

**Big Rental Speaks: 19th Annual 30 Top Rental Companies  
Going for 'Wow' and Not 'Whoa!': Smart Gala Design**

# SPECIAL EVENTS

**FALL 2016**

COVER STORY

## *Beyond the Ballroom*

**No venue can top a beautiful hotel ballroom,  
but it doesn't stop there. Here, stunning alternative  
spaces for special events.**

**EXCLUSIVE: 15TH ANNUAL  
50 TOP EVENT COMPANIES  
P. 9**

**DMCs SHARE EVENT  
SECURITY STRATEGIES P. 28**

# 15th ANNUAL

# EVENT COMPANIES

**AR, VR and O2O: The biggest event producers are speaking a new language as exciting new technologies such as virtual reality play a new role in special events. For the latest on what's coming next, read on ...**

EDITED BY LISA HURLEY

COMPANY	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS PER YEAR	ANNUAL REVENUE FROM SPECIAL EVENTS (2016 FORECAST)	NOTEWORTHY EVENTS	TOP TRENDS
<b>AgencyEA</b> Chicago www.agencyea.com	Fergus Rooney, Gabrielle Martinez	100 to 125	\$30 million	In the last year, AgencyEA executed "impressive projects," management says, including Under Armour's Brand House opening in Chicago, Hilton Worldwide's Tru by Hilton brand launch, City/Target's grand opening in Boston, the annual ASU GSV Summit, and ComEd's IceBox Derby. EA also recently opened a new creative space, Savage Smyth: "The venue offers 16,000 square feet of customizable, open space with ample natural light, modern elements and artisan detailing," they say.	"One of the biggest things we're seeing in the marketplace is brands using live events as incredible content feeders—or ways for their brand to generate owned, shareable content," EA management says. "This has truly put events and experiential at the center of the marketing mix, and extends to a brand's approach to measurement as well. The focus is less about the numbers on-site at an event, and more about how that event was able to create shareable content that expands the reach, multiplies impressions, and creates opportunities for measurable impressions."
<b>Allied Experiential</b> New York www.alliedexperiential.com	Matthew Glass	500	\$10 million	With two big programs for Netflix under its belt, including the "House of Cards" campaign center and the "Orange is the New Black" float at pride parades, Allied is increasing its work with other streamed programming, management says.	What's coming: The event industry should be ready for more live-streaming, real-time collection of data through polling and Q&As, more accessible virtual and augmented reality, and an increased use of event apps/CRM software to simplify check-in and registration processes, management says.
<b>AMCI</b> Playa Vista, Calif. www.amciglobal.com	David Stokols	500	\$100 million to \$125 million	Management has been busy opening new driving centers in various corners of the world as well as introducing "the first-ever digital executions including virtual reality, augmented reality, 360, and availability in app stores," they say.	Doing more with less: "Ever more integrated and superior results are produced while budgets and margins are both retracting," management says.
<b>A00 Events</b> Los Angeles www.a00events.com	David Merrell	30 to 50	\$3.5 million	The past year has been busy with Super Bowl events for big-time sponsors and major sales incentive programs for Fortune 500 clients, management says.	"Mobile technology continues to dominate most of the trends for 2016," the A00 team says. "Corporations are going back to last-minute decisions for pulling the trigger on corporate events." Big events are still happening and budgets are increasing, but "forecasting for business owners is getting more and more difficult."
<b>Ashfield Meetings and Events</b> Ivlyland, Pa. www.ashfieldmeetings.com	Gavin Houston	900 to 1,100	\$125 million to \$160 million	Highlights of the past year have included celebrating the first anniversary of Ashfield's creative consultancy brand, Spark Thinking; the relocation of its office into a new space with an emphasis on innovation, collaboration and energy to continue to cultivate a creative mind-set and inspired work environment; publishing the "Science of Meetings" white paper based on independent research looking into the future of meetings; and the launch of an internal employee development program, Future Focus, designed to develop and identify future leaders in the organization to fill critical roles.	Big trends affecting the event and meetings industry include an increased focus on global security; "as the risk is heightened, and travel policies of big organizations react accordingly, fewer delegates will be willing to travel to different events around the world," management says. Other forces at play: the emerging "sharing" economy, the speed at which new technology is adopted, the new possibilities that virtual and augmented reality bring, and the emergence of "positioning" technology. "We have been exploring how best to use the new technologies available to create and enhance sensory and personalized learning journeys," management says. "By personalizing the experience and considering the individual attendee rather than the collective group, you can make it more meaningful and create specific event tracks, specialist interest groups, interactive signage, and personal event maps and programs."
<b>Awestruck Marketing Group</b> Los Angeles, New York www.getawestruck.com	Lawrence Butler, Robin Potash	80 to 100	\$9.5 million	Over the course of the past year the company has continued to drive engagement for clients with "breakthrough creative concepts and best-in-class execution," management says. Noteworthy projects have included a summer tour for LEGO Ninjago, Bravo's "Below Deck Mediterranean" message-in-a-bottle stunt and social sweepstakes, VHT's "Dating Naked" custom billboard at Hollywood and Highland in L.A., Diesel's Denim Master Studio in-store customization events, the New York Rangers Playoff Fan Mobile, and PetSmart's Doggie Ice Cream Social.	Incorporating the newest in social media and technology continues to be important and helps clients get the most out of the events while improving the overall experience for attendees, the company says.
<b>Balich Worldwide Shows</b> Milan, Italy www.balichws.com	Gianmaria Serra	9	\$70 million	This year's event roster has included work on the opening and closing ceremonies for the Summer Olympics in Rio; the third edition of the Intimissimi on Ice Show at the Arena of Verona [Italy] with tenor Andrea Bocelli as a special guest; the re-opening of the Italian Pavilion in the Expo Milano 2015 area, now called EXperience, with the new exposition "Italy, Hymn to the Beauty"; and special celebrations in the UAE.	"We constantly work on the interpretation of different cultures, trying to understand the roots of their traditions in order to represent them in the best way through our shows," management says. "We amaze and speak to people's hearts, making them part of our work. In each show we make possible a direct dialogue and collaboration with locals. We are adopting new formats and models of communication, using different codes and languages. These new formats contain an equilibrium between very different items—like sport, fashion, music, art—and the fusion between modernity and tradition. We love creating immersive experiences and sharing of emotions."
<b>Broadstreet</b> New York www.broadstreet.com	Mark Baltazar	30	\$16 million	Broadstreet points with pride to its work on the annual TV One upfront: "Over two days of events, attendees were invited to join artists and contribute to an ever-expanding and evolving graffiti wall, which served as a one-of-a-kind hands-on focal point," management says. "Participants answered the question 'How do you represent?' by tagging their thoughts directly onto the wall." Following the upfront, the wall was divided into individual art pieces that were delivered to attendees as a constant reminder of TV One and its impact on viewers.	Social media is gaining a huge presence in the meetings/event space with user-generated content in the form of images and storytelling taking center stage, the Broadstreet team says. "Brands want event attendees to be a part of the whole experience, and using social media to generate content is an effective way to immerse them. Audiences have become more media-savvy, and the material they provide is more sophisticated, meaningful and memorable."

