

Successful Conference & Event Planning Webinar

Presenter: Carol McDaniel, VP of the Bernard Hodes Group April 22, 2010

Q&A

How much profit focused should the organizers be on making profit?

That is really based on what your goals are for the event – if the event is to turn a specific profit and/or reach a specific financial goal, it's best to set up milestones that need to be reached along the way and track those. That can be via sponsorship dollars, registrations etc....tracking them weekly has been very helpful for me .

Are you seeing a sliding scale for those members who are out of work or in transition?

Yes, that has been seen quite a bit last year. Many chapters offered discounts, scholarships and giveaways for state conference attendance as well as waiving membership fees to assist with the financial issues of its members.

During the event do you find it helpful for the volunteers in charge to wear a certain type of common clothing?

I think that is best practice – this helps distinguish the conference team/planners from the audience, also the volunteers that work onsite also have different shirts to wear. These typically are provided to the team as an “in-kind” sponsorship. If that is not an option and you don't have funding for shirts, the chapter shirts work nicely too.

Do you use a cash project financial report for event planning?

Absolutely! I use one for the sponsorship/exhibitor team and one for the registrations/attendees. I monitor this weekly and track it according to my allocated annual budget for the conference.

How do you normally cover for a last minute speaker cancellation? Do you schedule an extra speaker in case or cancel that part of the program completely? Are contracts established w/ speakers that would speak to an equitable replacement from their organization?

I do plan and coordinate extra speakers for my concurrent sessions – this is crucial as things happen – always have a few key backup speakers that can step in with little notice. In terms of the higher level keynotes that have been secured by a speaker's bureau, the contract signed includes a clause for cancellation and states that we will get a similar replacement (example, one year we had Michael Jordan scheduled, he got sick last minute, and the speaker's sent Christopher Reeves). Those details should be in the contract.

Where can you find examples of the speaker contract?

Any of the speaker bureaus will provide examples of their contracts for you to review. Some are very basic, others have many clauses, exceptions etc....it is all based on the speaker's requirements.