

# UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVE SUPERPOWERS: THE ART OF THEME-LOGY

UPMC PINNACLE FOUNDATION

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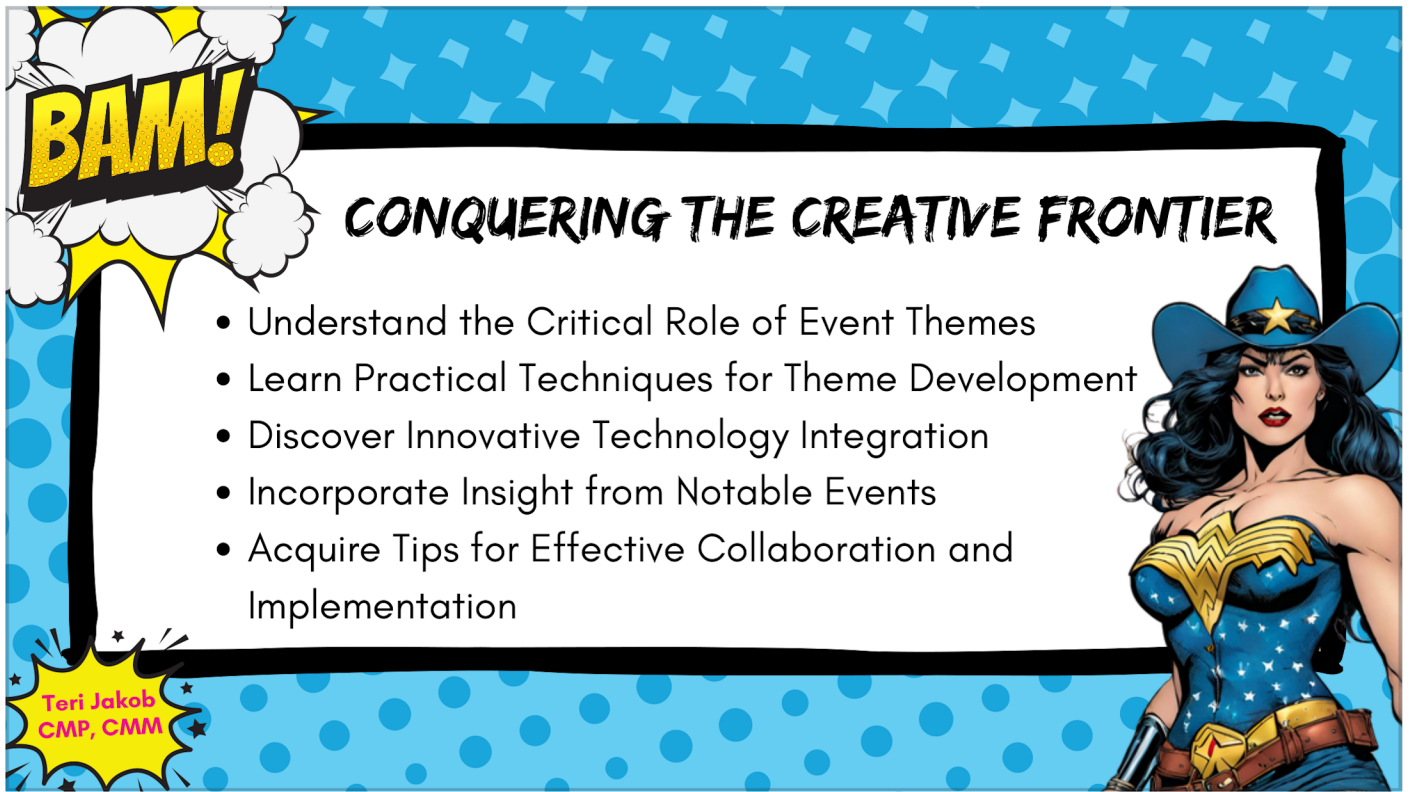
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Hi y'all! How many of you are from Texas? I grew up here in Texas, in Dallas, Fort Worth. Like all good Texas girls, I wanted to be a pageant princess and a Cowboy cheerleader. I'm the oldest of 6 kids. And while our family was big, money was small, so we had to be creative. Gifts were usually homemade. But even when birthdays and holidays were just family, they were a big deal! My mom was so creative!



