IVY SUMMER SPECIAL EVENTS TENTATIVE BUSINESS PLAN

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for Departmental Honors

by
Ivy Summer Lumpkin
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Thesis written by
Ivy Summer Lumpkin

Approved by

___________________________________________, Advisor

___________________________________________, Chair of Applied Communications

Accepted by

___________________________________________, Dean, Honors College
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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THESIS ANALYSIS

The last two years of my high school career were an elongated foreshadowing of the career choice I pursue today: event planning. Successful semiformal themed dinner parties, Christmas, Saint Patrick’s Day, and surprise birthday parties are only a few events I have planned and executed on my own. I spent the first two years of my college career searching for my passion until I found my niche in Applied Communication and Hospitality Management. My desire to explore an array of occupations in the hospitality industry and my enjoyment in gaining several different experiences in the field have presented numerous opportunities to me. From the very root of my interest in high school to how I seized my internships, semester studying abroad, practicum, and job opportunities is a journey of an analysis that underlies my thesis and business plan.

During my time at Worthington Kilbourne High School (WKHS) in Columbus, Ohio, I preferred hosting large theme dinner parties of about 50 to 60 guests from surrounding districts. From creating a theme to executing the event, I thoroughly enjoyed the responsibilities of planning an event and working independently. As a member of the WKHS News Team, I learned the fundamentals of media messages, advertising, communication, and teamwork. After graduating in 2008, I looked forward to attending Kent State University for four years. Unaware that event planning was based in the professional world, I explored my love for biological sciences. Having changed my course of study seven times bothered my conscience before I discovered the combination of Communication Studies and Hospitality Management. My drive to finish my studies on time inspired me to take summer courses and apply to the Honors College; more than an expression of my dedication to my work, this was also an opportunity to push myself.

The mother of a close friend expressed interest in having an intern during the sum-
mer of 2009, and I gladly took advantage of the offer. Christine Henderson is the Sales and Marketing Director at The Depot Event Facility & Rail Museum in Columbus, Ohio. As an associate, I communicated with leads and prospective clients, booked events, processed payments, and maintained financial records. I also networked with websites to increase publicity of business advertisements, created ads, and planned community events. After my sophomore year, I wanted to venture outside of my comfort zone in Ohio.

In search of a summer internship in 2010, I emailed wedding and event planners in San Francisco, California, and Vail, Colorado, to inquire about gaining experience. Amy Nichols Special Events in San Francisco responded with an offer to intern from May to August, during which I would complete a Distance Learning Financial Accounting course. Internship responsibilities included assisting in writing a wedding planning book, directing and executing weddings onsite, and constructing the marketing, logistics, and business related functions of her business plan, among various other projects. I studied Indian, Jewish, Italian, Chinese, and African wedding traditions and their meanings to add an element of cultural importance to her book. Working alongside a full-service wedding planner while taking an accounting course was beneficial because I learned the responsibilities of managing budgets.

The College of Communication & Information’s Study Abroad Florence Program encouraged me to reach further beyond my comfort zone and demonstrate my ambition. I emailed 30 surrounding event and wedding planning companies. Many responded with welcoming my questions and curiosity. Samuele Gallorini, owner of Il Cerimoniere on the outskirts of Florence, invited me to participate in a short-term internship with his sole proprietorship. I learned a lot about cultural differences in destination wedding planning and the effects of media on a foreigner’s perception of Tuscany. Our face-to-face, Skype, Facebook, and email meetings and interactions produced information and answers to my questions regarding start-up capital, launching a business for the first time, and system of
operations for a sole proprietorship in wedding and event planning.

Swathi Ravichandran, my Hospitality Management advisor, presented me with the opportunity to help execute an Indian wedding at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland about two weeks after my return to the States. I was excited to volunteer for this wedding because I had studied traditional Indian weddings, which last three days, and are among the most intricate of weddings and special events. Five other students and I assisted Durga Chigurupati, the wedding planner, in the 500-person event. This was another uniquely successful event to collect in my portfolio.

Dr. Ravichandran was also very helpful in my search for an internship that would satisfy my Hospitality Management Practicum in the summer session of 2011. The objective of the course: to comprehend and put into practice the components that produce high customer satisfaction rates. I was offered two positions at two separate locations, and I decided to work full-time with Shoreby Club in Bratenahl, Ohio. It was my first time as an employee at a country club, and my Practicum required me to interview the entire management staff, to learn and understand the detailed operations of the private club. As both a grill and banquet server at a private country club, I was committed to making members feel as if they were at home. My responsibilities ranged from tending to special requests in foodservice, such as small parties, buffets, and hors d'oeuvres, to setting up, serving, and cleaning up weddings on the Bluff and resetting the Mansion.

With many lessons learned from my experience in the event planning industry, I still possess a strong desire to achieve the success of a professional event planner and entrepreneur. After graduation from Kent State University in May 2012, I will be preparing for graduate school in fall 2012. I look forward to earning my Master’s of Business Administration while I study the patterns of an ideal population that would be likely to support my event planning company. As a professional, I would like to continue attending the Professional Convention Management Association’s (PCMA) networking events and to exchange
knowledge and beneficial information about the industry. As secretary of KSU Chapter of PCMA, I intend to lead by example and encourage others to make the most of themselves in our industry.

The best way I can lead by example is to apply what I’ve learned from my research and academics to the components of this project. My target market consists primarily of engaged women between the ages of 20 and 40. As I launch my business, I will apply theories and concepts I learned in my Gender and Communication course to strengthen my approach to prospective clients. In situations where the client is not necessarily the person paying for the event and his or her ideas for the event clash with the payer's visions, I can refer to critical theories to understand how the two parties can help come to a compromise, feel satisfied, and even empowered, by the outcome. Brides are typically the center of attention in traditional weddings.

Having learned from Gender and Communication and Conflict Management courses the diligence it takes in successfully facilitating communication between men and women in close relationships, I can effectively resolve miscommunication and relationship issues throughout the planning process. This creates the nature of the customer service aspect of my event planning business.

Often conflict and differences in philosophical thinking can arise from cultural and religious differences. The curricula of my Comparative Religious Thought, Principles of Thinking, and Intercultural Communication courses taught me how to practice various approaches to working with people whose lives differ in multiple ways, think creatively, and predict and understand arguments. Various theoretical approaches pertaining to globalization, religious conversions, and psychoanalysis will enable me to manage cross-cultural marriages and communication that targets the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements to discover clients’ repressed conflicts. Assisting Amy Nichols with her wedding planning book required me to study Indian, Jewish, Italian Catholic, African, Chinese, and
English wedding traditions. The Indian wedding in Cleveland was a perfect experience to which I could apply my research.

The knowledge I acquired from Business and Professional Writing and Legal Issues in the Hospitality Industry will aid me in composing my business plan, professional letters, and press releases. The Legal Issues course also made me more aware of circumstances under which I would need a legal permit in preparing for wedding and reception locations, rituals, special performances, catering arrangements, and many more components of events. Skills I gained from Organizational Communication, Financial Accounting, and Introduction to Entrepreneurship courses give me confidence that I can communicate competently, manage time and finances adequately, and create a strong, successful infrastructure and culture for my operation.

In conclusion, the quintessential passion I manifested as a high school student for event planning grew stronger in my very first freelance experiences coordinating large dinner parties and has evolved over time. Afterwards, I accepted a seasonal position as a sales associate and community event planner. I ventured further into the field of event planning and learned more about the industry on a national scale as I successfully landed an internship in San Francisco that opened my eyes to a new culture and the nature of event management. Even on an international scale during my semester abroad, I found a way to manage my time, work, travel, and complete a short-term internship with a wedding planner on the outskirts of Florence, Italy, which was a new taste of what the profession entails in the heart of a foreign country.

