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Government Contracting: How to Tackle Rapid Growth and Hiring for Conference and Event Planner Positions

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Part 1

Introduction

One of the primary issues currently facing the hospitality industry involves interaction with the government, as well as government-contracted organizations. Often, the government uses hotels and event centers to hold conferences, and the responsibility for planning these conferences and events usually falls to a contractor. In turn, the contractor must be responsible for hiring qualified planners and personnel, as well as organizing them into work units capable of planning these events. Increased demands by the federal government for a contractor's services can result in rapid growth among the personnel required by the contractor, and 2011 saw an upswing in these very needs, bolstered by the improving economic situation, and additional growth is highly probable in 2012. The management of human resources is not just a matter of finding individuals with certain skills, however; it also involves a variety of issues that are posed when this type of growth becomes apparent, including contract lengths, hiring policies, scheduling of personnel, and meeting specific conference requirements without exceeding a given contract's budget. The contractual and organizational elements surrounding a government conference contract makes private contractors' actions with regard to hiring and rapid growth all the more integral for success, both on individual contracts, as well as within the conference planning industry.

This paper plans to explore the issue of how conference project managers and other leaders working in government contractor positions can best approach the issue of rapid growth and hiring individuals for event and conference planning roles. In order to more thoroughly explore this problem, this paper will employ several strategies.
Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop guidelines to hire meeting, conference and event planners for federal government conferences.

Problem Statement

There are a variety of issues that confront government contractors when they are presented with a contract that involves the planning of a conference or event that are related to hiring planners. The most obvious is finding qualified personnel to meet the needs of the project, and who would be willing to take on a contract to plan the event. While some contracts with the federal government may have extended durations of up to five years or more, many are much shorter, and may be for only a few months, complicating the issue of hiring experienced managers who may desire a longer term of employment, or one guaranteed to be more stable. Depending on the state of the government budget, allotments for conferences can vary, requiring conference planners to anticipate and be capable of working with varying event requirements and resources. Often, finding a hotel and planning a conference can be a last-minute affair, meaning that individuals that are hired must be capable of working within high-pressure environments and have flexible approaches to problem-solving. Hiring additional individuals at the management and planning levels can help government contractors anticipate these short-notice contracts and events, but having an overabundance of employees can create unnecessary drains on financial and organizational resources. This makes the timing of hiring individuals essential for ensuring the proper balance of personnel, as having too few or too many employees can be equally harmful. The contracting organization must also decide whether positions would work best as on-call or part-time employment opportunities, which may also influence the organization's
ability to find qualified individuals to fill these roles.

**Justification**

Private contractors are often tasked by the United States government to provide the planning services for conferences, events, and trade shows, which may be financed either through the charging of attendees, sponsors, and exhibitors, or by compensation charged to the federal government itself (Kepplinger, 2007). These organizations must strive to hire the correct amount of employees for appropriate durations, as well as to place them in employment capacities that will allow them to utilize their skills without inadvertently creating a drain on organizational resources. This study will demonstrate how these issues can be addressed in such a way as to create tactical and strategic success for contracting organizations. These resolutions will also allow planning managers to improve, expand, and refine their skill-sets, helping them to grow as workers, and making them more likely to work with contractors in long-term arrangements; the last of these factors is particularly important in an industry whose unpredictability can complicate the fostering of organizational loyalty among employees.

**Constraints**

As with any research study, the present one is not without its constraints, which, far from being a detriment, help to define its scope. Although conference planning and government contracting are both fairly large fields, both of which have generated their own large volumes of research, the present study will limit itself to considering government contracting organizations that provide conference and event planning services to the federal government. This will help to keep the study focused on the problem at hand, as well as to unique issues that may only affect these organizations to any great extent. For the same reason, while these contractors must hire
many individuals in order to successfully plan and execute a conference, only those hiring and personnel management practices related to planning managers will be discussed. Information related to hiring and management of all employees will only be considered when it is of a broader nature that would still be of benefit and applicability to planning managers.

