How To Start and Direct Your Own Pageant

by Shelly Winters

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Shelly Winters Black is founder and CEO of Louisiana’s Most Talked About Productions - Shelly’s Pageant Express. Mrs. Black has over 16 years experience in the field of Pageantry. She has held competitive titles at the state and local level. She has coached, inspired, and prepared 3 national title holders. Her girls have an impressive winning record at the state and local level with consistency attaining top ten statuses at national competitions.

In addition to her experience with pageantry she also has over 25 years experience in the field of cosmetology and is a former salon and boutique owner. She serves as an on location stylist and makeup artist for pageants as well as bridal events and is in association with the film and movie industry. Shelly's work has been featured on E.T. in association with The Miss. Plus America Pageant.

She is also the Official Hair Stylist & Make-up Artist to the Miss. Plus America Pageant, Sixteen Year Veteran for Hair & Make-Up and Coach to The Miss. New Orleans Pageant & The Miss. American Dream pageant Systems. Shelly feels blessed to have worked with many celebrities including the delightful and Beautiful (Rue McClanahan) known as "Blanche DeVereux" from the Hit series The Golden Girls. Shelly has appeared in several New Orleans Commercials and celebrity Emcee. She also serves as a coordinator for the world renowned "Mardi Gras" celebration in New Orleans. She is the wife of Sean, mother of Robert and together they share 5 incredible children. Shelly is a resident of Kenner, Louisiana and is Extremely proud to be the New Director for the Miss. New Orleans Pageant!

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Debra Balsamo. Debra was a true friend. She assisted and inspired me, as well as many other young women. She worked tirelessly to run a pageant where everyone walked away a winner. We miss you dearly girl. I know God is letting you direct the Miss Heavenly Cloud Pageant.

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Chapter 1
My Passion
Like most girls I would stare at the TV set in amazement at the glorious gallery of beautiful women walking down the glittering runway. My sisters, brothers and mother would boldly state their favorites. My heart would beat faster and faster as contestant after contestant took their turn to stop, twist their upper torso for the whole audience to see while radiating the most incredible smile. They seemed so glamorous, beautiful, and larger than life. No matter what contest it was, Miss America, Miss USA, Miss Universe, Miss What Ever, the effect it had on me was undeniable. I wanted to be on stage with them. During the intermission between the Swimsuit and Evening Gown competition I would sneak into my older sister’s closet and try on her swimsuit and high heels. Then I would practice walking in front of the mirror with as much grace and dignity as any of the contestants on TV. Then the emcee's booming voice filled the room, "our next contestant is none other than Shelly Winters". Strutting, twirling, and smiling to the huge audience of friends and well wishers. The audience cheered, hooped and hollered. Then I was busted by my brother wondering where I was. He laughed but I knew right then and there what I wanted to do most of all. I was ten years old when my dreams became my passion.

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My desire to pursue the crown really took flight in high school. I experienced a touch of the pageantry as I was elected Junior Maid on the Home Coming Court at John Ehret High School in Marrero Louisiana. Lightning struck again in my Senior Year as 1982 Class Sweet Heart Queen. WOW, the Crown, a bouquet of Roses, a shiny Sash draped from shoulder to waist. Oh the thrill of Victory. I recall feeling beautiful.

I think as individuals we all want to feel accepted. Even deeper is the need to feel LOVE.

From my first win, Mrs Gretna, I felt the pull toward directorship. After winning several local pageants girls started asking me to coach them. Then I began my career in Hair & Make-up. I immersed myself into the world of pageants and I loved it. I breathed it inside. I sweated it out my pores. I worked diligently to learn every facet of the world of pageants.

This all lead up to the big day when I directed my first pageant.
Chapter 2
Why Do You Want to Direct a Pageant?

Since you are reading this book I'm assuming you are either considering running a pageant or you KNOW you want to run a pageant. Most of the pageant directors I have met were usually contestants at one time. Some started as a Pageant Mom and loved the atmosphere and the joy it brought to those who participated and attended the events.

As a contestant your desire may be sparked by observing the director of the pageants you participated in. The director might symbolize someone who is in control, glamorous, enjoying the process, and appears to be on top of the world.

Or maybe you thought the program could have been better organized, or just ran differently. Perhaps you believe you could add a style and panache that would be more entertaining and exciting.

As a viewer you might see things you enjoy, the entertainment, the crowning of the new royalty, the smiles of the contestants and the audience. On the other hand you may do things differently if you were the director.