# 15th ANNUAL 50 TOP EVENT COMPANIES

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<b>BUCOM International</b> Chicago www.bucom.com	Darlene Kramer	25 to 30	\$10 million	Company points with pride to its nearly 30 years offering logistics and creative services for corporate events, meetings and incentives to "Fortune 500 companies throughout the world," they say.	BUCOM's take on top trends: "The trends we see are meeting attendees looking for creative and superior culinary programs that offer healthy options, all nicely and uniquely presented; creative and cost-effective team-building with some CSR components; and social media as a business tool before, during and after meetings," they say.
<b>CE Group</b> San Antonio www.cegroupinc.net	Janet Holliday	1,000 plus	\$8.6 million	On this year's event roster: Grand opening events for the renovated Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center; Children's Hospital of San Antonio transformation celebration; Corner Store Country Run 5k Fun Run in nine cities; and year-long 110th anniversary celebration for H-E-B grocery company.	CE management points to "the shift to experiential-driven events" as a top trend. "Technology and virtual reality have played a big role, but we still like to include a human touch," they say. "The foodie culture has also become a big trend in events. Guests expect us to include a higher level of culinary and mixology, with chef-driven menus and craft cocktails."
<b>CMS Communications</b> Los Angeles www.cmsbiz.com	Diana Zimmerman	12 to 15	\$8.2 million	While CMS has been busy with events for clients including Firestone, Varian Medical Systems and Shaklee, "We are doing far more consulting," management says, "especially in the area of social marketing and brand strategy."	"Companies remain cost-conscious and not wanting to look as though they are producing extravagant events," management says. "Budgets overall seem to be stabilizing, but not growing."
<b>Corporate Magic</b> Dallas www.corporatemagicinc.com	Jim Kirk	15	\$20 million to \$25 million	Corporate Magic was chosen as the event production company for the grand opening of the Dallas Cowboys' massive new team headquarters, training facility and entertainment/hotel/retail/commercial complex—The Star in Frisco, Texas. The star-studded affair included prominent participation from local high school teams, which will also share the \$1.5 billion facility	"Today, it's all about engaging the audience with new and exciting experiences that reinforce the overall message," management says. "We see an increasing focus on what happens outside the ballroom, not just inside it. Event experiences are becoming more personalized through the use of virtual reality, 3D animation, augmented reality and interactive installations."
<b>CPG</b> St. Louis, Mo. www.cpgagency.com	Keith Alper	6	\$2.5 million	For the sixth year in a row, CPG will execute the Executive Leadership Council's Recognition Galas in Washington. "This special event gathers more than 2,000 guests, including many corporate CEOs, senior executives, thought leaders, etc., to honor individuals and corporations for their support of diversity, inclusion and achievement in business," management says.	"CPG believes you must connect your people to your purpose and provide a communication strategy that helps them easily cascade communications post-event," management says. "Short, inspiring, TED-style talks are replacing keynotes laden with PowerPoint reports. By organizing the seating to promote networking, organizations are connecting their people faster and more effectively."
<b>Department</b> Moscow www.department.com	Pavel Nedostoev	50 to 65	\$7 million	Events over the past year have included the Audi A4 launch using a futuristic dome-shaped shell with virtual reality; the interactive premiere of the MINI Clubman at a multimedia arts museum; and the launch of the Samsung Galaxy S7, where "we immersed the rooms of the old Moscow mansion in the futuristic and technological atmosphere," they say.	Clients react to economic changes in Russia while trying to economize and invest their budgets into events more sensibly, management says. The effectiveness of events is now the top priority. "However, from the experience of 2015 that was rich in its 'wow' projects, there are still expectations of breakthrough creative concepts," they note.
