

What Has ISES Done for You Lately?

By Bill Steigerwald, CSEP

There is some exciting news on the horizon for ISES members, and it's called branding.

It's essential and thrilling because it will mean more client interest in you as an ISES member, more prestige for being an ISES member among our "peers," and a better return on your ISES investment.

From the beginning, ISES has struggled to be recognized as the organization for event professionals, or even as an entity at all. We just never had an extra million dollars a year to spend on national advertising or a New York public relations firm. But something we just completed (thanks to our great association management company, Smith Bucklin) was to establish:

1. Our brand goals. For customers, ISES is the definitive resource to hire standardized event professionals. For members/potential members, ISES is the definitive resource to enhance and advance a career in the special event industry.
2. A brand (identity) that motivates customers to hire ISES members, and ISES as the resource for event professionals who are bettering themselves and the industry.
3. The appropriate support statements for our brand position, our marketing position, our slogan, our brand essence and our personality.

With this base, the direction, we now can make everything ISES-related—our logo, our ads, our press releases, our Web sites—consistent, more focused and working in ways that will get customers to call us and other event professionals to want to join us.

The work was done by a brand-positioning task force I was part of under the ISES International Marketing and Communications Committee (MarCom). We worked through extensive brainstorming and consensus-building exercises to get to these ends. Now, with some concerted effort, we will create grass-roots marketing to make inroads that we couldn't do with advertising. And you know what? It can be more powerful because it will follow years of experience, frustration, and trial

and error.

The work has started. Have you read a recent Special Events Magazine, specifically the "ISES" (formerly "Eventworld") section near the middle (which you are reading right now)? It used to be chatty, "local chapter does good" items. Now it's about real industry issues that demonstrate our knowledge and our forward thinking. I know you've seen the new logo. Don't like it? What did the fireworks suggest? Big party. What does block lettering with tumbling blocks, copper and black coloring suggest? Professional, innovative, fun...

And the work goes on. ISES has just released the branding tool kit to get local chapters and individual members tuned in the same way. It explains why this effort was undertaken and what we need to do. It has specific versions of the logo for use on the international, regional, chapter and personal levels. And it has sample sentences to use in our releases, formats to follow for stationery, and more.

Watch for big changes on www.ises.com that will make the Web site more customer-friendly and less cluttered. Look for the continuation of informative articles in ISES. And look for changes in our own chapter's Web site, newsletter and other communications.

Right now, we all need to start by substituting the ISES logo on our chapter Web sites, on our business cards and, as reasonably quickly as possible, our stationery. And get ready for ISES to pick up speed. With a consistent, powerful brand to present, good things are sure to follow.



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Throughout the month of May, ISES will be having an online membership drive! If you join at www.ises.com in May, we will waive the \$50 application fee and your membership will be good until June 30, 2007. This is an incredible value!

