

10 TIPS

FOR EVENT PLANNING SITE VISITS

The Destination Organization is often viewed as a great resource for site selection, but not all Event Strategists tap into the extension of the resources through the planning process. Viewing the Destination Organization as a partner from contracting to event actualization is a critical part of event success.



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GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PLANNING SITE VISIT WITH THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS

1

START WITH THE DESTINATION ORGANIZATION.

After the destination selection is official, the event planning team will transition to a new and equally important relationship with the Destination Organization. The Visitor Experience or Convention Services Manager will become the main point of contact and will be there to support the needs from the date of contracting through the actualization of the event. As the “boots on the ground” extension of your team, the Services Manager can provide useful resources and make the planning process easier, more efficient, and more cost effective. Create a structured and consistent communication timeline with with your Services Manager to ensure you connect regularly and maximize the resources.

2

DISCUSS IN DETAIL THE COMPLIMENTARY SERVICES OFFERED.

Destination Organizations offer a multitude of services that extend well beyond the sourcing and destination selection process. Take the time to sit down with the Services Manager on site to review the services offered and identify which align with the needs of your event. Work through the CVB Value pillars, and understand how that specific destination can support you within each pillar:

CVB VALUE PILLARS:

- Client Vision Advocate
- Destination Influencer
- Community Connector
- Intellectual Capital Broker
- Impact Advocate





3 KEEP A PULSE ON THE DESTINATION VARIABLES.

Even though the Event Strategist may have asked questions about projected construction, and layering or public events before the destination was selected, it's important to keep a pulse on these ever-changing variables. By prioritizing a deeper conversation on site with the Destination Services Manager, the Event Strategist can stay ahead of any changes and make adjustments to the event that will ensure the attendee experience is not negatively impacted.

4 BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR COMMUNICATIONS.

When an Event Strategist works with the Destination Organization to create a comprehensive marketing approach, they not only increase the assets available to them, but they also increase the marketing and communications reach. When conducting a planning site, build in time to talk with your Services Manager and work through the gaps in event and destination, so you can best align the marketing assets available. Understanding what communications, media, and social assets the destination can provide and how that can drive local or regional attendance can help as the Event Strategist is space mapping the event.



5 FOOD AND BEVERAGE IS MORE THAN JUST A MEAL.

When on a planning site visit it is important to not only understand the F&B menu options, cost, and logistics, but to also consider the impact that those planned or organic networking options will provide. Working with the Convention Services Manager at the Destination Organization can help you navigate the potential obstacles such as supply chain timing and cost impacts and help showcase the options that will allow your attendees to experience what is special about that destination through their senses. Stepping away from the typical conference meal and tapping into the local hidden gems can be a great way to increase attendee satisfaction.



6

SET ASIDE TIME TO REVIEW THE LABOR SPECIFICS.

Even though the Event Strategist would have reviewed the high-level labor specifics like union/non-union facilities and associated costs prior to contracting, it is valuable to revisit this topic while on site for planning. Reiterating the labor charges and regulations associated with all hotel and venues being used for the event will ensure that the planning team does not incur any unexpected obstacles and provide a smoother planning and event execution.



7

FACTOR IN THE DESTINATIONS INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL.

The Event Strategist will have, at a minimum, received a high-level understanding of the intellectual capital that the destination has to offer during the selection process. However, digging deeper into those assets and mapping them into the event is a very important part of the planning site visit. Working with the Destination to understand what assets align within industry, people, and cultural experiences can effectively create an experience that the attendee could not get elsewhere. Consider the inclusion of manufacturing or research facility tours, local or regional industry experts, influencers, or thought leaders, and community engagement opportunities that support the event mission and attendee sense of purpose.

8

WORK THROUGH VENUE REGULATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.

Creating an event of high value to stakeholders is often less about working within regulations, and more about working through resolutions. Some venues may have strict policies, unions, or have historical significance, limiting what the planner can and cannot do. Working with the Services Manager to understand the logistical regulations around F&B, décor, and aesthetic event elements should be step one and swiftly followed by a strategic conversation about how to get creative to meet the event needs in a way that works for all.

9 MAP OUT INTENTIONAL SPACES THAT CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR ALL.

Prior to the planning site visit it is critical to outline the needs of your attendees, and on-site work with your Services Manager to map space and create resolutions that meet those needs, so all leave your event feeling that they belonged. Your attendees may need intentional spaces for nursing mothers, religious practices, emotional renewing space, alternative restroom options, or other needs. Consider the needs of all and walk the space with your Destination Contact through the lens of all of those needs so they can share best practices other groups have used and make direct connection to partners who can support the construction of those infrastructural needs.

10 CONTRACTING TIMELINE CHECK-INS.

Upon contracting with a Destination, the Event Strategist should have solidified timelines for important factors like deposits, room blocks, and other contractual items. It's important to continue to connect and monitor the progress of these items in the planning site to avoid any unexpected issues or expenses.



