



THYMEBASE

# 58 Event Industry Terms Every Planner Should Know

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# Why Compile This List?

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No one likes jargon. We're instructed to avoid jargon in most professional settings. And yet, it's not that simple. Because the right words convey the correct meaning, and that matters when you're crafting memorable events.

Perhaps it's easier to talk about terms of art instead of jargon.

If you're a new event professional entering the exciting field, knowing the correct terms is a safety blanket. Not only does it allow you to communicate professionally, it helps you understand the more experienced pros. And isn't that the crux of event planning? Communication. Communicating with clients, attendees, vendors, and partners. So that's why we've compiled this glossary of the standard event planning terminology.

This list was compiled by Amanda Larson, CED, a Certified Event Designer, marketer, and content creator. With a degree in journalism and special events management, Amanda has worked in marketing and events for international startups and Fortune500 companies.

Regards,

Dean Levitt

Co-founder, [ThymeBase Event Planning Software](#)

# 10 Event Software Terms

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Technology and software are ever-evolving. Staying up to date with the latest jargon, terms, and acronyms is hard work (and don't you do enough of that already?). If you've ever read a new buzz word and thought, "Is that made up?!" – this is for you.

Here are ten event planning software terms that every planner should know in 2020!

## 1. CRM

Something every planner should familiarize themselves with is a CRM, or a **customer relationship management** system. Basically, it's a digital Rolodex that lets you organize your contacts and their details. Robust CRMs allow you to track attendee history, communicate with party-goers, and even keep custom notes on records. To scale your business as your network grows, a CRM is a smart software tool.



*Basically,  
it's a  
digital  
Rolodex  
that lets  
you  
organize  
your  
contacts*

## 2. EMS

The next software term (and acronym) that big-time event planners know is EMS: **event management software**. An EMS is a range of software products specially designed for event planners. They are used to coordinate events, manage conferences, plan events, host exhibitions. You name it. Leveraging an EMS can bring an event planning company to the next level because of its automation, integrations, and organizational power.

## 3. CRS

Another acronym? Yep, meet CRS, or a **central reservation system**. While planners might not have a CRS in their arsenal of software products, their clients vary well might. Hotels, restaurants, and larger venues commonly use a CRS to store information about, well, reservations. A CRS can make reservations but also share information on availability, rates, add-ons/upgrades.

## 4. Livestream

It's 2020, so it's safe to say most people are aware of live streaming. However, not many event planners have leveraged it themselves. That's why it's on this list – it's time to start! Live streaming is simply live broadcasting on the internet, mostly through social platforms like Snapchat, Tik Tok, Facebook, or Instagram. It is a vital component of current events because it opens your event to viewers anywhere in the world. Event planners can strategically incorporate live streaming into their plans to boost event awareness, expand brand (and sponsor) reach, and generate excitement. Share what's happening at your event in real-time. This raw, behind-the-scenes (BTS) footage is unedited and unrehearsed. But it's exclusive!

## 5. Open Rate

This term may seem obvious, but it's essential nonetheless. Open rate refers to the percentage of email recipients who opened or viewed an email. Most email software products measure your open rate. Keep it in mind when communicating with attendees! If people aren't reading your emails, it's time to integrate a new communication method.

## 6. Virtual Events

Virtual events are taking over as more people are choosing to stay home amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyday virtual activities include webinars, online presentations, workshops, and teleconferencing. However, now even virtual trade shows are on the scene! [Here's almost everything you need to know about planning a virtual event.](#)

*Virtual  
events  
are  
taking  
over*

## 7. AR or VR

The future certainly involves AR and VR. AR is ‘**augmented reality**.’ It involves technology that mixes reality with digital elements – like Pokemon GO or custom Snapchat or Instagram filters. VR is for ‘virtual reality,’ and it describes technology that creates a new environment for participants. [This event planning company’s blog says](#), “Virtual reality graphics are so convincing that viewers react in the same way they would do in the real world.”

