



2016-2019 Strategic Plan

The Association for Women in Events

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A global organization based out of the Washington, D.C. area, the Association for Women in Events (AWE) is a membership association that works to empower, elevate and promote women in the meetings industry. The association was born from the idea that women make up the bulk of employees in the events industry, yet there is a disproportionate amount of men who hold the highest level (C-suite) executive positions and leadership positions on Executive Boards. The organization aims to provide resources and guidance for women in the industry so that they may feel empowered in their current positions and reach their full professional potential. To that end, the organization strives to build a community of supportive women and men and aims to inspire thoughtful discussions among those working in the events and related industries about women-centric topics. Lastly, the organization endeavors to give women in the events sector a voice and provide accolades to organizations and individuals that support women in the industry. This strategic plan is our path forward for 2016-2019 and will guide the organization over these formational years.

OUR STORY

The Association for Women in Events was founded by Carrie Abernathy, Tamela Blalock, Mary Higham, Kiki Janssens, and Mas Tadesse in March 2015. The organization was inspired by several events for women that already were taking place among female events professionals including a senior-level “lean in” networking circle and a brunch-and-learn series for up-and-coming event professionals in the local Washington, DC community. Carrie Abernathy brought the leaders of these two groups together to discuss common goals. During these early discussions the idea of the Association for Women in Events was born.

A call for founding board members was launched in April 2015 and over 65 qualified candidates applied. In June 2016 a board of 20 was chosen to represent different facets of the events industry and support the organizational mission. Along with the executive committee (made up of the organization's five founders) there are currently 18 additional board members representing the organization and the community of women in events as a whole for a total of 23 founding board members. Membership was launched on January 20, 2016.

The current mission of AWE is to be “an inclusive community dedicated to the professional advancement of women in all facets of the events industry.” The organization conducts the bulk of its business virtually with a volunteer staff only. The organization currently offers immediate coaching with industry mentors, networking events, educational opportunity in person and online and other resources for members.

The Association currently operates as a not-for-profit organization with a 501 (c) 3 tax filing status.

VISION

To create a community that advocates for and supports women in the events sector.

MISSION

The Association for Women in Events is an inclusive community dedicated to the professional advancement of women in all facets of the events industry.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Alongside our vision and mission, the Association for Women in Events uses guiding principles to direct our work and promote organizational health as a whole. The following are touch points that lead our board of directors and inspire the work of AWE.

Integrity and Respect

The Association for Women in Events will guide by example and the board, members, and associates of the organization will be ethically, morally, and socially responsible. We endeavor to be the standard and role-models to others in this sector. AWE will lead by example and build a community for women in events industry.

Inclusiveness

AWE is an inclusive community and strives to be accepting of all who uphold our mission regardless of race, age, sex, ethnicity, social status, background, religion, or sexual orientation.

Transparency

The Association aims to be an open, honest, and transparent organization to our board members, members, stakeholders and the greater community at all times.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The main goal of the Association for Women in Events is to assist women in the events industry to achieve their professional goals and create a community that provides resources and support. The following objectives are the pillars of the strategic plan that will lead the organization in successfully fulfilling that goal:

- **Build** and **expand** the AWE member community
- **Forge** strategic partnerships in the greater business arena
- **Promote** women's issues, create awareness, and **provide** advocacy
- **Develop** and **provide** first-class education and networking opportunities
- **Celebrate** the achievements of women and organizations that support them
- **Establish** a long term governance and succession plan

GOAL 1: BUILD AND EXPAND THE AWE MEMBER COMMUNITY

The Association and stakeholders will spend the foundational years building and promoting the membership community. Growing and strengthening the member base will provide the greater events sector with a strong base of women advocates, coaches, mentors, and supporters.

- Each quarter, all of the Board of Directors will promote AWE membership either via social media, speaking opportunities, at events and to colleagues in the greater business sector.
- The Association will seek to employ a professional PR and marketing company to assist with promotion and developing a recognizable community "voice".
- The Association will set a goal to reach over 500 members in the first three years.
- AWE will build a dedicated Membership Committee to lead membership development.
- AWE will also build a dedicated Marketing & PR Committee to lead brand development.

GOAL 2: FORGE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE GREATER BUSINESS ARENA

The Association for Women in Events will focus on opportunities to strategically align with organizations that support the mission of the organization.

- The organization will create a process to review all partnerships with the goal to be open-minded and always have the best interest of the stakeholder for any potential in-kind sponsorships and donations.
- AWE will proactively seek out strategic partnerships that make sense for the organization. The organization will strive to work with businesses that hold steady to the mission and values of the organization.
- AWE will develop a strong business development and sales process.

- AWE will develop a dedicated Sponsorship & Partnership Committee to vet possible alliances and forge crucial relationships in the industry.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE WOMEN’S ISSUES, AWARENESS, AND PROVIDE ADVOCACY

The Association will be a powerful voice in influencing stakeholders in the meeting sector on increasing awareness about issues facing women in this specific sector and in the lives of women overall. We will employ a flexible, multi-factor approach in advocating for the interests of women.

