



STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Lydia Krasner

STORIES & INSIGHTS 4 DAYS AGO

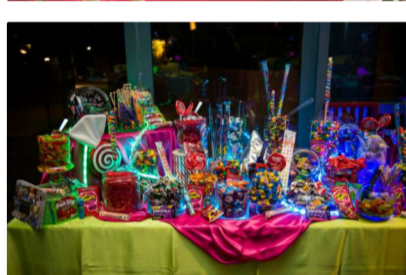
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Alright – so today we've got the honor of introducing you to Lydia Krasner. We think you'll enjoy our conversation, we've shared it below.

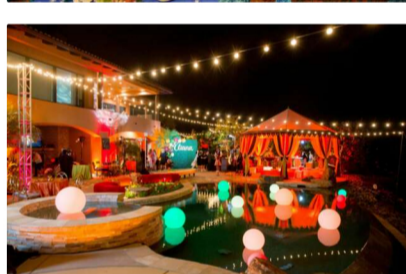
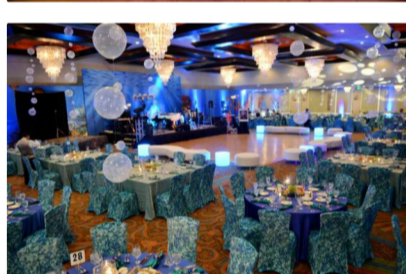
Alright, Lydia thanks for taking the time to share your stories and insights with us today. What's the backstory behind how you came up with the idea for your business?

I was working an art teacher in the religious school at a Synagogue, and the President approached me asking for help to "make the room pretty" for their annual fundraiser gala. I have a background in theater and I had friends who could bring in sets, props, lighting, backdrops etc., so I took the offer and made the centerpiece as well as designed the look for the room. They had one of the most successful events ever and offered for me to "come back next year". "And by the way, Mrs' Levin is having a Bat Mitzvah and she needs help". The lightbulb went off! There were many wedding planners, but who was helping these families plan Bar/Bat Mitzvahs? They happen at every synagogue, every week, and some offer two in a day. At the time, I was teaching at a couple different private schools because there was no full time work for an art teacher since all the arts programs had recently been pulled. I did the Bat Mitzvah and soon after, my name was getting passed around and I found myself feeling so appreciated, rewarded and I was able to put my creative skills together so appreciated, rewarded and I was able to put my creative skills together with my design skills and create beautiful parties! And with such a niche market, at the time, there wasn't much competition. I feel that my artistic background sets me apart from most planners because I have a very creative approach to what I do.



Lydia, before we move on to more of these sorts of questions, can you take some time to bring our readers up to speed on you and what you do?

My degrees are in Art Education and Photography. After starting my business by accident, it was really a hands on learning experience. The degree in Hospitality Management wasn't even offered at San Diego State University until years after I graduated. After 27 years, I still haven't seen it all. I come home from events every week thinking about what we can better next time we are at that particular venue or when we do that particular theme. Every week is a new opportunity and this industry offers so many innovative ideas and applications. Bar/Bat Mitzvah's are very different than they were years ago. It used to be bagels and tuna sandwiches in the social hall after the service and now thanks to shows like "My Super Sweet 16" and the internet, kids make way more sophisticated choices about their decor, entertainment and food options. I love a challenge too! If someone comes up with a crazy theme, it makes my job way more interesting than the same old Hollywood, tropical or sports themes we see so often.



Let's talk about resilience next – do you have a story you can share with us?

When Covid hit, I had been doing an average of 40-45 events annually. And everything came to a halt! I had a cancellation on March 13, 2020 at a March 14th Bat Mitzvah. The desserts, florals and custom decor as well as much of the food, were already made. It was devastating for the family. Our industry was the first to go because we are based on gatherings, and the last to return because those gatherings are typically large scale when you are talking about corporate, a wedding, Bar Mitzvah or social gala. Not working for over a year and a half was really hard because I have twins who at the time of the shut down, were sophomores in college and I had bills to pay! I am grateful that my business stood the test of taking so much time off and coming back strong. One of the biggest challenges was the postponements. Most of the services happened over Zoom, but folks saved the party until it was safe to gather. The 13 year olds were now as old as 15 and many of the kids were "over it". But the beautiful thing was to witness how many people were so grateful to have gatherings after the months of isolation. They were hungry for get togethers and celebrations. Parties mean more now than they ever have. These kids and families deserve to be celebrated. Many went as far as to do PCR tests at the door to the tune of \$40 per person. But if it meant the safety of their guests, the piece of mind was worth it.



Have you ever had to pivot?

Aside from Covid, the biggest pivot in my career was when I had twins. My first few Mitzvah's happened prior to becoming pregnant, and I was picking up more business as each party happened and I was introduced to more people and vendors. As my kids grew and started pre-school, I had more opportunity (and free time) to grow my business.

Contact Info:

- Website: www.mitzvahevent.com
- Instagram: @mitzvaheventproductions
- Facebook: Mitzvah Event Productions
- LinkedIn: Lydia Krasner
- Yelp: Mitzvah Event Productions

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