A traditional half-million dollar Indian wedding was an experience in which I exhibited leadership skills in executing tasks, using techniques for crowd control, and learning the significance of tradition and religion. I understand the difference between working with a sole proprietor and a country club in planning events. The Hospitality Management Practicum required me to interview the management staff at Shoreby Club, understand
how the entire club operation works, and how the onsite event planner plays a role in a company. Finally, from actively participating in a national meeting planners organization, networking with suppliers and planners in the event planning industry across the United States and Canada, and demonstrating academic excellence by way of thorough career and religious research, and leadership in independent & group projects, I have developed a strong work ethic. This particular series of experiences over a six-year period gives me a wealth of awareness as a young professional emerging in the field of event planning and confidence that my tentative business plan will yield success.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Company

The desire to be an event planner dates back to Ivy’s first experiences advertising and planning large dinner parties and community events. Other first experiences include a long-term wedding and event planning internship in the San Francisco, a short-term wedding planning internship in Italy, and a University-arranged private country club internship in which Ivy interviewed the management staff to understand how each department contributes to the entire operation of the club. Redesigning the structure of the Amy Nichols Special Events’ business plan and adding details about marketing, logistics, and business-related functions to the plan also add value to the history of Ivy Summer Special Events.

Ivy Summer Special Events (ISSE) is a sole proprietorship and full service wedding and event planning company that provides a complete series of consulting and planning services for various special events. Owner Ivy Summer Lumpkin is an experienced and dedicated professional with five years of event planning experience. As the 2011-12 secretary of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Kent State University Chapter and a third-year student member of the national meeting planners organization, Ivy networked with suppliers and planners in the hospitality and event management industries from across the United States and Canada at PCMA’s Annual Convention in Dallas, Texas, and San Diego, California. From these experiences, Ivy has developed industry relationships early on. She has discussed with a number of planners and suppliers the hardships of and best tips for yielding success as a young professional emerging in the industry. Conveniently growing these beneficial relationships through PCMA even after her college career can provide Ivy’s company with resources and the
many event materials about which her customers will inquire.

**The Market**

The customer base primarily consists of single and engaged women and/or mothers who are typically in their 20s, 30s, or 40s. Julia Wood’s *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture* (9th ed.) presents statistics pertaining to gender and communication that suggest women are more likely than men to take initiative in social gatherings. Women between the ages of 20 and 40 are the target market because they are more likely to seek assistance in planning their special events. Generation X, Generation Y, and Millennials, including individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, are more active than past generations in seeking assistance with special and social events such as weddings, receptions, right of passage ceremonies, extravagant birthdays, and themed celebrations. They have a perceived need to hire a professional who can carry the weight of the responsibility in order to fully relax at the event and enjoy the privilege with complete confidence that the planner has everything and everyone on task, on time, and on track. Many brides and grooms today are paying for their own weddings and special occasions. As the market evolves, people are finding more reasons to host extravagant events beyond weddings.

**Competitive Analysis**

Customers are in search of assistance and coordination for a variety of special events now than ever before. The company’s competitive edge begins with accommodating clients who are interested in weddings, receptions, birthday parties, bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs, graduation parties, anniversary celebrations, dinner parties, and other special events for their spouses, children, friends, family, and themselves. ISSE is unique in that clients have the company’s full and undivided attention. Listening to customers’ needs and vision of their event is essential to work competently with them. The creativity ISSE has to offer will help the client to create the event of their dreams. Our clients’ wishes
become our commands. Whether the client wants a Western, Tropical, Las Vegas, or more traditional wedding, we can make it happen. Services such as consultations, budget planning, answers to etiquette questions, as well as referrals to florists, stylists, entertainers, musicians, and other vendors give clients the necessary resources, such as food, beverage, audio, and visual production providers, to discover quality referrals that comply with their budget.

The Product/Service

Ivy Summer Special Events plans to continue its personally crafted products development which includes items such as string chandeliers, material flowers, ornaments and miscellaneous decor. Inquiries can be made by email, phone, or fax, and services begin with a meet-and-greet followed by a consultation with the client and development of objectives. The client is then presented with a selection of strategies and resources the planner recommends should be used to achieve the objectives in the most safe and cost-efficient manner. Creative concepts and new ideas the planner offers the client derives from the content of the consultation. ISSE formulates a customized plan and recommends one to three event planning packages that best suit the nature of any given event. Ivy Summer Special Events relies primarily on event planning packages and product sales to fund its operations and capital expenditures, some of which may be incurred prior to launching the business.

Value Proposition

Our unique selection of event planning packages is an important element of the company structure and is expected to gain popularity in the event planning market. The convenience of the company’s personally crafted product line benefits both the customer and the company. Customers recognize the years of research and development in improving the products and services which ultimately enhance their offerings to end users. While ISSE creates new products, including centerpieces and table runners, it also
creates brand value.

Management and Organization

Ivy Summer Special Events acquires a management and organization style that allows any given client to be flexible with control over all aspects of a given event by arranging checklists and recommendations for the client. Clients also receive budget planning information specific to a particular event and ISSE determines the most adequate tactics for managing each aspect of the event.
COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Description and Culture

Ivy Summer Special Events, also known as ISSE, is a sole proprietorship that provides consulting and referral services for weddings and special events by Ivy Summer Lumpkin. The company is incorporated in the state of Colorado. As she works from her home office, Ivy’s full-service event planning company typically attracts middle class women and first-time brides ranging from early 20s to early 40s. Customers consist of local and long-distance clients and engaged couples who usually work full-time and value the help of a planner. Success stems from happy clients who provide a wealth of referrals and word-of-mouth advertising. Ivy’s skill in creating and maintaining relationships with vendors and fellow wedding planners have also proved to be essential for the growth of the company. ISSE’s productions are replete with effortless elegance and a stylish, chic twist on well-coordinated details.

Ivy Lumpkin plans to benefit tremendously from media coverage and social media for her business. Ivy Summer Special Events can be found on social networking websites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr.com, each of which is listed as a URL in the appendices. Each site is accessible from the others for convenience.

Her background and diversity of academic and real-world experience with event planning long- and short-term internships in California, Ohio, and Italy, sets Ivy’s business apart from others and allows her to express a unique level of professionalism as well as a wise attitude toward spending money. Ivy worked with Amy Nichols Special Events in San Francisco, California, while completing an online financial accounting course in order to understand both the creative side and the accounting side of event planning. Service and package options include full-service coordination, partial planning,
and month-of coordination. Additional event packages tend to the needs of clients who require specific services for events including, but not limited to, bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs, weddings and receptions, birthday parties, anniversary parties, holiday parties, and renewal of vows ceremonies. Other benefits of her business are a la carte vendor referrals, venue search, and Italian destination weddings, as she also has established connections in Florence, Italy.

Ivy utilizes exceptional project management skills in communication with vendors who can design what her brides envision, and to make sure everyone stays on task and on time. She is indefatigable in providing relaxed, fun, and efficient services. Her company’s philosophy in working with couples encompasses the concept of getting to know them and their relationship, and reflecting the couples’ interests, personalities, and culture in their wedding. Lumpkin’s philosophy about individual clients entails practical reasoning, a pragmatic and realistic approach to the client’s idea with respect to the vision and the best means to achieve the goal.

Ivy’s experience with events at Kent State University Banquet Sales, Shoreby Club, The Depot Trolley and Rail Museum, and weddings with Amy Nichols Special Events and Adhya Productions gives her a well-rounded perspective and has prepared her for planning events of several different styles. Rotational internships with Amy Nichols Special Events and Adhya Productions required Ivy to conduct research for the development of a wedding planning book, religious ceremonies and rituals, a marketing plan, and business-related functions of event planning. Ivy’s connection with a wedding planner on the outskirts of Florence, Italy, sets her company at an advantage to make a couple’s destination wedding a reality.

Currently involved in synchronous projects, Ivy is in the midst of applying for graduate school and networking within the hospitality industry. Her consistent involvement with both the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
national organization and Kent State Chapter has broadened her understanding of how suppliers and planners across the U.S. and Canada work together to create harmony within the industry.