These thoughts are the launching pad for pursuing directing your own pageant. Now you need to take action. You have made a decision that will take you into an industry that is filled with Beauty, Entertainment, Media, and Glamour. The pageant industry promotes self growth. It is an industry that assists women in developing their individuality.
Chapter 3
Incorporating as a business

You need to give thoughtful consideration to picking a name for your company. This name will become your BRAND and people will associate you and the quality of your productions with the name. So choose a name that really reflects your interest and style. For example I chose the name "Shelly's Pageant Express". First my name is in it, second, the type of business, Pageant, and third, that it is all about expressing your-self. Many people choose to use the title of Production Company. For example I have a company called “Louisiana’s Most Talked About Productions”, which produces the Miss New Orleans Pageant, Miss Jefferson Parish, Miss Louisiana State, and other pageants.

Once you decide on a name I suggest you do a search on the internet to see if someone has already tabbed the name for a pageant company, a website, or something else. Try a few different web browsers when you conduct your search. Each browser will provide different results. Try Google, Yahoo, Firefox, Dogpile, etc. If your name is already taken, but is in a different country, you might still be able to use it. But do you really want to? Will it cause confusion if you grow your pageant to a much higher level? If you have a lawyer friend, and you should (preferably as a sponsor), consult them on this matter.
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Now that you settled on the name, check with your local/regional business registration authority on what needs to be done. In America we go to the Secretary of State office for the state we live in. I live in Louisiana and the Secretary of State has everything you need online. There is a checklist to assist you in down loading the correct files and forms. I had to file an "Articles of Organization" form with a check for $75. Then I brought it to a notary for an additional $20. After mailing the package I received my certification in the mail within a week. You also need to file for an EIN (Employee Identification Number with the IRS (in USA). This was very easy and only took about 15 minutes of time online.

I have found similar sites in other countries by doing a search on the internet. Once again having a lawyer friend is always helpful. One thing to consider is the type of corporation you choose. If you are really brave and very lazy you can choose to not officially incorporate but just operate as doing business as a company. But if someone gets hurt at a pageant and decides to sue you can be held personally responsible. Incorporation acts as a veil to protect you by clearly separating you the person from the business. You could choose a sole proprietorship. If you have partners then consider a partnership. There are other types of corporations and they all have different taxing structures. A new type of corporation is the Limited Liability Corporation. This allows you to choose to by-pass paying taxes on the company and just pay taxes on the personal
income you declare. This decision is a very personal one based on your needs as well as the country you live and operate in, so it is beyond my abilities to advise you on this topic from this book. But the internet has so much info that a little research will provide you with the answer.

Another possibility is a non-profit organization. If there is a cause you are passionate about and believe a pageant would make a good tool to raise funds and awareness a non-profit business may be the way to incorporate. Non-profits have a different structure and guidelines from a for-profit business. You register them at the same place as the for-profit business. In Louisiana it is the Secretary of State's office.

Once this is done it is time to get down to business.
Chapter 4
Giving your Pageant a Name

In chapter 3 we talked about naming your business. Now we need to decide on a name for your Pageant. These are two separate entities. As a business you may decide to run several different pageants with different themes.

You can have lots of fun brainstorming for creative names and ideas. Base it on the theme of your pageant. For instance I have a pageant called "Miss. Louisiana PLUS America". This pageant caters to larger women who would have trouble competing in the standard beauty contest. It gives them an outlet to compete and puts them on a level playing field with others. The contestants and audience have a great time. Notice the name has "Plus" in it signifying the theme.

Miss Plus America Pageant
Miss New Orleans Pageant
Miss Jefferson Parish Pageant
Miss Louisiana State
Miss. Metairie Pageant
Miss. Louisiana American Dream
Select a County, Parish, State, Region or city name to attach to the pageant name. In the above example the title was for the state of Louisiana in America.

Make sure the name is not already registered by checking the Secretary of State’s office and of course a web check of Trade Names.

Another option is to purchase an existing Pageant or Pageant Titles. Doing this gives you a name that has been established and has recognition in the public’s eye. Check with pageant directors in your area to see if they are interested in selling their title, or if they know someone else who is. There are many reasons why a director may want to sell the pageant off. They may need to relocate, or have health issues, or just want to pursue some other endeavors. Most directors that sell are interested in finding a successor with passion and organizational skills to keep their legacy going. So be sure you have those qualities before approaching them.

