



# MEETINGS & EVENTS MANAGEMENT

*How to Meet Your Objectives and  
Exceed Attendee Expectations*

**doe**

Advancing Organizational Excellence





## ***Create experiences that propel your brand, foster connection and ignite innovation.***

*Meeting and event management encompasses the planning, coordination and execution of various events such as meetings, conferences, trade shows and other gatherings.*

Recognizing the importance of a strategic approach to meeting planning, the certified AOE event planners collaborate with you and your team to identify goals, which helps drive the program plan and requirements. The team uses this approach to create and implement strategies to achieve those objectives. This process may include choosing venues, managing budgets, coordinating with vendors, arranging transportation and accommodations, and supervising the event on the day it takes place. Our aim is to deliver a successful and memorable event that not only meets your goals but also surpasses the expectations of your attendees.



# AOE's Meeting & Event Services

*AOE provides clients with support for conventions, conferences, seminars, trade shows, international seminars and conferences, special events, employee events and live webinars, and meetings of any size.*



## PRE-MEETING/EVENT SERVICES

When you start planning your next meeting or event, turn to the AOE team to set the stage for success. Our experts provide such services as:

- Evaluating and delivering recommendations on event budget, strategy and architecture
- Researching potential sites and assisting in the selection process
- Coordinating fundraising efforts and committee support
- Developing RFPs and negotiating contracts with selected venues and vendors
- Coordinating exhibit and tradeshow opportunities
- Outlining event specifications, timelines and resumes
- Managing room blocks
- Coordinating award programs, sessions, speakers and presentations
- Developing floorplans, wayfinding and signage
- Planning food and beverage services
- Coordinating transportation and both group and technical tours
- Managing event apps
- Coordinating volunteers
- Managing VIPs and speakers

## DAY-OF SERVICES

When the big day finally arrives, don't get bogged down in managing all the details. AOE ensures your meeting or event runs smoothly from start to finish by:

- Managing registration
- Providing on-site event support
- Managing setup and logistics
- Providing service-oriented solutions to event problems and challenges
- Facilitating vendor and team coordination
- Managing timeline
- Providing attendee assistance and support
- Handling potential crises
- Serving as volunteer/speaker liaison

## EVENT FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

The work hasn't ended once your event or meeting does—let AOE wrap things up for you, ensuring your goals were met as well as measuring your return on investment. Our post-event services include:

- Providing event evaluations
- Conducting attendee surveys, condensing the data into constructive feedback and actionable items
- Reconciling bills and tracking expenses
- Evaluating and delivering recommendations on event strategy and architecture
- Providing service-oriented solutions to event problems and challenges



# The Five Cs in Event Management

*The five Cs in event management are a framework for planning and executing successful events. They include:*

1. **Concept:** This refers to the core idea or theme of the event. It encompasses the overall vision, goals, and objectives of the event. The concept should be clear and well-defined, serving as the foundation for all other planning decisions.
2. **Coordination:** This involves organizing and managing all the event elements. This includes tasks such as securing a venue, arranging food and beverage, managing logistics, and coordinating with vendors and suppliers. Effective coordination ensures that everything runs smoothly and according to plan.
3. **Communication:** Communication is crucial in event management. It involves conveying information to stakeholders, participants, and attendees. This includes creating invitations, sending out promotional materials, managing social media, and providing clear instructions and updates to everyone involved.
4. **Cooperation:** Cooperation refers to the collaborative effort among all parties involved in the event, including planners, vendors, sponsors, and participants. Cooperation ensures that everyone works together towards a common goal, contributing their skills and resources to make the event a success.
5. **Control:** Control is about monitoring and managing the event to ensure that everything goes according to plan. This includes having contingency plans in place, addressing any issues that arise, and maintaining a calm and organized approach throughout the event.

By focusing on these five Cs—**concept, coordination, communication, cooperation, and control**—event planners can create and execute successful events that meet their objectives and leave a positive impression on attendees. ■



# The Seven Stages of Event Planning

*The seven stages of event planning are a comprehensive outline that covers the essential steps for organizing a successful event. They provide a structured approach to event planning, helping to ensure that all aspects of the event are carefully considered and executed.*

## STEP 1

### **Define Goals/Objectives**

Define the purpose of the event and establish clear objectives. Understand what you want to achieve, whether it's to raise awareness, generate leads or celebrate an occasion.

## STEP 2

### **Set Budget**

Determine the financial resources available for the event and allocate them appropriately. This includes expenses for venue rental, catering, entertainment, marketing and other aspects of the event.

## STEP 3

### **Select Venue**

Choose a suitable venue that meets the needs of the event, considering factors such as location, capacity, amenities and accessibility for attendees.

## STEP 4

### **Develop Timeline**

Develop a detailed timeline that encompasses all necessary tasks and key points prior to the event to include who from the team is responsible for what task. This timeline should encompass deadlines for vendor bookings, event promotion, invitation dispatch and other critical activities. A meticulously organized timeline will help maintain order and prevent any oversights.