## Objectives

In this presentation, we'll first uncover the significance of event themes. Then, we'll share practical techniques for theme development and explore fun ways to integrate innovative technology. We'll also dive into real-world case studies to learn from others and wrap it up with some helpful tips for better collaboration in event planning.



Event themes are not just decorative elements or catchy slogans. They are the backbone of any successful gathering. They give your event a unique identity, a personality, and a soul. Think of them as the storyteller of your event. They set the stage, guide the narrative, and leave a lasting impression on your attendees.

There is more to design than delivering fun. To truly connect with an audience, the event must get to the heart human emotion by addressing four key drives: acquiring, bonding, learning, and defending. The four-drive theory was developed and researched by Harvard Business School.

In an interview with Convene Magazine, Mary Beth [Mc-Q-N] McEuen, former vice-president, and executive director of The Maritz Institute, shared her perspective on the relationship between emotion and event design: “All of these drives are underpinned by emotion, and that is where the real richness comes into play for the [event] designer — so much of what you are trying to design is an emotional experience of the event. People are bonding with each other, laughing with each other, building relationships, building trust, generating new thinking and new ideas, and there is cooperation and even wonder awe, and curiosity. The more you have those types of emotions throughout an event, [attendees] will leave with a distinctly different memory.”

People attend events for the experiences and emotions that are brought to them. This is where the cognitive psychology of it comes together. Our brain can process images up to 60,000 times faster than text alone, which is why incorporating visual impressions via theme creates a greater impact at your event. Whether a conference like this or a fundraiser, a wedding, celebration, or an education symposium all events have a purpose and meaning, a story to tell.



When we see an image that is positive or uplifting, our brain releases dopamine, a chemical that makes us feel good. Conversely, when we see something negative or unpleasant, our brain releases cortisol, the primary stress hormone that can make us feel anxious or agitated. This is why visuals and lighting have a significant impact on how we interpret and understand information, as well as our overall mood and mindset. By leveraging the power of captivating images, you can communicate an impactful message that will stick with your audience long after the event has ended.