<b>Drury Design Dynamics</b> New York www.drurydesign.com	Jill Drury	15	\$10 million to \$12 million	Highlights of the past year have included the IBM InterConnect Event, which saw 26,000 business partners in attendance in multiple venues in Las Vegas, culminating in a concert from the one and only Elton John. For Johnson & Johnson Vision Care's Acuvue Oasys 1 day HydraLuxe contact lenses, the Drury team created an immersive environment that brought the brand to life: "Our 360-degree experience was inspired by the human eye."	The trends for 2016: More social integration within all aspects of an event, shorter and more visual talks akin to TED talks, and events that "blur the lines" between main-tent sessions, expos and workshops into single spaces, management says. Also on tap: More activations and hands-on experiential marketing opportunities, and complete branding and marketing immersion in all available spaces in the venue (e.g., corridors, elevators, food stations, etc).
<b>E=MC2 Events</b> Calgary, Alberta www.emc2events.com	Jocelyn Flanagan	100	\$12 million	An event highlight: the team produced the Juno Gala Dinner and Awards, honoring the Canadian music industry, for the sixth consecutive year. "Approximately 1,500 artists, industry executives, sponsors, VIPs and local dignitaries attend the ceremony," management says.	"Experiential design has become a greater focus in events as guests and stakeholders are overexposed to technology and have come to expect instantaneous results," management says. "Event experiences must now be carefully curated by event design-ers in order to engage with the lifestyle touch points of the millennial generation." They add, "A big trend is the seemingly organic integration of technology platforms to create branded events and activations that reach guests on a deeper level."
<b>Enterprise Events Group</b> San Rafael, Calif. www.eeginc.com	Richard Calcaterra, Matthew Gillam	103	\$38.4 million	A highlight this year: the client who held a futuristic-theme final-night party for 15,000 at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas during the annual user conference. "Robotic light-up figures, Terminator-style actors in suits, a Starship Troopers-fronted band, and various other themed entertainers delighted attendees for hours at the indoor/outdoor event," the EEG team says.	EEG management points to an uptick in live streaming during events, particularly user/developer conferences, via different software applications, as well as specialized geo-location tags via applications such as Snapchat. "Additionally, we see a continuation of requests from clients to get out of the ballroom and into unique venues: after-hours museums, refurbished warehouses, and concert venues are all on the table, particularly for tech clients." The bad news: "A trend that continues for third parties is the lack of availability and space from hotels and venues."
<b>Eventmakers</b> Toluca Lake, Calif. www.eventmakers.com	Guy Genis, Mark Genis	50 to 75	\$17 million	Notable events have included a multi-city upfront tour for Azteca Latin Network, a new transparent LCD technology used at an E3 exhibit, and collaboration with Chester Bennington from Linkin Park and Dave Navarro from Jane's Addiction and the Red Hot Chili Peppers on a concert for 5,000 GameStop managers.	"This is the year for transparent LCD technology and multiple events utilizing virtual reality technology," management says. "We are collaborating with a major shoe company to produce an in-store VR experience to show off their clothing lines for upcoming seasons."
<b>Eventum Premo</b> Moscow www.eventum-premo.ru	Alexey Berlov, Alexander Shumovich	55	\$9.1 million	Noteworthy events over the past year have included a conference for SAP; the Oriflame Megaforum and Banquet, where the event team put the guests in the middle of the event by using panoramic displays and 360-degree video; and an event in New York for 4,000 guests for Raiffeisenbank.	The digital world is now merged with the real world; "It's evident that this is one world," management says. Second, global marketers recognize that brands with strong values cause intense reactions throughout the world. But to capitalize on this, the event team must take risks, they say.
<b>EventWorks</b> Los Angeles www.eventworks.com	Ted Bowers, Janet Elkins	140	\$7.5 million	Diversity of events and locations has been a recurring theme: Eventworks created a one-of-a-kind carnival and basketball-themed private event in Cleveland; a multi-day corporate event for 2,800 in Oahu; unique social and corporate events along the California coast; an event for the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.; a three-day corporate incentive event on a 37,000-acre working cattle ranch near Missoula, Mont.	Attendee engagement in highly customized, branded and experiential events is now the norm, they say. "Clients are looking to create 'evergreen' experiences and content generated from events that is fresh, relevant, sustainable and lasting post-event, either in social media, traditional marketing channels or internal content. Progressive event decor and design, increasingly sophisticated entertainment experiences, and unique venues lead the charge in these efforts to put a client's brand spin on attendee experiences."



