

PRODUCING GREAT EVENTS



Various major events are an important part of tourism. To be successful at their planning and organizing one must consider a lot of factors. However, if everything goes well the outcome of such events for a particular region or area is very beneficial.

Major events are an important part of tourism. Be these events conferences or conventions, sporting events or religious rallies, major events impact almost every area of the tourism industry. Major events mean hotel occupancy, shopping at local retail establishments, food being purchased for and at the event and an increase in restaurant and entertainment revenue. Major events also offer the local community a non-haphazard approach to tourism planning. While the leisure tourism market is open to economic ups and downs due to anything from a change in weather conditions to an act of violence, major events produce a much more stable population. In the world of major events, most financial outlays have been made well in advance and as such the event is less subject to market fluctuations. On the other hand, there is stiff competition between locales for the major event business, and in some cases, such as in some forms of sport championship games, it is the winning team that determines who will be the host community.

Events cover a wide range of fields, from fund-raising dinners to political rallies, from sports events to school reunions, from professional and academic conferences to family reunions or religious experiences, all are events and all add to a community's economic health. To help you get the best meetings and special events for your community consider some of the following:

If you are attempting to attract a new special event, study every aspect of the event prior to bidding for it.

Often communities competing for special events simply do not do their homework. Before speaking with an event specialist, make sure that you know the basics: what are this event's demographics? What are its special needs? What do they not want? How do their dates match yours? For example, if you are going after a religious convention or special event, you may want to consider what drinks to serve and what you need to avoid.

To get the best competitive advantage to consider your strengths and weaknesses.

Doing a good assessment of what your community has to offer an event is essential. Ask questions such as: How do you stack up against others in your price range? Are your employees multilingual? What do potential customers think about what you have to offer and about what others are offering?

Make sure that you know the answers to what in English is called the basic "w" questions.

(Who, Why, When, and What) These are the essential questions that produce not only successful events but create positive word-of-mouth advertising. Make sure that you can answer fully: Who is holding the event and for whom is it targeted? Why are they holding this event? When will the event

take place? Where do they want to hold the event and are your facilities adequate? What expectations do the event planners have and can you meet these expectations?

Develop sophisticated checklists.

Make sure your checklist goes beyond the basics. Include such items as what VIP requirements will the special event need? Do the event planners need you to make appointments with the fire marshal or other city officials? What happens if the airport closes down? Do you need to coordinate with an ambulance service? What problems might attendees have when they are outside of the event venue? What special political, medical, religious or social sensitivities might the event-goers have?

Know to which threats the event may be subjected.

For example, are you in a hurricane zone, is this conference liable to have political infighting that might impact your locale, does this conference act as a terrorism magnet, or will the conference become a disturbance to local businesses and citizens? For example, political events often require streets to be closed off, traffic patterns to be moved and other inconveniences to local residents. While these are not a threat to the convention attendee they may become "threats" to the sanity of the local population and to other businesses.

Decide what the best use of your time is.

Events are really controlled moments in time in which memories are made. As such, how you manage your time will impact the success or failure of an event. When working with an event manager spend some time to learn who is in charge of each of the events aspects.

Learn what the event's time necessities are and prepare a timeline for your role in the event.

Often it is the small things that win over a client or make an event special. Having a timeline means that there is less chance of a mistake or an oversight. Timelines should indicate not only when something is to be started but also by when it is to be completed.

Offer the best technical support possible.

In today's world that is both fast-paced and multi-tasking, technology is king. Hotels that charge for the internet are doing themselves and their community a disservice. Let your event managers know what technology you have. Do not over-promise, many event managers and business people are unforgiving when it comes to not delivering on a promised piece of technology.

Nothing wins back people as well as a smile and a willingness to make it right.

No matter how well you plan an event, something will go wrong. Most people understand that mishaps will occur, what is not acceptable is refusing to recognize these mistakes and make them right. Saying merely "I'm sorry" is nothing more than a polite way to shun responsibility. Do not make excuses, make it right and make it right with a cheerful smile. The bottom line is that major events are a form of tourism and the essence of tourism is customer service. The community that

forgets this basic rule is gambling with its tourism industry and reputation.

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