There are some external constraints that affect this study, as well. These constraints relate to the type of data that is covered in the literature to be reviewed. Due to the relatively small number of government contractors that perform event planning, there has been little quantitative assessment of the rapid growth affecting this industry in recent years, which can sometimes limit the data provided to having case studies as their origin. Additionally, at times, conclusions and recommendations must be derived from research conducted in the broader field of hiring management-level personnel, although every effort will be made to ensure that these findings are applicable to the specific problem discussed here.
Part Two

Introduction

This literature review uses both peer-reviewed research and case studies to determine how government contractors and other events planning organizations have met conference requirements through their hiring strategies, and how their personnel management strategies have addressed the challenges of the ever-changing nature of government contracts for conference and events planning. From this information, it will be possible to create a set of best practices for use for government contractors that are in the conference planning industry, benefiting both these organizations and the hospitality organizations where these events are held.

Much of the literature related to the management of human resources has focused on ensuring a fit between employees and their positions, and this becomes particularly important in the field of events planning management. Difficulties can arise because qualified personnel are a necessity for these positions, but variable contract durations and other uncertainties may pose difficulties in hiring personnel that may wish to obtain more permanent employment. Hiring practices must therefore not only strive to obtain qualified events managers, but it must do so in a way that the position will appeal to them, even if the employment is only for a limited duration of time.

Challenges of the Contracting Environment

The government contractor industry faces unique challenges that must be addressed through personnel management, as the flexible nature of contracts can create rapid increases in workforce need at some points. Temporary employment, as described in an analysis by Wenger and Kalleberg (2006), tends to be subject to quarterly cycles, but is also contingent upon
employers’ desires to achieve numeric flexibility in the workforce. They caution that, during a recession, hiring temporary employees to attain this flexibility may be disadvantageous from an economic standpoint, and that wage flexibility may be a better option for employers, as this option does not sacrifice the ability to hire permanent employees (Wenger & Kalleberg, 2006). Government contracts, in particular, tend to increase the hiring of temporary employees, according to a case study by Akingbola (2004). However, this form of hiring can be deleterious in terms of the permanence of other employees, as well as for the ability for the agency in this case study to provide services on an effective basis (Akingbola, 2004). Rather than striving to hire temporary employees, these studies suggest that government contractors could benefit from a flexible pool of permanent employees, some of whom may work in part-time or on-call bases until contracts demand a larger work output.

The nature of events planning management work on a contractual basis produces effects on the organizations themselves, as well. Although government contractors are subject to organizational change, few organizations are actually prepared for making these changes, and according to (Buono & Kerber 2010), only one-third of change initiatives are viewed as successful by organizational leaders. Planned changes, such as workforce flexibility, can be implemented, but generally require an infrastructure and employee culture that is able to accommodate this type of change (Buono & Kerber, 2010). Thompson and Cavalieri (2010) add that sustainability is essential for managing growth in an organization, particularly rapid growth. These claims could have consequences for contractor organizations; although a series of favorable contracts could create a need for more personnel, these organizations must determine which strategies of workforce expansion would allow for these organizations to grow in a
sustainable manner.

**Hiring Practices**

Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, Phillips, and Odman (2011) suggest creating a set of core competencies that would be desirable for qualified candidates, which will match with a highly granular set of events planning requirements. Rather than asking employees what these core competencies should be, Campion et al. (2011) contend that they should be developed from the top down, with the input of upper executives in the organization. Samnani & Singh (2011), however, state that employee “fit” with the environment and business strategy is more important than striving for ensuring that a rigid set of core competencies be created. They note that providing rewards for job performance and making provisions for job training will attract qualified employees to a greater degree than stringent hiring practices (Samnani and Singh, 2011). Due to the short notice that many government contracted events planning jobs have, job training may not be an option, but rewarding job performance may be an enticement for qualified managers that may be reluctant to work in a position that does not promise permanent employment.