# 15th ANNUAL 50 TOP EVENT COMPANIES

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<b>Extraordinary Events</b> Sherman Oaks, Calif. www.extraordinaryevents.com	Andrea Michaels	40 to 50	\$10 million to \$12 million	Busy this year with grand openings and corporate events, including a massive event and VIP Party for OUE and the grand opening of Skyspace LA and its headline-making Skyslide and 70th floor outdoor observation deck. "The all-day block party celebration set a new benchmark for downtown Los Angeles where 15,000 people came out to enjoy the festival atmosphere," management says. Also busy with events for longtime clients Sysmex Corp. and CEMEX.	It is not team-building anymore, it is "sharing"; we no longer have guests; we have "participants," management says. "We need to deliver experiences that engage and have purpose and meaning. And we have to prove the value of everything we do. Live events have become much of what advertising used to be. With the impact of social media, the age-old adage of 'give them something to write about' means more than ever."
<b>Feats Inc.</b> Baltimore www.featsinc.com	Robyn Kress	130	\$10.7 million to \$13 million	The Feats team has been busy with work for Wellesley College, William and Mary, the University of Wisconsin, MIT and Stanford Medicine, among other top universities. Nonprofit clients included NAF: Be Future Ready, with 716 academies in 36 states, benefiting nearly 90,000 students; and the Heart of the School Awards, celebrating the work of outstanding public school principals.	Generational change presents both an opportunity and a challenge for all organizations looking to engage their crucial constituencies, the Feats team says. "Finding the best way to communicate messages that will resonate with multi-generational audiences and engage them meaningfully in an institution's work will be key to planning and executing impactful events for many years to come."
<b>FIRST</b> New York www.firstagency.com	Maureen Ryan-Fable	180 to 200	\$35 million to \$40 million	Highlights of the year have included the AOL Access Newfront—a festival-style block party in New York's South Street Seaport District, which gave the 3,000-plus attendees access to AOL's brands across 13 immersive activations. Also on the roster: the New York Times New York Summit, which showcased professionals across varied industries discussing their experiences inspiring and leading people in today's work environment.	"Continuing the trajectory seen in 2015, events have grown substantially as the cornerstone of corporate marketing strategies, and engaging influencers at every level is still paramount," management says. "Computer-generated realities continue to be the hot trend moving forward. VR environments are becoming more intricate while augmented reality has simply exploded with the launch of Pokemon Go. We can expect to see AR facial recognition during event registration and virtual floor plans come to life."
<b>Freeman</b> Dallas www.freeman.com	Chris Cavanaugh	5,000 plus	\$287 million	The client roster over the past year has included work for Anheuser-Busch, Jeunesse, Cisco, Marketo and Salesforce.	Freeman has seen a shift towards immersive storytelling, management says. "This includes the incorporation of digital innovations and cutting-edge event technology. Participants want to enjoy a shared experience that is easily shareable through their social networks." Personalization is the key to a successful event. "Throughout the attendee journey, special events also need to tie back to the brand strategy and should be an authentic extension of the brand."
<b>George P. Johnson Experience Marketing</b> Auburn Hills, Mich. www.gpj.com	Chris Meyer	2,300	\$300 million plus (Special Events estimate)	Longtime specialists in experiential marketing, the GPJ team continues to invest in digital tools, data analytics, and creative and live production talent. The agency has acquired boutique experiential agency Pulse220 and made a strategic investment in Latin American agency Mill Publicita. GPJ has expanded its leadership role in experiential services for the technology and automotive sectors, and has made strides into consumer packaged goods, financial services, and food and beverage industries, they say.	The good: Clients are deepening their understanding of and appreciation for solid experiential and event strategy; this is reflected in their willingness to tie their events to their broader marketing efforts in a stronger fashion, management says. The bad: "Many clients still struggle with integrating their event data insights into their other marketing channels."
