POST PANDEMIC REFLECTION: THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE EVENT DESIGNER/PLANNER

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Savannah Kay Kramer

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This study is to assess the potential changes COVID-19 has had on the event, tourism, and hospitality industry; specifically, how the skillsets of event professional have changed. While the event, tourism, and hospitality industry is ever changing, COVID-19 vastly shifted roles, responsibilities, and jobs for event professionals. So far, few studies have been conducted to identify the potential changes in skillsets that current and future event planners need to be prepared for their job. Using data from event professionals via focus groups and a survey, this study identifies these new or heightened skillsets. The findings provide useful information for current event professionals in addition to educational programs who can adapt their curricula to best prepare future event professionals.

Keywords: event professional skillset, impacts of COVID-19, event, tourism, and hospitality curricula.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 - Introduction

The COVID-19 virus and the global pandemic tied to it made humanity stand still (Cheatham, Felter & Maizland, 2020). Life as the world knew it came to a screeching halt with many countries mandating lock-downs (Kaplan, Frais & McFall-Johnsen, 2020) and paralyzed several industries what seemed like overnight. This potentially fatal virus, that is believed to have first affected the human race in China (Doucleff, 2021), has infected over 263.6 million people and killed over 5.2 million people as of December 2021 (World Health Organization, n.d.). Symptoms range from a fever and cough to loss of taste and smell to chest pain and trouble breathing (Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

COVID-19 put the world into a deep recession. The United States stock market was the worst it had been since the 2008 crash (Jones, Palumbo & Brown, 2021), which trickled down to most industries. With the majority of the events, tourism, and hospitality industry previously revolving around in-person events, unrestricted mobility, and attendee/guest discretionary income, this was arguably one of the most negatively impacted industries when COVID-19 restricted travel and social gatherings (Garcia, Mzezewa, Vigdor, Zaveri, Zraick, Sisario Anderson, & Padilla, 2020).

While the fields of events, tourism, and hospitality are ever evolving to meet the needs of its consumers (Butler, 2015), the impact COVID-19 has had on these multifaceted industries is significant. Event professionals have had to pivot and change roles. They are challenged with planning virtual events that impress their clients, finding vendors to work with due to the lack of event professionals returning to work, comparing

success metrics to a non-existing baseline and balancing new responsibilities. But what are the potential changes and the necessary skillsets event professionals need to have post COVID-19 and how does this impact changing academic curricula and professional development training? With over 300 universities offering educational programs in events, hospitality and tourism in the United States alone (Study Portal, n.d., Universities.com, 2021), curricula will also need to be updated to reflect these changes in skills and competencies.

1.2 - Statement of the Problem & Purpose of the Study

With live events cancelled, event professionals were focused to change and adapt into taking on new roles and responsibilities. The purpose of this study is to explore how COVID-19 has changed the skillset and training required by professionals in the events, tourism, and hospitality industry. This project conducted two focus groups and then developed a survey to further study how this pandemic affected event designers and planners. The findings will be useful in establishing a current baseline of skills that event professionals believe are important to the future of the profession, outline event trends that have been identified due to COVID-19, and develop a contemporary list of skills and experiences event professional employers are seeking. Additionally, this research could be used to evaluate and update academic curricula and professional trainings in the events, tourism, and hospitality fields.

The goal of the study was to answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the major changes due to COVID-19 in the event, tourism, and hospitality industry that would affect an event planner's role?

2. Currently, what are perceived as the most important skills needed to be an event planner and, if applicable, how have those changed due to COVID-19?

3. What academic education and professional training changes for event, tourism, and hospitality programs need to be addressed due to COVID-19?

1.3 - Need for the Study

The field of events, tourism, and hospitality is constantly changing and facing challenges and/or the affects of crisis. Due to the timing of this study, few studies related to the impact COVID-19 has had on the events, tourism, and hospitality industry have been published. Articles published in late 2019 and early 2020 regarding events and tourism in the United States tried to provide accurate predictions on how COVID-19 would affect the events, tourism, and hospitality industry (Becker, 2020). More recently, articles are beginning to supply data showing the true casualties in the industry, such as the crash of travel and events in the United States by comparing past years to 2020 and 2021 (Barnes & Holmberg, 2021). Other studies have provided insight as to how other countries around the globe predicted their tourism, and event sector would be effected. (Ranasinghe, Damunupola, Wijesundara, Karunarathna, Nawarathna, Gamage, Ranaweera, & Idroos, 2020). Articles published in the first quarter of 2020 have discussed how COVID-19 could potentially change the events, tourism, and hospitality industry (Mohanty, Dhoundiyal, & Choudhury, 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020) . However, no studies have been published to date detailing the changes and impacts on the event professional role.

While the events industry continues to constantly reinvent itself, the impacts COVID-19 had on event professionals' jobs should be studied as the industry moves

forward into unchartered territory. The need for an in-depth evaluation of changes to event professionals' jobs from before, during, and after COVID-19 is crucial in understanding how event professionals' career development and event trends have been and will continue to be affected by a global crisis.

Even with over 1.6 million jobs open in the events, hospitality, and tourism industry due to COVID-19 and the subsequent pandemic, many event professionals are choosing to not return to the industry (Madray, 2020; McMillin, 2021; Swenson, 2021; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). If professionals with decades of experience and talent are choosing alternative options over returning to the event, tourism, and hospitality industry, those vacancies in the industry need to be filled with trained and competent individuals. New skills, especially with the growth and advancement of virtual or hybrid meetings, will likely be sought out by employers for full time event professionals and those who choose to enlist as freelance event planners (Madray, 2020; McMillin, 2021, & Swenson, 2021). Therefore, this study can be used to prepare new industry professionals to fill these immediate gaps.

1.4 - Limitations

The scope of this study was limited to:

1. Subjects who participated in the focus groups and completed the survey were consenting volunteers who were provided an explanation as to why this research was being conducted.

2. Anonymity of the surveyed persons as no personal information that could be used to accurately identify the person of each completed survey.

3. The sample size of 21 survey participants in the United States and 138 fully completed survey responses, with most also coming from the United States.

4. The truthfulness and accuracy of information each surveyed person provided.

5. The number of event professionals in positions who interview and hire staff, which could affect the priority of skills in questions 15 - 18. This could have an undetermined effect on the recommended skills and experiences this study finds for academic and professional training in the event, tourism, and hospitality industry.

6. The response effect for survey questions 15 - 17 (Appendix F) as each surveyed person was presented with the possible answers in a randomized order. Per survey requirements, the surveyed persons only had to change the ranking of one answer before they could proceed to the next question.

1.5 - Assumptions

The scope of this study was based on the following assumptions:

1. COVID-19 had career altering impacts on event professionals in the events, tourism, and hospitality industry.

2. The skillset and competencies of event professionals and the events, tourism, and hospitality industry as a whole is constantly evolving.

3. The event professionals selected for the focus groups had multiple years of experience and could provide first-hand and insightful opinions about their roles changing.

4. The persons who completed the survey were competent event professionals who would answer each survey question honestly and to the best of their ability.

1.6 - Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to clarify and provide uniformity in the study:

COVID-19. A widespread virus resulting in a pandemic that altered not only the events, tourism, and hospitality industry, but the world as whole (Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; Sauer, 2021). The timeframe for COVID-19 is classified as a pandemic in the United States of America started in March 2020 and to date, is still happening (Wamsley, 2021).

Event Professional. A person who has experience in planning and executing events in a qualified and career setting (U.S Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2021).

Global Domestic Product (GDP). "The total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period." (Fernando, 2021 "What is Gross Domestic Product (GDP)?" section).

Professional Convention Management Associate (PCMA). A professional organization whose members are in the event, tourism, and hospitality field. "the world's largest, most respected and most recognized network of business events strategists." (PCMA, 2021, About section).

Return on Investments (ROI). A ratio to determine how profitable an investment is or was. ROI is calculated by dividing the profit of the investment by the cost of the investment (Guy Birken & Curry, 2021).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 – COVID-19 Background

COVID-19 has had a detrimental impact on many global industries, but one of the most harshly impacted was the events, tourism, and hospitality industry (Becker, 2020; Cheatham, Felter, & Maizland, 2020; Barnes & Holmberg, 2021; Jones, Palumbo, & Brown, 2021; Mandray, 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020; Ranasinghe, et al., 2020). Major domestic and global events were cancelled due to health restrictions and precautions; reservations were cancelled and the extremely volatile events, tourism, and hospitality industry lost an estimated $730 billion in revenue from late 2019 through 2020 (Becker, 2020; Garcia, Mzezewa, Vigdor, Zaveri, Zraick, Sisario, & Anderson, 2020). With event postponements or cancellations and social restrictions, roughly 1.6 million jobs in the event, hospitality and tourism section are still currently available (McMillin, 2021). To understand how the event, tourism, and hospitality industry will recover, we first need to look at how it was initially disrupted.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that is spread through the air (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; Sauer, 2021). When the virus started to spread across the globe in December 2019, there was no available cure to combat the spread or answers to its unpredictable effect on humans. Believed to have first been contracted in Wuhan, China, the virus quickly spread to other parts of the globe via international travelers (Doucleff, 2021; Sauer, 2021). By March 30, 2020, the United States had approximately 280,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases forcing the federal government to impose a federally mandated public lock-down. By the end of December, that number had risen to over 20.1 million (World Health Organization., n.d.)