The nature of hiring practices for government contractors must take into account the potential for abrupt changes in workforce demand. Collings, Demirbag, Mellahi, and Tatoglu (2010) state that organizations that have the capacity for rapid growth should opt to take a “best fit” approach similar to that recommended by (Samnani & Singh, 2011), and to avoid stringent hiring practices that would sacrifice flexibility. While some contractors may believe that it would be optimal to hire a large staff of events managers to be on-hand when contracts are negotiated, Ghosh, Willinger, and Ghosh (2009) state that under these circumstances, even when there is low
uncertainty about the ability to obtain contracts, organizations tend to benefit more from hiring non-standard employees, on a contractual basis. This allows for tighter, more efficacious management of human resources, and greater profitability (Ghosh et al., 2009). Elangovan, Anantharaj, and Sathiyamoorthi (2008) suggest a variation on this, where employees are hired on an “on-call” basis, to be brought into projects as needed, and using mathematical modeling of work trends to determine the man-hours, and therefore the hiring budget, that would likely be required for these employees. While this approach has the advantage of reducing wastage, and allows for employees to be on hand as contracts arise, it also requires modeling software and knowledge that some government contractors may not have available to them (Elangovan et al., 2008).

Mitigating Redundancies

The events planning management industry must avoid redundancies in its workforce in order to maximize efficiency and profitability. Redundancies can take many forms, but they generally involve the dismissal of employees due to the employer no longer engaging in the business that they were employed to do, no longer conducting that business at the employees’ location, or there is an expected or current reduction in the need for that type of business (Chandler & Waud, 2003). Redundancies can be managed by reducing temporary workers to allow permanent staff to continue working, reducing or ceasing new hiring, placing limits on overtime, allowing reduced hours on a voluntary basis, or requesting that employees temporarily assume part-time work (Cushway, 2011). Government contract work requires careful management of reductions and the maintenance of positive relationships with employees, as new contracts may make their talents desirable in the future.
Clarke (2005) investigates the phenomenon of financial incentives for voluntary redundancy, where employees receive benefits in exchange for temporarily leaving the workforce, until their skills are needed again. This approach has been found to make downsizing processes easier on employees and organizations, although some morale problems were reported among employees that had been hired for permanent positions, and who were unsure as to whether they would be returned to their old positions (Clarke, 2005). Munster (2005) takes a different approach, suggesting that minimizing job loss should be the largest priority for a redundancy program, and that part-time work, ceasing recruitment, and voluntary redundancy for reduced hours should be the strategies that are considered before letting employees go. Assisting employees that are let go, including through outplacement services, is another suggested method for maintaining positive employee relations (Munster, 2005).

Molleman and Slomp (1999) suggest a third option of avoiding redundancies through limiting the number of new workers that must be hired. This could be performed through the use of overtime and additional tasks, at certain times, and through ensuring that employees are multifunctional, thereby allowing them to take on additional tasks on a flexible basis. This last approach is demonstrated through statistical analysis to be effective in managing redundancy, but there is a limit to the amount of additional tasks and hours that employees could take on without needing to expand the workforce. A combination of multifunctionality and voluntary reductions, as discussed by Clarke (2005), however, could prove useful in allowing a contractor to have a skilled pool of managers to call on when contracts come in, but still allow for a smooth reduction in workforce at other points.
Employer Solutions to Growth Challenges

Within the literature, there are numerous accounts of how employers have managed the challenge of rapid growth through the use of various employment strategies, which could prove useful to government contractor organizations. A study performed by Barringer, Jones, and Neubauam (2005) suggests that rapid-growth firms that use a combination of selective hiring practices and performance-based incentives for employees tend to be the most successful at retaining qualified personnel throughout their period of growth. This would support elements of hiring practices that are suggested by both Campion et al. (2011) and Samnani and Singh (2011) that, respectively, claim that approaches to hiring using granular job requirements and employee qualifications, and the rewarding of job performance, are best practices for any business. Barringer et al. (2005) notes that both of these methods, in practice, are used more often by rapid growth businesses than by those in a state of “normal” growth.