I have purchased several different titles over the years. I have also sold titles in different regions because I have physically moved further away from an area and found it too time consuming to travel the distances necessary to give it my full attention.
When my good friend Debra Balsamo passed away I inherited her pageants. She was very organized and left a treasure chest of documents pertaining to the business. Many of the pageant documents, flyers, and brochure are examples in my course "The Complete Pageant Directors Start-up Kit" were taken from her extensive files.

“The Directors Start-Up Kit” also contains many other forms and templates that are indespensible to running a professional Pageant or Beauty Contest. In addition you will get hours and hours of audio files containing expert interviews with industry professionals. We will continue to interview experts in the field of pageantry and you will be able to access these audio interviews as a part of your “Director’s Circle Memebership” for purchasing “The Complete Director’s Start-up Kit”. Plus you will have access to the forum, where you can post questions to the same industry experts.
Chapter 5
Selecting a Location and a Date

In my experience the best location for a pageant is at a hotel. A hotel provides many perks that other facilities just can't match.

* Rooms for sleeping and dressing for judges and contestants that have to travel to participate

* Parking can be very accessible and accommodating for people with disabilities and the elderly

* Restaurants and catering is a wonderful resource for keeping your judges and staff happy and motivated

* Ball Rooms provide a spacious and elegant backdrop that adds prestige and atmosphere to the event
Of course you may have a reason for using a different type of venue. Perhaps your uncle Tanoose has a wedding reception hall, or grandpa can get you a great deal on the VFW Hall. Just consider how the accommodations stack up to the ones I listed above for a hotel. Is it in a good part of town where you want your daughter or grandmother driving through? Also consider the image you are setting for the pageant.

I prefer hosting my pageant events in hotels. The location may have an effect on the date for the event. If you have your heart set on April 1, but the hotel or venue is booked, you will have much distress in your life. The further away from the proposed date that you start to book the venue the better chance of getting what you want. As soon as I finish a pageant I will book the room again for next year if I was happy with the accommodations.

Pageants can be booked in any month of the year though spring and summer are the most popular. If you decided to go with the Miss & Master Christmas Dixie Pageant then obviously you would shoot for early December. Other things to consider are holidays, large local events or school related conflicts. Get a schedule of events and calendar from your local chamber of commerce or tourism department to find the best scheduling opportunities. Select a time to register the contestants and a time to start the pageant. For example 9:00 till 10:30 am for registration with an 11:00am start. We will cover times for the event in chapter 19 -The Schedule-Itinerary.
Chapter 6
Creating Age Divisions and Groups

This is where your job gets a little harder. You have to put your thinking hat on.

Children divisions can add a lot of fun to the event. They also can add challenges to your plate as well. Let's start with the Boys Division. These groups are harder to fill than girls. Fathers of the boys sometimes have phobias about their son parading on stage in a beauty pageant. They feel it will confuse their sexuality, or something along these lines. Sell them and their mothers on the benefits. Walking on the stage in front of a group will help make a child more relaxed and confident when in front of an audience. The process will help them learn poise and self assurance.

Surveys have shown that the greatest fear the majority of people have in life is a fear public speaking. The ability to go in front of a group of people to communicate a message or to persuade others to your way of thinking is a necessary skill for any business endeavor, and life itself. Sales people have the greatest potential of acquiring true financial wealth, far surpassing doctors and lawyers. Boys get a chance to put their toes in the water, so to speak, in the pond of life by participating in a pageant.
Mothers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents love to cheer on the boys. So remind the fathers that it’s good for the boys and the whole family.
I recommend having Baby Boys from birth till the age of seven. For example:

Baby Master- 0 to 2 years
Tiny Master-3 to 5 years
Master- 6 to 7 years
Of course this is just a suggestion so get creative and play around with the Boys groups.

The Girls Division is the foundation for starting a girl on the road to pageant success. Parents get a lot of joy placing their little darlings in the contest. We all think our children are beautiful, and indeed they are. So why not let everyone else see for themselves.

The girls also receive the same benefits of making presentations in front of a group that boys get. They strengthen their self confidence. They develop the awareness that neatness and manners count. The act of walking the stage and following a preset routine helps develop organization and concentration skills.

Of course parents may have difficulty letting a judge determine who deserves the winning title from a group of beautiful angelic bundles of love. It is important to emphasize to the parents that it is the participation that is most important.
Receiving a crown is secondary, and that everyone is a winner.