2.2 – Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Events, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry

Due to COVID-19, the Global Domestic Product (GDP) in the United States lowered between 0-5%, the unemployment rate rose from 3.7% to 8.9%, job postings were down over 30%, reservations for hotels lowered by 90%, in-person shopping was down 20% while online shopping was up by 67% bringing in $3.9 trillion dollars in 2020 (Jones, Palumbo & Brown, 2021). Pre-COVID-19, much of the events, tourism, and hospitality industry revolved around in-person experiences. Because of this, the events, tourism, and hospitality industry was left more vulnerable than other industries during the pandemic (Mohanty et al., 2020). An estimation of $1.2 trillion dollars of revenue was lost worldwide in 2020 just in the events, tourism, and hospitality industry (Cheatham, Felter, & Maizland, 2020; United Nations, 2020). While the United States had an increase in spending related to events, tourism, and hospitality from April 2020, those numbers stalled during the last quarter as COVID-19 cases steadily increased (Barnes & Holmberg, 2021).

Major events in the United States such as the South by Southwest, which led to a direct loss north of $1 billion, and the Met Gala were cancelled in 2021 due to the spread of COVID-19 (Garcia et al., 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020). Directly impacting the events, tourism, and hospitality industry, COVID-19 led to “increased flight cancellations, cancelled hotel bookings and cancelled local and international events," (Ozili & Arun, 2020, p. 2).

2.3 – Historical Overview Event Planner Actual and Perceived Roles and Skillsets

Unlike many other professions, the role of the event planner can differ drastically based on factors such as location, venue, purpose of the job, and training (Ponting, 2021). Indeed.com states an event planner is, "responsible for organizing corporate or private events for companies or individuals. Their duties include meeting with clients to discuss their needs, maintaining partnerships with vendors and caterers and overseeing the set-up, execution and cleanup of events" (Event Planner Job Description: Top Duties and Qualifications section, para. 1). The Professional Convention Management Associate (PCMA) classifies an event professional as someone who's job relates to the "development, organization and management of meetings, conventions, exhibitions and seminars," (2021, Membership section). While the International Institute of Event Management states an event planner is someone who is "managing a project such as a meeting, convention, tradeshow, ceremony, team building activity, party, or convention" and takes on, "budgeting, establishing timelines, selecting and reserving the event sites, acquiring permits, planning food, coordinating transportation, developing a theme, arranging for activities, selecting speakers and keynotes, arranging for equipment and facilities, managing risk, and developing contingency plans" (International Institute of Event Management, 2021, What is Event Planning? Four unique perspectives from event planning experts section), this leaves a wide gap in the expectations for event planners job duties and no educational requirements were listed in these descriptions.

The inconsistencies in education and training, specifically for event planners, is one of the greater challenges when attempting to exemplify the importance and value of a quality degree (Ponting, 2021). Encouraged by the fact there is no formal educational

requirement or standardization, books and papers are available that resemble "Do-It Yourself" instructions for becoming an event planner (Butenko, 2019). While these books of instructions may be more appealing than decades of student loans that can come with an accredited degree, they widen the knowledge and competency gap of event professionals (Tasci, Pizam, Croes & Chen, 2014).

Many professional organizations offer prestigious certifications to denote individuals who can pass their applicable courses and examinations (PCMA, 2021). However, event, tourism, and hospitality management programs have become increasingly more notable, popular and desired for individuals pursuing a career in the industry since the 1990s (Getz, 2008). Most of these programs pair classroom knowledge with hands-on experience through internships or other opportunities which is considered valuable by many employers (Study Portal, n.d.; Universites.com, 2021).

Many events, tourism, and hospitality degrees offer a combination of hands-on experience with classroom learning, allowing students to gain industry experience while increasing their knowledge baseline (Burton Sox, 2021). While there are over 300 colleges and universities offering varying degrees or academic accolades within the event, tourism, and hospitality sector, many of these programs' educational focuses greatly vary (Universities.com, 2021). Though there have previously been standards or curriculum checklists created by a taskforce supported by Meeting Professionals International in 2012, the events management, tourism, and hospitality industry is ever changing and expanding, creating a challenge for academic programs to stay current with industry trends and expectations (Burton Sox, 2021; Getz, 2008; MPI, 2012).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, skillsets perceived as high importance included organizational and creative ability, technical interest, financial acumen, communication skills including writing and speaking ability, an outgoing personality, flexibility, basic computer skills and the ability to think clearly in stressful situations (Matthews, 2008). Professional event planners set to standardize skill requirements for ability and knowledge within the events, tourism, and hospitality industry and complied the below Table 1 (Cecil, Fenich, Krugman & Hashimoto, 2013).

Table 1 - Skillsets from Cecil et al. study

Skillset	**Subskills and Development Timeline**
STRATEGIC PLANNING	Manage strategic plan for meeting or event
	Develop sustainability plan for meeting or event
	Measure value of meeting or business event
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	Plan meeting or event
	Manage meeting or event project
RISK MANAGEMENT	Manage risk management plan
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	Develop financial resources
	Manage budget
	Manage monetary transactions
ADMINISTRATION	Perform administrative tasks
HUMAN RESOURCES	Manage human resource plan
	Acquire staff and volunteers
	Train staff and volunteers
	Manage workforce relations
STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	Manage stakeholder relationships
	Design program
	Engage speakers and performers
	Coordinate food and beverage services

MEETING OR EVENT DESIGN	Design environment
	Manage technical production
	Develop plan for managing movement of people
SITE MANAGEMENT	Select site
	Design site layout
	Manage meeting or event site
	Manage on-site communications
MARKETING	Mange a marketing plan
	Manage marketing materials
	Manage meeting or event merchandise
	Promote meeting or event
	Contribute to public relations activities
	Manage sales activities
PROFESSIONALISM	Exhibit professional behavior
COMMUNICATIONS	Conduct business communications

(Cecil, Fenich, Krugman & Hashimoto, 2013)

With COVID-19 swiftly ending most global in-person events during the end of 2019 through the middle of 2021, event planners had to adjust, and occasionally validate, their roles and responsibilities as the world transitioned to a work from home setting. As online events and meetings became prevalent with the pandemic forcing events to cancel, a change of or added skills are necessary to complete roles related to event planning. This study is set to evaluate what event planners believe are the valued skills needed moving into future for event planners and how that can potentially change academic courses to respond appropriately.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 – Research Design

The main purpose of this study was to identify how COVID-19 impacted the events, tourism, and hospitality industry and changed the skills needed to be a successful event planner in the future. Additionally, this study was designed to offer curriculum suggestions to academic program faculty within the event, tourism, and hospitality teachings based on new skills that are perceived as necessary for event professionals. As the pandemic crisis enters into a recovery stage, this exploratory study hopes to inform the industry on key areas. The following questions were used when designing the mixed methods study:

1. What are some of the major changes due to COVID-19 in the event, tourism, and hospitality industry that would affect an event planner's role?

2. Currently, what are perceived as the most important skills needed to be an event planner and, if applicable, how have those changed due to COVID-19?

3. What academic education and professional training changes for event, tourism, and hospitality programs need to be addressed due to COVID-19?

3.2 – Selection of Subjects

Obtaining information and data from experienced event professionals who had various backgrounds within the event, tourism, and hospitality industry was the primary goal for both the focus group and survey pertaining to this research. The sample pool for this study's focus groups were experienced event professionals. Experienced event professionals was defined as having three or more years of experience in the event

industry. For the qualitative focus groups, an open invitation to participate in a focus group (Appendix C) was posted in a professional social media group for event professionals who were willing to share their experiences as an event professional pre, during and post COVID-19. For the focus group discussion, the research subjects needed to (a) be at least 18 years old, (b) hold a position in the events industry (i.e., hotel, restaurants, events), and (c) have been working in the events industry in 2018 until at least March 2020.

The selected twenty-one event professionals had various backgrounds and experiences within event planning. The event professionals were guided through the ninety-minute focus group meeting with questions on their work-related experiences due to COVID-19 and the adjustments they made within their skillsets. The two focus groups were led by an event grad student, the author of this paper. Before the scheduled focus groups, an email was sent to the participating event professionals (Appendix C) detailing the focus groups' meeting time, questions to guide the discussion (Appendix D), information each event professional needed to provide and a notice that the focus groups would be recorded. It was noted the detailed content provided by each event professional would remain anonymous unless a person was later asked and approved the use of a quote.