While temporary staffing is an option for some contractor organizations, Theodore and Peck (2009) caution that it is only capable of providing additional value to organizations under certain situations, such as in deregulated industries. Davis-Blake and Uzzi (1993) add that, although flexibility in employment needs tend to lead to greater use of temporary workers, factors such as government oversight and the need for highly specialized workers often limit their use. The consequence for government contractor organizations in the event planning management industry is that temporary employees allow for greater flexibility with regard to cost management, as well as control over the size of the workforce, but it may limit their ability to obtain workers with a high degree of specialized skills, including events planning managers (Davis-Blake & Uzzi, 1993). Any hiring of temporary workers over permanent workers that are
employed in a part-time or on-call capacity would have to take into account cost factors and the added value of specialized skills.

Interestingly, temporary employees have increasingly begun to rely on their “stocks of skills and abilities rather than in their claims on a particular job or organization” (von Hippel, Mangum, Greenberger, Heneman, & Skoglund, 1997). This means that temporary employees that are hired by government contractors may have a variety of skills, rather than the specialization that would be required of an events planning manager. However, there could be employees in this flexible labor market with the requisite skills to be of use to an events planning organization; the trend of disaggregation from single jobs toward individual sources of human capital, as described by Carnoy, M., Castells, M., & Benner, C. (1997). has meant that many more employees with high skill specializations are now available than in the past. That said, these employees may be willing to work in part-time or on-call capacities, as they are accustomed to flexible employment, and increasing numbers of employees no longer view work contracts as being “characterized by full-time employment for an indefinite period of time” (Carnoy 1997). This change in expectations and skill-sets of temporary employees could reflect a change in the temporary staffing environment as a whole, which, according to (Theodore & Peck, 2009) has entered a new node of growth.

Goodman and Steadman (2002) note that the growth of many service-oriented and contractor organizations has been enabled through contract-based employment and the use of flexible employment schedules for employees, and that these positions have grown proportionately to reflect a substantial percentage of the workforce. Although temporary employees are often considered to be a “reversible” arrangement, Foote and Folta (2002) believe
that human resources management should consider irreversibility as a facet of employment, and that flexibility with regard to employment should encompass the use of temp-to-hire positions, or the hiring of contract workers on a flexible basis, to work full-time or part-time as needed. These options allow for a great degree of flexibility with rapid acquisition of employee skills for government contractors, which would allow for an ideal medium to be reached in light of the nature of their business.

**Summary**

The research literature that has been conducted on hiring and human resources practices in government contractor industries, as well as for organizations experiencing rapid growth, reveal much about the challenges and potential solutions that must be addressed by events planning managers. These organizations must be able to strike a balance between flexibility and maintaining an ability to call on the unique skills and resources of capable management personnel. The organizations themselves must have the infrastructure and willingness to be able to grow in a sustainable manner. This includes being able to hire additional employees, as well as to increase or decrease work load and hours for employees, to avoid the need to lay off skilled managers. Hiring practices should reflect a combination of core capacity requirements for new employees, along with incentives for job performance, which will help attract talented employees to potentially non-standard positions.

The literature has also shown there are viable ways in which employers have responded to rapid growth. While temporary employees are an option, and an increasing number of temporary employees are bringing well-developed skill sets with them, a flexible approach to contracted and permanent employment may be preferable. Permanent or contractual employees
that are hired with the understanding that they will be working part-time or on an on-call basis can promote a greater level of loyalty, and can prevent reductions in service capabilities that can sometimes accompany the use of temporary workers. Cost management and contractual obligations can determine how many hours these employees work, and having employees with multifunctional skill sets can help to reduce the need to hire additional temporary workers. These solutions could allow for a viable means of navigating the unique demands that face government contractors, and can provide these organizations with skilled events planning managers as needed.
Part Three

Introduction

In order for event planning management companies to effectively set hiring standards that can allow them to respond to variable levels of need, these companies must have a blueprint that can dictate how to go about hiring event planning managers on a permanent or temporary basis, as needed. This blueprint will allow them to ensure that they are always able to have a sufficient number of trained planning managers on hand to manage existing government contracts and contact others quickly to respond to new contracts. Additionally, this blueprint will show how these companies can avoid maintaining too many employees on hand, so that they can avoid spending large amounts of money and other resources retaining individuals whose services may not be required at that moment.