## STEP 5

### **Coordinate Vendors**

Identify and secure vendors and services needed for the event, such as catering, audiovisual equipment, transportation and security. Negotiate contracts and ensure all agreements are in place.

## STEP 6

### **Implement an Effective Marketing Strategy**

Develop a marketing plan to promote the event and attract attendees. Utilize various channels, such as social media, email marketing, advertising and public relations to reach the target audience.

## STEP 7

### **Event Execution**

On the event day, ensure that all preparations are complete for a seamless execution. Collaborate closely with vendors and personnel to provide attendees with a seamless experience. Stay composed and ready to manage unforeseen obstacles with poise and efficiency. ■





# Essential Budgeting Tips for Every Event Planner

*Developing a thorough event budget is essential for maximizing the success of any event. It acts as a financial guide, offering a detailed overview of all expenses and revenue related to the event. Putting the budget together is a meticulous task, but with a detailed event budget, organizers can maintain financial oversight and attain optimal returns on their investments. Here are a few tips to help when it comes to the budgeting process.*

- 1. Identify your event goals:** Before diving into the budget, it's important to take some time to define your event goals and envision what you want your event to be. What are you aiming to achieve? Your event goals should directly influence your budgeting with spending priorities aligned to support these objectives.
- 2. Learn from event history:** Reviewing past events can offer valuable insights and data for formulating your budget. Analyze past events to see in what areas you may have come out under budget or over budget and make notes so you can adjust your budget accordingly. Your previous budget also gives you a good starting point for what items should be considered.
- 3. Break down the costs:** In every event, there are certain expenses that must be included in your budget. These could include items such as venue rental, food and beverage, audio visual, accommodations, speaker fees, staff and security. Establishing a preliminary figure for your "must-haves" will help identify an initial estimate that you can refine as you gather more specific details about your expenses. Include a list of "wishes" indicating items that would be nice to have but are not 100% necessary; if you have money left over, you can circle back to these items to see what can be added. At the end of the day, you should be investing in aspects of the event that will maximize your key performance indicators (KPI) and, consequently, your return on investment (ROI).



4. **Seek multiple vendor quotes:** Once you have a budget outlined, the research to secure your vendors begins. Make sure the vendor understands your needs as well as your budget. Obtain quotes from multiple vendors and do not settle on the first quote you receive! Getting multiple quotes is invaluable for understanding the market rate and gaining leverage for negotiation.
5. **Make sure revenue and expenses balance:** Your event's success is measured not just by attendee experience but also by its profitability. Detail your revenue sources, whether through ticket sales, sponsorships or merchandising, and weigh them against your expenses to achieve an ideal balance.
6. **Prepare for the unforeseen:** Always add a contingency for incidentals and emergencies. Events are complex and unpredictable, and unexpected costs arise even with the most thorough planning. A good rule of thumb is to add an extra 15-30% of your total budget to a rainy-day fund.
7. **Keep your budget dynamic:** Your budget document should be practical and adaptive. Incorporate aspects such as payment deadlines, actual costs and notes about dependencies between costs. Think of your budget as a living document that matures and evolves alongside your planning.

Events create experiences that can propel brands, foster connections and ignite innovations. These experiences depend on the seamless execution of numerous details with budgeting at the core. Event budgeting does not need to be a dread-inducing task. By adopting these tips, planners can achieve both fiscal control and creative freedom. Whether you are orchestrating a corporate function, an educational seminar or a vibrant community gathering, a well-structured, forward-thinking budget is the blueprint from which event excellence is constructed. ■



# Hotel Contract Negotiations:

## Save Money and Add Value to Your Event

*It goes without saying that planning a meeting or event is no easy task. Whether it's a seminar with several dozen participants or a convention expecting upwards of 50,000 in attendance, the logistics involved can be daunting to even the most organized among us.*

Every step of the way, the goal of providing an excellent attendee experience must be kept within budget constraints, so finding places to save or ways to reduce your financial liability is key.

Hotels make excellent venues for events; they're essentially one-stop shops when it comes to meeting space, accommodations, and networking or dining events, plus they often come with an on-site coordinator to assist planners with catering options, AV setup and more. Because of their convenience, hotels can come with a hefty price tag, but familiarizing yourself with the process of hotel negotiations can help you save substantially.

Most hotels will have a standard contract that they customize for each client, and this is where your two biggest money saving tools—**attrition** and **concessions**—will come into play.

### ATTRITION

Attrition refers to the amount of variant in a contract that may be permitted before some type of penalty is incurred. Attrition clauses inform both parties what the impact and expectations are should the variant fall short of the commitment.

Most commonly, attrition applies to blocks of rooms. When a group commits to a block of rooms with the hotel, there is an expectation that the group will fill those rooms, or the hotel will incur a loss (because

they have taken those rooms out of inventory and they can't be resold). Attrition clauses clearly set the expectation of what will happen if the group doesn't fill the block of rooms.

