



MY EVENTS COORDINATOR, LLC (MBE/WBE)

WBE Brings International Flare to Statewide Events

If you notice a bit of international flare to Arinola Solanke's event designs, chalk it up to her African and British upbringing. She was born in Nigeria and raised in the UK.

While living in London Solanke worked in the event planning industry and gained a law degree. After moving across the pond, she was determined to start her own business. She acquired a master's degree in business from Webster University and in 2010 she started her own company, My Events Coordinator and Party Rentals. The St. Louis-based business is a full-service event planning company and has six employees. They design, create and manage all types of private, social and business events. "When I started this company, I was very determined that this was going to succeed," said Solanke, "Sometimes I am not surprised by where we are now, because when you work hard good things come to you."

She provided event planning services for the Business Diversity Development's 2019 Business Diversity Forum at St. Louis Lambert International Airport. "Since I got connected with them, I know that if there is anything that I need they are only one phone call away."

Solanke's certification as a minority and woman-owned business is helping to land more contracts. She is excited to talk about her success, hoping to help others and to expand her business. She describes,

"This means my work is getting the attention that businesses like mine need to grow and to be successful."

Solanke is encouraging other women and minority-owned firms to become certified to help expand their companies. "There are plenty of opportunities in St. Louis. BDD offers classes and seminars and there are a lot of people willing to help and point you in the right direction," she said.

She is proud of her community work with a St. Louis charity organization that raises money annually for children in need. "We have sponsored several community fundraising events, and non-profit efforts including the Annual Kookin for Kids event by the St. Vincent Home for Children, and Vitendo4Africa, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower stronger, healthier immigrant individuals and families."

This year Solanke had the distinct honor to design, decorate, and cater an event for the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo during a visit to Washington University Olin Business School. "It was an intimate affair that entailed a significant level of details and cross sector collaboration." Solanke was responsible for designing and decorating the venue, providing catering and wait staff. "It was a huge success. I would consider it my most successful event, although challenging in parts."

Later when the event was over she says, "I asked the client how the event was and to my amazement he said to me in his own words, "This is what the president said to me: I have attended many events, but this one was extremely well done."