

the keena quarterly

Maximizing Your Meetings

A great meeting or event is one that furthers the goals of the host organization. Whether the meeting is geared to training, teambuilding, rewarding or brainstorming, well-orchestrated meetings can help a company become more productive and profitable. The Wall Street Journal estimates that if time spent in meetings was reduced by 20%, the company could save over \$10,000 per manager. There is often no substitute for face-to-face meetings, but in these unprecedented times you must be sure you are getting the maximum Return on Investment (ROI) in terms of time and money spent on a meeting.

Here are some tips to increase your "Meeting ROI"

Preparation

- » Before any money is committed, answer these questions: What's the objective of the meeting and who should attend? What do you want the attendees to walk away with?
- » Consider how you will measure the value of the meeting to management. Is there a less costly way to communicate with this group? The nature of the meeting will help dictate the facility and other activities.
- » Determine preferred dates, compile a list of venues, overnight needs, food and meeting space requirements. Remember to consider issues such as accessibility, parking, transportation, and proximity to other facilities and activities.
- » Determine what types of outside suppliers to use, depending on your budget and internal capabilities.
- » Involve representatives from all groups attending the meeting as you define the agenda and most appropriate meeting tools.
- » In spite of the serious nature of the meeting, build in humor, surprise, small gifts or some element of fun.
- » Distribute the agenda to meeting participants ahead of the meeting and include the amount of time devoted to each section.
- » Factor in interactivity — to boost social enjoyment and understanding.
- » If you are bringing people together, decide upfront how you will facilitate decision making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the participants, educate and build awareness for your message. How will ideas be generated, time-frames be managed, attendees motivated to participate?

Follow up

- » To justify the dollars spent on meetings, consider measuring knowledge gained by attendees, watch for an increase in sales that is attributable to the attendees' participation, solicit feedback via an evaluation or survey.
- » Consider distributing post-meeting information that reinforces the message/purpose of the meeting or event.

To truly maximize your meeting dollar, consider hiring a meeting planner such as keena & company. Our consultants know shortcuts, they've established networks for quick venue selection, and can negotiate everything from room rates to equipment. Meeting planners are also experts at the details of contracts, budget management, customization, communication, and creativity. Choose a meeting planner who's energetic but also a shrewd business manager, because they will be your agent at the negotiation table.

Details

- » Don't skimp on quality. Meetings reflect strongly on a company's image — for better or worse.