*Industry*

The event planning industry is a segment of the hospitality management industry. Both event planning and hospitality management are growth industries. Changes to be foreseen in these industries involve an increase in customer and traveler volume in specific cities in the U.S., such as Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, Las Vegas, and New York City (Convene, 2011). Ivy Summer Special Events is poised to take advantage of these changes by understanding populations in these booming cities and establishing a respectable reputation in one of them.

*Mission Statement*

Ivy Summer Special Events (ISSE) is a resource for customers who aspire to create the most intricate and intimate of events. The company strives to provide quintessential customer service. To implement the client’s personality and culture into the event is a top priority. ISSE promises to contribute to preserving the elegance of your event and making it the best it can be. Offering a host of packages and services specifically tailored to the needs of its clients, ISSE accommodates an array of customer demands.

*Strengths and Core Competencies*

A well-coordinated and exceptionally executed event for friends, family, coworkers, or communities: everyone wants it, but not everyone finds it. With the right amount of guidance a client needs, a lot of patience, and an eye for details and harmony, Ivy Summer Special Events assures the best of events. Professionalism is within our brand.

What makes ISSE different from others is the knowledge of social and religious traditions and rituals that pave the way for comprehensive, cohesive client meetings and success. Ivy personally brings to the company recommendations for vendors, hotels,
reception halls, and wedding planners for couples who are interested in an Italian destination wedding, a strength her business has over competitors. Other advantages include her knowledge of the Italian language, well-crafted details that complement clients’ vision, budget management techniques, and Italian, Jewish, Italian Catholic, African, Chinese, and English event etiquette and traditions.

Challenges

A great challenge in the event planning industry is social media integration. Other challenges include decreasing budgets while increasing expectations and producing creativity that affects the bottom line for an event. Other challenges for entrepreneurs who launch event planning businesses include marketing online and in print. There are also challenges the “big umbrella,” the hospitality industry, face as well. Among these are decreasing costs for business and clients, implementing green alternatives, and increasing customer, brand, and lifetime values in business development.

Creating a presence in social media now will allow ISSE to develop various relationships with prospective clients, partners, suppliers, and vendors long before the business begins to launch after at least five years in an event planning position at a full-service hotel or resort property. Experience with clients that have different needs and a range of budgets will give the company improved consumer insight and strategies for working with restricted budgets. Should the company seek loans and/or investors, new capital will help Ivy Summer Special Events meet these challenges by providing the company flexibility to invest in more green alternatives for each event as well as company-made materials for clients.

Long-term Plans

Ivy Summer Special Events maintains excellent working relationships with vendors, caterers, and venues throughout northeast and central Ohio, north and south California, and Florence, Italy. Ties with other planners and suppliers across the U.S. and in Italy may
eventually become motivation for the company to expand. The company can only assume as much responsibility as it can handle, and expansion is an option to consider at least five to 10 years after establishing itself in one city first.

Five years after ISSE is in business, the original plan is to consider expansion if and only if the organization is financially secure, in a healthy, stable position, and able to benefit from the decision to expand. Under these circumstances, the staff must consist of at least 4 professional event planners and two planner’s assistants, understand and comply with the original plan for its individuals to relocate to a location that is already affiliated with ISSE. The organization prioritizes the preservation of its culture. Five years from that point, either ISSE will have decided to expand, or not, but will nonetheless remain in operation. In 20 to 30 years from the startup of the business, the staff will remain at a small to medium size.

**Objectives**

Ivy Summer Special Events is honest and loyal to all clients and passionate about the design of events. The company extends its services for clients by introducing personally crafted details and ideas and a preferred list of vendors, caterers, and venues, in effort to create the event style, atmosphere, and experience they desire. A client inquiring about wedding planning who craves control, guidance, recommendations, or just some light advice, can choose from three different wedding planning packages available that can best suit a variety of needs. Clients who are inspired to host a birthday, surprise, rite of passage, or anniversary ceremony can finally find the best resources and planning services specific to their needs with ISSE. These unique qualities together create the culture of the business and inspire its mission statement.
PRODUCT/SERVICE PLAN

Purpose of Products/Services

Event planning services can be used to coordinate the structure, style, management, and organization of an event while removing several large event planning responsibilities from a client’s obligation. Services are available to the consumer market when prospective clients seek the assistance of a professional event planner. Ivy Summer Special Events intentionally creates a need to host all sorts of different events for the consumer market. The numerous event planning packages offered serve the purpose of addressing the needs and desires of customers from different backgrounds and with different budgets. Homemade company products serve the purpose of conveniently proposing clients with chic, stylish decor made in-house as well as creating the opportunity for increasing profit.

Features and Benefits

Event planning services have contributed to the success of most events, and the consumer market is reassured and relieved by the event planner’s role and agenda to ensure the achievement of a client’s objectives. Clients also experience inspiration from event planners’ creative ideas and financial guidance in remaining within a set budget. Ivy Summer Special Events features a selection of homemade products and decor for events available for purchase upon request. Centerpieces, table runners, aesthetic flowers and ornaments, and recyclable decor are a few of several sorts of event products created in-house. The packages and products aim to offer more of a variety to the target market than other event planning businesses. Clients appreciate discounted products and services which result from healthy working relationships with preferred vendors in the industry and in the geographical area.
**Value Proposition**

Certified Meeting Planner (CMP)

Continuous research and product improvements

Continuous networking in the hospitality industry through PCMA

**Facilities**

Ivy Summer Special Events believes that all its production, in-home office facility, and equipment are in exceptional condition and are adequate for the purposes for which they are used. Capital equipment is expected to utilize capacity and meet sales demand. The home office is where company-made products are created for the use of religious, themed, modern, traditional, chic, stylish, and innovative events. All ISSE retail items are produced in-house, primarily within the home office which occupies approximately 800 square feet. The company does not own the facility as the owner, Ivy Summer Lumpkin, works from home. Consultations and meetings with clients take place at a venue of their choice. Other meetings with various vendors include the event planner, the client, and the vendor at their facility or at the venue.

The full-service hotel or resort property at which Ivy Lumpkin holds an event coordinator, special event/wedding planner, or similar position, for at least five years prior to the launch of Ivy Summer Special Events, will be a recommended facility among the preferred vendors/venues list. Should the business move away from Colorado, the hospitality business with which Ivy intends to work prior to the launch of the business will become an optional ISSE destination event planning package, similar to the arrangement ISSE has made with Il Cerimoniere on the outskirts of Florence, Italy. The company's in-house research and development are conducted in a section of the space devoted to administration. Distribution of company-made products occurs directly from the company to the consumer. Orders can be made by phone, email, or fax, and will only be accepted if inquiries are submitted by enlisted clients who have qualified for the receipt of products and
services from ISSE.

*Related Products/Services and Spin-offs*

Any products and services that can be offered by the businesses among the preferred vendors/venues list are considered related products and services. These “spin-off” opportunities of which clients may take advantage are one element of related products and services. The other element may be the inspired and encouraged creative suggestions clients have regarding possible decor, design, and flair for an event. In any situation where the client and/or the event planner creates an opportunity for a new company-made product to add detail to an event, Ivy Summer Special Events will supply the most cost-efficient and socially responsible resources and tools to successfully execute the enhancement to purpose, details, and meaning of the event.

Ivy Summer Special Events can utilize one or more venues for numerous events and eventually benefit from prearranged discounts, possibly including the full-service hotel/resort property where Ivy Summer Lumpkin held an event coordinating/planning position and company-related partners, suppliers, and vendors. These venues and vendors with which ISSE has established healthy working relationships will be the first referrals presented to an inquiring customer. Ivy Summer Special Events will identify for clients which venues require exclusive catering and, when a client invests in a full-service event planning package, ISSE can provide tasting appointments from exclusive caterers.