## 8. Hashtag

If you’ve scrolled through social media today, you were already exposed to hundreds of these. Hashtags are words or phrases preceded with a hash (#) so that social platforms can link the posts together. They are essential to understand as an event planner to create custom hashtags for events, and also monitor related events. Plus, they’re an easy way to [make your event Instagrammable](#).

## 9. Event App

There’s an app for everything these days. And event apps are rising in popularity since developing them is becoming easier and easier. Event apps are a modern, valuable tool for both planners and event clients. An event app digitally aggregates all event information plus more. You can display the schedule, maps of the venue, activity information, offer class signups, and so much more.

## 10. Timelines

Most seasoned event planners know what timelines are, so why are they on this list of technology terms? Easy. [Event timelines](#) are best utilized digitally. A cloud-based timeline software syncs in real-time and updates automatically. That means everyone with access to your digital timeline knows about the update, change, delay, etc. as soon as you do. There are many details your timelines should contain, but making sure everyone is on the same page is vital.

*Tech that  
mixes  
reality  
with  
digital  
elements*

# 18 Event Planning Acronyms

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It's 2020, and to be honest, there are more acronyms than any one person can keep up with. Evolving technology and the trend of shortening words whenever possible (LOL!) has transformed the event industry into a landscape of letter puzzles. However, that isn't an excuse to glaze over them.

Here's a round-up of 18 event planning acronyms you need to memorize, STAT.

## 1. A/V – Audio/Visual

What's a modern event without some A/V? Audio/Visual covers everything from stage lighting to extension cords, projectors, DJs, and their turntables.

## 2. AR – Augmented Reality

AR is 'augmented reality.' It involves technology that mixes reality with digital elements – like Pokemon GO or Snapchat filters.

### 3. BEO – Banquet Event Order

Prepare for the BEO to become your BFF. It's one of the most common event planning acronyms. Also called an EO (event order), [a BEO is a document created by the venue](#) that outlines... everything. The BEO states the event timeline, set-up directions, F&B, A/V, costs, etc.

### 4. B/L – Bill of Lading

This is the document of the agreement between the transportation company and you, the shipper. The B/L specifies where the shipment is going and for what set price.

### 5. CAD – Computer-Aided Design

If you have created a floorplan or room design on a computer, congrats! You've created a CAD. This computer-aided design is the layout of how a room should be set up. It might include things like furniture, seating areas, A/V needs, etc.

### 6. CED – Certified Event Designer

This event planning acronym is given to certified event designers from the [Event Design Collective](#). They've [mastered the #EventCanvas to design events](#).

## 7. CMP – Certified Meeting Professional

If event planning is your career path, you may think about earning your CMP. This certification is globally recognized and connects you to thousands of other event professionals.

## 8. CRM – Customer Relationship Management

Keeping track of who's who is easier with a CRM. A customer relationship management software lets you organize clients, manage communication and outreach, and more.

## 9. CRS – Central Reservation System

Hotels, restaurants, and larger venues commonly use a CRS to store reservation information. A CRS makes reservations and also shares information on availability, rates, add-ons/upgrades.

## 10. CSM – Convention Services Manager

A CSM is a job title you'll come across. A Convention Services Manager is the venue employee assigned to work with you and others related to the event.

## 11. EMS – Event management software

An EMS is a range of software products specially designed for event planners. They are used to coordinate events, manage conferences, plan events, host exhibitions – you name it. Leveraging an EMS, like [Thymebase](#), can bring an event planning company to the next level because of its automation, integrations, and organizational power.

## 12. F&B – Food and Beverage

Self-explanatory enough, right? F&B is the term you'll hear whenever someone refers to the food and beverage of an event. Cheers!

*MPI is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide.*

### 13. FHC – Fire Hose Cabinet

You might see this acronym on a floor map to indicate where fire hoses are located in a venue.

