logistics.

Related Experience

MARKETING MANAGER – PEAVEY INDUSTRIES LP | 2022-2025

- Directed national marketing, sponsorship, and event initiatives across 90+ retail locations.
- Led end-to-end planning and execution of the organization's three-day national buying show and vendor conference, bringing together 170 vendors and 200+ attendees.
- Managed event workback planning, sponsorships, programming, vendor coordination, production, signage, entertainment, transportation, off-site activities, and stakeholder communications.
- Collaborated with executive leadership, vendors, sponsors, internal teams, and event partners to coordinate deliverables, resolve issues, and deliver a seamless attendee experience.

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT/FOUNDER – TWO SPOONS LTD. |2017-2023 |2025-PRESENT

- Plan and deliver experiential events, tourism activations, sponsorship initiatives, and community programming for clients and organizations across Alberta.
- Created and led the annual Harvest Moon Long Table Dinner, an immersive multi-course event incorporating live entertainment, beverage partnerships, visual activations, and curated guest experiences.
- Manage end-to-end event logistics including budgets, vendors, staffing, volunteers, sponsorships, production timelines, and on-site operations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – HOTELS RED DEER (DMF RED DEER) | 2014-2019

- Led destination marketing, sports tourism development, event attraction, and stakeholder engagement initiatives for the region.
- Coordinated large-scale event and conference opportunities involving government organizations, associations, and tourism partners.
- Facilitated community stakeholder collaboration and promoted Red Deer as a destination for conferences, meetings, and major events.

Governance and Industry

- Board Member, Meeting Planner International, Canada
- Board Member, Meetings Mean Business Canada
- Board Member, Meeting of the Minds – Tourism Industry
- Editorial Contributor – Alberta Meeting & Event Guide
- Editorial Contributor – Canadian Cowboy Magazine

Education & Professional Development

- Digital Marketing Certification – Digital Marketing Institute
- HubSpot Email Marketing Certification (2024)
- Legal Assistant Diploma – Red Deer College
- Ongoing professional development in AI tools, analytics, marketing technology, and communications strategy.

Event & Business Technology

CRM Platforms (Slack, Opera, Delphi) | Canva | Google Analytics | Social Media Advertising | Microsoft Office Suite | Google Workspace | Content Creation & Reporting Tools |Adobe Express | Metricool