

PERSPECTIVA

A Case Research Journal

RAZZMATAZZ-Pioneering Event Management in South India –Run by a Woman who means Business

V.V. Ajith Kumar

*Skyline University College,
University City of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE.*

Abstract

Dr. Meenakshi Anantram quit her post-doctoral research with the CSIR in 1994 to follow her heart's desire for a career in entertainment and started RAZZMATAZZ, one of the first few event management companies in the country. RAZZMATAZZ is a member of the Event & Entertainment Management Association. Razzmatazz organizes and delivers event management at an unsurpassed level providing national and international customers with a wealth of knowledge and experience to ensure their events are truly memorable. Her journey started with the launch of Coca Cola in Visakhapatnam for which she herself pitched in and convinced the client to get the event. From then she never looked back and she got the opportunity to organize various events for companies like Kellogg's, BPL, HUL, Reliance Industries, HSBC, etc. She has anchored more than a thousand stage shows and has organized more than 3000 events in various cities across India. She has encountered many problems but faced them boldly to be in this position today. She started with event management and then slowly entered into protocol functions, award ceremonies, theme parties, birthday parties, exhibitions, product launches, weddings, conferences and so on. Dr. Meenakshi has not done any MBA but learned the hard way how to sell an idea to the client, and also the other logistics involved in event management. She feels she has a long way to go and is very happy that her passion and hobby has become her livelihood.

Keywords: Event management, Woman Entrepreneur, Razzmatazz

*Corresponding Author: Tel.: +971561591634
E-Mail address: ajithkumarvv@gmail.com

©2015. SIBM Bengaluru.

Introduction

Razzmatazz is a national event management company with fully staffed and resourced offices in Visakhapatnam with representative units at Kolkata, Chennai, Cochin, Bhubaneswar, Goa and California, USA. They offer best practice, leading edge, and creative meeting and event management services, and adopt a unique project management approach to deliver spectacular results. Over the last 21 years, their team has worked throughout India designing and delivering more than 3000 meetings and events.

The Person behind RAZZMATAZZ

Dr. Meenakshi Anantram was born to the famous Ranji Trophy Cricketer and Cricket commentator, M.K. Murugesh and excellent orator, social worker and teacher Arati, She got “the gift of the gab” from her illustrious parents. Talking mellifluously comes naturally to Meenakshi. She takes to the microphone like a fish takes to water. A multi-faceted person endowed with a magnificent personality, grip on any topic of discussion, and a titillating voice, Meenakshi makes a captivating presence and has a penchant to play with words. She has an impressive education and career graph with medals and top honours bestowed on her right from school days till her doctorate in Ichthyo Parasitology and has 25 papers in International Scientific Journals to testify her superior caliber. She is the recipient of the S.P Basu Young Scientist Award, B.C Ray Gold Medal for outstanding research and is the only Indian Scientist to have been selected for the coveted Monbusho Scholarship to study as the U.N. representative from India, in Japan.

Meenakshi first held the microphone at the tender age of 13, and under the tutelage of well-known commentator, Amin Sayani, she learnt the techniques and nuances of the spoken word. She has hosted over one thousand shows all over the world as master of ceremony and anchor person. Some of the better known ones are:

- The “Festival of India” in the USA (1990).
- The inaugural of the 32nd National Games of 2002.
- Documentaries for the Cannes Film Fest and UGC.
- All India meet for collegiate at Madras 1983.
- India International Seafood shows at Delhi, Vizag and Goa.
- Protocol events, VIP visits, Chief Minister’s tours at many locations
- Inauguration shows & Award Nite Events.
- More than 500 musical shows with her event management company Razzmatazz with artists like Daler Mehndi, Mehnaz, Anaida, Shaan, Shuba Mudgal, S.P. Balasubramaniam, Malgadi Shuba, Penaz Masani, Chitra, etc.

She was selected as the Outstanding Young Person of the Junior Chamber in 1992 and in the same year entered the Limca Book along with her father as the only father – daughter duo in the world to have given running commentary for men’s cricket matches. In between, she also represented India for Handball at the 1982 Asian Games at Delhi and played Cricket and Handball for the state.

In 1994, Meenakshi quit her post-doctoral research with the CSIR to follow her heart’s desire for a career in entertainment and started RAZZMATAZZ - one of the first few

event management companies in the country. She was an MC and organized many events in her school and college life and wanted to use her talent in event management which had few players at that time. It was an unexplored market and she visualized the future potential as the Indian economy opened its doors towards Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization in 1991. Today, with over 3000 successful events all over India and representatives in many cities, her company is rated as one of the best in A.P. and is very popular in South India. Many other national event managers like Wizcraft, DNA Networks, Show House, Cause Celebre, CANDID and others have synergistic tie-ups with Razzmatazz who locally co-ordinate events for them.