<b>GMR Marketing</b> New Berlin, Wis. www.gmrmarketing.com	Cameron Parsons	180	\$10 million to \$15 million (Special Events estimate)	The GMR team delivered 20 Super Bowl programs for 13 clients, including fan experiences for SAP, Sonoma County and Chevron, management says. Also busy with SXSX, where GMR created event experiences for Esurance as well as the Warner Bros' upcoming film "Suicide Squad." "Both brands were trending high on social media during the weekend, as Esurance delivered access and prime experiences, while Warner Bros converted a local shop into Harley Quinn's Tattoo Parlor, with GMR inking fans with branded tattoos—both temporary and permanent."	"On a positive note, brands are integrating more pre-, during and post-event communication and touch points," management says. "This approach builds broader awareness, frequency and time with the attendees surrounding the event, as well as reaching others not able to attend." But digital interactions can be too much of a good thing: "The watch-out involves adoption, as many brands are looking to launch native applications or mobile platforms. These are additional platforms for already over-tasked attendees, versus leveraging and integrating within an already adopted event application or web utility."
<b>Go West Creative</b> Nashville, Tenn. www.gwcc.com	David Fischette	70	\$11 million	Busy this year with creative events and content for major brands including Sonic, Petco, Kawasaki and Cox Automotive. "This was also a stellar year for our Spoken Cinema [experiential platform], launching several national social media campaigns, including #wearethelions with the YWCA and United Nations," management says.	Entertainment is exciting, "But I see a return to entertainment for entertainment's sake," warns CEO David Fischette. "We must be storytellers and have a point to our creative. Everything needs to point back to the brand."
<b>Hargrove Inc.</b> Lanham, Md. www.hargroveinc.com	Tim McGill	600	\$80 million	A busy year for the Hargrove team with work at the Democratic National Convention and World Meeting of Families, both in Philadelphia, and the papal visit in Washington. The company continued to support big Washington, including CharityWorks Dream Ball, the Human Rights Campaign National Dinner, Fight for Children's Fight Night, the National Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, and Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Leukemia Ball. In addition to producing the media center at the Iowa Caucuses, 2016 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Summit at Stanford University, Hargrove also partnered with agencies on projects for Bud Light at the Super Bowl and Bud Light and Budweiser at SXSX.	Management points to continuing trends of "fully immersive experiential events with ties to both face-to-face, personalized marketing and social media, and digital integration," they say. "Technology is huge. From virtual reality and digital video mapping to simpler aspects like digital swag bags, digitalization is one of the biggest trends."
<b>Henry V Events</b> Portland, Ore. www.henryvevents.com	Matt Harper	100 plus	\$16 million to \$18 million	The event team was excited to produce a Freightliner national product launch, Adidas U.S. Olympic Trials Athlete Lounge and Innovation Championships, the Tillamook Ice Cream Tour, Pacific Foods Tour, Union Wine Road Trip and Feast Portland.	Human resources and training events are in an upswing for 2016, management says. "Rising costs of travel and venue expenses continue to stretch budgets," they warn, and there are fewer deals for off-season events available. "The smart use of technology continues to be a great way to control costs yet delivery major impact," they note.
<b>Index</b> Bangkok www.indexcreativevillage.com	Kreingkrai Kanjanapokin, Kreingkarn Kanjanapokin	77	\$63 million	The expansion of businesses to the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region—including Myanmar and Vietnam as well as countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia—is fueling demand for a one-stop-service creative marketing solutions approach, management says. The company also organizes concerts and live festivals within Thailand and abroad.	For the event industry in Thailand 2016, "the trend of doing activities that are able to engage between brands and consumers has increased continuously" due to consumers' behaviors on digital platforms, management says. As a result, businesses expand their event formats by adding special activities that enable consumers to get the new experiences both online and offline.