## UNRAVELING THE LASSO OF THEME MAGIC

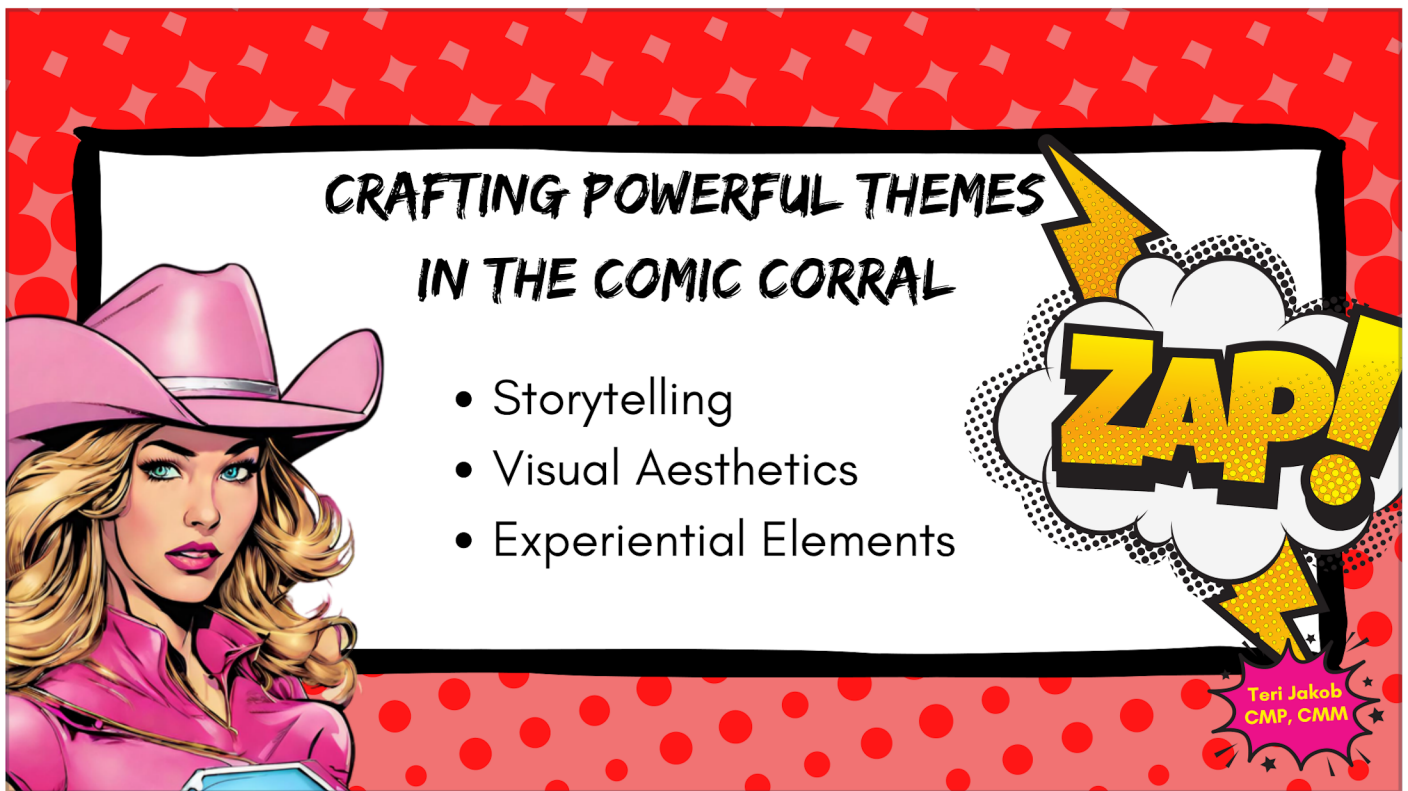
- Create unforgettable experiences
- Align with your event goals
- Know your audience



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To truly understand the power events, hold, let's look at how you can use themes to create unforgettable experiences that align with your event goals. While doing this it's important to emphasize the importance of knowing your audience. Some high-profile industries that have lassoed the power of themes brilliantly.

Imagine stepping into a world of enchantment, where every detail, down to the fireflies, is thoughtfully crafted to immerse you in a different reality. Close your eyes...



Imagine your event as story and use the theme as the narrative. Use it to explore how to tell the story. Page 5 in your Handout

Storytelling is not just about words; it's about crafting a narrative that resonates with your audience. Let's think about another example:

1. Define your narrative.
  - a. Start by identifying the core narrative or story you want to convey through the event. What message, theme, or emotion do you want attendees to take away? Ensure that this narrative aligns with your event's goals and objectives.
2. Develop a story arc.
  - a. Create a story arc that guides attendees through the event from beginning to end. Think of it as a journey with a clear beginning, middle, and end. This arc should build anticipation, engage participants, and provide a satisfying conclusion.
3. Storytelling sessions
  - a. Incorporate storytelling sessions or presentations into the event's agenda. Invite guest speakers, storytellers, or experts who can share relevant stories or insights that complement your event's theme and message.
4. Character engagement
  - a. Introduce characters or personas that are part of your event's narrative. These characters can interact with attendees, share stories, and add an element of intrigue and immersion to the event.
5. Attendee Participation
  - a. Encourage attendee participation in the storytelling process. Allow them to contribute to the narrative through social media, interactive activities, or collaborative storytelling sessions.
6. Emotional Connection

a. Focus on creating an emotional connection between attendees and the narrative. Use relatable and authentic stories that resonate with your target audience.