Starting of Razzmatazz

In spite of all her academic, research and non-academic achievements Meenakshi felt that there was something missing and she finally started RAZZMATAZZ with the support of her family. She went in search of opportunities and came to know that Coca Cola was launching their product again in India. She went to the Coca Cola office, Visakhapatnam and asked for an opportunity for the local launch of Coke. She was successful in getting the event and organized the launch with five hundred school kids decked up in red, performing for the public at various locations. The event made headlines in all major newspapers the next day. Then she started getting events for the launch of BPL Karaoke systems, Kellogg's cornflakes, etc. in Visakhapatnam. From product launches, she slowly moved into fashion shows and organized more than fifty fashion events featuring national models. She then ventured into protocol functions, award ceremonies, conferences, exhibitions and so on. The new rich generation of IT professionals approached her for birthday parties, rave parties, theme parties and Meenakshi converted this opportunity into business. She has now added wedding planning in her portfolio, in which RAZZMATAZZ offers a one stop wedding planning solution in which the following services are offered: videography, web cast of the wedding, catering, DJs & international dancers, lasers, special fireworks, intelligent lights, mandapams, theme decor, mehendi functions, sangeet functions, etc.

Problems & Challenges

Meenakshi's journey was not smooth. She has faced a lot of problems like getting the right people to work for specific events; her own employees who worked under her started their own event management companies and competed against her. RAZZMATAZZ today employs fourteen full time employees and forty two contract employees. The company has four important departments namely Production, Celebrity management, Administration and accounts and Sales and distribution. Employees are treated as family members and Meenakshi spends a lot of time with the team and ensures that people are tuned and developed for the requirements of the organization. Meenakshi is with the team always at the venue for all the events that she has organized, supervising the work. She maintains good relations with the suppliers and follows just in time philosophy where she gets the required materials as per the demand. According to Meenakshi, selling a concept to a client is very difficult as the wavelength and attitude of the clients is different. She says that some clients were asking for sexual favours after fashion shows and she had to take a tough stand and lose some clients for not meeting their dirty demands. Organizing road shows is comparatively more challenging for her than other events. She says that the present MBA's only want more salary but are not

ready to give their 100% commitment to work as per requirement. They are also not ready to stick posters if required (“menial” jobs in their opinion) – an activity which she has done and does even now. She loves cooking but because of her busy schedule she rarely gets time to cook. She proudly says that without support from her husband and mother in law she could have been able to concentrate on her work. Meenakshi despite not having an MBA, is a very successful event manager running RAZZMATAZZ which presently has an annual turnover of two crore rupees. She started her business with five thousand rupees and her first event cost the client just ten thousand rupees. Her major achievements have been organizing the National Games at Visakhapatnam and the Visakha Utsav on the beaches of Visakhapatnam.

Dr. Meenakshi feels that being a woman, she got the attention wherever she went and used her brilliant academic credentials to get a cutting edge in the negotiation with the clients. She has learnt all the nuances of event management the hard way. She cites an example where in one event, the auditorium had a capacity of 2000 people and there were more than 5000 people who turned up. They quickly put up big screens and sound systems outside the auditorium and ensured that all people watched the event. Today, she is one of the famous personalities known in Visakhapatnam. She also proudly says that she had a role in putting Vizag on the national map as the launch pad for many products from various FMCG products like Ariel, Kellogg’s, etc. She never realized that she had organized so many events and had become a trend setter in the area of event management. She feels that she has a long way to go and is very proud that her passion and hobby have become bread and butter for her. It is notable to mention here that RAZZMATAZZ is a pioneering member of the Event & Entertainment Management Association of India.

Despite her administrative duties and responsibilities as event manger, Meenakshi finds time to write articles for reputed Newspapers & Journals like THE HINDU, The New Indian Express, Deccan Chronicle, Hotelier & Caterer, Taj Magazine, Femina, Women’s Era, etc. and has over 200 poems (some award winning entries) which she is compiling into a book to be published soon. Her name features in the Marquis Bibliographies of famous people and “Who is Who” in the world.

What it means to be a women entrepreneur

Entrepreneurship as such is a tough call and when it is a woman who wants to become one, the odds seem to magnify given the chauvinistic attitudes of the Indian male. As Dr. Meenakshi says, “I am a man in the garb of a woman in the way I do my business and that is the only way I can survive and do well. And of course being a woman at heart, I deliver events with passion and emotion and not just bricks and mortar. That is my USP!”

Daily challenges include finding 30 hours in a regular work day of 24 hours to put the event on the road. Finding ways and means of keeping her normally over worked staff occupied on non-event days and of course, developing vendors, ideating events and dealing with the idiosyncrasies of artistes. Dr. Meenakshi would like to spend more time writing poetry which is her passion, watching movies, and chilling out on a holiday but for now these activities are on the back-burner. Looking back she feels that has created a niche for her and today when she walks into a meeting, people stand up not only because of the woman in her but the fact that she has created that aura of respect in her work and in her enterprise.