### 14. I&D – Installation and Dismantle

Build it, and they will come, literally. Also known as set-up, load-in, loadout, or striking, I&D refers to setting up and breaking down.

### 15. MPI – Meeting Professionals International

This global organization is important to be familiar with. MPI is the largest meeting and [event industry association](#) worldwide.

### 16. RFP – Request for Proposal

This document outlines the needs of an event. Planners send an RFP to venues and contractors that may be interested in bidding on an event.

## 17. SEO – Search Engine Optimization

Being familiar with SEO is a must to rise up the ranks on Google. If people are looking for you or an event online, it's essential to have an [SEO strategy](#) to help people find you!

## 18. VR – Virtual Reality

VR is for 'virtual reality,' and it describes technology that creates a new environment for participants.

# 10 Trade Show Terms

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Trade shows are a massive pillar of the event planning industry. These large conventions are gatherings for hundreds to thousands of people generating serious recurring business for event planners.

However, this particular type of event comes with its own set of vocab. Don't be frazzled next time you hear a new word at a trade show. Just read this list of ten trade shows terms you need to know as an event planner.

## 1. Trade Show (B2B)

Define "trade show"... really? This is first on the list of trade show terms because you need to know what makes a trade show different from other similar events.

A trade show is described as a B2B (business to business) event. That means its vendors and exhibitors are presenting to their peers. Trade shows focus on trade-related topics, so attendees come to learn about one unique industry.



*Trade shows are a massive pillar of the event planning industry.*

## 2. Consumer Show (B2C)

A consumer show is different from a trade show because it's B2C (business to consumer). That means its exhibitors showcase products and services directly to new potential buyers. At consumer shows, attendees come to discover new products, interact with brands, and socialize. They can usually shop (or pre-order) on site.

## 3. Virtual Trade Show

[Virtual trade shows](#) try to encompass all the facets of a traditional trade show but virtually. Attendees can experience the event digitally through webinars, portals, and live streams. Due to COVID-19, digital conferences are becoming [the new normal in event planning](#).

## 4. Airwalls

If you've been to a trade show, you've undoubtedly encountered airwalls. Airwalls are large portable panels that help partition or divide an open room or space. At trade shows, airwalls are commonly used to create meeting rooms or temporary offices within a convention hall.

## 5. Keynote

A keynote in the event world refers to the headline speaker or presenter. Typically, a keynote is a notable and well-respected figure in or related to the industry. The keynote presentation usually inspires the audience, kicks off the event, and/or simply serves as a motivator to attract attendees.

*They  
sound  
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but  
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they are  
different  
terms*

## 6. Breakout Rooms

These versatile spaces are must-haves at a trade show. Breakout rooms typically refer to the smaller spaces or classrooms, where sessions take place. A percent of attendees may go into a breakout room while others roam the trade show floor or visit concurrent sessions.

## 7. Floor Order vs. Floor Plan

They sound similar, but beware, they are different terms. A floor order is an order for additional services after the trade show installation has already begun. A floor order happens after an Advance Order, the order made prior to the show. These orders are for exhibitor items like electricity plug-ins, wifi, or furniture rentals. Now, a Floor Plan regards the map. A floor plan displays the size and locations of every exhibitor's space.

## 8. Traffic Flow

Traffic flow is the movement of visitors through a trade show hall. One way to help the traffic flow is with aisle carpet or installing or displaying arrows to help guide attendees.

## 9. Load In, Loadout

Load in is the time window dedicated for exhibitors to set up their space, install equipment, test AV, make last-minute floor orders, etc. On the flip side is loadout. This is the time for exhibitors to breakdown their booths, prepare crates for shipping, and simply get out! Loadout can also be referred to as breakdown or strike. Load in and loadout are good things to include in your [event timeline](#).

(tip: use our [event planning software](#) to build it).

## 10. Space Only

A pre-event term you may encounter is space only. This term refers to an exhibitor reserving a specific area on the trade show floor. Space only, however, means the exhibitor must provide their own booth, exhibitor stand, furniture, etc. This also means that exhibitors have more creative freedom for installs!

