

MEETING PLANNERS' ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

As with most tasks, planning a meeting can be much less of a hassle if you follow a good plan. But why reinvent the wheel? Below is a time-line recommended by the folks at MeetingsNet (www.meetingsnet.com), with some added thoughts, for planning a small to mid-size meeting.

Six Months Out:

1. Establish meeting objectives, theme, basic agenda, budget, attendee list.
2. Determine meeting dates (and alternatives) and destinations.
3. Contact Carolyn Bryson at HelmsBriscoe to begin site search (I couldn't resist ☺)
4. Hold space at top choices; conduct site visits.
5. Negotiate and sign contract.

Three to Six Months Out:

1. Notify attendees to "hold the date."
2. Refine program and agenda; select topics and speakers, including A/V needs.
3. Contract with DMC (I can help you find one), photographer, airlines, as needed.
4. Work with hotel on on-site office and communication needs.
5. Finalize off-site venues and activities.
6. Establish schedule for material production and make shipping arrangements.
7. Select and order gifts.

Two Months Out:

1. Select menus and decor; finalize meeting room setups.
2. Order signage.
3. Communicate meeting and travel details to attendees, speakers and guests.

Two Weeks to One Month Out:

1. Finalize and submit rooming list in accordance with cut-off date.
2. Ship materials.
3. Prepare name badges.
4. Schedule VIP pickups and amenities.

Three Days Out to Meeting:

1. Brief your staff; hold pre-con to familiarize hotel staff, review program and make changes.
2. Check shipments.
3. Confirm reader board information; provide list of VIPs to telephone operators.
4. Review rooming list with hotel; inspect VIP accommodations.
5. Coordinate airport meet-and-greet.
6. Establish procedures to have daily review of charges to master account
7. Check weather reports to make last minute adjustments to activities or arrivals.