There are four main areas that are covered in this blueprint, which correspond to the main areas identified in the literature review as being of particular importance for event planning management contractors and their maintenance of qualified employees. These include the challenges of the contracting environment, which involves the necessity of procuring qualified event planning managers, as well as having knowledge of the time constraints that can affect government contractors. The next component, hiring practices, discusses the necessary steps that contractors must take in order to ensure that they have access to both temporary and permanent event planning managers. Mitigating redundancies is the next part of the blueprint, which details how to reduce overlap in skills-sets, hours, and projects so that government contractors can conserve resources. Finally, these organizations must have methods of responding to growth challenges, as new contract demands can quickly strain the limited personnel resources of
government contractors. Each section is divided into two subsections, which detail how to integrate practices related to the topic into the organization, as well as the best practices that should be utilized by these contracting businesses in order to respond in an optimal way to both employee and government customer needs. By following the methods recommended in this blueprint, contractors will be able to balance these needs, and thereby provide effective events for their contracted customers, and in doing so, increasing the likelihood of repeat business.

**Challenges of the Contracting Environment**

In order to correctly manage staff, government contractors must first have an idea of which challenges they are likely to face. This requires training human resources staff about the staffing and contractual issues that are widespread in the event planning industry, which will allow them to respond in a fashion consistent with best practices. These hiring needs are not only subject to quarterly cycles, but they also are subject to the economic conditions of the time, and the perceived need by government agencies to hold events.

**Workplace Integration**

In order to effectively integrate the knowledge of these challenges into the workforce at a government contractor organization responsible for event planning, the primary focus should be on the human resources department at that company. This will require formal training on the part of the human resources personnel, as well as the upper management of the company, and senior events planning staff that could benefit from this knowledge. Assembling and providing materials to these departments, so that they will always have access to a list of best practices used for hiring event planning staff at any given time, will also prove useful for these organizations.
Training Methods and Best Practices

Integrating these practices into any company will require a sound instructional direction. It should include material that provides an initial refresher course on the relative costs associated with hiring temporary and permanent employees, including costs related to full-time versus part-time employees, and employees that are on call. The relative benefits and drawbacks for having these groups of employees should also be discussed.

The training program should also discuss the qualities that are ideal for event planning managers, so that human resources personnel will be in a better position to select individuals that will constitute a core group of permanent, full-time workers that can manage existing contracts, work to obtain new contracts, manage professional contacts, and perform other regular duties. These qualities should include having a bachelor's degree in event planning and at the supervisory level a Masters degree in Hospitality and Tourism and/or possessing the Certified Meeting Planning (CMP) designation.

The upper management of the events planning contractors should have additional knowledge about the effects that this type of business will have on their organization. They should be able to make informed decisions about sustainability and flexibility with regard to the growth of the organization, and must be able to prepare budgets that reflect the uncertain nature of contracting. If possible, these managers should make predictions about the seasonal size and resources needed to sustain and manage their workforce, based on several years of past contract work, and should also anticipate how present economic conditions and government policies could influence this work load.
Hiring Practices

The next set of best practices that contracting organizations must be familiar with relate to the hiring practices themselves. These practices are among the most important for the human resource personnel to learn, as they could make the difference for contractors that are able to adequately respond to a need for growth within their organization. In a training setting, some of the reference material that was used to create these best practices could be provided to participants, so that they could know from where these ideas were derived, and to give them an opportunity to see these concepts in action.

