

Aaron D. Wolowiec, MSA, CAE, CMP Fellow

Founder & President | Event Garde

Curriculum Vitae | Updated: February 2025

Brief Biography



Aaron Wolowiec is a nationally recognized meeting strategist, facilitator, and learning designer with more than two decades of association experience. As the founder and president of Event Garde, he specializes in creating engaging, multisensory learning and networking experiences. A certified Technology of Participation (ToP) facilitator and mentor trainer, Aaron prioritizes participatory and equitable approaches to consensus building and strategic planning. His work with boards, learners, staff, and

volunteers fosters meaningful connections, skill development, and practical application in the workplace. Beyond the boardroom, Aaron finds joy in celebrity autobiographies, true crime podcasts, traveling with his husband, Trevor, and walking their Mini Goldendoodle, Luca.

Education

- ⇒ Central Michigan University (CMU) | Class of 2009 | Master of Science in Administration (MSA), Leadership
- ⇒ Lansing Community College (LCC) | Class of 2006 | Certificate of Achievement, Sign Language Interpreter
- ⇒ Michigan State University (MSU) | Class of 2002 | Bachelor of Arts in Political Theory/Constitutional Democracy (PTCD) and Social Relations (SR)

Professional Experience

- ⇒ Event Garde | Founder & President | December 2011 to Present
 - **Team Leadership:** Leads a virtual team of 11 consultants, fostering a collaborative and growth-oriented environment aligned with Event Garde’s mission and core values. Organizes annual in-person retreats for strategic planning and team building, complemented by a mid-year virtual check-in. Supports professional development through monthly happy hours, quarterly lunch-and-learns, personalized mentorship, and attendance at industry events.
 - **Client Success:** Spearheads the successful delivery of services to more than 125 clients since 2011, maintaining an annual portfolio of approximately 25-30 clients, including many long-term, repeat, and pro bono partnerships. Oversees the management of more than 55 in-person events, two dozen facilitations, and numerous training sessions annually, reaching nearly 10,000 total participants with consistently high client satisfaction scores.
 - **Business Development & Strategy:** With a focus on brand awareness and strategic growth, partners with our client engagement team to reach new organizations, as well as to improve our business development processes and resources. Provides strategic direction for the firm’s website, quarterly community webinars, monthly e-newsletters and marketing emails, weekly blog and social media posts, and other thought leadership content.

- **Community Engagement:** Champions pro bono projects and charitable contributions as part of Event Garde's commitment to social responsibility, donating more than \$25,000 in total. Since 2022, facilitates a monthly CEO Circle series for entrepreneurs, fostering a supportive professional community and helping fellow association consultants navigate real-time business challenges.
- ⇒ Health Care Association of Michigan (HCAM) | Director, Education & Associate Partnerships | June 2003 to October 2011
 - **Event Planning & Management:** Planned and facilitated the annual convention and expo; managed the production of all marketing and promotional materials; developed and monitored a budget to meet attendance and revenue targets; and solicited sponsorships from key stakeholders.
 - **Professional Development:** Promoted professional development through in-person education programs; negotiated and executed program contracts; monitored licensure requirements for Michigan health care professionals; procured continuing education credits; and maintained accurate member records.
 - **Virtual Education & Technology:** Developed and coordinated all Web and audio conferences; managed technical support for all virtual education programs; produced electronic marketing and promotional materials; and conducted quality improvement evaluations.
 - **Member & Stakeholder Relations:** Liaised with members and vendors; cultivated trustworthy and respectful relationships to build client loyalty; collaborated with executive staff on recruitment and retention efforts; and strategized with the board of directors to foster engagement in regional, state, and national issues.