# 10 Catering Terms

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It's essential to learn the standard culinary and catering terms you're bound to see in the event planning world. The event planning industry is riddled with confusing jargon, but the realm of F&B is another world. French terms rule the culinary arts, and caterers might as well have their own dictionary.

Here are 10 culinary and catering terms – just an *amuse-bouche* (bite-sized appetizer), to satisfy your culinary term palate. Foodie or not, here we come!

## 1. A la carte

Let's start with an easy one. A la carte is when every menu item is priced and served individually. This is the opposite of a fixed menu where multiple courses are served at one fixed price. A la carte offerings are great at events because they allow complete flexibility. Just don't mix it up with the term a la mode – or a dessert topped with ice cream!

*French  
terms  
rule the  
culinary  
arts*

## 2. Deadstock

Leftover wine? No way that's real! But seriously, deadstock (leftover wine and liquor ordered for an event) is a problem in the F&B industry. Since liquor and wine are often ordered by the crate, a surplus of the stuff can create problems for the venue storage-wise and financially for the planner.

To get rid of the deadstock, create drink specials with the leftovers. Or try to use the supply at another event. Or even talk to your liquor rep! With a good relationship, you may be able to wrangle a bottle exchange or buy-back.

## 3. Silencer

It sounds ominous, but a silencer does precisely what the name suggests: silences. A silencer refers to the padding hidden underneath a tablecloth used to damper the clatter of dishes, cups, and cutlery. Silencers are especially crucial if you have presentations or speakers during the meal. There's

nothing like the annoying clanking of silverware to distract your speaker!

## 4. Banquet Setup

A banquet setup is when the room is filled with banquet rounds or large round tables. Banquet setups are often used for meals without entertainment or a speaker since guests are seated around the large round tables. Thus they're all facing different directions. Banquet rounds are an efficient use of space since every part of the table could become a potential seat versus rectangle shapes. Common sizes include 48" for six seats, 60" for eight, and 72" for 10-12 guests.

## 5. Cabaret Setup

On the other hand, you have a cabaret setup. This is when every guest is situated to face the front of the room – like if you were watching a cabaret.

Cabaret setups are ideal for speakers, presentations, or entertainment. Rather than long, skinny rectangle tables you may see in a workshop environment, cabaret setups typically use small tables. Usually, they sit two to five guests.

## 6. Banquet Service Charge

A banquet service charge is a fee to cover the operational expenses for a catering business. This is not the tip, but rather an operating cost. Service charges vary drastically from company to venue to location ranging from a typical 18% to as high as 49%! It's vital to know whether the banquet service charge is included in a caterer's proposal or not. This fee is also a great way to compare competing proposals.

## 7. Out Mess

While it sounds a bit messy, an out mess is a meal given to the event team and workers meant to be eaten in the back of the house (out of sight). The front of the house refers to everything that event-goers see, while the back of the house is where all the magic (and apparently employee eating) happens.

## 8. Family Style vs. Food Stations

Family style is the service where large platters are put in the middle of the table, and guests help themselves. Food stations refer to small, staffed tables scatter the dining room, each featuring different parts of the menu.

## 9. French Service vs. Plated Service

Leave it to the French to be extra. [French service](#) is the service where food preparation happens live table-side and used for guest entertainment. Today it's common with dishes like guacamole, flambe, and meat carving. Plated service is when the chef does the work, and the food is arranged on the plate in the kitchen.

## 10. Aperitif vs. Digestif

To round off our culinary list, we have two fun terms. An aperitif is a light cocktail served prior to dinner. It's designed to stimulate the palate and prep the drinker for the upcoming meal. After dinner is done, you'll see a digestif. This light cocktail is meant to aid in digestion.