Workplace Integration

As with the last step, these practices should include a training program for the members of the organization that will be affected by these guidelines, including human resources personnel, leaders of the event planning department, and upper management. This program will provide both instructions for these hiring decisions, as well as the rationale for these decisions. The human resources department should then implement hiring policies that are consistent with these lessons from the training programs, subject to the approval of upper management. Putting these best practices into use should be done as quickly as possible, in order to familiarize employees and managers alike with them.

Training Methods and Best Practices

This hiring approach involves maintaining a core group of qualified, full time employees that can be expanded as needed. Existing event planning managers and the upper management of the organization should collaborate to create a set of event planning requirements, as well as a set of core competencies that candidates should match; ideally, the competencies should roughly
align with the requirements of the job. In order to attract employees with a high degree of “fit” within the organization, these requirements should be made available to be viewed by job seekers, along with the compensation for the position. In order to attract on-call or part-time employees, the contractor should provide on the job training for event planning scenarios that commonly arise with government contracts, as well as furnishing rewards for exceptional performance; these could be aligned with rewards provided by hospitality partners that compensate for repeat event-hosting business. Using business models created through commercially available software, contractors should predict the number of employee-hours they will need for the near future, and negotiate contracted on-call hiring positions accordingly, using the aforementioned competency criteria for hiring.

**Mitigating Redundancies**

As mentioned in the literature review, the temptation for many contractor organizations is to have a large pool of skilled, full-time employees, who can devote their time to projects as needed; however, this can easily create wastage (Ghosh, D., Willinger, G., & Ghosh, S. (2009). Guidelines must therefore be implemented in order to reduce redundancies among the workforce and with regard to resource usage. However, simply dismissing full-time employees due to an anticipated reduced need is bound to create problems when hiring event planners in the future, so these guidelines seek to create a balance with regard to the workforce that can allow contractors to flexibly respond to growth, and minimize redundancies through contracts. This way, employees will be aware that they will only be needed at the organization for a certain time, and will not suffer from lost loyalty due to damaged expectations.
Workplace Integration

When training various members of the organization with regard to hiring practices, it is important to stress the need to avoid over-hiring, even with regard to on-call contracted employees. These training programs will therefore instruct human resources personnel about hiring into a group of employees that will be contracted for on-call work, and keeping a pool of prospective hires whose availability is known, and who could potentially come back for hiring if there is an expanded need to do so. At certain times of the year, or depending on the external need, hiring may be reduced, or stop altogether. Additionally, human resource personnel will be instructed on alternate ways to mitigate redundancies, in response to information provided to them from their managers.

Training Methods and Best Practices

The nature of contract work is such that employees may only be required for a limited time, but their skills may prove beneficial in the future, meaning that contract organizations should be careful to cultivate positive relationships with them, even when managing reductions. In order to make the nature of on-call employment more palatable to the majority of the event planning workforce; organizations should look into the financial feasibility of providing benefits in the event that employee services are not needed for as long as originally anticipated. Because employees could be returned to their old position when their skills are needed again, this approach is not likely to lead to morale problems that can sometimes result from position uncertainty. However, these programs should stress that the greatest priority with regard to minimizing redundancy is that of minimizing job loss; therefore, recruitment caps and careful
planning, even with regard to on-call and part-time employees, should be emphasized. If contractors still must reduce their workforce, voluntary reductions in exchange for benefits is generally the best way to reduce expenditure quickly, while still maintaining a positive relationship with departing employees.

**Solutions to Growth Challenges**

This component of the blueprint is integral to government contractors, who may sometimes experience large upswings with regard to work orders, and the need for additional skilled employees, including those at the management level. Sound employment strategies can allow for these challenges to be navigated in a way that produces optimal outcomes for the contractor, its employees, and for the contracting government organization, making this set of guidelines equally as important to be implemented. Like the other steps, it also involves training processes in order to provide a set of best practices for the company; however, some of the decisions that must be made in order to operate in accordance with these best practices involve those made by the upper management level of the organization, rather than at the human resources level, as with the previous two component areas.