Here are my recommendations for Girl Divisions:

- Baby Miss- 0 to 11 months
- Tiny Miss- 12 to 23 months
- Toddler Miss- 2 to 3 years
- Petite Miss- 4 to 5 years
- Little Miss - 6 to 8 years
- Young Miss - 9 to 11 years
- Preteen Miss - 12 to 13 years
- Teen Miss - 14 to 17 years

Check with other directors and look at the programs from other pageants to get more ideas. If you are hosting a pageant that is a franchise to a National pageant, then you may have to follow their age and category guidelines.

Here are my recommendations for the rest of the Girl Divisions:

- Miss - 18 to 26 years
- Mrs. - 18 years and older that are married
- Plus Miss - Dress sizes 14 and larger
- Ms - 21 years and older, single or divorced, without or with children
- Ms Classic - 40 years and older
Some directors choose to only hold divisions for the children ages 0 to 12. Other directors choose only to hold Teen Division and older. I prefer to hold the children's pageant separate from the older girls. I schedule the children in the morning. I’ll start the Teen and up in the early evenings. This breaks up the length and gives everybody a chance to break for lunch. Plus kids have better focus and pay more attention in the mornings. That is if the parents feed them a healthy breakfast. After the morning session parents can put the kids down for a nap.

You decide. It is your pageant, your decision.

Examples from pageants I participated in and templates for you to use are provided in the course "The Complete Pageant Director's Kit".
Chapter 7
Awards, Prizes and Sponsors

Pick someone on your staff who is outgoing and good with people. Give them the title of "Promotions Manager". Send them out to local businesses to seek donations of gift certificates or the products they sell. Good examples are makeup, skin care, flowers, jewelry, and gift baskets. Show the sponsor a dummy Program Book of the event and tell they will receive sponsor ship credit in the Program Book, and verbal mentions at the event. Remind the sponsor that pageants are positive events that help enhance individuals self worth and their participation will reflect their contribution to the community. Plus the people who participate and attend pageants are a good fit for their products.

A large selection of sponsor donated products enhances your "Prize Package", and will attract more contestants.

Awards are another opportunity for exercising your creativity. They can be trophies, toys, knick knacks, and even t-shirts. Figure out what you need for each group. For example in the Baby Miss you'll need a Queen, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place award. Give the biggest or fanciest toy to the Queen and smaller toys for the others.
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Get a label maker and place the name of the division and placing on each award to make it easy and simple for staff to have it ready for presentation.

Also prepare additional awards so that everyone leaves the place with something. Side awards allow the director to spread the awards out to everyone who participated. Everyone is a winner. Of course only one will win the crown.

Examples of side awards for the Baby Miss:

- Prettiest Eyes
- Best Hair
- Best Smile
- Most Photogenic
- Best Fashion

Hospitality awards can be given to the contestant who brings the most people to the pageant, or to the contestants who sell the most ads in the Program Book.
The Program Book has the schedule of events, photo galleries and contestants names and pictures. These are also the main value for sponsors who donate prizes. You can also sell advertisements to business that do not contribute prizes. Encourage your contestants to help sell the ads through their network of family, friends and co-workers by telling them the Hospitality title gets a big Prize Package. Really load it down with sponsor provided gifts to motivate them to sell.

I provide examples and templates for your use in the course "The Complete Pageant Director's Kit". I'll also explain how you can motivate the contestants to really sell the benefits to advertisers. You'll be a master leader and teacher for these up and coming pageant winners.

Some directors order special trophies from a trophy shop for the winners of different divisions. This can become quite expensive and put a big drain on your budget. I produce my own awards using fairly inexpensive items that are classy and appropriate. One award that is well received is a metal serving platter that only cost a few dollars. I personalize it with either an engraving tool or a nice label. Labels are easiest. If you go the other route, make sure someone with a steady hand and good penmanship, or better yet a calligrapher, does the engraving.
You will need to purchase a nice crown for your winner or winners. There are many wholesale shops on the internet, just do a search for "Beauty Contest Crowns". You could also go to directyourpageant.com and find links to what I consider the best and most affordable crowns, tiaras and other pageant accessories.
Chapter 8
Staff

Running a pageant is definitely not a one person show. It requires teamwork.

