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Competencies Established for Meetings, Events, and Exhibitions Management

➢ Collaborative engagement of event and exhibition industry leaders to identify key competencies
➢ Aligning the meeting and event management curriculum to reflect industry recognized competencies
➢ Developing a Workforce Readiness Assessment

Introduction

It's not all about logistics. Whether it's a business conference, a political event, or a family celebration, event planning and management is a growing trade that requires multiple skill sets for success.

In 2015, the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) convened an advisory group composed of technical and subject matter experts to update the Hospitality, Tourism, and Events Industry Competency Model. One of the significant changes that emerged from the group's deliberations was the redesign of the Tier 5 (industry technical) competencies to include competencies group by industry sector. One of the new sector blocks is exclusively focused on Meetings, Events, and Exhibitions Management.
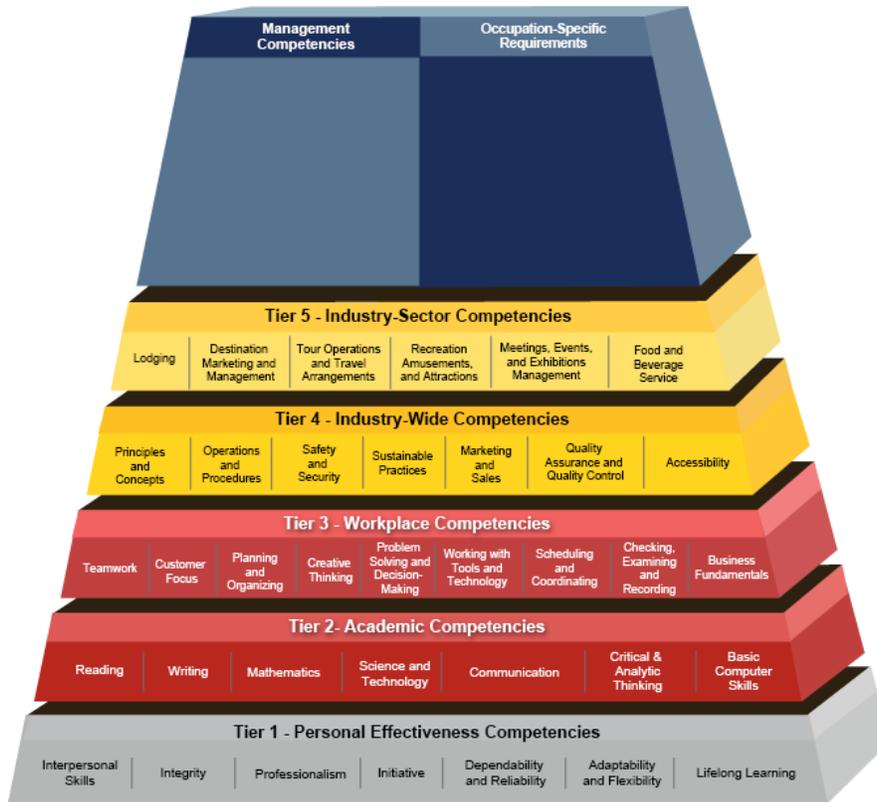
Workforce Need

From a national perspective, the outlook for meeting, convention, and event planners is strong. According to projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in this occupation is projected to grow 10% from 2014 to 2024, faster than the 6.5% average for all occupations. As businesses continue to recognize the value of professionally planned meetings, demand for the knowledge and ability to run successful meetings and events is projected to continue to grow.[1]

Approach

One of the subject matter experts who worked with ETA on the competency model update is Janet Sperstad, Certified Meeting Professional and Program Director, Meeting and Event Management, Madison Area Technical College. "In the past, event planning had generally been embedded in the hospitality sector and was not recognized as a separate specialty with its own skills and knowledge requirements," says Ms. Sperstad. "Working with ETA's advisory group helped to define the event management profession and put ETA's competency model in the hands of practitioners. I've been working with organizations, academia and the event industry to adopt the model, which has been received with great enthusiasm and appreciation."

Ms. Sperstad provided ETA with an array of resources to document the body of knowledge required by event professionals. As a result, Tier 5 of the updated competency model reflects the specific Meetings, Events, and Exhibitions Management industry standards delineated in these resources, including strategic planning, risk management, financial management, sustainability, human resources, event design and marketing.

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[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition

"The Meetings, Events, and Exhibitions Management competencies are embedded in our curriculum at Madison," says Ms. Sperstad. "Students can use ETA's competency model to demonstrate to employers what they have achieved. The model provides a conceptual framework for crafting job descriptions, working with teams and getting promotions."

Next Steps

The International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE), another industry champion that worked on the model update, is developing a Workforce Readiness Assessment, which students can take right after graduation. "This tool will benefit students, practitioners and faculty," says Ms. Sperstad. "It will enable us to map career pathways for students from exhibit and event coordinator to

exhibit and event manager to project director. The plan is to launch it in spring 2017."

"IAEE is excited to be a part of this ETA initiative," says Marsha Flanagan, Vice President, Learning Experiences, IAEE. "The updated competency model is assisting in the creation of many tools and services to further demonstrate that the Meetings, Events, and Exhibitions industry is one of choice."

Related Links

Madison Area Technical College, Meeting and Event Management
http://madisoncollege.edu/program-info/meeting-and-event-management

International Association of Exhibitions and Events
http://www.iaee.com