



## Meredith Greene

The Washington, DC business development manager for Drape Kings, the well-known specialist in drape rentals for special events, Meredith Greene was recently named president of the greater Washington, DC chapter of the International Special Event Society. She spoke to *LSA* about life at Drape Kings and what she hopes to accomplish with ISES DC.

**Lighting&Sound America:** What is your education and professional background?

**Meredith Greene:** I graduated from Radford University in 2001 with a bachelors degree in business administration. Before Drape Kings, I had positions at Oracle, a software company, and Leading Authorities, a speakers bureau in Washington, DC, where I was an account manager. At both jobs, I managed existing accounts and found new business.

**LSA:** How did you arrive at your current position?

**MG:** I got a phone call in 2010 from a recruiter about Drape Kings, newly arrived in DC. I knew nothing about them, but after speaking with Kevin Goodrich (my future boss) for quite a few hours, I was attracted to the freedom and flexibility the position offered. A brand-new office in my home base—there was a lot of potential to make it my own. A lot was riding on my shoulders, and I was up for the challenge.

**LSA:** How is working in an entertainment company different from other organizations?

**MG:** Well, it's a relief not having to wear a suit anymore! I don't want to say the atmosphere is more relaxed, because it can be pretty intense, but I definitely feel more comfortable. Previously, I was behind a desk all day. At Drape Kings, face-to-face communication is vital, especially for customer service. We want our clients to know we're there when they need us. Among our services, we store and launder drapes, and our crew can set up and strike the jobs. We rent to event planners, production companies, venues, etc. Our crews have an A/V background, so they understand how to work in setups that have many vendors in one place. Our crews can also go from a more technical setup, like a gala or wedding, and then drop off a few hundred feet of black drape to a production company. Our goal is not to wipe the competition off the map—just to let people know we're here for everyone. We consider ourselves partners to our peers in the industry. We aren't competing with them; we are a resource for them.

**LSA:** What kinds of events do you enjoy the most?

**MG:** Educational events that are interesting, not the same old thing, where you get to see what other people are doing and leave feeling inspired.

**LSA:** What are Drape Kings' goals as far as marketing?

**MG:** To further develop our social media presence. Our clients want to see what we do. They need examples of our work, and we are proud to show them.

**LSA:** What was it like receiving the ISES DC Capital Rising Star Award in 2012?

**MG:** It was an honor, especially since it was my first year on the board. I guess they saw potential in me. When I arrived at my first ISES meeting in 2010, I knew not a soul. I told myself to suck it up and meet people. You can't be shy; you have to care about your company, career, and realize networking is important. Business doesn't fall in your lap; you build relationships and become the best at what you do.

**LSA:** What are your goals as president of ISES?

**MG:** We have five brand values at ISES: creativity, inspiration, teamwork, education, and relationships. We need to take full advantage of them, and haven't done that to the best of our ability. We came back from ISES Live in Seattle with a lot of information, and are thinking much more strategically. The last thing I want to see is yet another info session on Facebook or Twitter. Our goal for the next two years is to take face-to-face communication a step further, and also make our website, education, and networking with ISES DC the best resources for the creative event professional. Previously, we had little control of our site and managing photos, etc. It had gone pretty stale. Now we can offer more substance to our members instead of just posting event dates. If someone has a question about volunteer opportunities, there is a link that goes directly to me; I can help match their skills to different events. I am calling the new ISES movement a "re-energizing" of our brand. Think differently, be strategic, and most of all, creative. 📶