

Pizza & Beer – Best Operations Practices

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T OR F – OPERATIONS IS NOT SALES

False! Everyone in your organization should be focused on new sales, exhibitor retention and customer service.

A CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CRM) WILL ULTIMATELY SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY.

Difference between database & CRM: in the details

Benefits of a CRM System:

DEVELOPING and MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Does not have to cost an arm & a leg

***Based on the survey sent to attendees before IAEE,
we have compiled a list of savings tips:***

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SAVINGS

Cut Danish and bagels in 1/2

Do You Need A “Full” Breakfast? Dress up that continental breakfast with fresh fruit, yogurt and cold cereal for a fraction of a large breakfast.

Use buffets vs. seated dining service - more variety, less cost

Use high-end receptions in place of high cost dinners for networking events – who remembers the same surf & turf or rubber chicken dinner anyway?

Use water coolers instead of bottled water

Use 6 oz. coffee cups instead of 8 oz. cups

Serve wine & beer instead of a full bar

Use smaller wine glasses

Use drink tickets and a cash bar combination

NEGOTIATE!!!! – if you don’t like the prices and offerings or need a special theme, give your budget to your catering rep and let them come up with the menu!

DECORATIONS/THEMED EVENTS SAVINGS

Décor props may be found in the basement in the hotel, convention center or GC’s warehouse! It’s amazing what things you will find in storage...and that may even be free!

Use themes that are being used by other groups serviced by the same GC. You can save a ton of money if the GC is using the same props for more than one meeting. They can easily change the logo and show name.

SAVINGS AT HOTELS:

Ask about the freight elevators and access to the hall – how many, what size, what restrictions? What overtime rules? What other groups will be using them?

Negotiate Many Different “Staff” Rates for hotel rooms. Some are free, some staff you will pay for. Also get a speaker rate and, perhaps even a VIP / Association Officer rate.

Convince those who normally take suites to take a room on the Hotel's VIP/Concierge floor instead. Explain how many more free room nights you'll have and how much you'll save.

ON SITE SAVINGS

Use your receptionist from your home office to run the show management office.

Use your salespeople as floor managers.

Place carpet “runners” in luncheon areas that are not fully carpeted. There is no need to fully carpet a dining area or back of the exhibit hall being used for lunch. Place tables so there are specific aisles and add a few runs of carpet to “spruce up” the area. Use bright colors.

Use a Photo Gallery as a New Revenue Stream. Take lots of candid pictures and place them on a photo wall in the exhibit hall. Offer to sell pictures for the participants to take home. Also offer them for sale after the event. It works for cruise ships and amusement parks!

MISC. SAVINGS IDEAS:

Whenever possible, schedule move in/out on straight time

Print fewer directories. Count the number of directories thrown away at the end of the show. On average 15% of the total attendance don't take or use the directory. Print less the next year.

If you have a Show Daily, count how many are left each day. Base your future counts on what was used.

Keep Detailed Records of Everything!!! Knowing what quantities you used and what things costs is a very valuable tool in planning the next event. This includes hotel pick-ups.

HOW DO YOU HELP GENERATE TRAFFIC THROUGHOUT THE EXHIBIT HALL AND MAKE IT A FUN, EXCITING ATMOSPHERE FOR THE ATTENDEES WITH LITTLE OR NO BUDGET?

Special focus areas for networking

Serve free food and/or drinks

Do you have sufficient seating area?

Food carts in dead spots

Internet café in the back of the hall

Play music (don't forget to add in BMI/ASCAP costs)

Hold educational sessions

Hold demonstration sessions

Other

SAVINGS ON AUDIO/VISUAL

Lump the General Session into meeting room count when getting bids. If you can prove that your order contains a substantial AV, then the contractor will discount more.

Don't be afraid to give your total budget - some clients think that in not giving out the information that the AV company will charge them up to that number- not the case. The more the AV Vendor knows the better he is able to propose what the client really needs and the better overall picture the more \$\$ they can save.

Use the same A/V Vendor who is in the facility before or after your event and try to use the same vendor – maybe amortize their custom set so the other client pays half and so do you. It saves labor money as well as equipment money.

Book venues with ample set-up and teardown times so to keep labor on ST and not OT.

ALWAYS double check to make sure you are NOT working around a holiday. They usually charge triple time on these days.

KNOW your city or make sure your AV vendor knows the cities rules on labor/costs. Show your AV vendor your facility contracts before you sign then so they can advise you on areas to save you money and also point out areas that might not be truly “official”.

Special thanks to Susan D. Haning, CEM, CMP, NAILBA for these tips!

