As we continue to educate meeting planners on the value of connecting with convention and visitors bureaus, it is important that destination organizations know the role they play in the industry and how to best utilize their skills when working with planners. This handbook is a critical tool for your team’s success as you work with event planners.

This tool could not have been possible without the help of our passionate and focused Convention Sales and Marketing Committee Attendance Promotion Task Force. Their volunteerism and commitment to our industry standards was invaluable for this important initiative.

While it is tempting to put this handbook on the shelf to read another time, this book is actionable and we encourage you to rally your team and take advantage of this important information.

Sincerely,

Don Welsh
President and CEO
Destinations International
This handbook includes:

A Round of Applause ................................................................................................................. 4
Why Was This Handbook Created? .......................................................................................... 6
How to Use This Handbook ................................................................................................... 14
Section 1: It All Starts with a Conversation ........................................................................... 19
   Planner Consultation & Profiling of Attendee Behaviors/Interests
Section 2: Getting Out In Front ............................................................................................... 30
   CVB Representation at Prior Year’s Meeting
Section 3: Build It and They Will Come ............................................................................... 39
   Marketing Tools & Support
Section 4: Make It Easy to Grab and Go ............................................................................... 58
   Key Marketing Collateral & Editorial
Section 5: Don’t Let Them Stray ........................................................................................... 68
   Supporting Attendance Promotion’s Call-To-Action
A Word about Banners and Coupons ..................................................................................... 80
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 81
This handbook was published by Destinations International. We are a passionate advocate for our members and dedicated to improving their effectiveness with education enrichment, resources, industry advocacy, research and networking opportunities.

This handbook was made possible by the leadership and work of the following Destinations International Convention Sales and Marketing Committee Attendance Promotion Task Force members in 2017:

- Loren Gold, Task Force Chair, Executive Vice President, Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Linda Atkins, Vice President of Convention Services, Visit Austin
- Marco Bloemendaal, Senior Vice President of Sales, Visit Milwaukee
- Julie Brakenbury, Director of Convention Services, Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Tracey Burkey, CDME, Vice President of Engagement, Visit Syracuse
- John Cychol, FCDME, CTA, Vice President, Meeting Sales, Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Nannette Eiland, CTA, Director of Convention Service, Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Aly X. Fernandez, Senior Director Destination Services, Discover The Palm Beaches
- Steve Genovesi, Executive Vice President, Visit Austin
- Brenda Hill, CSEE, Vice President, Destination Services, VisitPITTSBURGH
- Tiffany Kerr, Director of Marketing, Visit Austin
- Dave Larson, Director of Convention Services, Visit Milwaukee
- Tara Letort, CMP, Director of Group PR, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Jason Outman, Executive Director, Experience Columbia SC
- Suzanne Scully, CDME, Director of Meetings & Conventions, Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater
- Terri Roberts, Member Engagement and Training Manager, empowerMINT, Destinations International
- Kate Skidmore, Director of Member Engagement, empowerMINT and EIC, Destinations International
- Christine “Shimo” Shimasaki, CDME, CMP, President, 2Synergize, Inc. and Project Consultant
We would like to thank our consulting planners in their overall evaluation of how CVBs can best support attendance promotion.

TRINA ARMSTRONG  
Former Director,  
Event Services  
*The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)*

CARLOS PELHAM,  
CMP  
Director of Meetings  
& Conference Services  
*American Gas Association*

MELISSA RAWAK  
Managing Director,  
Marketing and Meetings  
*Association for Financial Professionals*

ROBIN PRESTON  
Director,  
Meetings Operations  
*American Chemical Society*

We would like to thank our consulting planners in their overall evaluation of how CVBs can best support attendance promotion.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

Please look for this call out throughout the handbook for more of their combined perspectives.
Why was this handbook created?

If the CVB industry is to continue to secure its value proposition in the minds of planners and event organizers, there are certain fundamental offerings for which the CVB should be solidly known by the meeting professional community. As the official marketing organization for our respective destinations, attendance promotion is certainly a key deliverable our customers should be able to look to us for counsel and support.

While we may have room for growth and improvement in this area across the industry, attendance promotion is most certainly an area of expertise where we as an industry want to have a solid stake in the ground and also allow Destinations International to communicate a unified value proposition to planners on behalf of the industry.
The destination is not just a flat unresponsive backdrop for a meeting but a full-stage production center to give meetings 3D power.

**3D Meetings: Leveraging Destination Assets to Make Your Meeting Come Alive** positions the chosen destination has tremendous influence on the “state of the meeting” and the perception of attendees. The event organizer’s ability to easily tap into all the destination has to offer in terms of meeting support and attendee experience options will directly influence their capacity to enhance, impact and differentiate their meeting, ultimately driving the desire to attend.
Why?

OVERVIEW / GOALS

Where We Stand Now

A look at what planners had to say about CVBs and attendance promotion.

In 2017, Destinations International joined forces with Destination Analysts and Miles Partnership for in-depth interviews of meeting planners and a survey of over 500 planners on their perspective of the CVB and the Future of the Meetings Industry. Results clearly indicate driving registration is a high priority for planners.

Also in 2017, Destinations International partnered with Convene’s e-panel, and over 500 planners responded to questions regarding how well CVBs are currently helping them with promoting attendance to their event and what are the most important attendance promotion activities CVBs should offer. Results confirmed we still have some work to do as an industry.

Here is how the planners responded:
Planners show **attendee satisfaction** and **attendee registration** as their top 2 success metrics.