Hotels typically give groups **allowable attrition**—a percentage of the room block that doesn't have to be filled—before the group is required to pay the hotel a penalty. The penalty is often calculated based on room nights, but it can also be calculated a number of other ways as well, such as room revenue. Regardless, the contract should clearly stipulate how attrition will be calculated. For example, if a group had a total room commitment of 200 nights and 20 percent allowable attrition, their minimum number of room nights they would be required to fill would be 160 room nights. If the group only actualized 100 rooms, they would be required to pay the hotel as a penalty the difference of 60 room nights at the group rate (example: \$189 + tax), for a total of \$11,340 + tax.

Negotiating a favorable attrition clause is important to groups so that they can minimize their financial exposure should their meeting not yield the attendance they were expecting. Most hotels are agreeable to 15 or 20 percent allowable attrition. Regardless of the attrition rates, groups must analyze their room block history and keep track of expected attendance in order to come up with a room block size that will allow them to meet their commitments.





There are additional clauses that can be added to the contract to help reduce attrition exposure:

- Negotiate for cumulative attrition instead of day-by-day; this gives groups far more flexibility, since it's based on overall pick up.
- Include an "around the block clause," which stipulates that any rooms booked outside the block by meeting attendees count towards pick up.
- Arrange for early departure fees to go towards attrition.
- Include a clause that waives attrition on any night that the hotel sells out.

## CONCESSIONS

Concessions are generally low- or no-cost items that a hotel is willing to provide a group based on the size, scope and value of the event to the hotel. They can include special pricing, discounts or complimentary items provided to attendees.

All groups, regardless of size and scope, should have a realistic "wish list" of items outlined in their RFP for the hotel to consider when developing their proposals. This is especially important, as the meetings industry



is no longer a buyer's market - with an increase in demand for hotel space, organizations should expect to see higher room rates and meeting expenses, and concessions can add additional value to your meeting without the price tag.

When developing a list of concessions, groups should consider items the hotel would be able to provide at little to no cost to them that will benefit the group's bottom line. For example, complimentary internet in the meeting space costs little to the hotel, is a benefit to attendees, and it would normally be a large expense for the group. Just remember, while its common practice to negotiate concessions, always be realistic and fair—you may not get everything you ask for.

Other common concessions include:

- Complimentary guest rooms (often one complimentary room per 40 room nights picked up)
- Complimentary room or suite upgrades
- Discount on menu pricing
- Discounted AV
- Reduced resort fee
- Waived meeting room rental with food and beverage minimum
- Free Wi-Fi in meeting space and/or guest rooms
- Two-week cut off for reservations
- Discounted parking
- No handling fees for shipping
- Complimentary VIP airport transportation
- Group rate extended three days pre-/post-meeting
- Five to 10 VIP amenities
- Staff rate rooms

With a combination of favorable attrition rates and concessions, a planner can save thousands of dollars on an event without cutting corners on attendee experience. ■



# How do You Measure the Success of an Event?

*Measuring the success of an event involves evaluating various metrics and performance indicators that align with the goals set for the event. Here is a glimpse into oft-used measures and techniques:*

- **Attendance Numbers:** The number of registered attendees is a clear indicator of your event's interest and reach. Compare these figures with your expected attendance to gauge success.
- **Attendee Satisfaction:** Collecting participants feedback through forms or surveys to assess aspects such as content, venue, organization, and overall experience. High satisfaction levels typically signal a successful event.
- **ROI (Return on Investment):** Evaluate the financial gains relative to the expenses incurred. This includes revenue from ticket sales, sponsorships and additional income, compared to costs such as venue rental, catering, and promotional activities.
- **Media and Social Media Presence:** Gauge the event's visibility via media coverage and level of engagement such as mentions, shares, and hashtags on social media platforms. Increased engagement can imply interest and influence.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Assess the quantity and quality of networking opportunities provided. Effective networking indicates that attendees derived additional value beyond the primary content.
- **Impact on Goals:** Examine if the event accomplished its intended goals. This might encompass educational outcomes, business leads, partnerships established, of awareness amplified.
- **Post-Event Activities:** Track what attendees do after the event. Are they following up with contacts made? Implementing ideas discussed? Taking actions that align with the events' purpose?
- **Return Attendance:** If relevant, track the number of attendees that show up for future events. This reflects ongoing interest and satisfaction.
- **Qualitative Feedback:** In addition to ratings and numerical data, qualitative feedback from stakeholders, speakers, sponsors, and attendees is highly valuable. It provides insights into what resonated well and areas that can be improved.

To gain a comprehensive view of event success, multiple measures often need to be integrated. The selected metrics should align with the event's objectives and can be tailored to specific goals and contexts. ■



AOE's tailored event planning services are meticulously designed to meet your specific needs and budget, ensuring a truly personalized experience. We maintain a wide network of reliable and high-quality vendors, guaranteeing the best services and products for every event. Our innovative event design and technology integration will create unique and memorable experiences for your guests. With our dedicated and experienced event coordinators managing every detail from start to finish, your event will be seamless and stress-free. **Choose AOE** for your next event and experience unmatched excellence.

