

Event Themes: More ideas from the Here and Now

Any seasoned event professional, or frequent party goers, will tell you that they have seen it all. Themes like *Marde Gras*, *1950's*, *Las Vegas*, or *An Evening in Versailles*, are a great time and mainstays in the fundraising and gala producing worlds. They are certainly all accessible; some linens are made for it, lot's of décor exists that can capture the spirit, and there are more than a few entertainers that can drive the theme home. There is certainly nothing wrong with these tried and true event themes, but having been done so frequently, sometimes, dare I say, they can lack inspiration.

It doesn't take a look to the past, or an imaginary visit to an exotic location to exceed expectation. The best way to get creative is to look at the world around you.... here and now. What are people talking about, and what can we create that inspires our guests, and ultimately ourselves. Let me give you an example – and a new theme to play with.

Like so many of us this past year, I have been inspired by the most historic and highly anticipated Presidential Election in modern history. Why not take the media fueled enthusiasm and create an event that has a Presidential Theme. The end result*A State Dinner* for 530 employees for a large corporate client, here in New Jersey. The goal was to recognize outstanding service – and what better way than an evening inspired by leadership and service of dedicated employees, and the leadership and service of our nation's highest office – The President of the United States.

From an invitation designed to mirror State Dinner invitations of the Kennedy administration, to scouring eBay for every weathered campaign button since President Taft, it was all about the research. Creating a menu that featured items served at a myriad of state dinners since F.D.R's first term, to homemade desserts that followed the recipes created by Thomas Jefferson. It was all so very personal and the crowd was in awe of the detail surrounding this “new and untested” theme. And as planners, isn't that what we all strive for – new and different.

There was no greater pleasure than seeing guests stand in line to “fake” vote for our next President. Here we are in a beautiful space, McCainatini's to the left and Obamatini's to the right, a band of secret service musicians playing to a packed dance floor, and a line of 20+ people wanting nothing more than to cast their ballot for President – in a fake vote!

I actually said to myself “*they know it’s fake, right?*” Of course, the fact that they could do this voting on a Card Punch Votomatic Machine used in the 2000 Presidential Election in Sarasota County, Florida also encouraged curiosity. I suppose even the best of events can fall victim to guests wanting to experience a hanging chad.

In summary, the end result was a memorable event, that fulfilled the goals and objectives of my client, and it was all done by my muse.....*here and now.*