- The organization through education, networking, social media, outreach and other strategies will address women-centric topics in a timely manner.
- AWE strives to take member needs seriously and will provide yearly surveys to members asking for feedback, topics, and assistance in developing education.
- The organization will develop a Community Outreach Committee to act as a philanthropic arm supporting women in business (that may fall outside of the events industry).
- The organization will strive to address all issues women face, even uncomfortable, unpopular, or tough topics.
- AWE will develop best practices for employing women in events.
- AWE will develop a code of ethics that will cover sexual harassment and workplace bullying.

GOAL 4: DEVELOP AND PROVIDE FIRST CLASS EDUCATION AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

AWE will provide education that will assist women in accomplishing their goals and objectives in the events space, which includes meetings, conventions, trade shows, marketing, and the like. The Association will provide education in an exclusive manner to all stakeholders in the industry in order to create a harmonious environment for all. Along with education, we will create a safe environment for networking and creating vital connections for women in events. We will create opportunities to bring like-minded individuals, women and men, together in order to develop strategic business relationships for women to help foster their advancements.

- The organization will approach like-minded organizations to provide opportunities for our members that currently don’t exist in the sector, for example, education and events.
- AWE will develop curricula based on member’s feedback and needs.
- The Association will build educational opportunities that align with our mission.
- AWE will develop an Education & Events Committee to vet potential sponsorships, develop education, and build networking opportunities for members.

GOAL 5: CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THEM

AWE will work to provide positive feedback to those in the events community that actively support women in the workplace. The organization also strives to applaud the accomplishments of members and women who inspire, support, and empower other women.

- AWE will develop a strategy to provide positive accolades to businesses that empower and promote women in events.
- AWE will develop a way to provide positive accolades to the individual achievements of women in events.
- The organization will build an Awards Committee to take a look at ways to promote and applaud women/organizations in business.

GOAL 6: ESTABLISH A LONGTERM GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND SUCCESSION PLAN

The AWE BOD will work to establish a plan of action for association governance, long term financial planning, leadership succession planning, and association staffing.

- AWE will develop a long term plan for governance (including updating and improving bylaws), board of director roles and responsibilities, succession plan for leadership, and determining areas of authority.
- AWE will develop immediate and 3-5 year operating budgets and financial goals.
- AWE will develop a plan in conjunction with budget for staffing association.



THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

2016 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President-	Carrie Abernathy CMP, CEM, CSEP
Vice-President-	Kiki Janssens
Treasurer-	Mary Higham CEM
Secretary-	Mas Tadesse
Acting Past President-	Tamela Blalock MTA, CMP

2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doreen Biela CEM
 Cedric Calhoun CAE, FASAE
 Dana Freker Doody
 Anna Gebert MBA
 Barbra Gustis CMP
 Dionne Hulsey
 Melinda Kendall MA
 Marissa Maybee MBA
 Stephanie Selesnick CEM
 Eris Sims LES
 Julie Sullivan CMP, CEM
 Terri Toennies CMP
 Dan Traver CEM
 Nicole Unger CMP
 Richelle Wilkins CMP
 Rachel Wimberly

Johnnie White CMP
Cattleya Wongkongkatap CMP

2016 COMMITTEE ROSTER*

Awards Committee

Leadership:

Melinda Kendall, MA *Chair, AWE Board

Members:

Jenn Ellek
Joe Felperin
Joan Eisenstodt
Jennafer Ross
Heather Sampson
Inge Hafkemeyer
Mary-Claire Andrews

Community Outreach

Leadership:

Cattleya Wongkongkatap, CMP *Chair, AWE Board
Kasey McNeil, CEM *Co-Chair

Members:

LaShawn Dunbar
Erica Hall
Kiersten Walker

Events & Education

Leadership:

Doreen Biela, CEM *Chair, AWE Board
Julie Sullivan, CMP, CEM*Co-Chair, AWE Board

Members:

Josie Zamolyi Caldwell
Marissa Maybee
Amy Pepin
Jeanne Procope
Stephanie Selesnick
Laura Welsh
Terri Toennies
Richelle Wilkins
Mary Medawar

Membership

Leadership:

Nicole Unger, CMP *Chair, AWE Board
Dana Freker Doody*Co- Chair, AWE Board

Members:

Mary Kreins
Tamela Blalock
Elizabeth Baranik
Stacy Kulig-Clift
Danielle Baarman
Jennifer Lindeblad

PR/Marketing

Leadership:

Rachel Wimberly *Chair, AWE Board

Members:

Lisa Dyson
Donna Ifurung
Jenn Waters
Katherine Zimoulis

Partnership & Sponsorship Committee

Leadership:

Barbra Gustis, CMP *Chair, AWE Board
Ted McGregor *Co-Chair

Members:

RJ Apana
Stephen Peeler
Dan Traver
Shannon Burke
Dionne Hulsey
Gwen Campbell
Melissa Ritchie
Kristin Mirabal
Rosa Mendoza-Friedheim

**These lists were last updated on Friday, April 22, 2016.*

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