

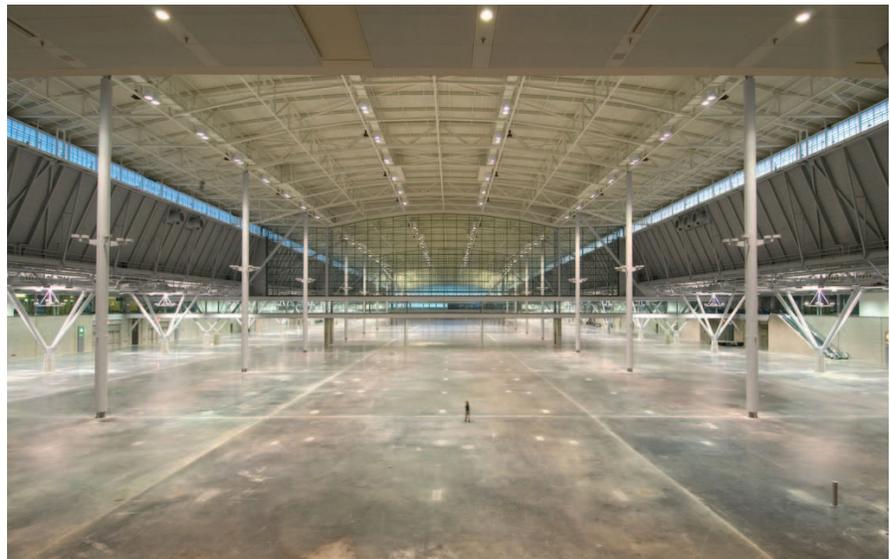
## Keeping safety at the forefront of our events

Requiring ETCP certification from all their riggers sets JCALPRO apart from their competition

AS A SMALL COMPANY, started by a longtime industry rigger, it was important from the very beginning that we find something unique and important to set us apart from our much larger competitors. Rigging is still a smaller niche market within the grand and growing industry of events, but it's the area we call home. As much as we've adopted and perfected other relevant services and offerings, rigging is at the heart of everything we do.

“ We see . . . ETCP as a huge step in growing and bettering our industry, as well as our company. ”

When the owner of our company, James (Jimmy) Callanan, took the big step to incorporate his business and go after one of the largest and most sought-after contracts in the Northeast at the time—the exclusive rigging contract for the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, including their newest addition, the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC)—it was time to very solidly define what made him different and the best choice for the job. Before the BCEC opened its doors in June of 2004, the MCCA made the smart decision to help preserve its new investment and existing building by calling on one company to handle all the rigging and liability for overhead attachments. This new building was its architect's dream with curved ceilings peaking at 100' throughout the exhibit space, divided by 60'-tall half-



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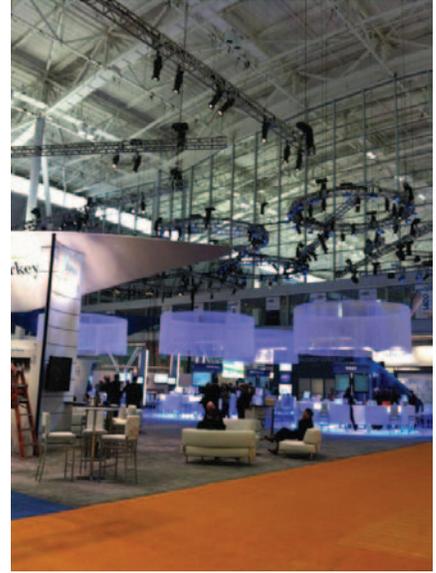
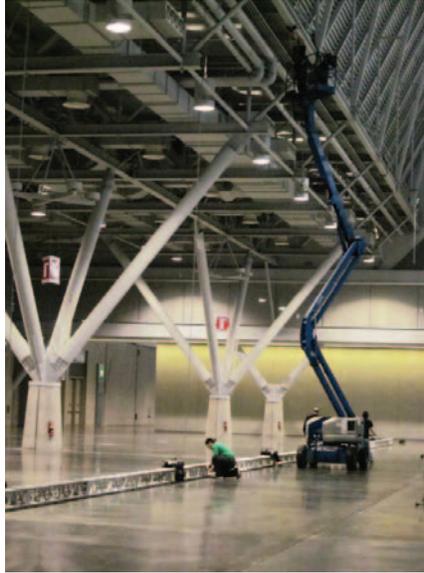
moon windows above the airwalls. This exposed-beam ceiling with ample catwalks could be a rigging haven for the right rigging company. Sitting around the table with the applicants for the job, MCCA officials asked potential rigging vendors what their plan was to hang SAP—the first big show to hit the BCEC with a large exhibit hall and even bigger general session requiring over 500 chain motors. The first company pitched utilizing a dozen 120' boom lifts and taking a week-plus to get everything loaded in and set up. Jimmy said he'd do it in a few days with riggers who walked the beams and rigged from the top down—no large propane booms needed. Jimmy and JCALPRO got the job.

