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Dear ILEA-NC Scholarship Committee, the Board, Rachel Jacob-Barnett & Lori Oates,

I wanted to take a moment to deeply and sincerely thank you for creating the amazing opportunity to attend ILEA Live in Minneapolis! This is a truly magnanimous and touching gesture.

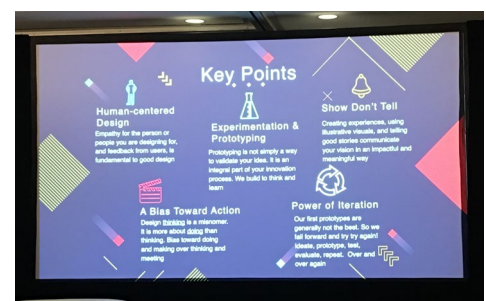
I was absolutely blown away by this experience. The caliber of professionals in attendance, the content and the event design were epic.

Here are just a few of the gems that came out of keynotes and breakout sessions:

- The opening night party (where “Purple Rain” was filmed) was beyond description. The best party EVER!
- Kevin White’s comment, “The algorithms and enticements online are aimed at the low-hanging fruit. If you fall in to that, you’re done. Stay agile and on top of your directives and you will win that game!”
- Patrick Talty, GM of U.S. Bank Stadium delivered a powerful keynote about optimizing meetings, and implementing a “Slow steady push” engagement with staff, versus managing oversight with ‘fits & starts’.
- Ashley Crowder of Vntana blew our minds with what is going in in Augmented Reality. You can point your camera at your feet and try on different shoes! Holographic tech is now within reach for most businesses.
- Most powerful of all was the group discussion with a panel from the Global Event Forum, about how we can make money for not just delivery, but strategy. “Selling the process, not the product.” To do this we need to involve them in the process and ask difficult questions that make them stop and realize what we do. Trust is the #1 product we sell. 25% of all marketing budgets are for events. We are a “need to have”.
- Rachel and Pam who gathered me up to dance at the opening party and invited me to join them for a fun, lively dinner with an ever expanding posse of 16 or so event ladies!

I want to again express my most sincere thanks for this incredible opportunity that has enriched me and my business. ILEA-NC is a heart-swelling organization filled with angels and sages. Thank you all for your incredible contribution to me and this association!

With Gratitude,
Heather



Heather Rogers' notes from the ILEA Live 2019

Global Events Forum discussion

The Global Events Forum brought together a panel of international event professionals to debate and discuss the most important topics impacting the live event industry.

Outcomes included influential reports on the commoditization of the live events industry and how event professionals can make face-to-face experiences even more valuable.

This panel discussed what was covered in the day an a half dialogue around differentiators that matter most to clients and how the events industry can put a PRICE ON OUR CREATIVE IDEAS.

Dan Bolton, Founder, DanBolton.com

Sara Grauf, Sr. VP, Event Strategy, and Services,
Giants Enterprises

Mark Wells Sr. VP of Creative Services, Hello DMC

David Adler, CEO, and founder of BizBash Media



Heather's notes, cogent points highlighted:

It's about credibility, and differentiation and articulating our value.

How we tell the story of how what we offer is different. We need to change the conversation.

There are two sides of the spectrum one side is the THINKING side, the strategy/ideation where we create the attendee journey design. On the other side is DOING side, the delivery and production design tactics.

Our job is to make the THINKING side more visible to clients.

Dan Bolton said, *"We were focusing on delivery, but what differentiates is the WHY and the HOW?"*

We are looking at strategic ways we can identify what our value is and how we can articulate that to clients, educate them and showcase how we add value.

The most important thing is to look at your RFP process. All RFPs are all about deliverables. Never are we getting an opportunity to have a dialogue and ask: "What do you want to do here?" in the proposals.

Education in the Agency sector is important. Planners can start giving clients formulas or one-sheets to ask clients why is the event happening in the first place. Planning agencies need to train their staff to do this.

Mark Wells said, *"We've been hiding that it's a lot of hard work. Now that we are addressing the issue, we won't answer the room rate question without more data. The superhero part used to only*

happen at the end. We now invite them into this process. If I can show them how much work goes into what we do, they can understand us better and become partners with us."



All the hard stuff on the checklist never has a price tag.

The new improved approach would be to connect with the client and say: *"Here is the information I have... What would you do with it?" It's about creating a dialogue.*

The idea is to start moving away from the word "Supplier" because that makes it more of a 'Transactional' relationship. No, we want them to become long-term stakeholders.

How to create the climate where you can be asking for money to create RFP?

Trust is key if we want to start getting paid for THINKING as well as doing. TRUST is the number one product we sell.

We need to start sharing the process with them and let them in on the process of how we do what we do.

What we do is design, it is strategy and delivery.

Questions came up regarding clients who want highly detailed proposals, at the last minute who don't want to be in a dialogue about the process. The answer was: "You have to be somewhat selective about the clients you are willing to work with."

Some clients shop by prices. Some shop by value.

You'll know right away which one. It will go to price right away. You suggest that they find another company to "Give you what you're looking for."

It's costly not to work with solid companies you trust. They know that and will often pay more for trusted companies.

You can say to them, *"Your event gets much better if we can talk about this..."* Then they are more likely to listen.

The best way to slow them down and create a conversation is to ask specific questions they have to stop and go get the answer to. This alone makes them more aware of the granular detail you are working in to create their proposal.



You can also ask a general question like, *"What can we do to make your life easier?"*

You can say, *"Getting us in earlier will make your life easier in the long run."* Tell them that this will make more efficient use of their time and result in a better program.

When we start asking harder more difficult questions they have to stop and think.

We bring incredible value. We connect people. We are the most important business in the world.

25% of all marketing budgets are for events.
We are a 'need to have'. We need to convince leaders that this is true. We need to sell the process, not the product
Language it to where it's all about them.
"Working together we will create a better product and a better outcome."

Our human capital is the value.
The goal is to create high-performance collaboration.