The sample for this study's survey were also experienced event professionals. However, in order to proceed with the survey, the surveyed person needed to be: (a) a planner, (b) a supplier, (c) employed by a third-party agency or (d) an independent consultant all within the events industry. If the surveyed person stated that their current job description did not fit any of the previously listed titles, they were asked to write their

events industry role in a box. Their role was later determined to either meet or not fulfill the requirements of an event professional for this survey.

For the qualitative and quantitative survey, an invitation to participate in a survey (Appendix E) was emailed to a list of event professionals and posted on social media. For the focus group discussion, the research subjects also needed to (a) be at least 18 years old, (b) hold a position in the events industry (i.e., hotel, restaurants, events), (c) have been working in the events industry in 2018 until at least March 2020. Upon entering the survey, individuals were asked to read informed consent verbiage (Appendix B) and had to willingly agree to participate in the survey (Appendix F).

3.3 – Procedures for Data Collection

A human subject's compliance agreement was submitted to Indiana University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) by the grad student researcher and three professor researchers. All parties completed the Indiana University Human Subjects training and passed the related test prior to collecting data. The documentation was filed on July 3, 2021, and was approved by IRB on July 20, 2021 (Appendix A).

Once approved by the Indiana University IRB, invitations to participate in the focus group were sent via social media. Focus group attendees were asked a series of predetermined questions during a recorded online meeting, which each of the attendees consented to. After both focus groups were conducted, the recordings were watched, and more detailed notes were taken to identify common themes throughout the meetings. Once the main themes were identified, a 25-question survey based off of information received in the focus groups was created.

Sequentially, the survey was shared with the focus group attendees and other event professionals via email. The link to the survey was also shared on social media by the research team. Survey participants were able to provide their responses through Qualtrics, a web-based software where surveys can be created. After 45 days, the survey was closed, and that data was extracted from Qualtrics. Partial or incomplete responses were deleted from the dataset.

3.4 – Instrument Design

A list of questions was created and reviewed then asked in a pre-determined, sequential order using uniform verbiage during both focus groups. These structured, focus group interviews were designed to alleviate usability issues and create an open dialogue in order to identify common themes throughout the focus groups (Biddix, 2009). After reviewing the focus group meetings, a 25-question survey was created which corresponded with common themes from the focus groups and would provide additional data and insight. The survey was reviewed multiple times in order to provide a clear, logically formatted experience for the survey participants where they would be providing quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 – Focus Group

The two focus groups conducted to identified common themes regarding the changes COVID-19 brought to event planners such as job importance, necessary skillsets and how the pandemic's restrictions in regard to group gatherings and mandated safety precautions impacted the quantity, format, and the return on investment (ROI) of events. The first focus group had 9 participants while the second focus group had 12. Table 2 outlines the basic demographics of all the focus group participants without revealing their personal information. Out of the 21 focus group participants with varying job and years of experience within the events, tourism, and hospitality industry, 19 were female and 2 were male.

Table 2 - Profile of Focus Group Participants

ID	Gender	Job Title	Years of Industry Experience	Sector	Employment Status
1	Female	Account Executive	5	Supplier	Employed
2	Female	Owner, Lead Planner	6	Events	Employed
3	Female	Executive Director	11	Events	Employed
4	Female	Owner, Independent Consultant	13	Independent Consultant	Employed
5	Male	Advisor, Marketing Operations	14	Events	Employed
6	Female	Account Executive	15	Events	Employed
7	Female	Director of Events	15	Events	Employed
8	Female	Sales Manager	15	Events	Employed
9	Male	Senior Event Manager	15	Events	Employed
10	Female	Director of Business Development	18	Service Provider	Employed
11	Female	Marketing Event and Training Coordinator	18	Events	Employed
12	Female	Head of Global Events	20	Events	Employed

13	Female	Meetings and Education Manager	20	Events	Employed
14	Female	Conference and Event Planner	21	Events	Employed
15	Female	Senior Meetings and Events Manager	24	Events	Employed
16	Female	Independent Conference and Event Manager	25	Independent Consultant	Employed
17	Female	Senior Director of Events	27	Events	Employed
18	Female	Meeting Event Manager	28	Events	Employed
19	Female	Vice President of Global Accounts	31	Events	Employed
20	Female	President	32	Technology	Employed
21	Female	Owner, Meetings and Event Consultant	34	Events	Employed

The focus group was recorded and conducted in a conversational format where the interviewer asked guiding questions and allowed for an organic conversation to happen between the focus group participants. Notes were taken by the research team during the focus groups in order to engage with the participants in a more natural conversation. After both of the focus groups were conducted, the recordings were then watched multiple times in order to identify key themes within each focus group session. The themes for each group were then compared and repeated topics, concerns and concepts were then noted. Along with a brief digestible definition and example, Table 3 outlines major themes mentioned in focus group session such as: communication, continuous learning, creativity, financial management, generalized skillset, specialized skillset, and virtual events planning.

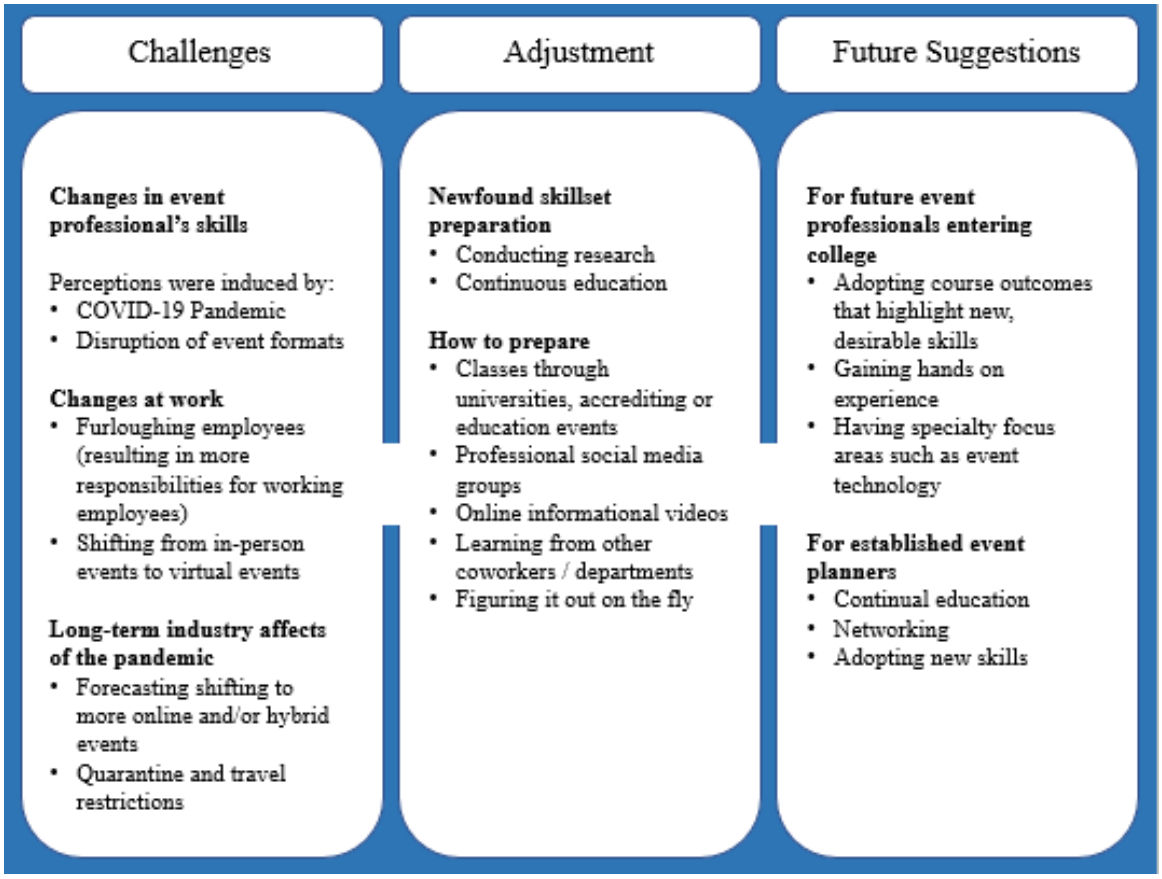
Table 3 - Major Themes from the Focus Groups

Theme	Definition	Example
Communication	Effectively deliver and receive information to and from clients, vendors, coworkers and other parties.	When the job involves a lot of different teams and suppliers, communicating accurate details between parties is highly important to ensure the client receives what they ordered.
Creativity	Designing and processing unique or new ideas to fit a variety of needs such as budget and timeframe.	I needed to figure out how to redesign my event space that provided a space where some clients could be fully engaged in a presentation while others could leave the room without disturbing everyone else.
Specialized Skillset	Providing an expertise in a few niche areas applicable to the overall job.	During the pandemic, having to learn how to do everything an IT department would do, becoming the resident IT expert.
Generalized Skillset	Providing a good understanding of multiple areas applicable to the overall job.	Learning to wear a multitude of hats when coworkers were furloughed and someone needed to complete portions of their job.
Financial Management	Planning and following a monetary budget.	Clients needed to pick whether they wanted an option that was out of their budget or within their budget.
Virtual Events	Hosting events via an online platform	Learning how to effectively create virtual events and how much different they are than in person events
Continuous Learning	Constantly educating oneself, especially in relation to their job.	During the pandemic, opting to become certified or take classes in subjects relating to a person's job.

