

Location, Location, Location

Article Rating: NA

Submitted by: articlediner on 2006-11-02 and viewed 45 times.

Total Word Count: 659

Author Rating:

Sample of Content:

This has always been the guiding principle of real estate, but it could also be the first critical step in making your meeting a rousing success or a complete disappointment. Certainly we know that education and networking are the two main attractions for most convention attendees, but all of the terrific sessions and social functions in the world won't mean a thing (and your organization won't make nearly as much revenue) if you can't get them there first. Consider the following factors when selecting your meeting site.

Content:

Rotation

A smart organization will rotate its annual convention across the map. This strategy not only allows you to meet in all regions where your membership is based, but it also benefits membership growth and recruitment in addition to keeping the meeting fresh in terms of climate, attractions, time zones, and cost of attending.

Member Input

Ask your members â€” both actively attending members as well as those who donâ€™t attend often â€” where theyâ€™d like the convention to be held. They may bring to your attention destinations that you havenâ€™t considered. Be sure, however, to give more weight to sites recommended by actively attending members since their attendance is the foundation of your meetingâ€™s success.

First Tier vs. Second Tier vs. Third Tier

While many organizations will always meet in first-tier destinations, many others should be looking more closely at second- and third-tier cities, where they can enjoy being the big fish in the pond and receiving added attention. Thereâ€™s an abundance of great smaller destinations â€” with first-rate convention facilities â€” that might be a better fit for your organization. However, if your group has a history of maximizing attendance and revenues while convening in first-tier markets, you should probably stay where you can sustain or continue this growth.

Lift

If you anticipate an attendance of 10,000, itâ€™s probably not in your best interest to select a meeting site whose airport canâ€™t handle the large number of daily arrivals and departures that your group will need. Simply put, if people canâ€™t get there, youâ€™re in trouble. Make certain you obtain information on the total number of daily nonstop flights, seats, and feeder cities prior to finalizing a destination with questionable lift. In addition, be cautious of cities where one carrier dominates the lift some of these cities can be very expensive to fly into.

Climate

Do your delegates expect warm weather? Is high humidity a problem? How about rain or snow? Donâ€™t make the mistake of meeting in the wrong destination at the wrong time of year. Find out the average daily high and low temperatures for each of the cities youâ€™re considering. Also obtain the average number of days with .01" or more of rain in the month youâ€™re thinking about. This information is available in 40-year averages and is collected by most airport authorities. If outdoor activities arenâ€™t on the agenda, however, then weather becomes less of a deciding factor.

Competition

Too often, organizations wear rose-colored glasses and assume that their meeting is the only one of its kind that their members will be interested in attending. But thatâ€™s not

always the case. If there are organizations in a field similar to yours, or you simply have a number of true competitors, take the time to check when and where their meetings are scheduled. Sometimes delegates and exhibitors have to draw the line as to how many meetings they can afford or take the time to attend in a given year. And if your convention conflicts by date or location with a competing convention, you're running the unnecessary risk of losing your attendees and exhibitors to another event.

Keep Options Open

Your chances of orchestrating a successful site selection can usually be improved substantially by creating competition in the marketplace. Whenever possible, strive to find two to three facilities or destinations that you're willing to contract with and that want your business. (Groups often make the mistake of deciding on one particular facility or destination and then trying to negotiate.) It's also very important to show date and room block pattern flexibility wherever possible.

As you can see, selecting a meeting site isn't as simple as throwing a dart at a map. But it can be quite an enjoyable and educational experience. By doing your homework, you will put yourself in the best situation to select the destination that will help give you record attendance, revenues, and reviews.

Jeff Sacks is Vice President, Midwest Region at Conferon Global Services, Inc. in St. Louis. Visit us at <http://www.conferon.com>.

Article Source: <http://www.ArticleDiner.com/>

About the Author:

Jeff Sacks