#### 7. Post Event Storytelling

a. Continue the storytelling journey even after the event concludes. Share event highlights, attendee stories, and behind-the-scenes content through post-event communication channels, such as social media and email.

#### 8. Collect and Share Stories

a. Encourage attendees to share their own stories and experiences related to the event. Share these stories on your event's website or social media platforms to extend the narrative's reach.

### Visual Aesthetics: Page 6 in your Handout

Visual aesthetics set the mood, convey your message, and create a cohesive and visually pleasing environment. Let's look at another example:

#### 1. Thematic design

a. Design the event's physical space and environment to reflect and enhance the chosen narrative. This includes decor, lighting, signage, and overall aesthetics. Consider how each element can contribute to the storytelling experience.

#### 2. Themed Entrance

a. Make a strong first impression by designing a thematic entrance or archway that sets the tone for the event as soon as attendees arrive.

#### 3. Multi-Sensory Elements

a. Engage multiple senses to immerse attendees in the narrative. Consider incorporating soundscapes, and tactile experiences that evoke emotions and enhance the storytelling.

#### 4. Thematic Scent Experiences

a. Consider incorporating themed scents or aromas into the event space, further immersing attendees in the sensory aspects of the theme.

#### 5. Interactive Installations

a. Design interactive art installations or exhibits that not only align with the theme but also engage attendees and allow them to immerse themselves in the event's aesthetics.

#### 6. Thematic Photo Opportunities

a. Create designated photo spots or vignettes within the event space where attendees can capture moments that showcase the theme.