However, the largest and overarching theme was event planners' skillsets had or needed to change due to COVID-19. These items that were highlighted by the focus group participants were used to mold the survey "Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner" which focuses mainly on updated skillets perceived as necessary to be a successful event planner and how COVID-19 quantitatively and financially impacted event, tourism, and hospitality businesses or sectors within a business.

Figure 1, created with themes and data from the focus groups and survey, shows the progression and possible adjustments in education and desired skillsets to be made due to data in the focus group and survey. COVID-19 brought some of the largest, seemingly instantaneous, changes to the events, tourism, and hospitality industry, making established and upcoming event professionals expand their skillset to include new areas such as virtual events and other technology-based platforms. Gaining new skills regarding virtual event though, can be beneficial to heighten the quality of in-person events. One interviewee, an event professional with 15 years of experience stated, "Nothing that I knew in the in-person event industry applied to the virtual (events). But now that I've learned this virtual (skills), I think I'm going to put more of that into the in-person (events) knowing how technology works."

Figure 1 – Aspects of Skill-Based Changes in the Event, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry Due to COVID-19 via Collected Themes and Data from the Focus Groups and Survey



4.2 – Survey Descriptive Analysis Results

Once the "Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner" survey was created and opened on September 7, 2021, a total of 1,403 emails with a brief message and the survey link, were sent to IUPUI Alumni, MPI Members, Association of Bridal Consultants (ABC) Members and the focus group participants. Additionally, a similar message and the survey link were posted on social media by each of the research team members. Three rounds of follow-up emails were sent at weekly intervals until the survey was closed after on October 22, 2021; after 45 days of being open for survey participants.

The survey had a total of 271 responses with 49.08% (133) partially completing the survey and 50.92% (138) completing the entire survey for useful responses. For the purpose of this project and article, all future data referenced will be based on fully completed survey responses. The average time for survey participants to complete the survey was skewed due to survey participants not finishing the survey uninterrupted once they had started. Due to numerous test runs conducted by the research team, it was established the survey should not take more than a half hour to complete, if taken uninterrupted. Taking out the responses that took over a half hour to complete gives an average completion time of 13.28 minutes with 5.8 minutes being the shortest response time and 29.1 minutes being the longest. A factor for the higher completion time for the 18 surveys that were completed in over a half hour is that the survey was not marked as "incomplete" until the research team closed the survey. This means that the survey participant could start the survey, and when they went complete it hours or days later, they would pick up the survey at their last unanswered question.

Represented by Table 4, among the survey participants, 15.21% of survey participants were between the ages of 18 and 29. 10.14% of survey participants were between the ages of 30 and 34. 14.49% of survey participants were between the ages of 35 and 39. 10.86% of survey participants were between the ages of 40 and 44. 12.31% of survey participants were between the ages of 45 and 49. 15.94% of survey participants were between the ages of 50 and 54. 12.31% of survey participants were between the ages of 55 and 59. 8.61% of survey participants were 60 or older.

In terms of gender, 86.95% of survey participants were female. 12.31% of survey participants were male. 0.72% of survey participants were non-binary or gender fluid.

When it comes to race, 9.4% of survey participants were White- Hispanic and/or Latinx. 84.1% of survey participants were White- non-Hispanic nor Latinx. 6.5% of survey participants were other minorities including Asian American, Black and/or African American, other, or preferred not to disclose.

Furthermore, 79% of survey participants were located in the United States of America. 21% of survey participants were located in other countries including Canada and Italy. Regarding education level, 7.24% of survey participants' highest education level was a associates degree or some college. 74.64% of survey participants' highest education level was a bachelor's degree. 17.4% of survey participants' highest education level was a master's degree. 0.72% of survey participants' highest education level was a doctorate degree.

In terms of job responsibilities, 75.4% of survey participants had the job role of planner. 24.6% of survey participants had other job roles, including independent consultant, supplier, and third-party agency. In terms of organization type, 31.2% of survey participants were in a role at associations. 13% of survey participants were in a role at corporations. 14.5% of survey participants were in a role as an independent consultant. 21% of survey participants were in a role at non-profits. 8.7% of survey participants were in a role at third-party agencies. 11.6% of survey participants were in a role at another business type. The average number of years survey participants have spent in the events industry is 17.29 years with a standard deviation of 9.564 years.

In terms of employment status, between 2020 and 2021, 77.2% of survey participants had the same role at the same organization/company. 11.4% of survey participants had an events industry tole at a different organization/company, 32.5% of the

survey participants had other scenarios, such as employed at the same organization with a different role, left the industry, unemployed, and were not willing to answer the question. Lastly, when it comes to the size of the organization, as of 2021, 56.5% of the participants worked in a company that has 50 or less employees, 14.5% worked at a company that had 51 – 100 employees and 29.0% worked at a company with 101 or more people. The table also shows percentages for 2019 and 2020 with projected percentages for 2020 regarding employee numbers at a workplace.

Table 4 - Profile of Survey Participants

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 - 29	21	15.21
30 - 34	14	10.14
35-39	20	14.49
40 - 44	15	10.86
45 - 49	17	12.31
50 - 54	22	15.94
55 - 59	17	12.31
60 - 65+	12	8.69
Gender		
Female	120	86.95
Male	17	12.31
Non-Binary or Gender Fluid	1	0.72
Race		
White - Hispanic and/or LatinX	13	9.4
White - Not Hispanic and/or Latin X	116	84.1
Other Minorities	9	6.5
Location		
United States of America	109	79

Other Countries	29	21
Highest Education Level		
Associate's Degree or Some College	10	7.24
Bachelor's Degree	103	74.64
Master's Degree	24	17.4
Doctorate Degree	1	0.72
Job Role		
Planner	104	75.4
Others Including: Independent Consultant, Supplier, Third Party Agency	34	24.6
Business Type of Current Job Role		
Associations	43	31.2
Corporate	18	13
Independent Consultant	20	14.5
Non-profit	29	21
Third Party Agency	12	8.7
Other	16	11.6
Employment Status Between 2020 and 2021		
Has the same role at the same organization / company	88	77.2
Has an events industry role at a different organization / company	13	11.4
Other positions including: Employed at the same organization but role has changed, left the industry, unemployed, did not answer.	37	32.5
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
Years in the Events Industry	17.29 years	9.564

Year / Company Size	50 People or Less	51 - 100 People	101 People or More
End of 2019	55.8%	11.6%	32.6%
End of 2020	59.4%	13.8%	26.8%
In 2021	56.5%	14.5%	29.0%
Projected in 2022	52.2%	14.5%	33.3%

4.3 - Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

To further explore the changing requirement of skillsets for event professionals in the pandemic times, this study asked the participants to rate the importance of various skill sets generated from the focus group interviews and the literature (Cecil et al., 2013). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to analyze the underlying dimensions of these skill sets. EFA is appropriate in this research context, given that an EFA's purpose is to identify patterns and factors within the data by using predictions, making it a typical starting point when analyzing data to construct metrics and see how the all the data aligns (Child, 2006; DeCoster, 1998).

Following the suggestions provided by Yong and Pearce (2013), the EFA analysis took the following steps. First, a preliminary factor analysis was conducted, with principal components analysis as the extraction method and a varimax rotation. The results showed that a total of 10 variables were extracted and included in the findings, accounting for 67.95% of the total variance. The results of the preliminary tests were examined – the correlation matrix was checked and no multiciliary issues were spotted. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (significant level of $p < .05$) to confirm that our example has patterned relationships.

