

M.E. PRODUCTIONS
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The Life Of The Party!

By Glennis G. Wright

A behind-the-scenes look at one of Florida's premier event planners and the magnificent floral settings it creates.



Christopher Lyon

Event planning is an exciting business, and Ft. Lauderdale's M.E. Productions keeps the excitement building with sophisticated designs; breathtaking décor; and high energy, interactive talent for its clients' special events. More than 500 events per year—small, intimate gatherings of 50 people or huge, corporate events of 3,000 attendees—bear testimony to the satisfaction of this Florida company's customers and the success of its carefully orchestrated planning of both corporate and social events.

Whether a banquet room billowing with fog or a desert sheik's tent is what a client envisions for his or her special event, M.E. Productions can make it happen. The company, owned by Hal Etkin, founder and CEO, and his son James Etkin, president, offers complete production capabilities including floral and other décor, big-name musicians and entertainers, food, staging, and more. Customers can even order corporate gifts from the company. M.E. coordinates events across the United States as well as in other countries. In fact, 60 percent of its events are outside the state of Florida. M.E. has more than 100 in-house party themes, which can be utilized for these events, and a 35,000-square-foot warehouse of props and set pieces. In-house departments such as Florals & Décor, Stage Productions, and Music & Entertainment handle the work smoothly.

M.E. Productions *at a glance*

Owners: Hal Etkin and James Etkin
Locations: Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, and Miami, Fla.
Number of events per year: 500
Number of employees: 80 full time, 20 seasonal part time
Year established: 1975
Annual sales volume: \$10 million

flowers are stars, too

In the Florals & Décor department, flowers for M.E.'s events are all handled from a small area with a permanent staff of three full-time employees and two part-time workers. M.E. Productions' floral administrative director, Christopher Lyon, who began working in the event industry when he moved to Florida 14 years ago, says that some of the floral department's greatest



As M.E. Productions grows, it is finding for events they're planning in other cities. staff with them to produce those events. M.E. regularly works with several hot spots: Doral Golf Resort & Spa in Miami, the Beach, and The Westin Diplomat Reso

pricing perfection

Mr. Lyon shares that M.E.'s minimum investment and it's \$5,000 for a corporate event. \$1,000 is required, then 25 percent cash before the event, 25 percent is due six weeks before the event, 25 percent is due the week of the event. deposit is required, and 75 percent of a week before the event date, with the following the event.

Mr. Lyon reports that M.E. doesn't charge is there a fee if the customer decides made. Labor is included as part of the two months' advance notice is preferred three weeks is more usual nowadays.

doing it all

M.E. Productions is vastly accommodating utilize any segment, or all, of the services. Consequently, the cost of individual events choose to avail themselves of the services includes lighting and other technical equipment only the Florals & Décor department; a destination for their meeting or social events. Entertainers are drawn from the entertainment industry including Bon

event essentials

In addition to floral décor that is required for each event, Christopher Lyon, floral administrative director of