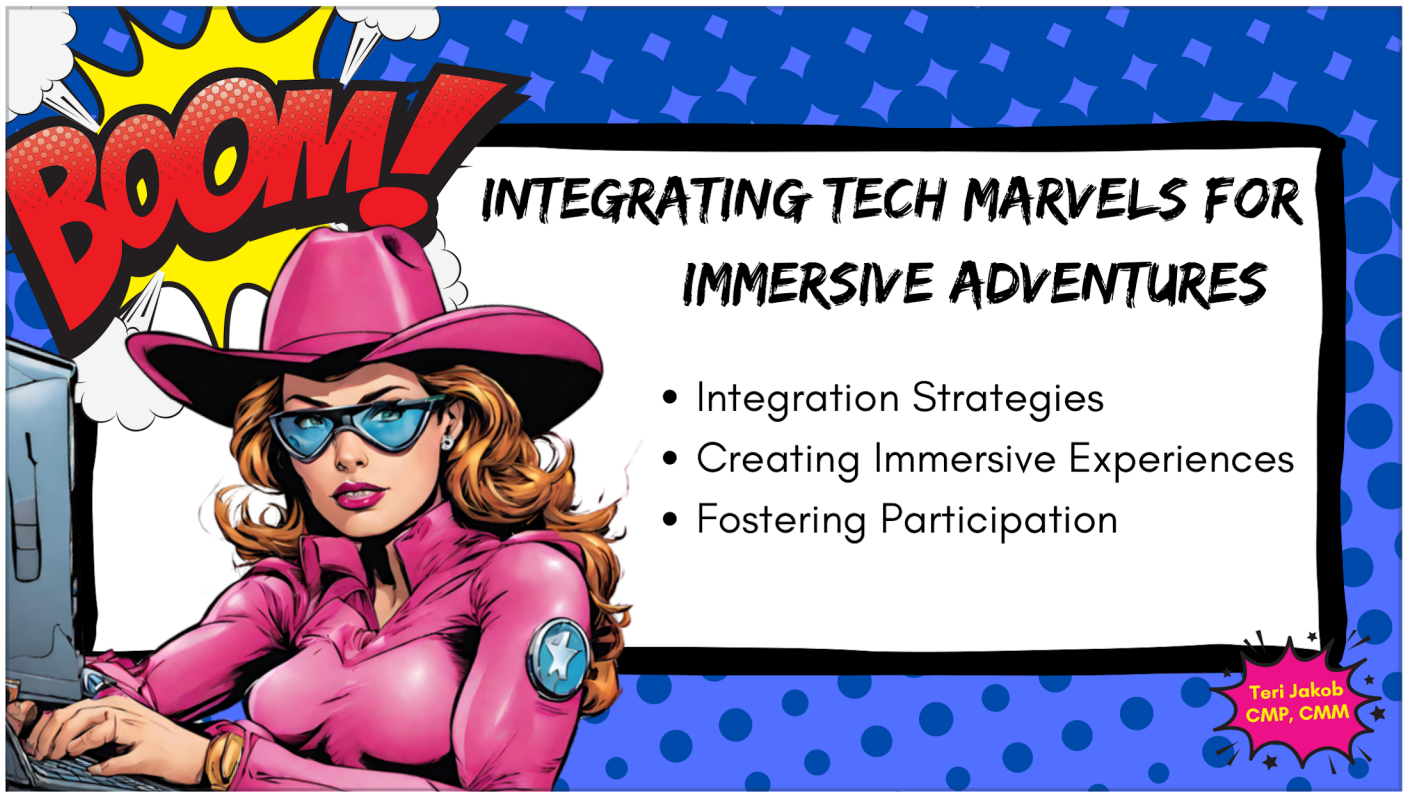
#### 7. Continuity and Consistency

a. Ensure that the narrative and theme are consistent across all event touchpoints, from marketing materials and registration to signage and swag. A cohesive approach reinforces the story and message.