*Event Planning Packages*

Ivy Summer Special Events is a full-service event consultant and planning company to provide services including, but not limited to, etiquette advice, event scheduling, discounted invitations and products, vendor confirmation, rehearsal attendance, supervision of both ceremony and reception setup and budget planning. Each event planning package is appropriately named after a unique musical term which denotes the meaning of the event. Ivy Summer Special Events offers three wedding planning packages for clients who are
interested in full-service, partial, or month-of planning, and three special event planning packages for clients who are interested in planning birthday/surprise, rite of passage, or anniversary ceremonies. There are planning checklists that are specific to each planning package.

The Classical

Full-service planning ranges between $8,000 and $10,000 and involves vendor recommendations and individual consultations with up to five different vendors arranged by the planner. Clients who seek heavy assistance in planning an event from start to finish, up to one year, will benefit from the full-service planning package.

The Duet

Partial planning ranges between $4,000 and $6,000 and includes the planner in specific weeks of the month for two to six months until the day of the event. This package offers vendor recommendations and individual consultations with up to three vendors arranged by the planner. Clients who seek a balance of control over or have most of their details and ideas decided will benefit most from this type of package.

The Prelude

Month-of planning ranges between $1,500 and $2,000 and pertains to clients who desire either a planner to organize, tweak, put a twist on, or add details of his or her event. Clients who, for any reason, can no longer commit to the responsibilities of coordinating an exceptional event for whatever reason may also choose to invest in a month-of planning package.

The Staccato

Birthday, surprise, and holiday party planning ranges from $300 to $500 and appeals to clients who want to share and/or surprise others with the best experience of the year.

The Mezzo

Rite of passage ceremony planning can cost between $400 and $800 and offers
services to clients who envision a grand celebration for a bar/bat mitzvah, first communion, ritual event, or rite of passage. This planning package also invites clients who celebrate the transition stages of life including, but not limited to, baby showers and wedding showers.

*The Encore*

Anniversary and engagement party planning can range from $500 to $800 and appeals to clients who have invested in ISSE wedding planning packages as well as clients who seek to renew their vows and/or celebrate their successful relationship in a special way.

*Distribution*

Ivy Summer Special Events is not bound to any distribution agreement with any other company. Clients interested in personally crafted retail products by Ivy Summer Special Events may inquire about them after the first consultation during which logistics about time and budget management, venue selection, guests, and activities are discussed. Retail products are featured on the official ISSE blog and Facebook websites but will not be sold online. Featured products include fabric flowers and bows, paper snowflakes, hanging pendant lighting, table runners, and clementine candles.

*Technique*

The process by which planning is executed involves a specific yet flexible timeline for each planning package. The timeline acts as a checklist and organizes clients’ ideas according to their priorities and needs. Service is conveniently accessible for immediate advice while the client is accompanied by an ISSE planner at vendor, cater, and venue visits.

The knowledge Ivy acquired through educational courses, specifically related to gender and communication, organizational communication, understanding arguments, legal issues in the hospitality industry, business and professional writing, and financial accounting, are in direct correlation with event planning, set her apart from competitors, and complement experience acquired through her various freelance and internship projects. The understanding and use of semantics in client meetings affects the level of
appeal in customers to ISSE products and services. This technique in particular can persuade a client’s attitude towards and perception of what the company has to offer. It is the most influential technique in client meetings and most important because the process of competent communication has largely to do with having a way with words.

The two different techniques used in client meetings are the directive approach and the non-directive approach. The directive approach is best used when a client welcomes the planner to control the pacing, climate, formality, and drift of the consultation. This approach is usually more appropriate for clients who invest in either the full-service or partial planning package. The non-directive approach is most effective when a client has significant control over the subject matter, length, climate, and formality of the consultation. Clients who commit to the month-of package, and sometimes partial planning services, tend to be more receptive to this approach.
INDUSTRY RESEARCH AND ECONOMICS

Event Planning Defined

Meetings and conventions bring people together for a common purpose, and meeting and convention planers work to ensure that this purpose is achieved seamlessly. Event planners coordinate every detail of meetings and conventions, from the speakers and meeting location to arranging for printed materials and audiovisual equipment.

Education

Some universities offer college degrees for event planning. Most entrepreneurs in the industry do not obtain one, but many have attended classes and achieved certifications. The majority of event planners were introduced to the industry through catering or business meeting planning before exploring the world of event planning. Along with educations, employers appreciate experience in management, marketing, accounting, and sales.

Getting involved with national organizations provides a network of opportunities to meet people in the industry through conferences and build skills from experience. My goal in education is to pursue a Master’s in Business Administration as well as a Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) certification through the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). Organizations similar to PCMA, such as International Special Events Society (ISES) and Club Management Association of America (CMAA), are reputable research tools for young emerging professionals in the event planning industry.

Career Launch

Networking competently and successfully plays a significant role for young
emerging professionals. Many hospitality management organizations offer manager-in-training (MIT) programs, especially in full-service hotels. My goal in preparing to launch my business is to gain as much experience as possible in an organization as an onsite event manager to acquire the knowledge, confidence, and stability it takes to grow my entrepreneurship. After at least five productive years with a full-service hotel or resort such as Hyatt or Loews, I will anticipate the launch of my business.

Emerging in the Industry

To become a planner takes many years of experience, but not a lot of start-up capital when compared to that of a restaurant business. Asking a bank for a loan is usually only an option when one already owns a business and is seeking to diversify his or her services. Otherwise, it is difficult to prove to a bank that a new business will succeed and pay back loans in due time. Overall start-up costs depend on what services the business intends to offer. The most important equipment needed to merge into the industry includes a laptop, cell phone, internet connection, business cards, Yellow Pages ad, and a good organizer. Another important consideration sole proprietor event planners make is whether they would rather own a limited-service business and outsource catering functions if they are coordinating the entire event, or a full-service event planning business with a fully stocked kitchen and catering service. If an event planner whose business has its own kitchen and catering service is starting from scratch, a rough estimate for liability insurance would be $2,500 or less, especially if the planner can negotiate.

Industry Profile

Meeting, convention, and event planners held about 59,950 jobs in 2010 in the United States. Approximately 27 percent worked for religious, grant-making, civic, professional, and similar organizations; 17 percent worked in accommodations, including hotels and motels; 8 percent worked for educational services, public and private; 3 percent worked for governments; and 6 percent were self-employed. The remaining were employed
by convention and trade show organizing firms and in other industries such as corporate meeting and convention planners. Employment of meeting and convention planners is expected to grow 20 percent over the 2006-16 decade. That's faster than the average for all occupations. While businesses and organizations become increasingly international, meetings and conventions become even more important. Alternatives such as email, video conferencing, and the web, face-to-face interactions remain a necessity.

Associations for industries such as healthcare, in which meeting attendance is required for professionals to maintain their licenses, are the least likely to experience cutbacks during downturns in the economy. Meeting planners are highly susceptible to business cycle fluctuations because meetings are normally among the first expenses cut when budgets are tight. Fortunately, planners are able to move to different industries quite easily if they choose to respond to the growth or declines in particular sectors of the economy.

**Pay and Earnings**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that Colorado's median annual earnings of wage and salary meeting, convention, and event planners in May 2010 were between $47,860 and $51,440. As of May 2010, employment in Colorado is recorded at 1,250 people. Hourly mean wage across the state is $23.72. The annual mean wage statewide is $49,330. Among the list top paying metropolitan areas for this occupation as of May 2010 is Boulder, Colorado, with an hourly mean wage of $28.41 and an annual mean wage of $59,080. North Central Colorado nonmetropolitan area is among U.S. nonmetropolitan areas with the highest employment in this occupation with an hourly mean wage of $21.60 and an annual mean wage of $44,930. The same also has one of the highest concentration of jobs and location quotients in this occupation.

**Nature of Routine**

While preparing for an event, the duties of an event planner includes responding to
inquiries, reviewing and delivering invoices, making arrangements in person and over the phone, or by email, confirming information, and following up usually ends after an event on a date specified on the event contract(s). Accounting is another important component in keeping up with a company’s financial position and astuteness. Event planners are also constantly involved in professional relationships with musicians, florists, caterers, speakers, security, valets, media, and accommodations for disabled guests. My goal is to use a preferred vendors list because ISSE event planning packages offer different numbers of vendors from which to choose based on price.