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<b>InVision Communications</b> San Francisco www.iv.com	Rod Mickels	150 to 160	\$65.2 million	The past 12 months of events has included Genentech NSM 2016, EMC World 2016, EMC Global Partner Summit 2016, Amway Achiever Awards, Oracle OpenWorld, Veritas WSMC 2016, Adaptive Path UX Week, MobileIron Mobile First 2016, Gartner Symposium, NetApp Insight, PegaWorld 2016, HPE Discovery London, Cisco C-scape, Kubota Dealer Meeting, Atlassian Summit, Coach SMC, BoxWorks Conference and Freescale NXP Tech Forum.	"A lot of our clients are looking for engagement strategies that increase audience engagement during and beyond the event," management says. "Content is more interactive, shorter and more focused on storytelling, both to capture short attention spans and be memorable. New tech is almost overwhelming event professionals, but we are seeing success when it's used in a seamless, purposeful way that isn't just about being flashy. Some of today's hottest technologies includes virtual reality/augmented reality, wearables, interactive wayfinding, 3D printing, drones, facial recognition and interactive data visualization." And in the face of the tech onslaught, "More conferences are adding 'digital detox' spaces or activities like meditation to help attendees be present and off their devices."
<b>Jack Morton Worldwide</b> Boston www.jackmorton.com	Josh McCall	1,000 plus	\$100 million (Special Events estimate)	This global brand experience agency stressed its creative chops this year by appointing Bruce Henderson chief creative officer. "As an ideas-led agency, the CCO takes a pivotal role, so this was a critical appointment for Jack Morton," management says.	There are "huge opportunities" for immersive technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality to be meaningfully integrated into brand experiences and "beautifully blur the lines between digital and physical, audience and participant," management says, adding, "As more agencies compete for the same space, continuing to grow market share through broader service offerings is a key challenge. Increased competition, combined with increased expectations, requires a constant focus on ensuring that our quality and expertise in all these areas remains world-class."
<b>JHE Production Group</b> Harrisburg, N.C. www.gojhe.com	Jay Howard	350	\$18 million	This year's event roster has included the Google Gravity Games, CMA Music Festival with Big Machine Label Group activations, and the FOX Sports V/USGA putting green in New York for the start of the U.S. Open.	"Partners and consumers are looking for what's different and sets their event apart from others," management says. "We are constantly challenged to develop something new and different for events, whether it's in graphics, activation or other elements within the event."
<b>LEO Events</b> Memphis, Tenn. www.leoevents.com	Cindy Brewer	150	\$15 million to \$17 million	Busy over the past year with Sherwin-Williams Celebration 150, Walmart shareholders meeting, KAA800 festival, 10 annual global events for a major financial services firm, Software AG's global incentive program in Costa Rica, and Krone's BIG X product launch—held on a dairy farm in Florida—and dealer meeting.	The LEO team is applying its expertise in festivals to corporate events. How? "Creating client 'personas' to define your target through mining registration data to make digital work for you; gathering feedback continuously throughout the entire event life cycle to fine-tune content strategy; and taking action on insights so the event becomes audience-curated," they say.
<b>Linkviva</b> Dubai www.linkviva.com	Niousha Ehsan	50	\$20 million	Highlights of the year have included the Vogue Italia fashion show, held by Emaar Properties in the Dubai Mall.	This Dubai-based company explains, "In a rich but transient region where entrepreneurship flourishes and trust is supreme, major clients are looking beyond connections and budgets and are partnering with event companies that can deliver on what they promise—not just what they pitch."