Furthermore, it was determined this sample is suitable for EFA by looking at the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy (cutoff above .50). Moreover, items with a factor loading value less than .45 and cross-loadings were removed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Lastly, Cronbach α value was calculated for each new factor, ranging from .32 to .95. Following the factor loading suggestions per sample size provided by Hair et al. (1998), factors with a Cronbach value less than .6 were excluded from the results. The data of the study was proven to be significant ($p < 0.001$) have a KMO of 0.830, and an approximate chi-square of 1,664. The results regarding perceived importance of certain skills and how the data interacts are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 – EFA Results

	General Business Skills	General Logic	People Skills	Optimal Efficiency	Business Tech and Numbers	Active Communication	Customer Facing Skills	General Communication
Risk Management	0.757							
Financial Management	0.636							
Site Management	0.592							
Negotiation	0.588							
Persuasion	0.526							
Human Resources	0.449							

Critical Thinking		0.733						
Strategic Planning		0.629						
Problem Solving		0.584						
Decision Making		0.516						
Project Management		0.476						
Networking			0.783					
Creativity			0.6					
Team Building			0.568					
Time Management				0.764				
Multitasking				0.712				

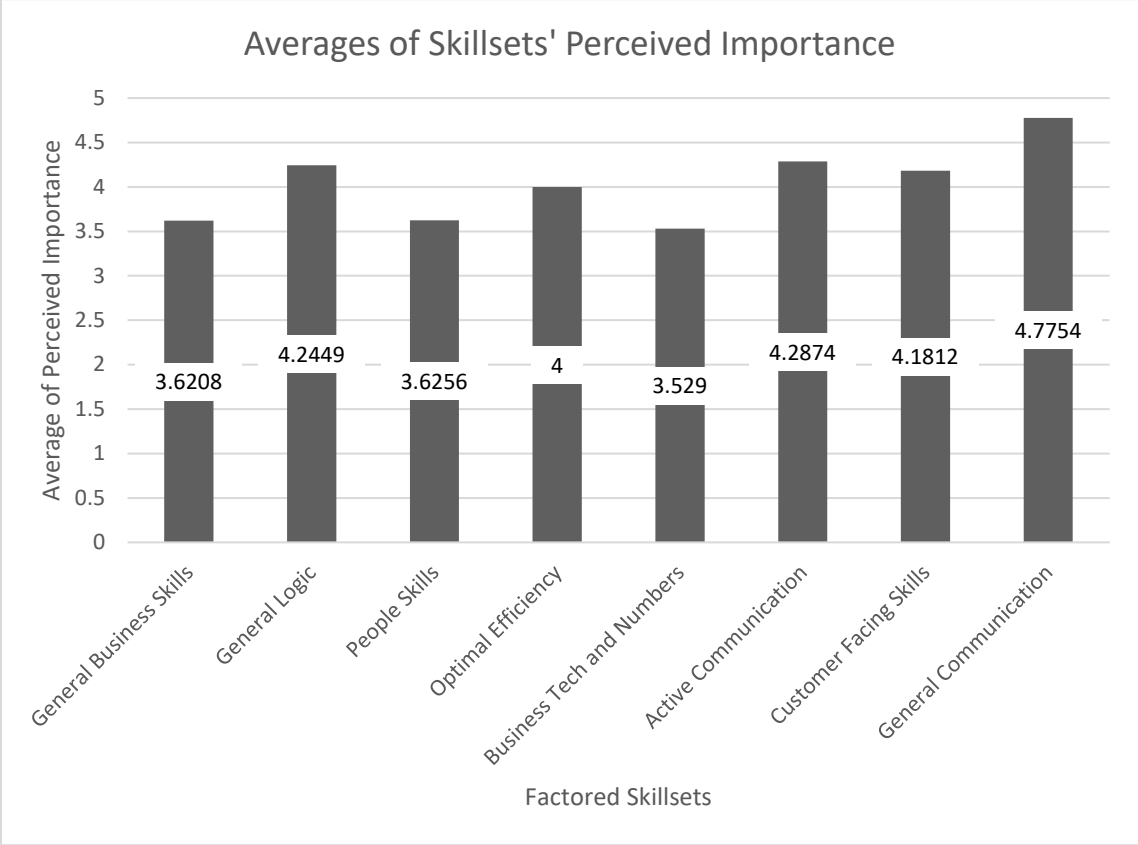
Solving Conflicts with a Win-Win Approach				0.481				
Software Proficiency					0.75			
Stakeholder Management					0.669			
Data Analysis					0.46			
Collaboration						0.701		
Active Listening						0.666		
Analytical Thinking						0.459		
Integrity							0.778	
Professionalism							0.668	

Information Gathering							0.449	
Communication								0.831
Cronbach A	0.805	0.791	0.664	0.626	0.618	0.643	0.636	N/A

Factor 1, General Business Skills, was comprised with 6 items with a Cronbach α of .805, which is acceptable: Risk Management, Financial Management, Site Management, Negotiation, Persuasion and Human Resources. Factor 2, General Logic, was comprised with 5 items with a Cronbach α of .791, which is acceptable: Critical Thinking, Strategic Planning, Problem Solving, Decision Making and Project Management. Factor 3, People Skills, was comprised with 3 items with a Cronbach α of .664, which is acceptable: Networking, Creativity and Team Building. Factor 4, Optimal Efficiency, was comprised with 3 items with a Cronbach α of .626, which is acceptable: Time Management, Multitasking and Solving Conflicts with a Win-Win Approach. Factor 5, Business Tech and Numbers, was comprised with 3 items with a Cronbach α of .618, which is acceptable: Software Proficiency, Stakeholder Management and Data Analysis. Factor 6, Active Communication, was comprised with 3 items with a Cronbach α of .643, which is acceptable: Collaboration, Active Listening and Analytical Thinking. Factor 7, Customer Facing Skills, was comprised with 3 items with a Cronbach α of .636, which is acceptable: Integrity, Professionalism and Information Gathering. Skills grouped in Factors 8 and 9, Flexibility / Adaptivity, Meeting / Event Design and Empathy, respectively, did not meet the Cronbach's acceptable level (>0.6) and therefore, were not analyzed further. Although Communication did not emerge as an underlying dimension of the factors, given that it has been frequently mentioned in focus group interviews, it was kept in subsequent analysis under Factor General Communication.

Figure 2 shows the average of each factored skillsets' contributing factors' perceived importance on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Important At All," 2 being "Slightly Important," 3 being "Moderately Important," 4 being "Very Important," and 5 being "Extremely Important."

Figure 2 - Averages of Skillsets' Perceived Importance



General Business Skills had an average of 3.6208 falling between moderately and very important. General Logic had an average of 4.2449 falling between very and extremely important. People Skills had an average of 3.6256 falling between moderately and very important. Optimal Efficiency had an average of 4.000 falling at very important. Business Tech and Numbers had an average of 3.529 falling between moderately and very important. Active Communication had an average of 4.2874 falling between very

and extremely important. Customer Facing Skills had an average of 4.1812 falling between very and extremely important. General Communication had an average of 4.7754 falling between very and extremely important.

The averages for this graph are solely based on what each survey participant provided without being compared to other variables. This shows that each factored skillset were perceived, at minimum, as moderately important, showcasing that while each of these factored skillsets are important for an event professional to have, some skills are perceived as situationally better, which will be shown in later comparisons.

4.4 - Comparison Results

To compare if the determined factors were affected by variables such as the size of the company, work location, or whether events were in person, hybrid, or virtual, multiple ANOVA tests and correlations tests were conducted. An ANOVA is the best method in this research context, as an ANOVA's purpose is to identify if differences between groups are significant (Qualtrics, n.d.). Correlation tests can test the relations between different variables.

To start with, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication ($p > 0.05$) are not significant when comparing to how many employees were at a company in 2019, 2020, 2021 or predicted in 2022. This means that these skills listed in all of the factors are not affected by how many employees are at a company in the past, currently and in the future, making the company size irrelevant when comparing the importance of these skills.

As for year 2019, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills, Business Tech and Numbers and General Communication are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing a work location of in office, hybrid or remote, yet General Business Skills was significant ($p < 0.05$).

For 2020, work location was not a significant factor ($p > 0.05$) when comparing General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills, Business Tech and Numbers and General Communication.

For 2021, Factors General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing a work location of in office, hybrid or remote for 2021, yet Business Tech and Numbers is significant ($p < 0.05$) in this scenario.

For 2022, Factors General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers and General Communication are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing a projected work location of in office, hybrid or remote, but Customer Facing Skills is significant ($p < 0.05$).

Additionally, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication ($p > 0.05$) were not significant when comparing to how many in-person and online events, in addition to having no events that a company executed in 2019.

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication and Customer Facing Skills ($p > 0.05$) are not significant, yet General Communication is significant ($p < 0.05$) when comparing to how many hybrid events a company executed in 2019.

In 2020, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers and Customer Facing Skills were not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing to how many in-person events a company had in 2020 yet Active Communication and General Communication were significant ($p < 0.05$).

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication and Customer Facing Skills were not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing to how many hybrid events a company had in 2020 yet General Communication was significant ($p < 0.05$).

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication ($p > 0.05$) are not significant when comparing to how many virtual events a company held in 2020.

General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers and Customer Facing Skills were not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing to a company that did not have events in 2020 yet General Business Skills, General Communication and Active Communication were significant ($p < 0.05$).

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and

General Communication ($p > 0.05$) are not significant when comparing to how many in-person and hybrid events a company had in 2021.

General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Customer Facing Skills, General Business Skills and General Communication were not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing to a company that did not have events in 2021 but Active Communication was significant ($p < 0.05$).

General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, General Business Skills, General Communication and Active Communication were not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing to a company that had virtual events in 2021 yet Customer Facing Skills was significant ($p < 0.05$).

When comparing to the percentage of in person events a company is predicted to have in 2022, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication and Customer Facing Skills ($p > 0.05$) are not significant but General Communication is ($p < 0.05$).