Planners identify rentals and venue as well as their compatibility for the success in the setup, delivery, and tear down processes. Other responsibilities to be fulfilled before the day of the event include onsite inspections and discussions with the venue managers about the conditions of the venue such as lighting, floor space, construction, and other factors that affect attendee comfort levels. Clients appreciate the planner’s presence throughout the event because it reassures them that the event is under control. Planners must be prepared with alternative plans in the event of an unexpected accident or incident, such as emergency plans, public services and cleanup.

One successful strategy planners apply is the practice of reaching out to new clients while thanking current supporters. While creating a budget, planners need to consider revenue opportunities such as sponsorship, donations, and concession sales as well as expenses including insurance, food, security, permits, and printing. Planning for the size of space for both the event and parking, portable toilets, chairs, tables, tents, bonfires, and other activities is also necessary.

Planning publicity requires a relationship with the media. To increase awareness of an event, a good planner needs to send a press release to the media at least a week prior to the event and a reminder about a week later. An announcement in the company newsletter would also help advertise the event. At the conclusion of the event, a good planner evaluates
the event by attendance and media coverage, identifies missing items on the checklist, focuses on what worked and what needs improvement, and recognizes which vendors should be called upon for future events. In the end, it is important to celebrate the successes and thank those who contributed.

Primary Research


**Interviews**

Amy Nichols, Amy Nichols Special Events Owner (San Francisco, CA)
Durga Chigurupati, Adhya Productions Owner (Cleveland, OH)
Samuele Gallorini, Il Cerimoniere Owner (Florence, Italy)
John Burge, Kent State University Entrepreneur-In-Residence (Kent, OH)
Rachel Herchick, Kirtland Country Club Event Administrator (Willoughby, OH)
Tim LaFleur, Experient Meeting & Event Manager, CMP (Cleveland, OH)
Joan Eisenstodt, Hospitality & Meetings Industry Trainer, Facilitator & Consultant (Washington, D.C)
Allison Ross, Shoreby Club Wedding Planner (Bratenahl, OH)
Nancy Nerhan, Special Events Planner (Half Moon Bay, CA)
Deborah Hermann, Event Producer (Cleveland, OH)
Swathi Ravichandran, Kent State University Hospitality Management Associate Professor (Kent, OH)
Denise Easterling, Kent State University Entrepreneurship Professor (Kent, OH)
Natalie Nemec, Event Manager, CMP (Materials Park, OH)

*Magazines*

MARKETING PLAN

Strategy

Whether clients require a full-service package, or simply consulting on a specific service, Ivy Summer Special Events (ISSE) can help. The company uses a marketing plan strategy that is designed to influence our target market to inquire about services, ultimately close the sale, and promote press releases to local media news outlets. The strategy consists of three aspects to give ISSE a competitive edge: (1) encouraging word-of-mouth advertising, (2) offering multiple packages for several types of events, and (3) approaching advertising with tactics that use passion, experience, and trust to trigger persuasion in the target audience.

The market is driven by the need to host and attend various special events throughout the year including bar mitzvahs, bat mitzvahs, weddings and receptions, birthday parties, anniversary parties, holiday parties, renewal of vows ceremonies, and more. The market is most attracted to event planning services that have been tried and true according to reviews and feedback from friends and family. The business considers what many event services drive the market and offers different packages for each of the several events because they create the opportunity for steady business before and after wedding season.

Ivy Summer Special Events provides its customers with one-stop shopping by aggregating a complete range of event services under one roof. The company competitively positions itself as a premier provider of event services as it will leverage its owner’s expertise in event planning. Ivy Lumpkin has very strong communication skills and active social network accounts such as Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter, which can be found in the appendices, that will help develop the ‘buzz’ about the
high quality of the services offered by ISSE. The company plans to create a presence on Pintrest.com in the future, a social media website from which the business reaps inspiration for its personally crafted products.

The strategy ISSE utilizes in reaching the target market focuses on how to discover prospective clients through target market segmentation based on life-stage and psychographics. Focus on the 20-40 years life-stage and the psychographics that detect outgoing, social, innovative, and creative attitudes is the more specific profile of our ideal niche market. This type of subsegment of the general market has distinctive traits that may provide ideal combinations of benefits. The goal of our strategic marketing is to create messages that attract attention, create interest, persuade, drive action, and provide the promise to execute a client’s vision and exceed expectations. Advertisements also need to be memorable as much of advertising’s impact lies in its delayed effects (Moriarty, 241).

Industry Profile

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 59,950 convention, meeting, and event planners who are either employed in the U.S., and 6% own a similar business to Ivy Summer Special Events. Similar businesses in Colorado cater nine to 12 weddings per year on average. According to First Research, Inc., the 4,000 companies in the U.S. trade show and event planning industry generated a combined annual revenue of more than $9 billion as of November 2011.

Industry Trends

As consumer demand for event planning services increases beyond the realm of weddings and traditionally larger special events, new challenges and opportunities arise for small event planning business owners. Professional event planning services have typically been considered solely necessary for larger special events, but they are just as beneficial for smaller special events. Statistics measure the growth in employment in the industry as well as the increasing demand for coordination of smaller special events, lifetime, and annual
celebrations. Many consumers are willing to use the best available services to make an event one of the best days in a lifetime.

The event planning industry grows at a steady rate between 10 and 15 percent from 2006 to 2010, due in part to the need for meetings, for example, in the pharmaceutical industry. The top paying industries for convention, meeting, and event planning include telecommunications and aerospace product and parts manufacturing, while the industries with the highest levels of employment in the occupation include colleges, universities, professional schools, local government, and traveler accommodation.

Word-of-mouth is the best form of marketing communication for companies similar in size and nature. Planners need to demonstrate that the initial high costs of peculiar services will be balanced out by cost savings in the long run. Ivy Summer Special Events services and products can make this claim. The Better Business Bureau, Angie’s List, referrals, and testimonials from clients are avenues ISSE will use to promote business and express the company’s need to adhere to ethical standards.

Competitive Analysis

Overall economic activity is driven by demand. The manner in which individual companies generate profit is in direct correlation with how they market effectively, manage costs, and retain valuable staff. Large companies established in multiple locations have the advantage of economies of scale in negotiating supply, transportation, and labor contracts. In contrast, small businesses succeed in competition with superior customer service delivery that drives repeat business.

Direct Competition

Competition in the event planning industry is intense. Ivy Summer Special Events is in direct competition with surrounding event planning companies, many of which have substantial financial resources, extensive capabilities and experience in researching and developing effective marketing and personal approaches to the consumer market. Their
established facilities, products, services, and marketing resources also contribute to their ability to compete in the event planning industry.

Indirect Competition

Alternative services, such as linen and furniture rental companies, only capture a fraction of the marketplace. Coincidentally, Ivy Summer Special Events supports and works with such alternative services, and vice versa. Friends and family who aspire to plan and execute an event for a prospective client is sometimes unknowingly competing heavily with professional event planners. Fortunately, successful planners have a network of vendors with which a client can discover the best discounts that may not be offered otherwise.

Future Competition

Future competition includes similar and/or new event planning companies in the surrounding area. Ivy Summer Special Events continues to monitor all relevant research and expects to develop improved tactics for differentiating its products and services.

Growth Potential

The revenue opportunity from selling sponsorships, donations, ad space, and merchandise to Ivy Summer Special Events is sizable as the worldwide meeting, convention, event planning and trade show market is estimated to be over $10 billion. The company hopes to have marketing arrangements with 10 to 15 well-placed businesses, such as Groupon.com, theFoundary.com, and other social buying networks that offer discounted ISSE services and advertising, by the end of ISSE’s third year, which can generate revenues after five years of the launch of the business. While the consumer market, the industry, and the demand for event planning services and products increase simultaneously, the growth rate for opportunities to expand business and to work in various sectors of the industry.
FINANCIAL PLAN

Sales Projections

Sales are projected to grow to $24,000 over the next three years and to over $48,000 in the next six years. Increasing consumer demand is anticipated to develop at a consistent pace over time, and given the company’s geographical location and production capacity, these are reasonable projections.