Selecting the personnel for your staff doesn't have to be complicated, and you don't need large numbers. Here is my recommendation for staff positions:

**Director** - This is you!

**Judges** - select people from different occupations and industries to get diversity. You can also use people you work with and respect. Reigning queens love to participate because it keeps them involved and motivated with the pageant community. Your banker, hairstylist and florist should also be approached.

Use three judges for the children's pageants and five for the teen and older divisions. You can also assign the title of Side Award Judge to one of your supporters. The Side Award Judge’s job is to distribute the extra awards and create balance among the contestants.

**Auditor** - someone good numbers.
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Promotions Manager - a friendly, gregarious go-getter to raise funds and acquire prizes. They will also pass out entry forms at local schools, beauty salons and even at day cares centers.

Stage Manager - is in charge of setting up the stage and usually supervises two assistants.

Designer Editor - designs and creates program book.

Emcee - is the front person who makes the majority of announcements and establishes the tone and flow of the show. They are good at public speaking and have a pleasant voice. This role could be done by you, a beauty queen, or a local celebrity. You will have to supply the Emcee or Host with a Script of the pageant. This also will be provided in the KIT.

These are the key positions you need to run a pageant. You can also create other positions as you see fit. In some cases the same person will do multiple jobs.

Spouses can show support by filling in at one or more positions.

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Chapter 9
Judging Criteria

Now let’s select the categories in which contestants will be judged. This can vary from one pageant to another depending on the theme. Here is my recommendation for the children:

Facial Beauty
Personality
Creativity/Costume
Overall Appearance

Now every person defines facial beauty differently. This is a plus because it adds diversity to the mix.

Contestant personality is an area where someone can really wow the judges to increase their score.

Overall appearance can cover the selection of the outfit by the contestant. How appropriate is their appearance for the division/age group? Does the color highlight and accentuate the best parts of the contestant’s features and talents?

Comments should be given in a positive manner by judges.
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Examples would be:

* Great Smile
* Beautiful Presentation
* Love that Outfit
* etc.

The judges should score with 8 as the lowest number and 10 the highest. Use decimal points in score. Ex: 8.5, 9.2, 9.3, etc. This helps eliminate ties within the groups. Naturally the contestant with the highest score gets the Queen or King, followed by the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. Give a 4th runner-up in the Teen and Older divisions.

Inform the judges that the contestants may see the score sheets.

The judges need to be respectful and tactful with all contestants. As the director, you can choose whether to show the score sheets to the contestants or others. I always show the score sheets. It helps establish trust in the contestants, their family, and other participants. This will give accountability of your organization to fairly judging the event. The whole idea of pageants is to lift people up and motivate them to be the best they can be.
Chapter 10
Auditor Sheets

Auditor Sheets are for tallying up the scores from the judges. Use one Auditor Sheet for each division as well as one Judge Sheet per division.

It is important to have these sheets organized and accounted for before the pageant so there are no shortages. It will be very stressful and cause a huge crisis if you start a new division presentation and your judges and auditor are missing the necessary forms.

Make a separate folder that contains the forms for each division for the auditor. On the auditor’s sheet is a list of contestants names, numbers, and judges scores. The layout will vary from pageant to pageant.

Examples are provide in “The Complete Pageant Director’s Kit”.

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Chapter 11
Crowns, Banners, and Pins

The Internet has made it so easy to find all the items you need to run a successful pageant. There are some wonderful and reliable web sites that sell crowns, pins, banners, sashes, and other gifts.

Of course you should also ask other directors for referrals of dealers they have used for crowns and banners.

Now it is time to acquire your pageant's crowns and other items. If you have 10 divisions you will need ten crowns. Sometimes I'll get an extra crown and give it as a side award for "Most Beautiful". You’ll also need 10 banners for each division and the banners for the overall winner. Purchase enough matching pins for the banners and sashes.

Pick appropriate crowns for the winners of each division. When selecting crowns for kids kings and queens, make sure the height is no more than 3-4 inches high. Remember these small people will be wearing these crowns and banners at other functions so you don't want something too heavy.
If your pageant has a specialty theme you can purchase crowns that incorporate the theme. Some examples I have seen include Christmas, Easter, and Halloween.
The Banner will include the Pageant name and the Division. For example: Teen Miss- Miss New Orleans.

Sashes are like banners in that they drape over the contestants shoulders and across the waist, but they don't contain the pageant name or division title. Sashes are great for "Most Photogenic", " Prettiest Face", etc. For the kids divisions I give toys instead of sashes.

