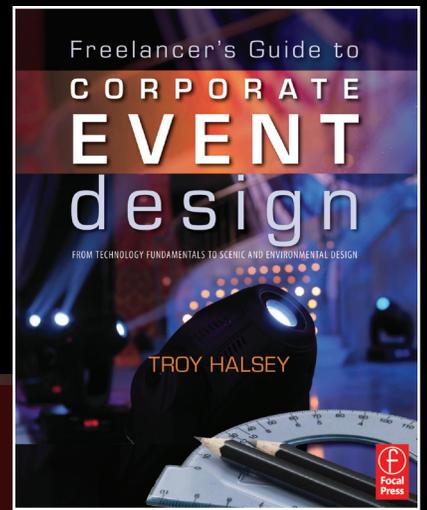


# Setting the Stage

*An interview with Troy Halsey, author of **Freelancer's Guide to Corporate Event Design: From Technology Fundamentals to Scenic and Environmental Design**, about how to transition into corporate event design*



## **How did you transition from a theatre background to corporate events?**

Well, I kind of fell into it really. Fresh out of school I worked for a production company that focused on television commercials and corporate videos (I wanted to get into television at the time). I was quickly drafted to the Corporate Event production team with my staging knowledge and the rest is history.

## **If someone wanted to follow your path, what steps would you suggest?**

I was lucky in that the university I attended, Texas Lutheran University, called their theatre degree "Dramatic Media" and it focused on incorporating technology into theatre productions. This gave me a solid base of both theatre craft and technologies like projection and video. So, I would have to say as a student, learn everything you can about live production including how the technologies work and their limitations. From there, spend a few years in the field as a Production Assistant in theatre or film. This onsite experience is invaluable. From there...well, that is where the game of professional ladder climbing comes in.

## **Is there a specific skill set that would be beneficial for someone to have in your line of work?**

Absolutely! You have to be able to show your designs to clients in some form. I like 3d applications as they can create very realistic images of designs...such as 3dStudio Max. But hand drawing skills are also a high commodity these days, if not more than 3d skills...so I would be so bold as to say if you can draw...you can get a job in this industry. The most obvious skill set, however, is of course a solid understanding of design principals. Drawing and 3d are only the delivery mechanisms...you still have to know how to design first.

## **Describe your typical day on the job.**

Oh boy. I am not sure if there is a typical day. I am very lucky in that my projects always have unique elements that keep an attention deficit guy like me entertained. If I had to give an answer I would say: team meeting, client calls, endless meetings with Account Executives and design teams, and then I squeeze in an hour to do my designer things (what I get paid for). I would always prefer less meetings, but they seem to be a required element in the corporate world.

## **What do you see as the future of corporate events and corporate event designers?**

It could go a few ways. I see more events happening online...which is not good for my field. But there will always be a need for personal connections...and live events will continue despite web seminar technology. Technology always leads this industry and I see a lot of new and exciting toys coming soon. As a designer or planner in this industry, you always have to keep up with new technology to stay current. Keep an eye out for OLED...(Organic LED) video screens...imagine unrolling your TV, which is just a thin sheet of plastic, and hanging it on any surface...it's coming soon!

## **What inspired you to write a book about freelance corporate event design?**

I actually started the book out of frustration. We designers hate being distracted when we are in the zone. I always had new designers bugging me with questions and making what seemed to be small mistakes that ruined events. I decided we, the event industry, needed a training manual. Not finding one...I decided to write it. Also, I secretly always wanted to write a book...but I thought it would be a fiction masterpiece! :)

## **What are you most excited about with the publication of your book?**

The possibility of speaking engagements. That's right...I am not ashamed to admit it. I hope to someday travel the country teaching creative design seminars to schools and businesses. I am already scribbling notes for my next book on the topic, but I am a creative type...and we tend to procrastinate.

## **What do you hope people will take away from your book?**

I hope readers discover a new career option for what to do with their theatre degrees, and I hope the book is a good resource for those new to the industry from both a client and production perspective.

## **Other than your awesome book, are there any other sources of information people who are interested in pursuing corporate event design should be aware of?**

A quick Google search, keywords "The Event Industry", will provide an overwhelming selection of resources. There are tons of trade magazines available and online resources as well. But I do have to say....my book is a great start :)

## **Any parting words of wisdom for your readers?**

Whether you are new to the event industry as a paying client or event planner, or a theatre student, the event industry is a great way to make a living and have fun doing it. I hope my book helps get you started and prevents a few headaches along the way.



*Troy Halsey is an award-winning scenic designer who has worked in the field of theatrical and corporate design for over 15 years as a professional freelance carpenter, event and video producer, technical director, and production manager. He holds a BA in Dramatic Media from Texas Lutheran University. Currently, he is the Lead Scenic Designer for one of the industry's largest event companies.*

*His book, **Freelancer's Guide to Corporate Event Design: From Technology Fundamentals to Scenic and Environmental Design** is available wherever fine books are sold.*