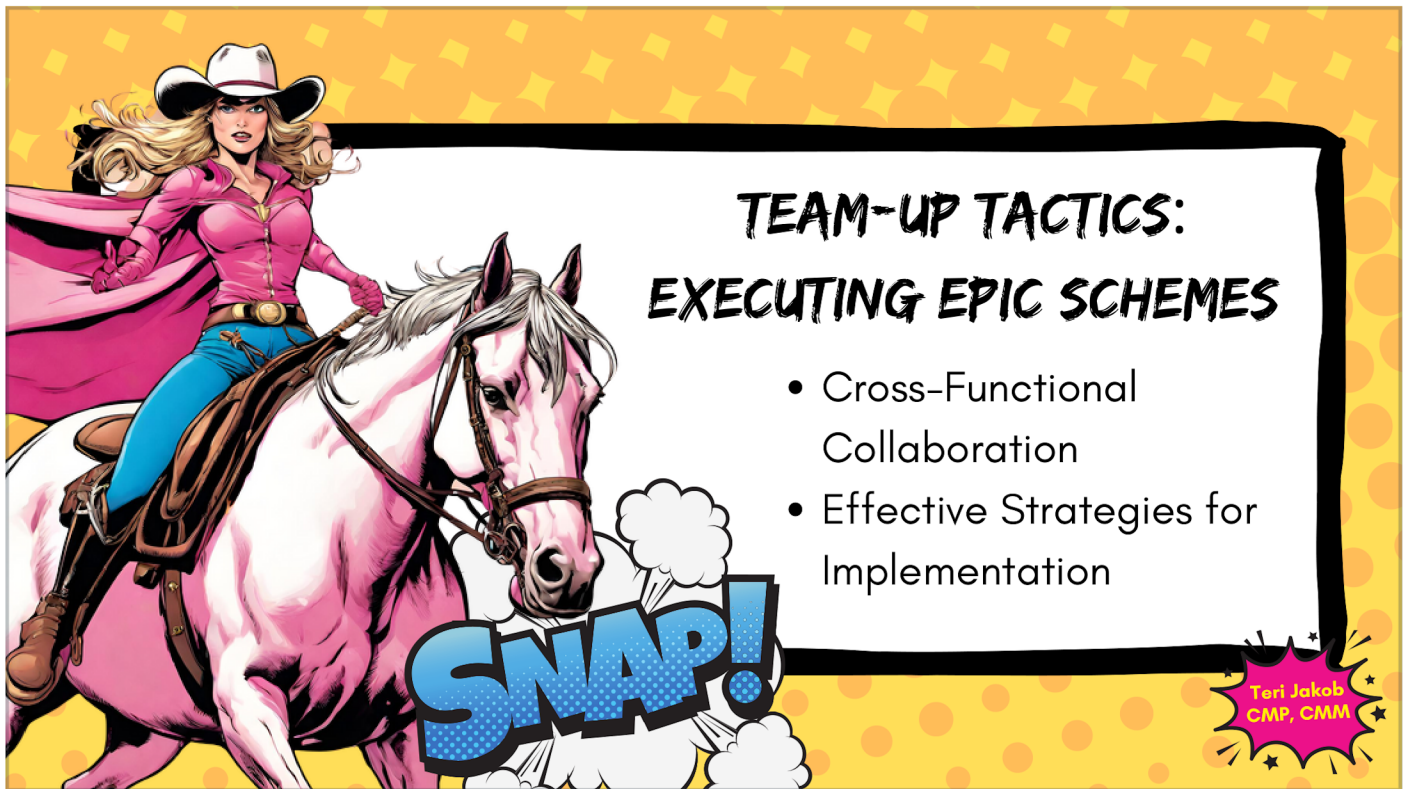




We'll explore essential techniques and strategies that will help you elevate your event planning game to the next level.



Leveraging tech and interactive elements on (page 15 in your handout) in your event can enhance engagement, create memorable experiences, and set your event apart.



Every superhero needs a sidekick I'm really lucky to have mine in this room. Event people are no different!

Collaboration and implementation are critical aspects of improving event and theme design. Here are ideas and strategies:

Cross-Functional Collaboration:

- a. Interdepartmental Collaboration: Encourage partnership between different departments within your organization, such as marketing, design, logistics, and content creation. Each department can bring unique insights and into your event design process.
- b. External Partnerships: Collaborate with vendors, sponsors, and creative agencies, who can provide specialized services and resources.
- c. Advisory Boards or Committees: Form advisory boards or committees composed of industry experts, influencers, or community representatives. They can offer diverse perspectives and contribute to the event's design and implementation.
- d. Regular Cross-Functional Meetings: Schedule regular meetings involving all relevant stakeholders to ensure ongoing communication, alignment of goals, and collaborative decision-making.
- e. Design Thinking Workshops: Set up design thinking workshops that bring together cross-functional teams to brainstorm and ideate on event themes and designs. This approach promotes creative problem-solving and empathy for attendees.