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication ($p > 0.05$) are not significant when comparing to the percentage of hybrid and virtual events a company is predicted to have and companies that are predicted to not have events in 2022. Again, these results show that some skills have been and will be perceived as more important based on the type of event the company is hosting.

When comparing the factored skills to the survey participants role in the events industry, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, and Customer Facing Skills are not significant ($p > 0.05$) but General Communication is. This shows that no matter the job title in the events industry, most of these skills are important.

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication ($p > 0.05$) are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing the job status similarities and differences for survey participants between 2020 and now; but Optimal Efficiency is show significance ($p < 0.05$). These results mean than no matter the changes in a career, most of these skills are important.

For 2019, 2020 and predicted for 2022, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing if a company's event's budget increased or decreased when compared to the previous year. For 2021, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication are not significant ($p > 0.05$) when comparing an increase or decrease in budget, but General Business Skills and Business Tech and Numbers were listed as significant ($p < 0.05$). This result infers that the significant stills were possibly perceived as less useful as the event, tourism, and hospitality industry recovered from the pandemic but will be considered useful again once businesses are back on track.

Looking at how many events a company performed in 2019 and 2021 and a prediction of numbers for events in 2022, General Business Skills, General Logic, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication were not significant ($p > 0.05$) and People Skills was significant ($p < 0.05$). For 2020, General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication, Customer Facing Skills and General Communication was not significant ($p > 0.05$) and Optimal Efficiency was not significant ($p < 0.05$). These results show that generally, People Skills, has not been, nor will be significant or prioritized skillset.

General Business Skills, General Logic, People Skills, Optimal Efficiency, Business Tech and Numbers, Active Communication and Customer Facing Skills are not significant ($p > 0.05$) and General Communication was significant ($p < 0.05$) when compared to if a survey participant's company has measured their ROI differently since 2019. This means that the perceived importance of most skillsets does not change if their ROI were measured differently by years.

Below, Table 6 summarizes the previously mentioned results. Based on all the above results, there is not a set factored skillset that remains as significant to all of the job-related comparisons, which indicates that no matter what the job is within the events, tourism, and hospitality industry, all of these skills are necessary and desired for event planners in some capacity.

Table 6 - Comparison Results

Skillset / Category	Active Communication	Business Tech and Numbers	Customer Facing Skills	General Business Skills	General Communication	General Logic	Optimal Efficiency	People Skills
2019 Company Size 50 People or Less	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 Company Size Between 51 - 100 People	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 Company Size 101 People or More	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 Company Size 50 People or Less	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

2020 Company Size Between 51 - 100 People	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 Company Size 101 People or More	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 Company Size 50 People or Less	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 Company Size Between 51 - 100 People	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 Company Size 101 People or More	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 Predicted Company Size 50 People or Less	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

2022 Predicted Company Size Between 51 - 100 People	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 Predicted Company Size 101 People or More	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 Work Location	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.034*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 Work Location	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 Work Location	Not Sig.	p = 0.032*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 Predicted Work Location	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.017*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

2019 - Company Had No Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 - Company Had In-Person Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 - Company Had Hybrid Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.05*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 - Company Had Virtual Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 - Company Had No Events	p = 0.006**	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.22*	p = 0.44*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 - Company Had In-Person Events	p = 0.005**	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p < 0.001**	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 - Company Had Hybrid Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.22*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

2020 - Company Had Virtual Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 - Company Had No Events	p = 0.016*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 - Company Had In-Person Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 - Company Had Hybrid Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 - Company Had Virtual Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.036*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 - Company Had No Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 - Company Had In-Person Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.029*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

2022 - Company Had Hybrid Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 - Company Had Virtual Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
Job Title / Role Within the Industry	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.025*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
Current Employment Status	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.076*	Not Sig.
2019 - Budget Change	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2020 - Budget Change	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2021 - Budget Change	Not Sig.	p = 0.019*	Not Sig.	p = 0.016*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2022 - Predicted Budget Change	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
2019 - Company Number of Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.004**
2020 - Company Number of Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.033*	Not Sig.
2021 - Company Number of Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.021*

2022 - Predicted Company Number of Events	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.003**
Change in ROI Measurement Since 2019	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	p = 0.008**	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Not Sig.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 – Discussion

The results of the study address all three initial questions:

1. What are some of the major changes due to COVID-19 in the event, tourism, and hospitality industry that would affect an event planner's role? Changes in the industry include health and safety protocols, new technology and technology skillsets, and different types of events being conducted within the event, tourism, and hospitality industry.

2. Currently, what are perceived as the most important skills needed to be an event planner and, if applicable, how have those changed due to COVID-19? Shown in Chapter 4, there are 8 factored skillsets with 1 to 6 subskills that are perceived as important to event professionals for a post pandemic planner.

3. What academic education and professional training changes for event, tourism, and hospitality programs need to be addressed due to COVID-19? Education and training curriculum can be updated to include new or more recently prominent skills for event professionals.

The 8 factored skillsets from this study do partially align with the 12 skillsets determined by Cecil et al in 2013; which differs from this study by stating the estimated timeframe for each subskill to be fully developed, in addition to listing an importance level and how frequently the skill is used. Meeting and Event Design was listed as a useful skillset in the 2013 study but did not meet the Cronbach's A standards for this study. Some subskills in each study were listed as skillset titles and vice versa, meaning

there is crossover between the two studies' skills and skillsets. A major difference between the 2013 and this study is due to COVID-19 being relatively unheard of until late 2019, new skills and subskills heighted by COVID-19 may not be applicable to event planners in and after the pandemic.

5.2 – Practical Implications

Though the data generally did not produce significant findings, implicating that all the factored skillsets are viable for event professionals in the post COVID-19 era. This fills the current gap in knowledge regarding what event professionals and programs within the event, tourism, and hospitality industry should focus on to both create successful events and future event professionals.

Utilizing these results, educational programs and universities can update their curriculum to maximize the potential of students and current event professionals obtaining relevant knowledge in regard to the event, tourism, and hospitality industry. While certain aspects or skills might not apply to every niche or position, generally, the data shows that industry professionals view these skillsets as valuable assets. Figure 3 demonstrates the existing need for this study and possible future implementations of the results.

Figure 3- Study Importance Demonstration

5.3 – Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There are a few limitations with this study. The following limitations and recommendations for future research regarding desired skillsets for post pandemic event professionals are:

1. As the event, tourism, and hospitality industry constantly evolves, desired skillsets for event professionals will also change. While this data shows what skills current event professionals find preferable and other recent trends within the event industry, this data does not identify the roles and responsibilities of event professionals as a whole or new roles that could be created in the industry due to COVID-19. Similar studies will not only need to be conducted to validate this data, but future studies will need to be conducted as the industry changes. Similarly, other demographics could be considered in future studies.

2. Additionally, all of the focus group participants and the vast majority of the survey participants conduct their business within the United States of America. This potentially limits the data results to a geographical area due to limited input from other areas. Future studies should be completed within other specific geographic areas or globally.

3. Most of the focus group and survey participants were female. The data may reflect priorities more often held by those who identify as female over those of their male or other gender identity counterparts. Additional research could be conducted to gain the opinions of more men or other gender identities to discern if the current data is comparable.

4. Universities and other education programs can utilize this data to amend their academic programs within the event, tourism, and hospitality industry to maintain relevance in relation to trends in the field.

5. After reviewing the results of the survey, a theoretical conclusion was made that survey participants could need definitions for certain skills or key words in the survey. For example, Stakeholder Management and Meeting / Event Design potentially needs a future study to define the differences.

5.4 – Conclusion

The main focus of this study was to compare potential changes in desired skillsets for event professionals pre and post COVID-19. Based on a literature review, a list of skills for post COVID-19 event professionals could not be found. After conducting two focus groups, eight major themes were identified and used as a guide to create the survey questions. The 21 focus group participants were volunteers recruited by social media posts from the professors of the research team.

The survey was created using research from previous works (Cecil et al., 2013), results from the focus groups and trends the research team had noticed or discussed with other event professionals. The 25-question, anonymous survey was fully completed by 138 event professionals with varying levels of experience within the event, tourism, and hospitality industry. The survey was divided into 5 sections: a) Informed Consent b) Profile / Qualifying Questions c) Business Responses to COVID-19 d) Skillset e) Demographics with both open and close ended questions.

The analysis was conducted in SPSS, a statistical program, by using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and ANOVAs. The descriptive statistics showed averages regarding the demographics and experience of the survey participants. The exploratory factor analysis produced 8 skillset factors that were then used for further data comparisons. (1) General Business Skills, comprised 6 subskills; Risk Management, Financial Management, Site Management, Negotiation, Persuasion and Human Resources. (2) General Logic, comprised of 5 subskills; Critical Thinking, Strategic Planning, Problem Solving, Decision Making and Project Management. (3) People Skills, comprised of 3 subskills; Networking, Creativity and Tam Building. (4) Optimal Efficiency, also comprised of 3 subskills; Time Management, Multitasking and Solving Conflicts with a Win-Win Approach. (5) Business Tech and numbers, comprised of 3 subskills; Software Proficiency, Stakeholder Management and Data Analysis. (6) Active Communication, comprised of 3 subskills; Collaboration, Active Listening and Analytical Thinking. (7) Customer Facing Skills, also comprised of 3 subskills; Integrity, Professionalism and Information Gathering. (8) General Communication, comprised of 1 subskill: Communication. It is important to note that the subskill Communication did not meet the Cronbach A standards to become part of a skillset however, given the feedback from focus groups, it was determined by the research team that Communication should be evaluated in further research for this study.

