



Interactive Roundtable Discussion
“How Planners and DMCs Can Work Together to Manage Cost While Achieving Program Objectives”

Moderated by Glenn & Kathy Duffey, Florida Coast to Coast

Topics:

1. Transportation

- To better coordinate the amount of airport pick ups a VIP room at the airport could be set up to band guests for more group transportation rather than more individual pick-ups. Try to work with airline partners to consolidate group flights so that group transfer is easier.
- Use shuttles on departures that leave at scheduled intervals thereby relieving the need to set individual departure times.
- Ability to negotiate price but not at the expense of safety or service
- Allocate flight allowance by region or reimbursement
- Try to set arrival/departure parameters before booking to control shuttle times
- Have offsite events within walking distance of hotel
- Blocked seats only
- Change sedans, SUVs, vans to bus shuttle

2. Staff & Resources

- Utilize, when appropriate, CVB to supplement staffing
- Choose staff that can work multiple functions at the same time
- Use the DMC and the sources of a local planner to augment office staff - perhaps docents or students
- Use clients that represent destination to get to know attendees as well as to help alleviate the amount of local staff
- Offer tiering level of staff to help control budget
- Split shifts to reduce overtime or negotiate day rates
- Use local signage companies
- Bring your own staff rather than have the DMC supply the staff
- Lower staff quantities; utilize internal staff, use college students studying Hospitality in exchange for credit

3. Décor/Entertainment

- Fruit centerpieces at breakfasts
- Rearrange overlays on tables
- “Give-Back” centerpieces
- Use local, live entertainment or DJs rather than a band
- Reusables
- Choose a venue that does not require as much décor
- Use lighting to replace some décor
- Focus on one area of a room for décor rather than the entire room
- Work with local merchants for better pricing



- Work w/DMC or hotel on items for décor they already have used for other events that can be recycled for your event
- Share your budget with DMC upfront!
- “One Supplier = more bang for the buck”
- DIY as much as possible
- Use items that are “timeless”
- Use Guest talent

4. *Production*

- Utilize your budget proactively – tell suppliers exactly how much you have to spend and allow/empower the suppliers to become creative
- Establish national agreements
- Use as many local vendors as possible to cut shipping costs
- Negotiate all line items
- Use as many reusable items as possible
- Use smaller companies – less overhead
- Use large screens as background instead of a hard set
- Use local hotels/AV Production instead of high-dollar out-of-town producers
- Cut opening videos
- Go back to basics

5. *Off-site Events*

- Capitalize on venues within walking distance to hotel
- Look to your DMCs to offer suggestions on venues
- Eliminate one of your buffet stations and reduce bars by one
- Use beer and wine bars
- Value of DMC – Share on resources (tents, rentals, even entertainment)

6. *Teambuilding*

- Company gives employees the responsibility for parts of the program
- Turn teambuilding into social responsibility events: “Giving Back”
- Simplify them but keep them fun
- Team Cook-off

7. *Dine-arounds*

- Keep them as a group
- Ask for menu change – choosing lower cost foods/wines
- Cut down options – ex: pre-select the liquor – no full bar
- Location, Location, Location
- Client pays bill = lower management fee
- Early or later seating allows turnover so restaurants will work
- Dine on off-peak nights
- Stay in Hotel
- Consider the culture
- Cash allowance vs. formal dine-arounds
- Give attendees gift cards for dinners instead