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Ralph Rizzo

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- by [Julekha Dash](#) Staff

Event planner Ralph

Rizzo likes helping

people make their

visions a reality. When

his Baltimore company

R&R Events Inc. plans

weddings, corporate events and parties, Rizzo's reward is seeing

his client's reaction. Started in 1990, R&R counts the **Baltimore**

Ravens, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and Baltimore City

among its clients.



Rizzo first started his own company in 1979, a disc jockey firm Valley Sound Inc. He went on to start an event planning business, which he thought was the natural evolution and a way for him to expand his capabilities as an entrepreneur. Today, he has five employees and his 2006 revenue topped \$1 million.

What's the most challenging part of your job?

It's realizing what the customer wants, even someone who is not a visual person and giving them our vision of what they are looking from.

How do you handle a client with a limited budget?

We work within the budget. The designs and props may be scaled back. We'll do an in-kind trade or donation. Let's say someone's

event costs \$20,000 but they only have \$15,000. We still want the event to look good so we get sponsorships or advertising.

What is the largest budget event that you have done?

A \$500,000 wedding for a Miami Heat player. I can't say the name [of the player]. We had to sign a non-disclosure. Our average event costs between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

What about the most outlandish event?

The opening of Planet Hollywood in Baltimore. That was a big Hollywood-themed event. It had 700 feet of red carpet and stars like Bruce Willis and Will Smith. That was the most challenging from a logistics standpoint getting city permits.

What's the biggest change in your industry?

Obviously the green thing is very important. A lot of event companies are looking to be resourceful in recycling props and sets.