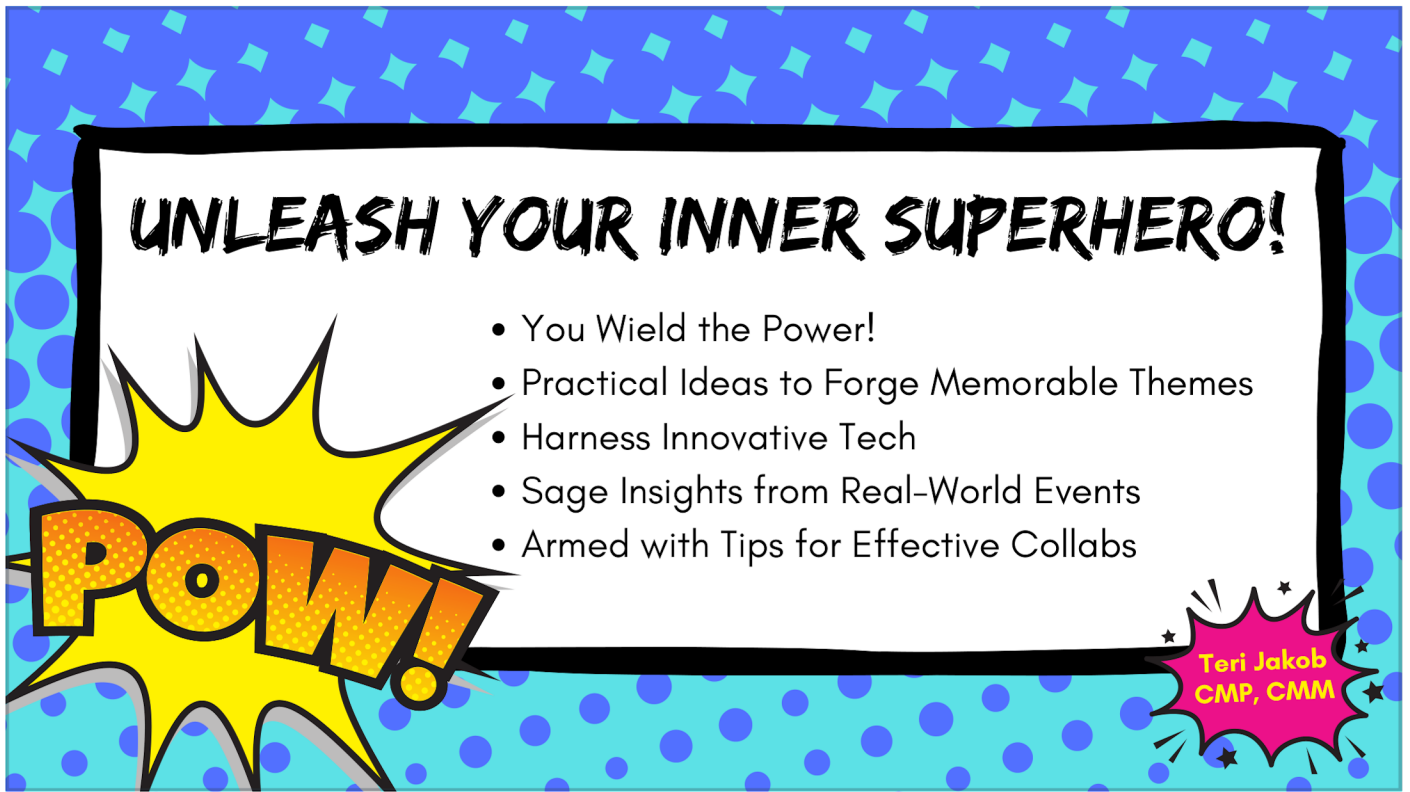
Effective Strategies for Implementation:

- a. Project Management Tools: Utilize project management software and tools to track progress, assign tasks, and ensure that all elements of the event design are implemented on schedule.