**Workplace Integration**

Because these training areas involve decisions made at the upper levels of management, there are fewer employees in the organization that would have to be involved in their implementation. Therefore, instead of work-hours training sessions that are conducted in a more formal atmosphere, this training might be optimally provided in an informal-after hours setting, where the training provider and managers could engage in two-way dialogue about optimal solutions for meeting growth demands. Instructional materials could also be provided to the
managers that relate to the potential solutions to these challenges, and certain sets of best practices might be the most applicable to them, along with case studies which could demonstrate these uses. After this training, much of the integration for this step pertains to management being able to implement these changes within their own workforce, which may involve discussion with the human resource department, engaging in mathematical modeling to make predictions about employee demand, or other such tasks. At all points; however, it is important to adhere to best practices standards in order to successfully navigate growth challenges in a way that benefits all stake holding parties.

Training Methods and Best Practices

In order to respond to growth in a sustainable and successful way, contractors must be able to retain their most qualified employees throughout this period of growth, without losing them to other competitors, who would likely be undergoing a similar period of rapid expansion in business. Two of the strategies used to acquire qualified employees and retain them even in periods of business downturn, namely, instituting stringent hiring practices with regard to competence, and providing performance-based incentives for employees, are also likely to help employers retain these employees during times of greater need. Although temporary workers from a temp-to-hire or similar organization are an option for meeting needs, they often can only provide a limited additional value to contractors, as many of these employees do not have highly specialized sets of skills, as would be required by event planning managers. For this reason, it is more effective to seek out professionals that are capable of working on-call, or for a contracted period of time, but it is up to the management as to whether they may want to use temporary employees to fill supplementary employment needs.
However, this is not to say that none of the employees in the temporary labor pool might lack the skills to be effective event planning managers, and contractors may wish to work with temporary employment agencies in order to determine whether any applicants have the requisite skill sets, so that they can be offered employment on the same terms as those offered to other event planning managers. Managers may also wish to consider the impact of various employment strategies on organizational culture; many effective organizations have “irreversibility” as a term of employment, even with contract workers. Therefore, contracts should only be offered to employees that the contractor would be willing to work with on a frequent basis, as the need arises, even if they are initially on-call. Employees could also be made aware that, if their service proves useful, that they could move into a full-time position among the core group of event planning employees, thereby increasing their employer loyalty, as well as helping the contractor have access to the most capable groups of employees in the workforce.

**Conclusion**

Contractors must strike a delicate balance between flexibility with regard to their workforce, and having access to the most skilled employees, who are likely to desire full-time employment. This blueprint provides a way for contracting organizations that provide event planning management to respond to rapid increases in the need for their services, while at the same time using a preventative approach to redundancy management, so that they can avoid laying off employees whenever possible. These blueprints recommend a series of training sessions for several groups of employees, including human resources personnel, event planning personnel, and the upper management of these contracting organizations. Each of these groups
has a role to play in properly managing the workforce for a contractor, ranging from helping to set hiring standards, to determining the need for event planners in the future, to managing the organizational culture.

Government contractors could benefit from utilizing an approach that only hires the employees that are likely to be used in a given timeframe, but keeping a pool of prospects to contact in case needs abruptly increase. Along with a core group of full-time employees in the event planning department, hires should be made for on-call contracted employees, whose skills match up to criteria created by the management and event planning staff. Benefits should be offered based on performance, and, in the event that the workforce needs to be scaled back, employees could be offered benefits in exchange for ending their contract voluntarily, but sooner than expected. By carefully managing employee relations, even with on-call contracted professionals, government contractors will be able to effectively respond to a growing need for event planning managers, and maintain excellent relationships with contracted workers, so that they will be able to call on their skills in the future.

Well-planned and managed conferences can help to establish the positive reputation of a contractor, making the awarding of future contracts, and of long-term contracts, more likely. Therefore, both the conference-planning and hospitality industries have a direct vested interest in having the knowledge of tackling hiring issues and growth demands, as this knowledge will provide continued profits to all stakeholders.


