

CYNTHIA (CINDY) LERICK

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Professional Profile

Professor of Practice and festival and event executive with 30-plus years of leadership in nonprofit management, sports management festival and fair production, strategic planning, sponsorship development, and financial management. Experienced in live, virtual, and hybrid event production, economic impact analysis, festival and event strategy, and experiential learning program design.

Education:

Falmouth University, Cornwall, UK

M.A. Creative Events Management

- Thesis: Examined how long-term founders, CEOs, and executive directors of small to medium community festivals approach and participate in exit strategies, and how their roles affect the subsequent success or failure of their successors.

Augsburg University, Minneapolis, MN

BA. Physical Education. Emphasis in Corrective Therapy | 1986

Completed additional study in the University of Minnesota Institute of Technology's Civil Engineering program, earned an AA in Dental Hygiene from Normandale Community College, and participated in the Small Business Management program at St. Thomas University.

Academic Appointments and Teaching

Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

Professor of Practice. Department of Hospitality Management | Aug 2025 to present

Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

Instructor, Department of Hospitality Management | Sep 2023 to Aug 2025

Courses taught include the following:

- HM 321 Hospitality Service Systems
- HM 331 Resort and Club Management
- HM 363 Intro to Event Management
- HM 370 The Business of Wedding Planning

- HM 424 Hospitality Sales and Promotion
- HM 427 Travel and Dining Auction
- HM 463 Business Event Coordination
- HM 504 Fairs and Festivals
- HM 650 Senior Seminar in Hospitality Management
- Hospitality Management Club advisor 2025-2026
- K- State CMAA Chapter Faculty advisor

University of Minnesota Tourism Center, St. Paul, MN

Instructor. "Greening Events. Sustainable Practices for Festivals and Events" | Sep 2023

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Adjunct Instructor. Center for Hospitality Resilience. Event Management Series | May 2021

Ohio University, Athens, OH

Teaching Assistant. REC 3630/5630 Festival and Event Operations | Spring 2021

University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Community. Nonprofit Partner. HFIM 3000 Hospitality and Food Management Marketing | Spring 2020 to 2022

Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ

Community Nonprofit Partner. CRD 435 Service Learning for Community Development | Spring 2020

Augsburg University Weekend College, Minneapolis, MN

Instructor. Personal and Community Health | 1987 to 1988

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Guest Lecturer. Event and Entertainment Operations. Foundations of Event Management | 2020 to 2022

PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Lerick, C., & Rosen, I. (Expected October 2026). *Festival Management: Planning, Designing, and Delivering Events Globally*. Kogan Page Publishing.

Research Contribution: *Brewing a New Beginning: Leadership Transitions and Strategic Challenges at Starbucks*. Dr. Yue Teng Vaughan, Dr. Vijaya L. Zinnoury, Ruoyan Wang, and Cynthia (Cindy) Lerick.

Professional Experience

The Art of Events LLC, USA

President and CEO | 2018 to present

- Event consulting firm producing live, virtual, and hybrid events.
- Services include interim executive leadership, strategic planning, sponsorship plans, staff and intern management, economic impact studies, event evaluations, and production oversight.
- Selected clients and projects include the Saint Louis Art Fair, Coconut Grove Arts Festival, Oklahoma Festival of Arts, Southern Highland Craft Guild, Philadelphia Flower Show, and Lubbock Art Alliance, for which I handled artist recruitment, evaluation, and an economic impact study. Other projects include the Richardson TX Wildflower Festival and the Singapore Flower Festival, both of which involved conducting economic impact studies.

Cultural Festivals, Saint Louis, MO

Executive Director and President | 2009 to 2017

- Producer of the Saint Louis Art Fair and year-round community arts programs.
- Transformed organization from a six-figure deficit (minus 150,000) to positive financial standing through strategic initiatives and financial management.
- Secured multi-year title sponsorship. 150,000 per year. With renewal commitment through 2022.
- Rebranded and promoted fairs and events. Increased participation and broadened community perception of a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- Managed sponsorship and grant prospecting, contracts, city coordination, and all event logistics and fundraising operations.

Additional roles with Cultural Festivals. Interim Executive Director 2019. Consultant 2020 to present.

Sausalito Art Festival Foundation, Sausalito, CA

Executive Director | Jun 2017 to Nov 2018

- Directed business operations for a three-day art and music festival. Budget 1.8 million. Approximately 22,000 attendees.
- Implemented cohesive branding and digital marketing campaign.
- Relocated and redesigned festival footprint.
- Increased ticket sales by 21 percent. Total ticketed sales: 596,203.

Seafair, Seattle, WA

Director of Strategic Planning. Development. Production Consultant | 2007 to 2009

- Developed and implemented business, marketing, and public relations plans for athletic program events.
- Developed sponsorship proposals and delivered consulting services for fine arts festival business planning.
- Coordinated media and public relations efforts and facilitated fundraising processes.

Uptown Association. Uptown Art Fair, Minneapolis, MN

Executive Director | 1996 to 2007

- Increased cash sponsorships from 50,000 to 280,000.
- Secured a six-figure title sponsorship. Renewed for seven years.
- Increased membership income by 25 percent.
- Improved national rankings. Included in the top 10 by the Art Fair SourceBook.
- Directed promotional, marketing, media relations, and physical operations across the Uptown district.

Raceelfs, Minneapolis, MN

Owner | 1983 to 2000

- Founded and operated a dedicated road race management company specializing in the production and promotion of endurance sports.
- Managed end-to-end event execution, including directing, timing, and promoting over 100 diverse events such as marathons, triathlons, and skiing competitions.
- Developed specialized technical systems for event timing and logistics to support high-participation athletic events.