ANOVAs were then conducted to compare each of the 8 factored skillsets to other data results. These comparisons showed that each of the 8 factored skillsets were not significant in relation to other survey data points, meaning each of the skillsets would be desired for an event professional. While a few of the factored skillsets showed

significance for partial data points, the generalization can be made that these factors are non-significant due to the inconsistency and limited times the data results in a significant finding.

There were no statistical differences within the data. This means that each skillset can be applied not only to the widespread of jobs encompassed by the tourism, event, and hospitality industry, but to any industry. The data does not fit a niche market and could be applied in other industries.

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

PROTOCOLS

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

APPROVAL LETTER

To: Cecil, Amanda

Protocol #: 12157

Protocol Title: Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner

Type of Submission: Initial

Level of Review: Exempt

Approval Date: Tuesday, July 20th 2021

Expiration Date: no date provided

**If Expiration Date = "No date provided," this research does not require annual renewal; thus there is no expiration date.*

The Indiana University HRPP approved the above-referenced submission. Conduct of this study is subject to the IU HRPP Policies, as applicable.

Additional Notes:

This research is exempt under the following category: Category 2(ii).

Documents approved with this submission:

Attachments

Informed Consent Statement	Focus Group Informed Consent Verbiage.docx
Recruitment Materials	Survey Group Recruitment Verbiage.docx
Data Collection Instrument	Focus Group Questions.docx
Data Collection Instrument	Survey Questions.docx
Informed Consent Statement	Survey Informed Consent Verbiage.docx
Recruitment Materials	Focus Group Recruitment Verbiage.docx

You should retain a copy of this letter and all associated approved study documents in your research records.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the HRPP via email at irb@iu.edu or via phone at (317) 274-8289.

Appendix B: Approved Study Information Sheet

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH

[Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner]

About this research

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Scientists do research to answer important questions which might help change or improve the way we do things in the future.

This form will give you information about the study to help you decide whether you want to participate. Please read this form, and ask any questions you have, before agreeing to be in the study.

Taking part in this study is voluntary.

You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Indiana University.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to identify potential changes and outcomes related to event planners' roles in events, tourism, and/or hospitality programs.

You were selected as a possible participant because you worked in the events, tourism, and/or hospitality industry at the beginning of 2019 as an event planner.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Amanda Cecil, CMP, Dr. Becky-Liu Lastres, Erica Shonkwiler, MBA, CMP and Savannah Kramer at the Department of Tourism, Event, and Sport Management at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

What will happen during the study?

If you agree to be in the study, you will be completing a survey asking your experience to identify potential changes and outcomes related to event planners' roles in events, tourism, and/or hospitality programs since pre-COVID19. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?

The risks of participating in this research are being uncomfortable answering the survey questions.

We don't expect you to receive any benefit from taking part in this study, but we hope to learn things that will help scientists in the future.

How will my information be protected?

All research includes at least a small risk of loss of confidentiality. Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential.

We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published. Results from the research will be reported as aggregate data. All responses are collected through a password-protected program and will be eventually saved on an encrypted driver/server. All responses will be destroyed after three years from the completed date of this study.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, and any state or federal agencies who may need to access your research records (as allowed by law).

Will I be paid for participation?

No, you will not be paid for your participation.

Who should I call with questions or problems?

For questions about the study, contact the researcher Savannah Kramer at [redacted].

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, please contact the IU Human Subjects Office at 800-696-2949 or at irb@iu.edu.

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate in Focus Group

Good morning!

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of our **Event Planners Focus Group** tomorrow, *(date varied per email) (you are welcome to enjoy lunch while we cha*t).

We appreciate your time and the opportunity to hear your thoughts on our topic – **Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner.**

You do not need to prepare anything for Wednesday. However, attached are the discussion questions. Please review and think about your answers. We will cover as much as we can with our 90 minutes. If during our time there are any topics you were not able to express your thoughts or opinions on and would like to, you are welcome to email me your responses directly too.

We will record this interaction for educational purposes only, your responses to the questions will be strictly confidential and not tied to you individually or your company. We will only report themes that do not have any identifying information and/or quotes that have been approved in writing by our interviewees for use in our research project. Please see the attached Focus Group Informed Consent document for more information.

For our records, please email me back with the following information for you:

- Company
- Job Title
- Years in the Event Experience Industry

The Zoom link is in the calendar appointment and here for ease: *(Zoom link was entered here, varied per email.)*

Again, we would like to thank you for your time. See you tomorrow!

Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Guide

FOCUS GROUP OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning/afternoon! My name is Savannah Kramer and I am a graduate student in the Department of Tourism, Events and Sport Management. I am conducting interviews to explore the evolving role of the event professional and changes to our profession over the last 18 months. This focus group will not last longer than ninety minutes.

Please know your responses to the questions will be strictly confidential and not tied to you individually or your company. We will only report themes that do not have any identifying information and/or quotes that have approved in writing by our interviewees for use in our research project.

This interview is being taped so I can return to the recording for data analysis or confirmation of quotes. Again, it will not be shared outside of our project team and I will delete the tape as soon as I have captured the needed content from the interview.

Do you have any questions or concerns? Are we ready to get started?

Have each interviewee state the following:

- **Name**
- **Company**
- **Role (Planner)**
- **Years in the Event Experience Industry**

If you are a planner, what business type(s) does your professional event experience encompass?

- Association
- Corporate
- Independent
- Third Party
- Non-profit
- Other, please specify: _____

Comparing January of 2020 and today, how would you describe your current employment status?

- I have the same role at the same organization/company
- I have an events industry role at a different organization/company
- I am employed at the same organization/company but my role has changed
- I have left the event industry and am working in another sector
- I am currently furloughed and looking to re-enter the events industry

- I am currently furloughed and not looking to re-enter the events industry
- I am currently not employed but looking to re-enter the events industry
- I am currently not employed and not looking to re-enter the events industry

IF SOMEONE HAS STAYED AT THE SAME COMPANY

Thinking back to 2019, before the pandemic, in what setting did you perform your work (outside of traveling for events)?

- 100% remote
- Over 50% remote and under 50% in a company office
- 50% remote and 50% in a company office
- Less than 50% remote and more than 50% in a company office
- 100% in a company office

Thinking back to 2019 before the pandemic, describe your day-to-day role and responsibilities.

- What would you say were the most important skills for an event professional pre-pandemic?
- What was your challenges as an event professional pre-pandemic?

Once the pandemic hit in early 2020, what changed for your role, if anything?

- How did your role pivot?
- What were your challenges as an event professional during the pandemic?
- What were you doing differently day-to-day? Were there new skills that you had to learn quickly? Please describe.

Looking toward 2022 with the global events coming back, how will your role again change?

- Describe your professional development plans. What will remain the same?
- What skills would you recommend for new event professionals coming into the field?
- What challenges do you see for your role in the future?

During this unusual time for the events profession, many organizations took the time to re-focus and adjust their organizational goals and objectives.

- Did your company's goals and objectives shift during the pandemic? If so, describe the change.
- Did your company address or readdress diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI)?

        - If yes, What steps is your company taking to offer more inclusive experiences, racial equality and diversity representation in your events?
    - Did your organization address corporate social responsibility, specifically sustainability?
        - If yes, what new initiatives emerged or are being considered?

How a company and person measures success might be different in present day.

- Looking back to 2019, how are you measuring performance differently since the pandemic?
- How is your company measuring employee performance differently?
- How are your measuring event ROI?

During the pandemic, many professionals used professional resources such as online networking events, professional social media groups, and obtained certificates from reputable companies pertaining to events.

- Personally, what was your greatest or most used professional resource during the pandemic?
- Are there any other educational courses or certifications you completed during the pandemic?
    - Education: What type of courses?
    - Certifications: Specifically, which ones?

Is there any important information pertaining to the past, present or future of the events industry that we did not touch on and you would like to share?

Follow up questions:

- How do you believe your work setting will change from 2019 going forward?
- Is this more appealing or less appealing to you as an employee, explain?
- If any remote work is being done, what software/technologies are used to keep the team organized and communicating?

Prior to the pandemic, what percentage of your events were:

- 100% Live
- Hybrid
- 100% Virtual

During the pandemic, what technology platforms/software did you use to help you offer virtual events?

Looking forward to 2022, what percentage of your event will be:

- 100% Live
- Hybrid
- 100% Virtual

Thank you for taking the time to have this discussion. It is greatly appreciated, and I enjoyed hearing about your experience. Have a great rest of your day!