FREIGHT SHIPPING TIPS FOR EXHIBITORS

Put One Person In Charge of Shipping: Many companies can save money by consolidating shipments from departments into one shipment. Many times GC's receive multiple shipments that incur minimums (#200 cwt) but if they were consolidated on one skid as one shipment, would save a number of minimums. Additionally, one shipment will mean that the exhibitor will have one tracking # vs. multiple #'s and no idea which department sent what, etc.

Know The Full Cost of Shipping: Shipping is not merely the cost to go from point A to point B. You can incur "waiting time" charges for truck drivers sitting in marshalling yards waiting to deliver to the dock. Quite often it's less expensive to sent to the warehouse and have delivered to the booth (even if it's on OT on Saturday or Sunday) vs. having a driver bring direct to the show and sit in the marshalling yard for 8 hours at \$100 an hour for waiting time.

Know that FedEx and UPS are not good ideas for shipping outbound from a show. It is "rare" they show up to get the shipments. Why? Because they can't wait and are on tight schedules. Freight that is re-routed onsite at shows end is more costly than arranging in advance.

Build a Relationship with Your Exhibitor Services Representative: Most exhibitors (and this is important for newer exhibitors to do) don't call and get to know their GC exhibitor services representative. A call placed a day or two before the advance deadline date is reached (when prices go up) is prudent to make sure you have thought of everything. Your ESR will help you

think of things you might have forgotten (electrical, plants, AV, etc.) thus saving you higher charges onsite. Get to know them...they are there to help you and save you money.

RFP's – Yes or No???

Consider “Capabilities Presentations”

- How much does it cost GC's to prepare proposals?
 - GC's in the audience?
 - <500 nsf \$_____
 - 500 – 1,000 nsf \$_____
 - 1,000> nsf \$_____
- “Price Checks” are time wasters...how's your relationship?
- Capabilities Presentation
 - Select via referrals or if seen in action and impressed
 - 90 – 120 min. presentation/Q&A session per company
 - Determine if current GC can be “reworked” / negotiate
 - Uncover innovative ideas/services, go to bid
 - Go to bid ONLY if you are truly willing to switch GC's
 - Predicated on the results of proposals

Make Dates/Requirements Easy to Find

- Show on first page, w/headers don't bury in RFP **why?**
 - Completed proposal due day/date
 - # of hard copies (to supplement electronic copies)
 - Deliver copies to what location(s)?
 - Floor plan required?
 - Artistic renderings required?
 - NDA forms signed/completed due by?
 - Exhibitor Services Manual required for 1st year of agreement
 - Registration procedures for show visit? Days prefer to visit!
 - Potential presentation dates for finalists?
 - Time blocked out by GC's so available

RFP Development

- Develop current invoice in Excel (handout)
 - Could ask GC to give you FINAL in Excel format too
- Leave quantities from last year's invoice
- Add or delete any areas for future years
- Leave blank % disc, GC's fill in from 0% - 100%
- Make sure **sections** have **totals** so you can compare
- Once you develop, should be good for years w/minor rev to quantities, etc.

Additional Things to Include

- Who owns a digital camera?
- Is it easy to take pics and upload?
- Include pics of your show mgt areas (multiple angles/4 corners)
 - Overhead views are good too if possible
 - Could have show photographer do as part of agreement
- Include and **name pics** correlating to RFP areas
 - Especially handy if show visit not possible before bid
- Include a **high resolution, vector .eps logo** of current logo and/or next year's logo theme for renderings
 - Who can tell me **why** a vector .eps logo?
- Most current year's final "**detailed**" floor plan (multiples)
- Days, dates and times contracted w/venues
- Give freight weight total and breakdown is helpful
 - Advance to Warehouse; Direct to Show Site
- If you expect items to be *complimentary*, say so
- If you have the previous GC post show report(s), include
- Visit bidders offices / warehouses for true capabilities

- Get Account Executive's schedule and shows 30 days in front and behind your tradeshow

More Lead Time, Better Proposals

- RFP distributed 30+ days in advance of show. Why?
 - Flights? Schedules?
- Visit to the show is offered/required w/RFP in hand
- Proposals are due 7-14 days after show is over
- Why are spreadsheets not good indicators of cost?
 - No GC will be lowest in **every category** (easy to compare)
 - See totals per categories and final totals easily
 - 95% of tradeshow stays the same annually rule
- Are you a “**holiday ruiner**”?
 - RFP’s sent out early / mid Dec and due January 2nd
 - Most of office staff is taking time off

Evaluation Procedures: Look For...

- Proposal delivered on time?
- Proposal delivery system creative?
- Instructions followed to the “T”
- Proposals separated into sections with tabs, table of contents?
- Innovative ideas or services
- Responsiveness of company representative
- Following steps gets you a better price

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