I'll also give a sash for the "Supreme Award". Before the event contestants are encouraged to sign up with a $20 entry fee for the "Supreme Award". When the event is over the contestant who racks up the most overall points gets the award. If the person with the most points didn't register for this award then it goes to the contestant with the next most points who did register. I give a fur coat out as the award (I'll purchase a Faux Fur Coat from Burlington Coat Factory).

For kids crowns I usually spend about $30 each. On the Older Divisions I'll spend around $50 each.
Chapter 12
Award Presentations & Photos

Invite Queens from other pageants to assist in handing out the awards. The Queen Presenters get another opportunity to wear their title banner and keep their image in front of the public.

Give out the Side Awards first followed by 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st and finally the Queen. The winner gets the crown and the official banner with the Division and Pageant Title. Use a pin with rhinestones to hold the sash together at the ends.

Have the winner’s photos taken onstage alone after the individual presentations. Then take a picture with their court.

Make sure contestants sign photography rights release forms so that you can use these photos in future promotions. This is a good thing for you and them.
Chapter 13
Advertising & Accepting Entries

Now that you know the location and date it’s time to advertise for contestants. Create a Pageant Flyer with this information. Hire someone with graphic skills if possible to make it look really excellent and professional.

Distribute the advertisements at Day Care Centers, Beauty Salons, Nail Shops, Dress Stores, and wherever you think potential contestants like to shop or hang out.

I found that placing ads in the small community news papers really draws well. Ads are usually cheap compared to the large news papers.

Word of Mouth is always your best referral. People trust other people they know
A website is very important in this day and age. Go to my websites for ideas on how to construct yours.

http://www.shellyspageantexpress.com/
www.missneworleans.org
http://www.missplusamerica.com/Louisiana.asp

Word of mouth is always your best referral. People trust people they know, and sometimes they trust someone they don't know but like their personality.

Accept entries by mail and online. So make sure you have a mailing address on the flyer. On the website you will need to include a form page that can be sent via email.

Set a deadline before the event to apply. Usually thirty days works best.
Encourage the contestants to pay the entrance fee by the deadline with the incentive of waiving the Side Optional fee.

(For instance I previously gave an example of the Supreme Award with a registration of $20.) This way the contestant saves a few bucks and gives you funds to pay the deposit on the crowns and banners.

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Set a final deadline for the entry fees. Also set a deadline for turning in the Program Book ads.

You may still accept entries at the door but tack on a $10 late fee.
Chapter 14
Entertainment

Use entertainment between events in divisions to give contestants time to make changes and also to entertain the audience.

Call other local directors and ask them to send their queens that have talent such as singing and dancing. Tell them you will showcase them in your pageant. Of course this gives them an opportunity to practice their skill and widen their networking base and audience.

Give the entertainer a small ad in the Program Book in exchange for their time and talent.

You can also call dancing schools, karate schools and gymnastic schools for even more variety. These types of business are a natural fit with pageants and networking with them can lead to many interesting opportunities.

Select 3 to 4 entertainers to perform two numbers each. This will allow the auditors 20 to 30 minutes to tally up the scores.
Chapter 15
Hiring Audio-Visual and Lighting

This is one part of your event that must be top notch and professional. The audience and the contestants all depend on a clear and understandable emcee to keep them abreast of what is center stage.

If the lights are poor then it will cast a dark shadow on the contestants face while walking on stage. One sure way to ruin your pageant is to let uncle TaNoose do it for free because he has a stereo and some garage lights.

Look for a Mobile DJ in your local area. These guys work weddings, banquets, conventions, parties and other events. In the old days a DJ carried around thousands of CDs or records and turntables/CD players. Technology has now offered them laptop computers and audio files to not only lighten their carrying load but also provide better organization and quick access.

Let’s look at a list of things to consider:
1 Tell him the size of your audience and the room size to make sure he has enough power to reach everyone without distorting the sound. Will you need a wireless microphone or two? Does he have his own lighting? Try to find own who does and make sure he has enough to provide a soft but bright light for the entire stage area and the emcee podium. Some DJs can provide smoke, bubbles and other special effects. If you want any of these things then tell him before you ask for a price quote.

2 Give him a very detailed run down of the schedule so he can smoothly switch from microphone to music.

3 Don’t assume they know what you want. They will get paid so they work for you. Tell them what the appropriate attire will be for your pageant and volume for your audience.