Appendix E: Invitation to Participate in Survey

Event Professional:

Hello! My name is Savannah Kramer and I am a Graduate Student at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

The IUPUI Event & Tourism Institute (ETI) is currently conducting a research project entitled "*Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner*" which coincides with my thesis. The purpose of the study is to identify changes related to event planners' role and to uncover the critical knowledge, skills and abilities of an event professional following this recent crisis. The results will be considered in our department's upcoming curriculum and course updates. Our continued focus is to best educate and train future professionals in our field. This research is being conducted by Amanda Cecil, Becky Liu-Lastres, Erica Shonkwiler and myself.

Your input is invaluable to the success of this project and we would appreciate 15 minutes of your time. Please click the following link to access the survey. Additionally, it would be greatly appreciated if you would share this information with your event industry contacts. I have drafted verbiage for an email and/or social media in **bold font** below

If you have questions or are interested in the project's findings, please reach out to me directly at [redacted] or [redacted].

My best,

Savannah Kramer

Appendix F: Survey Instrument

Post-Pandemic Reflection: The Changing Role of the Event Designer/Planner

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Start of Block: Survey Informed Consent

Q1 **Please read the attached file (**Informed Consent File**)** for information

For compliance purposes, we would like to confirm your willingness to participate in this survey.

If you agree to participate in this survey, please select, "I willingly agree to participate under the terms described above."

If you do not agree to participate in this survey, select, "I prefer not to participate."

Proceed to the next question once you have made your selection.

- ○ I willingly agree to participate under the terms described above
- ○ I prefer not to participate

Page Break

End of Block: Survey Informed Consent

Start of Block: Profile / Qualifying Questions

Q2 What is your role in the events industry?

- ○ Planner
- ○ Supplier
- ○ Third Party Agency
- ○ Independent Consultant
- ○ Other, please specify below:

_____

Page Break

Q3 Comparing January of 2020 and today, how would you describe your current employment status?

- ○ I have the same role at the same organization / company
- ○ I have an events industry role at a different organization / company
- ○ I am employed at the same organization / company but my role has changed
- ○ I have left the industry and am working in different sector
- ○ I am currently unemployed but looking to re-enter the events industry
- ○ I am currently unemployed and not looking to reenter the events industry

Page Break

Q4 Where is your company's local office?

- ○ United States of America
- ○ Canada
- ○ Other, please specify below:

_____

Page Break

Q5 Please provide the zip code of your company's local United States office

_____

Q6 Please provide the zip code of your company's local Canadian office

_____

Page Break

Q7 How many employees were at your company during the specified time frames below?

	50 people or less	Between 51 - 100 people	101 people or more
End of 2019	○	○	○
End of 2020	○	○	○
In 2021	○	○	○
Projected in 2022	○	○	○

End of Block: Profile / Qualifying Questions

Start of Block: Response to COVID-19

Q8 What was / is your work location for the specified time frames below?

	In office	Hybrid	Remote
End of 2019	○	○	○
End of 2020	○	○	○
In 2021	○	○	○
Projected in 2022	○	○	○

Page Break

Q9 During the specified time frames, what percentage of your events, regardless of the organization, were in person, hybrid, or virtual?

If you did not have any events during a timeframe, please put 100 in the "No Events Percentage" box.

	In Person Events Percentage	Hybrid Event Percentage	Virtual Events Percentage	No Events Percentage
2019				
2020				
2021				
Projected in 2022				

Page Break

Q10 How many events (internal and external) did / will your company complete per calendar year?

	1 26 51 76 101 126 150 175 200 225 250
2019	
2020	
2021	
2022, expected	

Page Break

Q11 Comparing to each previous year, has the budget of your events department increased, decreased or not changed?

	2019	2020	2021	2022
My company's number of events have	▼ Increased ... Decreased	▼ Increased ... Decreased	▼ Increased ... Decreased	▼ Increased ... Decreased

Page Break

Q12 Since 2019, has your company measured its event return on investments (ROI) differently?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

Page Break

Q13 Please explain how your company has measured its event return on investments (ROI) differently since 2019.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

Q14 During the pandemic (2020-2021), what were the three largest challenges or changes to your role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Response to COVID-19

Start of Block: Skillset

Q15 Moving forward, into 2022 and beyond, what are the most important conceptual skills event planners need to possess?

Please rank the importance of each skill below where 1 = the most important, and 10 = the least important.

_____ Analytical Thinking
_____ Creativity
_____ Critical Thinking
_____ Data Analysis
_____ Decision Making
_____ Flexibility / Adaptivity
_____ Information Gathering
_____ Multitasking
_____ Problem Solving
_____ Time Management

Page Break

Q16 Moving forward, into 2022 and beyond, what are the most important human / people skills event planners need to possess?

Please rank the importance of each skill below where 1 = the most important, and 11 = the least important.

_____ Active Listening
_____ Collaboration
_____ Communication
_____ Empathy
_____ Integrity
_____ Negotiation
_____ Networking
_____ Persuasion
_____ Professionalism
_____ Solving Conflicts with a Win - Win Approach
_____ Team Building

Page Break

Q17 Moving forward, into 2022 and beyond, what are the most important professional / technical skills event planners need to possess?

Please rank the importance of each skill below where 1 = the most important, and 10 = the least important.

_____ Human Resources
_____ Financial Management
_____ Marketing
_____ Meeting / Event Design
_____ Project Management
_____ Risk Management
_____ Site Management
_____ Software Proficiency
_____ Stakeholder Management
_____ Strategic Planning

Q18 Moving forward, into 2022 and beyond, how important are the following skills for your role in event management? Please rate the importance of each skill where “1= not important” and “5 = very important.”

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Active Listening	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical Thinking	○	○	○	○	○
Collaboration	○	○	○	○	○
Communication	○	○	○	○	○
Creativity	○	○	○	○	○
Critical Thinking	○	○	○	○	○
Data Analysis	○	○	○	○	○
Decision Making	○	○	○	○	○
Empathy	○	○	○	○	○
Financial Management	○	○	○	○	○
Flexibility / Adaptivity	○	○	○	○	○
Human Resources	○	○	○	○	○
Information Gathering	○	○	○	○	○
Integrity	○	○	○	○	○
Marketing	○	○	○	○	○

Meeting / Event Design	○	○	○	○	○
Multitasking	○	○	○	○	○
Negotiation	○	○	○	○	○
Networking	○	○	○	○	○
Persuasion	○	○	○	○	○
Problem Solving	○	○	○	○	○
Professionalism	○	○	○	○	○
Project Management	○	○	○	○	○
Risk Management	○	○	○	○	○
Site Management	○	○	○	○	○
Software Proficiency	○	○	○	○	○
Solving Conflicts with a Win-Win Approach	○	○	○	○	○
Stakeholder Management	○	○	○	○	○
Strategic Planning	○	○	○	○	○
Team Building	○	○	○	○	○

Time Management	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Skillset

Start of Block: Demographics

Q19 Gender: How do you identify?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Trans
- ○ Non-Binary or Gender Fluid
- ○ I identify as something else which is: (please specify below)
  _____
- ○ Prefer not to say

Page Break

Q20 What is your current age range?

- ○ 18-24
- ○ 25-29
- ○ 30-34
- ○ 35-39
- ○ 40-44
- ○ 45-49
- ○ 50-54
- ○ 55-59
- ○ 60-64
- ○ 65+

Page Break

Q21 Race: How do you identify?

- ○ Asian American
- ○ Black and/or African American
- ○ Native American / Indigenous American
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ○ White - Hispanic and/or LatinX
- ○ White - NOT Hispanic and/or LatinX
- ○ I identify as something else which is: (please specify below)

_____

- ○ Prefer not to say

Page Break

Q22 How long have you been in the events industry?

(Years of experience combines: planning, creating and/or executing events in a professional setting)

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

Years of Experience 

Page Break

Q23 What business type(s) does your professional event experience encompass?

(Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Associations
- ☐ Corporate
- ☐ Independent Consultant
- ☐ Non-profit
- ☐ Third Party Agency
- ☐ Other, please specify below:

_____

Page Break

Q24 What business type does your current professional event job encompass?

- ○ Associations
- ○ Corporate
- ○ Independent Consultant
- ○ Non-profit
- ○ Third Party Agency
- ○ Other, please specify below:

_____

Page Break

Q25 What is your highest education level?

- Some High School
- High School Diploma, GED, or Equivalent
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate Degree

End of Block: Demographics

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Master of Science in Event Tourism (Research Track) - an Indiana University degree, earned at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in May 2022.

Bachelor of Science in Tourism, Convention, Event Management - an Indiana University degree, earned at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in May 2018.

Business Foundations Certificate - an Indiana University degree, earned at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in May 2018.

Conferences

International Conference on Events – Making Waves in Africa: Exploring New Frontiers in Festivals and Events, co-presented Post-pandemic reflection: The changing role of the event designer/planner.