Eight years later, and after a second RFP

process, JCALPRO is still the exclusive rigging provider for the MCCA (among other venues), and we still rig from the top down, with our riggers walking the beams. This means that the two most important things required to continue doing the work we do are great people and a great track record. Through Jimmy's days of touring with theatre performances and rock shows while rigging in local arenas and movie sets, he collected a good rolodex of qualified individuals who wouldn't be put off by the type of rigging required as a member of JCALPRO and who welcome and enjoy the challenge.

We have always put a lot of weight in personal recommendations from trusted sources before taking on a new employee;

however, there is nothing quite like seeing individuals in action when determining whether they're the right person for the job. ESTA (now PLASA) played a key role in our company when trying to standardize some of our internal safety requirements and best practices. Having this resource in place was especially important when trying to bring up new riggers in the business. As our company's new venue contracts continued to grow, and the convention centers we work in continued to book more business, it became increasingly important to not just rely on the people we could bring into our company from the industry but also to help train new individuals to work at the same



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level. Unfortunately, a “rigging school” does not exist . . . nor does “rigging” as a college major; so training resources, short of on-the-job training, were limited.

As a long-time member of ESTA, JCALPRO heard about ETCP quite early on. We immediately began discussing the idea of it among our management staff and employees. It is very easy to say that there is nothing more important to us than safety for both our employees and clients. With safety at the forefront of all business decisions, we have always strived to operate the best practices and procedures in the industry, knowing one mistake can have eternal ramifications. Therefore, we immediately saw the value in ensuring our staff became ETCP Certified. We saw, and continue to see, ETCP as a huge step in growing and bettering our industry, as well as our company. As a secondary effect, we also knew that early adoption of the certification program would be another great way to set us apart from our competition. We were nearing the end of our first contract with the MCCA and our competitors were even more

eager to take over our role. We brought an ETCP Certified arena rigger onto our staff and he took on the function of our new safety manager and trainer to help get the rest of our team prepared for the exam. We offered to cover the cost of the exam for any employees who successfully completed it and sponsored training classes so everyone could better prepare. In our rebid for the MCCA contract we discussed, in great detail, the ETCP certification program and the already certified employees we had on staff. We stressed the importance of this standardized measure of understanding, ability, and experience and what it could mean for the convention centers and their clients.

Even after being re-awarded the MCCA contract, we continued to push for all of our riggers to become ETCP Certified and in addition to the Arena Rigging certification, we also have a few people with the Entertainment Electrician certification, and still others with both. For us, ETCP was a way to not only gauge and grow the level of our current employees, but it has created a goal for newcomers to work towards meeting the industry standard of achievement. Any applicants wishing to join JCALPRO must now be currently ETCP

Certified as a rigger. In a business where attendees, show managers, outside vendors, and various building staff continuously put a lot of trust in us to get the job done efficiently, accurately and, most importantly, safely, we love having this extra level of standardization behind us and those who work for us. Embracing ETCP, and PLASA's safety guidelines, have been a big part of how we continue to earn trust and therefore, marketability. With ETCP at our core, we also know that our company will continue to grow up the right way, with the right people, and the right practices. ■



**Elise Bechard** is Vice President of Operations and Client Relations for JCALPRO, Inc. and has been with the company since 2005. As a graduate of Emerson College with a background in sales and event planning, she oversees all of JCALPRO's client outreach and communication, as well as various marketing and social media efforts. Elise is an active member of many industry organizations and sits on the advisory board for the South Boston Youth Development Program.