Questions :

1. Discuss various aspects of Entrepreneurial process with reference to Dr. Meenakshi Anantram's journey so far?
2. Why did Meenakshi start Razzmatazz? Discuss the various skills required in Entrepreneurship and relate them to the above case.
3. According to you, what problems did Dr. Meenakshi face after starting Razzmatazz and how did she overcome them?

References :

1. Hisrich.R.D, Peters.M.P & Shepherd.D.A , Entrepreneurship Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited, (ISBN-13: 978-0-07-062017-9)
2. Kuratko.D.F & Hodgetts R.M, Entrepreneurship in the New Millennium, Cengage Learning India Private Limited ,(ISBN-13: 978-81-315-0561-8)
3. Ramchandran.K, Entrepreneurship Development, Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited ,New Delhi (ISBN-13: 978-0-07-024887-8)
4. Website of Razzmatazz: www.razzmatazz.in

Annexure

Exhibit I: Profile of RAZZMATAZZ

RAZZMATAZZ is a national meeting and event management company with fully staffed and resourced offices in VISAKHAPATNAM with representative units at KOLKATA, CHENNAI, COCHIN, BHUBANESWAR, GOA & CALIFORNIA, USA. We offer best practice, leading edge, and creative meeting and event management services and adopt a unique project management approach to deliver spectacular results. Over the past 21 years our team has worked throughout India, designing and delivering more than 3000 meetings and events.

We provide creative, cost effective, high level management skills and expertise for: Associations (State, national or international conferences and congress) Corporate (product launches, reward programs, incentives, staff conferences, AGM's client functions) Exhibitions (Public and trade exhibitions of any size) Government (secure meetings, special protocols, VIP management) Special events (Public functions, dinners, building, product or project launches) We are enthusiastic, creative, hardworking and focused on you.

How we work

RAZZMATAZZ organizes and delivers Event Management at an unsurpassed level, providing national and international customers with a wealth of knowledge and experience to ensure their conferences and events are truly memorable. From our first meeting to discuss your desires, until the completion of your event we deal with all the details and make it as simple as possible We are more than an event planning organization; ours is a destination event company. We take your thoughts and ideas and turn them into reality with ease. From Corporate events including conferences, product launches, team building, themed events, themed dinners to weddings and arranging your accommodation, you are in safe hands with us.

We know and love what we do, what we can offer and how best it can suit you. We pride ourselves on organizing everything so that you can concentrate on relaxing while all the hard work is being done by us....no wonder that after 21 years and more than 3000 events we are still growing from day to day and have a 100% client recall record.

Our key Services are

1. Event Management & Production
2. Corporate Events
3. Protocol functions
4. Award ceremonies
5. Conference & Incentive Programmes
6. Team Building
7. Theme Dinners
8. Exhibitions
9. Product Launches
10. Weddings & Birthday Parties.

Exhibit II: Few Esteemed Clients

TVS Motor Company	MPEDA	Rotary International
Hero Honda	Sea food Association of India	TATA Indicom
Idea Cellular Ltd.	Bajaj Auto Ltd	Taj Group of Hotels
Pepsi Food Limited	Maruti Udyog Ltd	ITC
Indian Navy	Hyundai	CEAT
Coca Cola	NIIT	GE Capital
BPL	VSEZ	TGV Industries
Samsung	The Hindu	MAA TV
Thomson	Nalli Silks	Voltas
Videocon	Sterling Resorts	Murugappa Group
BPCL	Club Mahindra	MGM Group
HPCL	APSTC	Daspalla Group of Hotels
ONGC	SONY	Waltair Club
Archies	Happy Home	IBP Century Club
Hindustan Unilever LTD	K.G Denim (Trigger)	Vijayawada Club
Asian Paints	MICROSOFT	Executive Club (VIJ)
Hutch(Orange)	INTAS	VIZAG Steel Plant
Airtel	IT& C Dept. Govt. AP	United Breweries
AgriGold	IMAX	Seagrams
Satyam Computers	PIZZA HUT	Shaw Wallace
Wipro	Sporting Frontiers	SALPG
ITW Signode	IVRCL	Varun Motors
Dr.Reddy's Lab	State Bank Of India	HSBC
Karvy	AP Tourism Dept.	IBM
VLCC	Airport Authority of India	Colgate Palmolive
Coffee Board of India	Nagarjuna Fertilizers	ICICI Bank
NTPC	NEC	HDFC Bank
HY-Grade Essar Projects	ICFAI	Andhra Bank
NHAI	JWT	RSK BBDO
TATA Motors	Gangavaram Port Ltd	GVMC
BHEL	Reliance Industries	POKARNA
NSTL	WESTWOOD International	HANMER MSL
<i>We could not have spelt SUCCESS without you</i>		