Twin Cities Marathon, Minneapolis, MN

President / Executive Vice President / VP Operations | VP Saturday Running Events 1984 -2003

- Held progressive leadership roles for one of the premier marathons in the United States, including serving as President from 2000 to 2003
- Directed comprehensive race logistics and technical operations, including the coordination of Saturday events.
- Orchestrated long-term board strategy and executive oversight to ensure the event's growth and operational success.

Rollerblade, Inc., USA

Event Production / Technical Coordinator | 1990 to 1993

- Designed and executed event marketing plans and managed department-level budgets.
- Established and maintained critical relationships with international event producers and vendors to scale brand presence.

Additional experience: YMCA Twin Cities Program Director, 1983 to 1987. Main St. Fort Worth Arts Festival Co-Producer, 2003 to 2005. ArtFest Fort Myers Virtual Consultant, Oct 2020 to Feb 2021; Executive Director, Sep 2021 to Apr 2022. Irish Fair Minnesota. Hybrid Event Designer and intern management consultant, Mar to Aug 2021.

Presentations and Invited Lectures

- Women Grow the Farm. 2026 “Designing Successful On-Farm Events.”
- Lubbock Art Alliance. "Navigating Art Shows and Building Professional Success".
- International Festival and Events Convention. 2025. "Chaos and Curveballs: A Festival Risk Response Challenge". "Inside the Industry General Session. IE Live. Crystal Ball. Proactively Preparing for the Future". "A First-Timer's Roadmap to Maximizing the IFEA Convention".
- Greater Miami Festival and Events Association. 2025 June. Keynote. "Customer-Focused Events. Designing Experiences that Truly Matter".
- International Festival and Events Convention. 2024. "Event Energizer. Shifting from Routine to Riveting".
- Art-Linx Art Fair Directors Conference. 2024. "Succession Planning and ICE Planning for Your Organization".
- Art-Linx Art Fair Directors Conference. 2022. Co-presenter. "Crisis Media Management". Moderator. "How to Run an Effective Sponsorship Program".
- International Festival and Events Convention. 2022. "Succession Planning for Festivals and Events. The Change of Strong and Longtime Leadership".
- California Festival and Events Association. 2022. "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Post-COVID” and “The Great Resignation and Mental Health in Event Management".
- Texas Festival and Events Association. 2021. "Adding Art to Your Event".
- Minnesota Festival and Events Association. 2020. "Keeping Your Event Fresh".
- IFEA. Webinar. 2021. "The Internship Dilemma: Creating Successful Internship Experiences and Relationships".
- ZAPPLication®. Webinar. 2021. "Best Practices".
- Art-Linx. Webinar. 2021. "Budget Reality 2021".
- Florida Festival and Events Association. Webinar. 2020. "Keeping Your Event Fresh".

- The Big Irish Echo Campfire. Webinar. 2020. "The Show Must Go On. What Will Irish Festivals Look Like in the Future?"
- National Recreation and Park Association and IFEA Event Management School Workshop Presenter, 2012 to 2023, 2025-2026. Topics include Arriving at the Bottom Line, Applied Budgeting, Event Administration and Legal Considerations, and Customer-Focused Events.

Publications

Lerick, C., & Rosen, I. (Expected October 2026). *Festival Management: Planning, Designing, and Delivering Events Globally*. Kogan Page Publishing.

Research Contribution: *Brewing a New Beginning: Leadership Transitions and Strategic Challenges at Starbucks*. Dr. Yue Teng Vaughan, Dr. Vijaya L. Zinnoury, Ruoyan Wang, and Cynthia (Cindy) Lerick.

Certifications and Professional Development

- CMAA Faculty Development and Immersion Program 2025
- Certified Event Designer. Event Design Collective. Jan 2025.
- Executive Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism Management. Florida Atlantic University. 2023 and 2025.
- Nonprofit Strategic Planning Master Course. 2022.
- Polaris Human Trafficking 101 Training. 2022.
- A Greener Festival Assessor. 2021.
- Diversity Equity for the Live Events Industry. 2021.
- Trained Crowd Manager. 2021.
- Virtual Events Institute Professional. 2021.
- Pandemic Compliance Advisor for Meeting and Events. 2021.
- CFEE. Certified Festival and Events Executive. International Festivals and Events Association. 2014.
- CFM. Certified Festival Manager. University of Minnesota Tourism Center. 2000.

Professional Service and Affiliations

- International Festivals and Events Association. World Board Member. 2013 to 2024. Chair 2015 CFEE Program Manager. 2015 to present.
- International Festivals and Events Foundation Board, 2007-2014; Board chair, 2013.

- National Association of Independent Artists. Board Member. 2021 to present.
- Visit Manhattan Advisory Board Member. 2024 to present.
- CMAA Faculty advisor. 2023 to present.

Awards and Honors

- IFEA Hall of Fame. 2025.
- Sausalito Art Festival. 8 IFEA Pinnacle Awards.
- Cultural Festivals. 95 IFEA Pinnacle Awards. 3 Grand Pinnacle Awards.
- Uptown Association. 55 IFEA Pinnacle Awards.
- City of Minneapolis Planning Department. Committee on Urban Environment Awards.
- NAIA Mo Dana Distinguished Service Award. 2007.
- Zapplication Distinguished Service Award. 2011.
- Minnesota Distance Running Club Distinguished Service Award 1991
- Northern Lights Running Club Contributor of the Year, 1988