<b>Live Marketing</b> Chicago www.livemarketing.com	Anne Trompeter	25 to 50	\$10 million	Specialties include trade show marketing, activation strategies, product launches, meetings and events, interactive media, content development, and staffing, management says.	"We've been hyper-focused on rethinking the reach of trade shows," management says. "With so many distractions on the trade show floor, it's harder than ever to cut through the clutter and grab the attention of potential prospects. We're particularly excited about direct mobile marketing using geo-location or geo-fence technology. We've had great success combining traditional direct marketing campaigns with at-site mobile marketing."
<b>MGM Resorts Event Productions</b> Las Vegas www.mgmresortsevents.com	Jim Murren	1,300	\$16 million	Highlights of the past year have included the 20th anniversary of the Keep Memory Alive fundraiser held at the MGM Grand; an incentive travel awards gala with 2,400 guests on the tropical shores of Cancun, Mexico; the grand opening of the 20,000-seat T-Mobile Arena on Las Vegas Boulevard; and the largest pool party in the company's history, with 7,500 guests on the Beach at Mandalay Bay.	MGM points to both good trends and bad in today's event world. The good: "Customer spending on reality, F&B, meetings and events has returned to pre-recession levels." And the bad: "Their expectations related to discounts and product availability create fulfillment issues, as their lead times continue to be short."
<b>Next Group</b> Milan, Rome www.nextgroup.eu	Marco Jannarelli	70	\$20 million	Busy over the past year with Best of Belron 2016 (an integrated event for 1,200 guests and an international competition between 27 countries); L'Italia dal vivo (a roadshow for Intesa Sanpaolo Bank); 40 Years in Nogara (celebrating the 40th anniversary of Coca-Cola HBC's biggest bottling factory in Europe and featuring 664 people forming the biggest human "Contour" bottle); and the Nestle Italiana 2016 sales convention (which took management and the sales teams to the Aerospace Logistics Technology Engineering Co. to teach them how to go beyond their limits; the plenary session took place in the Mars Room, a perfect reconstruction of the planet, used for simulations and training astronauts).	Strategy is the strongest trend, management says. "Events are getting more and more integrated in the corporate marketing and communication plans, and the strong focus is on results. Technologies and innovations, which have long belonged to the tactics, are finally being employed as strategic means, not as an end. This is also affecting the relationship between agencies and corporate clients, which is changing for the better: It's getting more that of a partnership than that of supplier-ship."
<b>Opus Events</b> Beaverton, Ore. www.opusagency.com	Monte Wood	900	\$56 million	Thanks in part to an equity investment in the agency last fall, "We doubled both our creative services and event production teams," management says. Opus continues to produce "high-profile, high-level events for clients including Amazon Web Services, Salesforce, EMC, Daimler Trucks North America, and Symantec."	Where business will boom: "We are seeing continued above-average growth among tech-related companies, indicating a high likelihood of consistent experiential marketing spending in that vertical," management says. "Across all markets, we are seeing increased attention paid to the connection between engagement analytics and revenue results."
<b>Pacific Event Productions/PEP Creative</b> San Diego www.pacificevents.com	Joanne Mera	850	\$10 million	Company offers event coordination services across the U.S.	"Revivals seem to be trending this year for events, and bringing in pop culture and themed eras has been very hot in 2016," management says. "We have seen more events bringing back 'old school' themes and borrowing from the media by utilizing superheroes and classic fairy tales."
<b>Party Planners West</b> Culver City, Calif. www.ppwwinc.com	Patricia K. Ryan	25 plus	\$26.7 million	PPW's busy event roster over the past year has included Super Bowl 50 events in San Francisco and Santa Clara, Calif.; the MLB All-Star Game pre-game celebration in San Diego; the BNP Paribas Open hospitality build-outs in Indian Wells, Calif.; and the 2016 NFL Draft in Chicago.	