Income Projections

The company is projecting increasing profitability from the year it launches its products and services and onward. Expense ratios will decline significantly each year due to efficiencies and capacity once additional equipment is in place.

Cash Requirements

The required materials that attribute costs to the total start-up capital include a:

- MacBook Air laptop ($1,600)
- Adobe PhotoShop Elements ($100)
- HD Printer ($200)
- Cell phone unlimited data service ($30/month)
- Ring Central incoming fax/voice messaging ($25/month)
- Website creation and web hosting ($2,000)
- Development of promotional materials ($1,000)
- Business cards ($100)
- Collateral such as printed postcards or client packets ($300)
- Car/gas/mileage ($50/month)
- Advertising costs ($2,000)
- Membership in wedding/event planning associations ($1,000/year)
Hiscox insurance for general liability ($30/month), errors, and omissions ($25/month)
Participation in bridal shows and miscellaneous costs ($2,000)

The total start-up capital required for the first year equates to approximately $12,380. ISSE plans to repay the loan or investor by generating a modest revenue and profit approximately three to five years after the launch of the business.

*Sources of Financing*

No private investors or bank loans are being sought for Ivy Summer Special Events, however, the company will consider grants. Prior to the official start of this business venture, investment dollars will be sought from the event planning position Ivy Lumpkin occupies at a full-service hotel or resort for at least five years. This savings plan will facilitate growth plans for the next five years.
GROWTH PLAN

Personnel Requirements

Ivy Summer Special Events is a sole proprietorship, and Ivy Summer Lumpkin is an independent professional event planner. The company expects to consider and/or begin increasing its staff at least three years after launching products and services to support expanded sales and opportunities. The staff will not exceed four full-time professional event planners and two planning assistants unless the consumer market demands more products and services than four full-time staff members can accommodate.

Exit Strategy

The business strategy of Ivy Summer Special Events is focused on the establishment of key strategic partnerships with vendors, local venues, and marketing partners for the delivery of its services and products to target markets. While this strategy provides Ivy Summer Special Events with the mechanism to rapidly develop and deliver its services and products to the market and maximizes the potential of near-term revenues, it also positions ISSE as an attractive candidate for merger or acquisition. Ivy Lumpkin foresees the possibility and consideration of selling to a larger company or similar-sized competitor between 20 and 30 successful years.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Wedding Timeline/Checklist

12 Months to go

Announce engagement

Arrange for your families to meet, if they haven't already

Set a budget and determine who will be paying for what

Decide on your top budget priorities (i.e. which will get the most money - your gown, the caterer, flowers, photography, etc.)

Choose and book a limousine or classic car company

Create your personalized wedding website

Start your ceremony and reception location search. Determine what is and isn't included with the venue.

Decide what type of wedding you want: style, size, location, time of year/day, etc.

Draft preliminary guest lists: Bride's, Groom's, Bride's family, Groom’s family. Register for engagement gifts.

Gather ideas for your ceremony and reception

If you have a preferred officiant, confirm that your preferred wedding date works with him/her

Start interviewing caterers if it isn’t included with your venue.

Order thank-you notes for engagement gifts

Subscribe to wedding magazines

Book photographer, band

11 Months to go

Set a wedding date.
Interview wedding planners and hire one, if desired

Reserve a ceremony and reception site. Get contracts signed and pay deposit.

Plan engagement party; Begin dress research; Set a wedding date

Create a wedding Web site

Register for gifts prior to your first engagement party and/or shower.

10 Months to go

Determine your wedding’s color palette and theme

Research marriage license and residency requirements if you’re getting married abroad

Select the members of your bridal party

Interview a few other vendors still to make sure of your final decision.

Finalize guest list and mailing addresses (in Excel template)

Reserve a block of rooms for out of town guests

Finalize caterer decision.

   Book caterer, sign a contract, if not already determined by your reception venue. Send a deposit.

9 Months to go

Find out your local marriage license requirements

Schedule the date you’ll go together to apply for your marriage license

Make bridal salon appointments to try on wedding gowns

When you buy your gown make alteration appointments.

If wearing an heirloom gown, clean and schedule alterations

Gather vendor referrals from friends and relatives

Interview officiants

Finalize wedding date; Order and mail save-the-date cards.

Start meeting with vendors – photographers, caterers.
8 Months to go

Start a fitness/workout regimen

Start meeting with vendors - bakers, videographers, florists, bands and DJs.

Contact lighting, tent, restrooms and other rental companies for at-home or outdoor ceremonies/receptions.

For indoor weddings, look into lighting, trees/greenery, lanterns and other rentals.

Delegate agreed responsibilities to your groom

Reserve a block of rooms for out of town guests

Set up appointments with various florists to discuss options

If you have your heart set on a specific vendor (photographer, band, etc.), work to confirm them as soon as possible. Still interview/meet with a few others to be sure.

Choose & notify attendants. Make sure your maid of honor and best man are aware of what you expect of them - providing a list of their duties will help. Also provide them with the names/addresses of the other attendants, especially if they all don't know each other.

Start research wedding invitations. Think about wording/design/color scheme.

Traditional? Modern? Order thank you notes that can be used before and after the wedding (after w/ your new name).

Research and purchase wedding insurance, if necessary, and any liability policies required by your venue.

7 Months to go

Finalize wedding theme and colors

Choose a color scheme - make sure it doesn’t conflict with the reception venue’s décor.

Ask florists if flowers in your color will be in season for your wedding date.

Research wedding customs and traditions

Set up appointments with various florists to discuss options.

Begin looking for a cake designer. Inquire at your reception site if they charge a cake
cutting fee.

If you’re getting married at home, talk to your gardener about landscaping

Interview and get price lists from several photographers and videographers. Determine what photography style you like.

6 Months to go

Book baker and decide on cake flavor, design and style, and send a deposit.

Discuss groom’s cake ideas, if having

Finalize menu & service details with caterer.

Book florist and determine overall style for personal flowers and ceremony and reception décor. Sign a contract and send a deposit.

Start thinking about flower arrangement styles you like for your bouquet and centerpieces.

Book ceremony musicians; Book photographer and videographer. Sign contract & send deposit.

Select ceremony music; consult with officiant

Select ceremony readings

Start auditioning reception bands or DJs; when you are ready, book them, sign the contract, and send a deposit. Try to see the DJ/Band play live. Confirm that the players you saw in person or on the demo tape are the same performers who will play on your wedding day.

Research invitation designs

Select an officiant and discuss ceremony structure and any religious requirements (such as counseling).

Try on dresses and order your wedding dress and accessories. Start thinking about any special undergarments, shoes, and veil.

Finalize your invitation wording and order invitations plus plenty of extras & envelopes.
Reserve calligrapher.

Reserve a hotel room for your wedding night

Set aside blocks of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.

If necessary, update passports

Talk to your maid of honor and best man about party plans (such as the shower and bachelor party).

Order pre-printed napkins, matchbooks, coasters, etc.

Create maps to ceremony and reception locations for enclosure in the invitations.

Start investigating any ethnic customs or cultural traditions you might want to incorporate into your ceremony and reception.

If you haven’t done so already, add all vendor payment dates to your calendar or PDA.

Book rehearsal dinner site and caterer.

Plan “wedding weekend” activities, such as brunches, sporting events, barbecues, children’s events, tours, breakfasts, etc.

Talk to hosts about party plans (shower, bachelor parties, etc).

5 Months to go

Book day of transportation for the bride, groom and bridal party

Select attire for your flower girl(s) and ring bearer(s)

Select bridesmaids’ attire and confirm that each bridesmaid has ordered her dress; Discuss shoes & jewelry options with bridesmaids. Consider wraps if cool weather is a possibility.

