

Registration, Hotel Arrangements and the Sourcing of the City for Events



Todd Lambert
CEO
EventSphere, LLC

CEOCFO: *Mr. Lambert, what is the concept behind EventSphere?*

Mr. Lambert: We take special pride in our signature “High Tech, High Touch” service creed. While much of our work remains purposefully invisible to our clients, it’s all the day to day tasks on the back end that ultimately contribute to a positive and memorable experience for our client’s attendees, members, exhibitors, and VIP’s.

CEOCFO: *What does that mean day-to-day?*

Mr. Lambert: From the start, we work hand in hand with our clients to determine a customized service offering. As an organization that specializes in registration, hotel arrangements and the sourcing of the city for events, we know how to do these activities more effectively and efficiently than a client who may only do these things for one event a year.

CEOCFO: *Is it typical to outsource these functions? Do most organizations look outside their resources?*

Mr. Lambert: As the hospitality industry has developed, we have seen strong demand from potential clients looking for a partner who offers a variety of services. Collaborating with clients on their annual events and conferences allows them to leverage our systems, processes and staff. Client can then redeploy their own resources to focus on the event experience, growth strategy and ROI for their attendees.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand on a basic level about the whole process that perhaps others do not?*

Mr. Lambert: This is all about relationships. In today’s world of apps, technologies and different ways of working, the heart of the hospitality industry is about relationships and the meaningful connections you build. We believe in human interaction first. Technology is an enabler in our eyes-it enables our team to be successful. Our relationships with our clients, conventions, visitors’ bureaus and hotels is what sets us apart from our competition.

CEOCFO: *How do you handle the emergencies or immediate aspects of some of these events?*

Mr. Lambert: A detailed plan for all possibilities is an absolute must. In the events industry, you can expect something to go off script. When this happens, it is important to keep the team focused and stay on message – “We have walked through this scenario, and we know how to successfully respond.”

CEOCFO: *What have you learned over time or changed in your approach?*

Mr. Lambert: I have learned to take advantage of the diversity in the workforce today. Everyone has their own perspective based on their own experiences. There may be five different approaches from five different people sitting in the same room on how we are going to achieve our goal. You have to understand that the common denominator is the shared goal and encourage passionate conversations around achieving that goal.

CEOCFO: *Do you typically work on a project soup to nuts, beginning to end?*

Mr. Lambert: Yes. We typically start on a project about twelve to eighteen months out and go through the entire venture. There are situations; however, when a client comes to us partway through the timeline looking for help. Our goal in either case is to build solid relationships so we have a long-standing client partner. The better we get to know our clients, the better we can customize their services to meet their needs.

CEOCFO: *Have you found that when someone comes to you that they typically will continue?*

Mr. Lambert: We have been very fortunate in being true to our mission to make our clients happy – no matter what they need us to do. We have had clients ask us to staff the registers in their event bookstore; we have provided concierge

service for their VIPs. I have even flown up to spend a week with a client to plan a gala for their event when their original plans fell through. With average client tenure of four plus years for a five-year old company, we believe our message and approach are well received in the hospitality arena.

CEOCFO: *How do you evaluate the technologies that may be helpful for people to be using at the events?*

Mr. Lambert: If technology is easy to use and people enjoy it, then it is beneficial. If a tool is cumbersome, or if there is just flash and no compelling need, then the technology is at best a distraction.

CEOCFO: *Are you surprised at how much that comes out which does not meet that criteria?*

Mr. Lambert: I am very surprised. It is also very surprising that many larger organizations are focusing on being a technology company first and then a service provider. We are never going to take that approach. Our goal is not to be the largest company in the market but the best, including our systems. We will never say “here is our box and you have to work within it.”

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people? How do you know when someone has the right people approach that you want?*

Mr. Lambert. Passion. Passion for the hospitality industry and a passion for working with people. An individual who wants to be behind the computer, is afraid to pick up the phone or to actually meet with a client is not the right fit. I want someone who is very comfortable with interaction.

“If you are looking for someone that is going to help you grow your event and be a true partner, give feedback and be with you every step, then you should choose EventSphere.”- Todd Lambert

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential new customers?*

Mr. Lambert: We have found that the best way to find new client partners is through referrals and introductions. A referral is worth 100 cold calls in my mind. The events industry, for all of its size, is surprisingly tight-knit. Meeting planners talk with each other all the time and I am always able to pick of the phone and ask someone to make an introduction for me.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the housing and hotels side? How do you know and access an individual hotel where the chain might be good but each hotel tends to run a bit differently?*

Mr. Lambert: Working with hotels is like working with a client, you have to believe in the partnership first. We always should be able to explain what our client is looking for and collaborate with hotels who share our service-based approach. For instance, if we have a conference that is composed of more mid-level managers, we need to get a little more creative to fit tighter budget parameters. For a conference with more creative types, we look for hotels that set the stage for more social interaction.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as the company has grown and evolved?*

Mr. Lambert: What surprised me is that there is real hope for people who want to start their own business. I never would have seen myself parting ways with one of the largest organizations in the marketplace, especially during the worst recession of our lifetime. It has been hard work and scary at times. However, I have never been happier in my career. I get such joy from building a company with a culture of service to our clients and to each other. Finding the right clients and the right team that fit with that culture and the response we get from them is worth all of the hard work.

CEOCFO: *Why choose EventSphere?*

Mr. Lambert: If you are looking for someone that is going to help you grow your event and be a true partner, give feedback and be with you every step, then you should choose EventSphere.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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