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# Gary Berg

NOW THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT.

BY MARCIA JEDD

From 45-minute after-dinner shows at meetings and conventions to booking fairs and college events, Gary Berg's knack for creating memories and passion for entertainment shines. He runs G.L. Berg Entertainment, a St. Cloud-based entertainment consultancy and booking agency which celebrates its 20th birthday next year.

The liberal arts major with a post-graduate degree loved managing a band so much as a part-time summer job in college, he subsequently left an 11-year career in higher education and college administration to start the business. "I saw a compelling need in the marketplace to provide entertainment," he says. "I didn't sense there was anyone who was meeting the needs of meeting planners to deliver affordable, self-contained entertainment with a variety of options."

Stage hypnotists, comic jugglers, ventriloquists, magicians, musicians and stand-up comedians are among the cadre of performers Berg and his small staff of entertainment consultants offer meeting planners to customize the best entertainment for their event. In addition to offering entertainers who are signed exclusively with G.L. Berg, the agency also arranges acts from the likes of country sensation Keith Urban to comedians Darrell Hammond and Frank Caliendo.

"We help meeting planners create an event that has a much better chance of being successful and stays within the parameters of what they need to have happen." He advises planners not to get too caught up in tying a performance to the theme of the event, such as the case of a Hawaii-themed event. Although the client originally wanted the comedy routine to stay with Hawaii theme, Berg convinced them to avoid it. "There's really nothing funny about Hawaii. Our comedian delivered a great show, and didn't even wear a Hawaiian shirt."

Berg and his staff arrange entertainment for 2,500 to 3,000 events annually in the United States and abroad. The largest concentration of business is U.S. corporate and association-related events.

What's the secret to success? Offering top-notch service and professionalism among its staff and performers. The agency requires its performers to attend trainings and participate in workshops on topics such as new sound and light technology as well as insurance and travel issues. "Our entertainers get to know each other," he says. "We get rid of a lot of insecurity you see in agencies because acts pull for each other."


"I get to work with great people to create events that are memorable and fun," he concludes. "Bringing people together—performers and clients—in this way is extremely rewarding." 

PHOTO BY: TATE CARLSON.