Think about specific ceremony and reception decoration needs like a chuppah, aisle runner, etc.

Provide bridal shower guest list to maid-of-honor

Update registry lists for bridal shower

Research honeymoon destinations

Finalize invitation design and order wedding invitations, and don’t forget to order extra
outer-envelopes
Check invitation proof
Book a calligrapher if you haven’t already.
Test drive directions before printing direction cards
  Reserve rental items; Reserve tables, chairs, and/or other rental equipment you’ll need
  (unless caterer or site is taking care of it).

4 Months to go
Book honeymoon
Provide guest address list to calligrapher
Meet with hair and makeup stylists to discuss ideas
Finalize ceremony details - who is providing music, pick readers and readings and songs.
  Book hair/makeup artists for you, your female family members and attendants (if they wish to have their hair/makeup done).
Create song play and do not playlists for your band/DJ.
  Select first dance and other special dance songs. If your band is learning a new song, find out how much advance notice they need.
Schedule dance lessons, if desired
Schedule dress fittings.
Order wedding rings
  Reserve tuxedos for groom (or determine attire), dads and groomsmen; choose and buy accessories you will need: shoes, shirt stays, cuff links, and a pocket square.
Draft wedding program information
Schedule your wedding rehearsal with officiant and bridal party
  If you don’t have one already, ask the ceremony/reception venue for a floor plan so you can plot out the flow of the event & where things will go.
Pick out or design a ketubah or other marriage contract if required by your religion.
Arrange for all insurance policies to include you and your future spouse: health, auto, homeowner’s, and life insurance.

Arrange and finalize wedding-day transportation for you, your wedding party, and guests (as needed).

Consider surveying guests on transportation.

3 Months to go

Attend first dress fitting

Plan rehearsal dinner: book space and order invitations

Order or make wedding favors; Allow extra time for custom-made favors (i.e., chocolates in a preprinted box) or if you plan to make them yourselves.

Purchase guest book/vessel for guest notes

Research signature drink options

Attend pre-marriage counseling or classes, if required

Request time off from work for your honeymoon

Finalize flower arrangements for ceremony, reception and personal flowers

Order wedding programs or start making them if you plan to make them yourself.

Pick up your invitations & give to calligrapher with extra envelopes.

Talk to people you’d want to do special performances or readings as part of your ceremony. Pick songs, readings.

Submit your song “wish list” to your DJ or band along with your list of spotlight dances.

Submit picture “wish list” to photographer.

Arrange for babysitter to watch guests’ kids on wedding day.

Find toasting glasses, cake knives, votives, favors for your wedding. Determine who will deliver to/from venue.

2 Months to go

Mail wedding invitations; Send invitations 6-8 weeks prior to the wedding (longer for
international guests).

Determine first dance, father/daughter dance, mother/son dance songs. Ensure band/DJ can play these songs!

Keep a record of RSVP cards you receive

Arrange parking for the reception.

Send rehearsal-dinner invitations

If you haven’t already, buy or arrange for a guest book.

Arrange for bubbles, sparklers, rose petals if you’re doing a “send off”.

Buy materials for and make place cards (give typed names to the calligrapher if you’re using one)

Schedule a makeup and hair trial. Select gifts for attendants and parents. Attend bridal shower.

Write and mail shower thank-you notes

Grooms: Buy gifts for your best man, groomsmen, and ushers

Brides: Buy gifts for your maid of honor and bridesmaids

Start drafting your wedding vows, if writing your own

Write/create the ceremony program if you haven’t done so already.

Schedule a tasting with your caterer and confirm reception menu

Order liquor, wine, and/or champagne if they’re not included in the catering contract.

Send wedding announcement to local newspaper, if desired

Plan for escort cards. Start a seating chart for a sit-down dinner.

Request your caterer/reception venue’s “A-Team” of servers/waiters and bartenders.

Compile packages for out-of-town guests with wedding information, recommended sites, restaurants, snacks etc.

Ensure that you have all proper liability information in order (additional insurance required by site, parking permits (if applicable), fire marshal, etc.)
Discuss room block “pick-up” with hotel. Add or cancel hotel rooms if necessary, paying attention to contract limitations.

1 Month to go

Draft seating chart

Finish and print ceremony programs, favors, escort cards.

Arrange for a babysitter for the reception, if necessary

Confirm that each bridesmaid has received her dress

Review ceremony details with your officiant

Get cell phone numbers from all vendors for day-of event.

Distribute copies of selected readings and songs to ceremony participants

Apply for a marriage license

Finalize vows

Attend bachelor/bachelorette parties.

Send photo shot list to photographer. Discuss your expectations for photos.

Send do/do not play list to band/DJ.

Write your wedding speech/toast

Prepare bride and groom emergency kits. Assemble guest room gifts for out-of-town guests. Start breaking in your wedding day shoes.

Attend a hair and makeup trial and remember to take pictures of yourself

Schedule a haircut appointment for the groom for the week or two before the wedding

Attend final dress fitting

Start breaking in your wedding shoes.

Pick up your wedding rings

Purchase cake knife

Purchase toasting flutes

Provide the wedding venue and your coordinator with the phone numbers of all vendors.
Provide the coordinator with copies of all final contracts.

Send seating and place cards to calligrapher, or begin to write/print them yourself

Make up welcome gift baskets for guests.

- Get marriage license and make appointments for blood tests (if necessary). Check when the license expires.

- Work on a list of “must-play” (and “do-not play”) songs for your DJ/band

- Confirm wedding-night and honeymoon reservations

- Start putting together the seating plan if you’re having a seated reception meal.

- Make sure your homeowner’s or renter’s insurance covers your rings and gifts.

- Do paperwork for official documents if you are changing your name.

  - Work out wedding-day timing and details (who will get the bride there, where the wedding party will dress, etc) and draw up a schedule with your coordinator.

  - Email your wedding party to relay critical info related to rehearsal and wedding (dates, times, directions, duties)

  - If your officiant is not conducting your rehearsal, make sure someone’s in charge of the rehearsal.

Give your planner the names of all of your attendants and immediate family if you haven’t already.

**1 Week to go**

- Make all final vendor payments and make sure they arrive before wedding day (will alleviate stress on the wedding day).

- Finalize any special preferences, readings, or other ceremony details (in writing) with your officiant.

- Finalize any changes with vendors in writing.

- Pick-up wedding dress from bridal salon

- Give seating chart to caterer, location manager, or host
Discuss music with ceremony musicians and agree on final choices

Have groom and groomsmen pick-up their tuxedos or attire.

Wrap all gifts for the wedding party and write each attendant a nice note.

Prepare toasts or thanks to friends and family

Check in with friends and family giving toasts.

Call guests who haven’t RSVP’d for the wedding and rehearsal dinner.

Finalize seating chart.

   Give the caterer your final head count; Confirm set-up instructions and menu items
   (including vegetarian options).
   If paying by consumption for beverages, review with caterer that waiters should not over
   pour beverages, open bottles in advance or bus glasses that people are still drinking from.
   Confirm head count, delivery time, and location with your baker.
   Confirm delivery locations, times, and final arrangement count with florist. If planning on
   using real flowers on your wedding cake, confirm they’ll be fresh and without pesticides.
   Ask florist to label all bouquets & boutonnieres.
   Confirm location, date, and time with all vendors
   
   Have a follow-up meeting or phone call with the officiant to go over rehearsal dinner
   details and ceremony schedule/timing.
   Send reception location manager and planner final seating chart and drop off seating
   cards.

Give ceremony and reception location managers a vendor contact sheet

   Brides: Make sure you have your garter and “something old, new, borrowed, and blue” if
   you want to include these customs in your wedding.
   
   Confirm wedding day beauty appointments. Confirm wedding day details with all
   vendors. Pack for honeymoon.