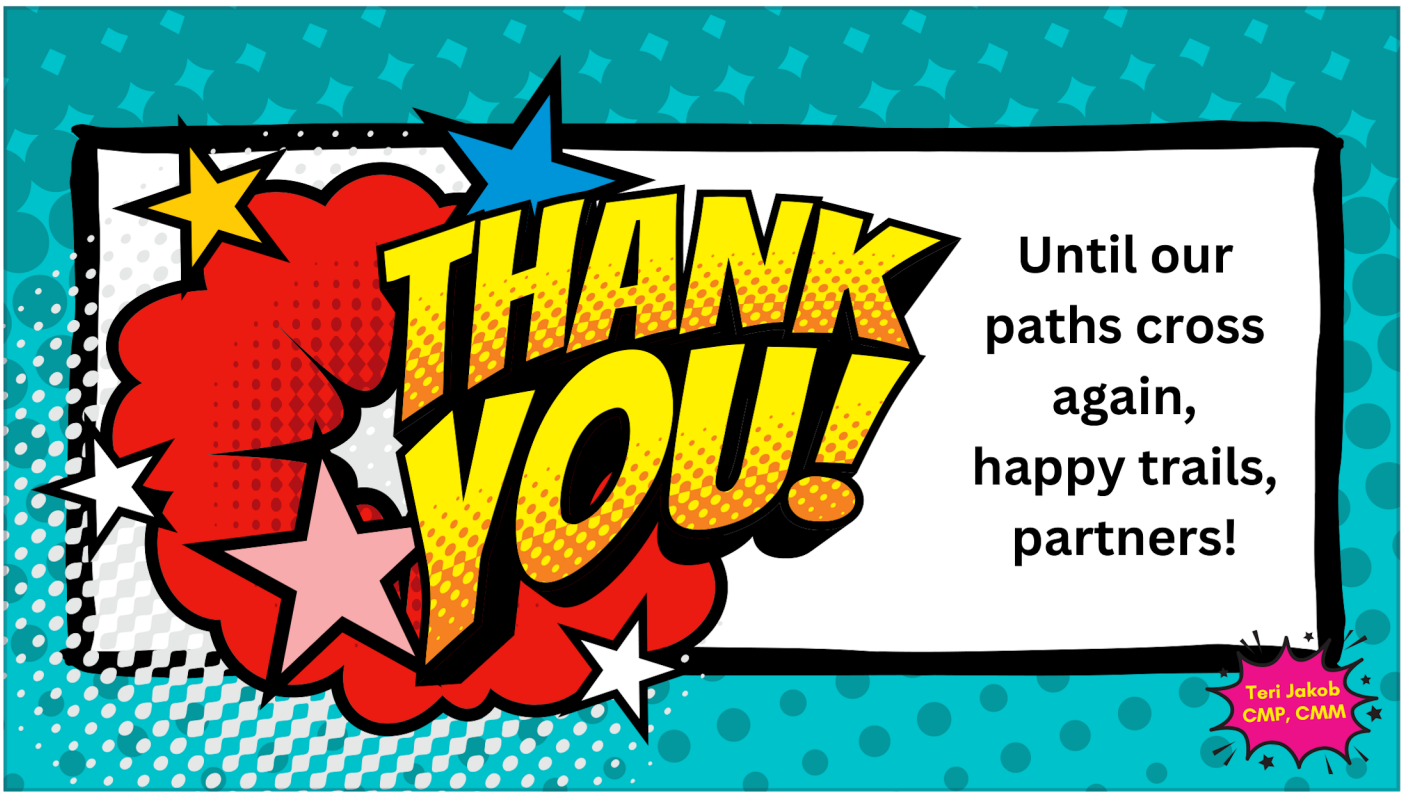
- b. Clear Communication Channels: Establish clear communication channels and protocols for all stakeholders. Regular updates, status reports, and feedback loops are essential to ensure everyone is on the same page. Effective communication is crucial to avoid misunderstandings and ensure seamless execution.
- c. Detailed Event Runbooks: Create detailed event runbooks that outline step-by-step procedures for executing every aspect of the event and theme. These runbooks serve as a reference for all team members involved in implementation. Having well-documented processes ensures consistency and minimizes the risk of errors during execution.

To make your event theme shine and leave a lasting impression on attendees, it's all about getting different teams on the same page. With strong teamwork and clear plans, your event design will run like a seamlessly synchronized powerhouse!







So, let's recap. I've just discussed the critical role of event themes and how they can set the tone for successful events. I touched on practical techniques, innovative tech integration, and used real-world events as examples. Additionally, I highlighted valuable ways for fostering effective collaboration in event planning and execution. Now it's your turn to share your superpowers with the world! You may have noticed that your pens have affirmations on them, feel free to take an extra to share, and don't forget your cape!




Y'all are the true heroes of today's adventure! Thanks for ridin' shotgun on my comic book journey.

Don't forget to sling a lasso of friendship to connect with fellow trailblazers, share your tales, and keep the fires of creativity burnin'! Until our paths cross again, happy trails! I'm Teri Jakob!



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