4 Give them the music you have selected for your opening, transitions and closing. Contestants will sometimes have songs that they will use if you have a talent part of your pageant. Entertainers will also have backing tracks to perform with. These must all be presented well in advance of the gig, preferably a week before the pageant. Do not assume that they have access to every song ever recorded. The entertainers and contestants need to secure their own tracks. In some cases they can find the desired tracks, but ask, don’t assume. Make sure he can handle the formats you give him.
5 Tell them what you want them to do, and not do. Will they just play music or will they occasionally make announcements.

6 Decide where they DJ audio/video equipment will be set up. Their location must not interfere with the view of the audience, yet they will know where they need to be in relation to the stage for them to perform properly.

7 Do they have experience working with photographers and videographers. Videographers will sometimes want a feed from the sound booth. Give your videographer and DJ/sound people the others phone numbers or emails to work out the details before the event.

8 Let them know how far in advance of the start they need to set up. If you have rehearsals before the event can they be there?

9 Sign a contract and make sure copies are made right there to keep everybody in agreement. Contracts can always be amended later if necessary, but make sure you both sign the additions. Make sure you’ll agree on the “Total Cost”. Most DJs have their own contract. Discuss what the payment terms are and make sure if someone other than you pays the DJ that they receive a fully covered check. If you let a third party pay them and the check bounces you are responsible.
10  Make sure it is clear who the DJ answers to. Other people may have good intentions but wreck havoc with your event if the DJ thinks they must follow the orders of another person.

Be very clear with everyone involved in the pageant about their roles and the authority structure. You are the boss, you're in charge. But since you can't do everything delegate certain responsibilities to other staff members.

Just be very clear.
Chapter 16
Hiring photographers and videographers.

These individuals are the ones who preserve the glorious moments for posterity. That is why you should hire professionals.

Photographers who work weddings will usually be a good match with a pageant’s photo needs. Check and see if they have worked these types of events before.

Ask other pageant directors for referrals.

1. Ask to see the photographers' portfolio to verify the quality of their work. See if their style matches with your tastes.

2. Check the prices for prints and availabilities. Tell them how many different angles are necessary for each group and individual shots.

3. Make sure your personalities are compatible. Photographers and pageant directors are all artistic types so make sure you get along well, especially in front of a group of people. Bottom line is that they are getting paid and that they work for you. So be clear on what is expected.
4 Most photographers will come out at no cost to you in trade for you promoting the sales of their services.

5 Give them a detailed schedule of the events and make sure they understand what is necessary. Are they used to working with audio and video people? Have them exchange numbers to make sure there are no conflicts.

6 Just as the DJ usually have their own contracts so do photographers. If they don’t have a contract then write something up that clearly states what is expected.

Videographers have a different set of criteria to follow from the photographer. Most videographers will set up at least two cameras, and some as many as seven cameras. At least one camera will be set up on a tripod in the back of the room directly facing the stage. This camera will have a wide shot and is called the Master Shot. Make sure the videographer is able to fence off the area around his cameras so that people won’t bump into them.

They will need electrical power for some of their gear so make sure the venue provides adequate power for them as well as for the sound and lights. Make sure they use duct tape or rugs to secure loose wires that could be a tripping hazard.
The optimal lighting for video is to have as much on the stage as possible. Some directors may want to add drama to the event by having the lights dim down at certain times. DON’T DO THIS!

Keep the lights on at full intensity at all times. Otherwise you could render the video un-useable for some parts of your pageant.

Plus it adds more work for the DJ who already has his hands full.

The photographer will use a flash which can affect the iris levels of the video cameras set to automatic. Keeping the lights at the same intensity minimizes the problem.

Find out the turnaround time for the videographer to edit the production and announce it to the audience. The videographer should be able to take prepaid orders from the audience and contestants before they leave the venue.
How To Start and Direct Your Own Pageant

By Shelly Winters

www.directyourpageant.com

Chapter 17
Day of the Show Preparations

Put together a checklist before heading out to the host location.

* Stage Equipment

* Pick up Program Books from printer

* Assemble the Judges Books & ink pens

* Auditor Books

* Tape, Scissors, Sticky Notes, Straight Pins, Safety Pins, Paper, extra copies of Entry Forms

* Crowns, Trophies, banners, sashes, and other Awards

* Water and Light Snacks

* Gifts for Entertainers
Chapter 18
Budget

Keeping your expenses down should be your first priority. Some Directors make the mistake of going overboard to make a good impression. An entertaining and visually pleasing pageant can be produced without tremendous luxuries.