Deliver guest room gifts to hotel
If you’re having a receiving line, determine the order you want everyone to stand in

Assign day-of responsibilities to attendants; Determine any wedding day assignments for members of the wedding party, and make lists/info sheets as needed (i.e. what needs to be taken home from the reception)

Call venue and make sure your vendors all have access to the site when they need it

Confirm all final payment amounts with your vendors; mail or drop off any final payments.

Confirm times for all attendants to show up on the wedding day, and where to go

Fax transportation providers a schedule and addressed for pickups on wedding day

Provide transportation company with all addresses and key phone numbers.

Plan any additional night-before activities with friends and/or attendants

Designate someone in your family to help with family photos (corralling family members, making sure everyone is present!).

Arrange for someone to send your wedding dress to a cleaner and return your groom’s tuxedo to the rental store.

**Day Before**

Organize tipping envelopes for officiant and vendors, give to coordinator to distribute.

Attend rehearsal and rehearsal dinner

Drop off ceremony accessories at ceremony site or with a planner – programs, yarmulkes, unity candle, favors, guestbook, pen, etc.

Confirm with people who you expect to give toasts.

Give attendants and parents thank you gifts

Drop off favors, guest book, and pen at the reception site, and any other non-valuables.

Get a manicure, pedicure and massage.

Brides: Pull together wedding gown, veil, shoes, stockings, and a last-minute emergency kit (aspirin, makeup, safety pins, mints, etc)
Confirm all specific honeymoon travel plans (including transportation to airport, etc)

Give wedding announcements to your honor attendant to be mailed on the wedding day

**Wedding Day**

Set aside a private moment together after the ceremony to exchange gifts and a sweet congratulatory kiss (or two)

Thank your parents and others who have helped you!

Relax, smile, and enjoy the day!

Remind designated person to take home & freeze your top layer of wedding cake.

**After the Wedding**

Mail thank you cards to guests within 8 weeks of returning from your honeymoon

Send change-of-address form to post office, if necessary

Change your last name on necessary forms

Story and photo in local paper
Appendix B: Preferred Vendors List

Venues:
Beauty Bar (Denver, CO)
Denver Botanic Gardens (Denver, CO)
The Blending Cellar (Boulder, CO)
Chez Cirque (Greenwood Village, CO)
City Park Recreation Center (Westminster, CO)

Photographers:
Monarch Event Photography (Denver, CO)
Armes Photography, LLC (Denver, CO)
Sweetwater Photography (Denver, CO)
Pixil Studio (Denver, CO)
Tony Gallagher Photography (Denver, CO)

Videographers:
Cinematique Films (Denver, CO)
Raecom Productions (Denver, CO)
Wolff Paw Video (Denver, CO)
Elegant Productions (Breckenridge, CO)
Cinematic Visuals Production/Roz Otsuka Photography (Denver, CO)

Caterers:
Catering By Design (Denver, CO)
Biscuits & Berries (Denver, CO)
Michael's of Denver Fine Catering (Denver, CO)
Lifestyles Catering (Denver, CO)
A Spice of Life Catering Services (Denver, CO; Boulder, CO)
Furniture rentals:

Party Time Rental Inc. (Denver, CO)
Butler Rents (Denver, CO)
Chair Rental (Englewood, CO)
All Seasons Rent All (Greenwood Village, CO)

Musicians:

A.C.E.S. (Denver, CO)
Peneplain Music (Denver, CO)
Amadeus String Quartets and Ensembles (Denver, CO)
Christen Stephens, Flutist (Boulder, CO; Denver, CO; Westminster, CO)
Peek Performances (Denver, CO)

Flowers:

A Design Resource (Denver, CO)
Bridal Budget Bouquet (Westminster, CO)
T’DA Design & Production (Denver, CO)
Lehrer’s Flowers (Denver, CO)
Diz’s Daisies (Denver, CO)

Balloons:

A Memorable Event (Denver, CO)
Uniquely Twisted (Denver, CO)
Zany Entertainments (Denver, CO)
Balloonatics - Printed Balloons (Denver, CO)
Amazing Artworks and Entertainment (Westminster, CO)

Limos:

Your Personal Chauffeur & Concierge Service (Westminster, CO)
A Century Limousine (Denver, CO)
Denver Limo (Denver, CO)

Colorado Airport Transportation, LLC (Denver, CO)

Denver Limo - Ultimate Limo - Denver Airport Shuttle (Denver, CO)

**Shuttle bus rentals:**

Colorado Airport Transportation, LLC (Denver, CO)

Denver Limo - Ultimate Limo - Denver Airport Shuttle (Denver, CO)

Ramblin Express (Colorado Springs, CO; Denver, CO)

Arrow Stage Lines (Denver, CO)

Premier Charters Denver (Denver, CO)
Appendix C: Resume

Ivy Summer Lumpkin
347 Crain Avenue, Kent, Ohio 44240
(614) 570-8884 (cell)
ilumpkin@kent.edu

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a career in the hospitality industry that utilizes acquired leadership skills, industry experience, and academic knowledge.

EDUCATION
Bachelor Of Arts, May 2012
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
Major: Applied Communications
Minor: Hospitality Management
GPA: 3.72  Major GPA: 3.90

SPECIAL SKILLS
Computer: Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Prezi
Certification: TIPS® (2013)

RELATED
Server/Expo, Mad Jack’s Grill & Pub, Aurora, Ohio

EXPERIENCE
December 2011 - Present
Accommodate guests with craft beer, fine wine, and comfort food with a twist; provide abundant product knowledge of all food and beverages served; contribute to guests’ genuine experience and Mad Jack’s upscale-casual ambiance. Handle cash and credit transactions yielding to approximately $1,100 per weekend evening.

Grill Server, Shoreby Club, Bratenahl, Ohio
May - August 2011
Provided exceptional service to club members and their guests; trained in fine dining, casual dining, and events; tended to special requests to meet their needs. Assisted in the set-up, tear down, and services of weekly events throughout the property. Handled cash, credit, and member account transactions daily.

Banquet Server, Oceano Hotel & Spa, Half Moon Bay, California
July – August 2010

Provided quintessential customer service to wedding attendants and hotel & spa guests. Contributed to preserving the beatitude of every event and making the best of every guest’s stay.

Wedding Planning Intern, Amy Nichols Special Events, San Francisco, California
May – August 2010

Assisted Amy Nichols in writing a wedding planning book, directing and executing weddings onsite, and constructing the marketing, logistics, and business-related functions of her business plan among other various research projects.

Sales Associate/Community Event Planner, The Depot Event Facility and Rail Museum, Columbus, OH
June - August 2009

Worked with leads and prospective clients. Networked with websites to increase publicity of business advertisements. Planned and created ads for and hosted community events. Kept financial record and responded to, confirmed with, and updated customers about upcoming events via email and/or phone.
HONORS/Recipient, Dean's List, seven semesters

ACTIVITIES
Recipient, Ebony Achievement Award, February 2012
Homecoming Queen, Kent State University 2011
Member, Professional Convention Management Association, November 2009 - Present
Secretary, Professional Convention Management Association, August 2011 - Present
Public Relations Officer, Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Honors Society, Spring 2011 - Present
4-year Recipient, Oscar Ritchie Scholarship 2008 - 2012
Speaker, 2011 Oscar Ritchie Scholars Guild Induction Ceremony
Participant, Kent State University Florence Study Abroad Program, Spring 2011
Project Manager, PCMA’s Friends & Family Dinner, Fall 2011
Student, Honors College, Winter 2010 - Present
Volunteer, Oxfam World Hunger Banquet, Winter 2010
Volunteer, Annual Fabulous Bistro at the Fabulous Food Show, Cleveland, Ohio, November 2009 - 2011
Appendix D: Ivy Summer Special Events Facebook Page
http://www.facebook.com/IvySummerSpecialEvents

Appendix E: Ivy Summer Special Events Twitter Page
https://twitter.com/#!/IvySummerEvents

Appendix F: Ivy Summer Special Events Blog Page
http://ivysummerspecialevents.tumblr.com/