# 15th ANNUAL 50 TOP EVENT COMPANIES

COMPANY	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS PER YEAR	ANNUAL REVENUE FROM SPECIAL EVENTS (2016 FORECAST)	NOTEWORTHY EVENTS	TOP TRENDS
<b>Paulette Wolf Events and Entertainment</b> Chicago www.paulettewolfvents.com	Jodi Wolf	75 to 100	\$10 million	PWE has had a full slate of events this year including meetings, incentive trips and events for NetApp, Arrow, CDW, IBM and Cisco, multiple product launch events for HMSHost, grand opening events for Plainridge Casino and Hollywood Casino, private anniversary events featuring Keith Urban, Train and Buddy Guy, as well as a concert series for Duke University.	The big trend: Sponsors and event hosts can no longer simply have logos at their event and consider their work done, management says. "Increasingly, innovative experiential marketing, new and expanding digital platforms, and stiffer competition for sponsor dollars have led to a savvy set of decision-makers who have elevated sponsors' ROI, as well as built symbiotic partnerships."
<b>Pico Global Services Ltd.</b> Hong Kong www.pico.com	Lawrence Chia	330	\$340 million	New services, new markets for Pico over the past year: "We delivered a wide variety of marketing-related activities to top companies around the globe, managing cross-country roadshows and media and dealer events, among others," management says. "We also expanded our work into growing markets like art shows, including Morocco Art and Culture, Art Carnival and i Light Marina Bay in Singapore, and Art Central in Hong Kong, along with auction events—providing services for clients including Bonhams, Hanhai Auction, K Auction, Poly Auction and Tokyo Chuo Auction." Other projects have included mega-sporting events such as the Olympics in Rio, work for global car brands such as Aston Martin, Volvo and Ford, and many celebrations for Singapore's 50th anniversary.	"While evermore engaging and seamless O2O [offline to online] campaigns remain the mainstream in terms of the wider business climate, especially in the retail sector, event marketing trends continue to be dominated by technology on all fronts—apps that employ virtual or augmented reality, wearables, geo-caching, and intelligent assistants, to name just a few examples," management says. "In an increasingly connected and technology-savvy world, it is more important than ever to connect with audiences in both the physical and digital spaces."
<b>Podegiki</b> Moscow www.podegiki.ru	Sergey Gorbachev	174	\$9.2 million to \$10.5 million	The year's event roster has included big events for Bayer, Janssen, Johnson & Johnson, PepsiCo, Nivea and Yam.	Three big trends are influencing events today, management says. For one, client expectations are high, which compels event producers to develop thoughtful strategies. Second, the onslaught of tech tools means events can have multiple influences on guests. And finally, a dip in event budgets—especially painful in Russia, where the ruble has fallen—means that clients are more demanding, forcing event agencies to work smarter.
<b>Ruby J Events</b> London, New York www.rubyjevents.com	Joanna Greenfield, Lucie Robins	35 to 40	\$2.5 million	Event highlights in the U.K. have included the first-ever wedding at London's new German Gymnasium, continuing work for the Future Dreams charity, and an upcoming 50th birthday at Kensington Palace. For U.S. clients, the team has handled a VIP hospitality suite at the Olympic Games in Rio, a gala for Friends of the Museum of Israel, and a 25th anniversary gala dinner with 1,200 guests for a big medical services company.	In London: It's all about the details, management says, "from personalized napkins at each place setting to bespoke drinking glasses to serve cocktails. Each event, whether it be social or corporate, wants to know they are treating their guests to little surprises throughout their event." But in New York, bigger is better: "Most events are on a much larger scale, and it is our job to make sure that we control budgets and personalities when bringing the events to life."
<b>Sequoia Productions</b> Los Angeles www.sequoiaprod.com	Cheryl Cecchetto	25 to 40	\$12 million to \$20 million	This year's event roster has included the Academy Awards Governors Ball, Primetime Emmys Governors Ball, Saban Media Center Opening, G'Day USA Gala, AMPAS Governors Awards, and events for San Diego's Horton Plaza Park and Goldman Sachs.	Social media activities incorporated into corporate and entertainment industry events still top the list, the Sequoia team says. But, "The downside is that everyone is so involved in capturing the event via technology that guests are missing out of the experience in real time."
<b>Sobytie</b> Moscow www.so-bytie.ru	Mikhail Struchkov	52	\$3.5 million	Landmark events over the past year have included the 70th anniversary of Victory Day in Moscow and the 150th anniversary celebration of the Moscow-to-Nice route, which connected Russia to France via rail.	What is more important than things? Experiences, this agency says.
<b>Tamar Productions</b> Chicago www.tamarproductionsinc.com	Mary Ann Rose	150 to 200	\$14.5 million	Busy this year with McDonald's Worldwide Convention, Riverside Medical Foundation Gala, Face the Future Foundation Annual Gala, and Chicago Police Foundation Second Annual True Blue event.	"Branding is the top request from most events," management says, and "there is also a trend for not-for-profit organizations to reach out to event professionals to produce their events instead of using volunteers." And let this motto guide your design decisions: "Bling is in!"
<b>Uniplan</b> Cologne, Germany www.uniplan.com	Christian Zimmermann	265	\$49.7 million	The very busy Uniplan team has worked on the Parisian Grand Opening, Lumières Hong Kong, Audi Q7 Launch, Audi A5 Launch, Hong Kong Formula E, 15th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business, Schuller kitchen jubilee, Tourism Australia Aquatic and Coastal Campaign Launch, Art Basel Hong Kong, Volkswagen New Multivan and Caravelle Launch Event, Tahitian Noni Beverages Morinda Summer Conference 2016, Mercedes-AMG Racing Event 2016 GT Asia Shanghai, Cadillac Egg-Centric Challenge, Maserati Levante Regional Launch, Maserati Sneak Preview, and Longines Masters of Hong Kong.	The big trends that the Uniplan team keeps in mind: The Internet of Things (where everyday objects have Internet connectivity); new technologies such as virtual reality; the power of social media (such as WeChat in Asia) and Big Data; individualization and personalization; and hybrid events and pop-ups.
<b>Vok Dams Group</b> Wuppertal, Germany www.vokdams.de	Colja M. Dams	370 plus	\$210 million	Beside noteworthy events all over the world for marquee key accounts such as BMW, Lamborghini, BASF, Jeep, Pepsi, Adidas and Goodyear, the team is proud to have won new clients including IBM, L'Oréal, Siemens and MyAustrian Airline.	The world—and consequently the event industry—is facing upheaval: "Digital transformation, disruption, economy 4.0, the Internet of Things, and Big Data force agencies and clients alike to extend their business models," management says. "The effect of the digital revolution on agencies is the need to introduce agile project management. Agile project management is based on a clear project structuring in conjunction with a self-reliant team organization and the highest degree of flexibility, which is already integrated into the process at the beginning of a project."

**NOTE:** All information is supplied by the companies listed unless otherwise noted. Companies listed oversee production of special events, hiring specialists as needed. *Special Events* estimates are based on interviews by staff, industry experts and other research. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, errors and omissions sometimes occur; it is the policy of *Special Events* to correct such errors promptly. All figures are in U.S. dollars. Should your company be on this list? **Tell us at [info@specialevents.com](mailto:info@specialevents.com).**