Let us first make a list of expenses. Then we need to figure out how many contestants we need to break even. If you can get twenty contestants or above you will make a handy profit.

* Hotel Ball Room
* Crowns
* Trophies/Awards/Toys for Kids
* Banners and Sashes
* Gifts for Judges, Auditor, Emcee,
* Audio-Video- Lighting Contractor
* Printing
* Postal Charges
* Sleeping and Changing Rooms
* Web site
If you decide to affiliate with a larger organization and your pageant becomes a preliminary for a larger more prestigious pageant you may have franchise fees to account for.

To get an affiliation with Miss America, Miss USA, etc, you will need to build your business to a high enough level. Plus it will be a nice size franchise fee.
Chapter 19

The Schedule Itinerary

Creating an itinerary is vital to the outcome of your event.

Remember pageantry is show business.

Get them in, give them one heck of a show, and get them out.

Staging each component on time is important to everyone. The contestants are depending on you to give them and enjoyable and free flowing experience. Your audience is expecting nonstop entertainment. No awkward dead spots while someone tries to fix a problem. Your staff also depends on good organization as well as leadership. Having a well thought out itinerary will instill confidence in your staff.

Your pageant should be three hours or less. After three hours fatigue sets in for the contestants, the staff, and especially the audience squirming in their seats.

Here is an example of an itinerary:
Miss Metairie Pageant  
April 20th, 2008

9.00 till 10.30am  Registration
11:00am  Pageant Starts
               Directors Message
11:05  National Anthem
11:00  Introduction of Emcee
11:15  Introduction of Judges and Auditor
11:25  Presenting all the contestants on Stage in a Line Up

Baby Master
Boy Master
Baby Miss
Tiny Miss
Toddler Miss
Petite Miss
Little Miss
Young Miss
Preteen Miss

12:30  Overall Competitions

12:45  Entertainment (Auditor tallies score)
1:00  Special Awards & Thanks
1:30  Crowning of Royalty & Photos session

www.directyourpageant.com
Chapter 20
Wrapping it UP

Pageantry is a vehicle that young women choose to help launch their careers.

The experience helps enhance self esteem by learning to develop their individuality and giving them a stage to present it from. Hair and Make Up skills are polished and perfected.

Pageantry is a positive, self assertive tool that will open many doors of opportunity for both the Director and the Contestant.

It is very similar to the entertainment Industry.

The Glamour of pageantry awaits your special skills and talent to become the Best Director you can be.

Yours in Pageantry
Shelly Winters Black

www.directyourpageant.com
So you made to the end of this eBook.

Do you really want to start your own pageant?

Is your passion so strong that you will persevere no matter how many people tell you it can’t be done?

Are you ready to start now?

There are so many details and tips that I just can't give you in such a small book. But I'm committed to helping everyone who shares my passion for pageants and the beauty contest industry.

That is why I started the website www.directyourpageant.com. Here you will find articles by me and other experts in the pageant industry. I'll provide you with tips and hints to make the event as enjoyable, and most importantly, a profitable adventure.

And if you are really serious I'm offering my course "The Complete Pageant Director's Kit" at the website. This course will provide expert information that took me 20 years to accumulate from my mentors in the Pageant Industry.

The kit includes all the forms and templates you need. It also includes many letters and documents needed to do business professionally and cover all your bases legally.
How To Start and Direct Your Own Pageant

By Shelly Winters

You will get examples of brochures and a system to teach staff and contestants to sell out every ad in your program book package.

You get a set of audio interviews with experts in the Beauty Contest field. Interviews include Pageant Directors, Title Winners, knowledgeable support staff, and experts in hair and makeup.

I'll give you an audio version of this book, to listen to at your convenience, with extra information in the form of stories and tips.

When I was starting out I would have easily paid $4,000 for everything contained in this Kit. This is a one of a kind package that is not available anywhere else.

I'm offering this to YOU for only $199.

I make 10 times that just as a consultant for various clients.

But I love this business and I want to share my love and passion with anyone who feels the same.

www.directyourpageant.com
So start your exciting adventure now and get "The Complete Pageant Director's Kit" by going to my website at www.directyourpageant.com.

Good Luck!