Publications

- ⇒ Donahoo, P., & Wolowiec, A. (2021). Outsourcing and creating healthy vendor relationships. In S. S. Radwan (Ed.), *Professional practices in association management* (4th ed., pp. 363–376). ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership.
- ⇒ Co-authored the *Meetings, Education & Professional Development Survey Report*, released by Event Garde in 2018 in collaboration with Whorton Marketing & Research, expanding 2012 research with MSAE to 12 state societies and surveying 1,986 associations.
- ⇒ Co-authored eBooks addressing critical industry needs, including *The Complete Guide to Virtual Event Creation* with Chris Gloede, *Tradeshows (R)evolution* with Lowell Aplebaum, *Engaging Learners* with Tracy King, and *8 Steps to Successful Mobile Activation* with Kim Harwood.
- ⇒ Maintains *The Gardian Blog*, featured on *Alltop* and *Association Universe*; publishes *The Gardian eNews*, a monthly e-newsletter reaching nearly 5,000 subscribers; and regularly contributes to a myriad of association blogs, magazines, newsletters, and podcasts.

Presentations & Conferences

- ⇒ Over a 22-year career, delivered countless engaging presentations to a wide range of audiences, including ASAE, state societies, industry organizations focused on learning and meeting professionals (e.g., Connect, MPI, SGMP), the Institute for Organization

Management (IOM), and various trade associations, individual membership societies, non-profits, and government agencies across the United States.

- ⇒ Sessions range from 60-minute workshops to half-day deep dives and multi-day intensives, modeling sound instructional design by creating an intentional, active partnership with learners to effectively personalize and process new information and then apply it in ways that lead to meaningful behavior change in the workplace.

Honors & Awards

- ⇒ Dallas/Fort Worth Association Executives (DFWAE) | 2024 | Star Award
- ⇒ Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) | 2024 | Chairman's Award
- ⇒ Dallas/Fort Worth Association Executives (DFWAE) | 2023 | Star Award
- ⇒ Events Industry Council (EIC) | 2022 | Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) Fellow
- ⇒ Michigan Meetings + Events (MiME) | 2018 | Best Meeting Professional Award
- ⇒ Michigan Society of Association Executives (MSAE) | 2017 | Supplier Partner Award
- ⇒ Events Industry Council (EIC) | 2015 | Top #CMP30 Influencer Award
- ⇒ Michigan Society of Association Executives (MSAE) | 2013 | Rising Leader
- ⇒ Michigan Society of Association Executives (MSAE) | 2011 | Emerging New Leader Award
- ⇒ American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) | 2009-2011 | Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP)
- ⇒ Health Care Association of Michigan (HCAM) | 2008 | Chair Award

Certifications

- ⇒ Meeting Professionals International (MPI) | December 2024 | Event Welfare Champion: Neurodiversity & Experience Design
- ⇒ National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) | September 2023 | Certified LGBT Business Enterprise
- ⇒ Health Education Services | June 2021 | Pandemic Compliance Advisor
- ⇒ National Diversity Council (NDC) | September 2020 | Certified Diversity Professional (CDP)
- ⇒ Association for Talent Development (ATD) | March 2019 | Expert Coach
- ⇒ Association for Talent Development (ATD) | January 2019 | Integrated Talent Management Certificate
- ⇒ Institute for Learning Environment Design (iLED) | April 2018 | Certified Learning Environment Architect (CLEA)
- ⇒ Events Industry Council (EIC) | November 2017 | Sustainable Event Professional Certificate
- ⇒ The Institute of Cultural Affairs in the USA (ICA-USA) | July 2017 | Certified Technology of Participation (ToP) Facilitator (CTF) and Mentor Trainer (MT)
- ⇒ Association for Talent Development (ATD) | August 2015 | Master Instructional Designer
- ⇒ Association for Talent Development (ATD) | August 2015 | Learning Transfer Certificate
- ⇒ Tourism Ambassador Institute (TAI) | January 2012 | Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA)
- ⇒ American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) | January 2010 | Certified Association Executive (CAE)
- ⇒ Events Industry Council (EIC) | January 2009 | Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)