*An  
aperitif  
is a light  
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served  
prior to  
dinner*

*As an event planner, you may never meet them*

# 10 Corporate Event Terms

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Corporate events are the bread and butter of the event industry. These high-paying clients promise professionalism and repeat business, not to mention a good payday. But they speak their own lingo.

## 1. Board Members

We'll begin with some easy corporate event terms. If working with a corporation, you can bet they have board members or a board of directors. This is the group of people elected to represent shareholders (more on them next) and support management. They make big decisions, like where the company is going. As an event planner, you may never meet them. However, be aware of who is on the board so you can be clear about what the company stands for. This may affect event decisions.

## 2. Shareholders vs. Stakeholders

It seems people use these interchangeably, but don't fall into that trap. Shareholders are, in fact, those that own shares of a company. If you own stock in a public company, you're a shareholder. Stakeholders, on the other hand, are those impacted by the company. Stakeholders can be employees, customers, government, communities, investors, or suppliers. Your corporate event will affect stakeholders, no doubt about it, so be sure to consider stakeholders when planning, or pitching, your event.

## 3. Force Majeure Clause

You may have heard this word buzzing around due to 2020's pandemic. A [force majeure](#) clause is a part of most venue contracts. It exempts the venue from liability should something happen out of their control, cough, COVID-19. Things that could spark a force majeure clause are natural disasters or other "Acts of God." When signing a contract, just be sure that this clause favors both sides and doesn't place liability on only one party!

## 4. Comp Rooms

If your corporate event is [working with a hotel](#), sometimes the hotel may give you some comp rooms, short for [complimentary rooms](#), or room nights. These free rooms are a great add-in to consider when negotiating a hotel contract. You can compare their value over the rack rate or the standard (and often highest) rate.

## 5. Skirting

No, we're not referring to the corporate dress code. Skirting is the term used to describe the fabric that surrounds tables and stages. This affixed fabric is used to hide cables, storage, and the unsightly metal legs of risers. If you're planning a multimedia presentation, you'll likely need skirting to hide AV.

## 6. Attrition Rate

This is a valuable metric to measure in corporate events, especially if you handle them year over year. The [attrition rate](#) is the rate at which an event decreased due to no shows (those that signed up and didn't come). It's determined by the number of no shows divided by the number of those registered. Attrition rates also apply to room blocks at hotels. Be sure to define the rate in your negotiation, so if only 80% of your attendees come, you're not held liable for those rooms.

*Attrition rates also apply to room blocks at hotels*

## 7. Breakouts

Common to corporate events, breakouts are small gatherings designated to let smaller groups interact apart from the larger conference. Breakout rooms are essential to consider when scoping a new venue should the event be planning breakout sessions.

Breakout sessions usually refer to small panels, workshops, or presentations that don't appeal to the average event attendee since they typically focus on highly specific, niche topics. Multiple breakouts can take place at the same time.

## 8. Call Times

If you have speakers, be sure to clearly define your call time. This is the time that moderators, performers, panelists, presenters, aka anyone going on stage, are required to show up. Call times are usually 15-30 minutes before their stage time, so they can be mic'd up and prepped for the spotlight. Of course, we recommend [sharing an event timeline](#) with your speakers and include the call times.

## 9. Carpet Top

Pretty straightforward, the corporate event term, carpet top, refers to a stage topped in carpeting. It's a common choice for corporate events because it minimizes onstage noise and clatter. However, a full carpet top can look outdated, so some resort to an acrylic top but place a decorative rug under onstage chairs and tables to achieve the dampening effect.

## 10. Confidentiality Agreement

You're likely to cross one of these if working with larger corporations. Confidentiality agreements are simply documents signed when one party provides confidential information to another.

The general expectation is that whatever information is exchanged is in secret and can only be used for the declared purpose. For example, suppose you're planning a launch party. In that case, the company may enforce a confidentiality agreement, so you do not leak any information before the unveiling.

## Thanks For Reading

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Thanks for reading this glossary of event planning terms. I hope you find this information useful and maybe even found a few surprises.

Have fun out there!