### Meeting Success Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendee satisfaction</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendee registrations</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client satisfaction</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving meeting goals</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying within budget</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendee registration revenues</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings negotiated</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships/exhibitors revenues</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold out room block</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit margin</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sponsorships/exhibitors</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/exhibitor satisfaction</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/trade/press coverage on event</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media engagement and mentions</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please think about how you most typically evaluate the success of the meetings or events you plan. Which of the following do you generally consider MOST IMPORTANT in measuring the success of a meeting or event? RANK THE TOP FIVE? Base: 565 Completed Surveys*
The vast majority of planners surveyed agree or strongly agree that the **CVB is the most expert resource** on the destination.

The DMO is the Destination Expert

The CVB/DMO is the most expert resource on their destination.

---

The DMO and the Future of the Meetings Industry 2017, Destination Analysts

---

Please state your general level of agreement with each of the following statements. Base: 569 Completed Surveys
However, while 75% of planners surveyed pointed to the awareness of availability of our digital marketing materials, only 38.5% point to the awareness of overall attendance building tools provided by CVBs.
Only 28% of planners say CVBs are either good or excellent with help in promoting attendance.

These results perhaps point to the fact there is low awareness of what attendance promotion services are all about.
Why?

OVERVIEW / GOALS

Planners who were asked to rate the importance of these CVB attendance promotion services make a strong statement for the need for advice and consultation, matching attendee preferences to destination assets, and ease in accessing marketing materials (combined important and very important ratings).

Source: Convene ePanel, April 2017
Sponsored by Destination International’s empowerMINT
How to Use This Handbook

The mission and objective of this task force was to clarify the pathway to maximize attendance promotion effectiveness.

- What are the most fundamental attendance promotion tools/processes needed to support the planner?
- How do we profile the attendee?
- What connections should be made?
- Who’s doing what well in the industry?
- What auto piloted behaviors are not serving us well, and where are there missed opportunities?
APPLICATION & FRAMEWORK

What this handbook is/is not:

• It is not a standard practice or intended to be applied uniformly across the CVB industry. It is not expected to be adopted in its totality.

• It is a guide of attendance promotion practices, both expected and perhaps unexpected, that when collectively applied will raise the CVB value proposition.

• It does bring visibility to how some CVBs are currently executing successful programs.

• It is a menu for your destination to consider and choose from as you evaluate your own attendance promotion practices and offerings.

• This handbook is a CVB resource. The ideas and practices should shape your planner interactions, but it should be considered a CVB resource and not shared with planners directly.
It stands to reason, as more CVBs solidify their attendance promotion offerings, we will move the needle as an industry in being recognized as essential partners for contributing to the event’s success for any planners attempting to drive attendance for their meeting or event.

**Our goal is to raise attendance promotion services as a key differentiator between having a meeting with or without CVB involvement.**

What follows are the critical areas, identified by the task force, and confirmed by consulting planners, which should be seen as primary deliverables in each area of attendance promotion support and resources for CVBs.

**ATTENDANCE PROMOTION PRACTICES FRAMEWORK**

- **SECTION 1**: It All Starts With a Conversation
- **SECTION 2**: Getting Out in Front
- **SECTION 3**: Build It and They Will Come
- **SECTION 4**: Make It Easy to Grab & Go
- **SECTION 5**: Don’t Let Them Stray
Each tool or process is detailed in the section that follows and includes: the purpose of the tool/process, planner value, conditions that may/may not apply to the offering, examples of execution of the tool/process, as well as resources in the appendix, if applicable.

CVB sales, services and marketing professionals who peruse the handbook will find a suitable baseline to follow and interesting approaches being applied by their peers, as well as the ability to look further to hone their own approach and offerings.
But...

A word about size of the CVB and the size of a particular group as it relates to attendance promotion tools and processes. One of the things that made this compilation of ideas regarding attendance promotion challenging was the realization that the application and desirability of many of the outlined attendance promotion offerings will vary greatly depending on the budget of the CVB and the size and economic impact of the group to the destination.

This is one of the primary reasons this handbook is offered as a guide and a resource for CVBs, as opposed to a standard to be uniformly applied across the industry. Our goal is to inform and inspire rather than dictate a selected standard set of practices.
Section 1

IT ALL STARTS WITH A CONVERSATION

Planner Consultation & Profiling of Attendees Behaviors/Interests
Conversation is so important!

In order for planners to be motivated to proactively market not only their meeting, but in conjunction their meeting location, it is important for CVB sales, services and marketing professionals to educate planners on the ways in which their meeting is influenced by the destination and then put this powerful force into action.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

Some planners may not even know the right questions to ask CVBs about attendance promotion services. It’s important that the sales person start this conversation, involve marketing where needed, and not leave it to much later in the process when services takes over.
What Is the Purpose of the Conversation?

CONSULT
The consultative process of qualifying meeting objectives and attendee behaviors begins in the sales role and continues in the services role.

EDUCATE
The CVB sales professional must first educate the planner on how the destination impacts the decision to attend. *(Resource: Decision to Attend Executive Summary)*

PROFILE
The CVB professional and planner join together to accurately determine the attendee profile. *(Resource: Behavior Profile Template)*

IDENTIFY
From the attendee profile, the CVB sales and marketing professionals identify and recommend the top destination assets and suggest connections to leverage the destination’s intellectual capital.

REVIEW
The CVB professional conducts a review with the planner of their attendance promotion toolkit and the opportunities to personalize based on the assessment findings.
Fostering the Desire and Decision to Attend

For our industry to make gains on attendance promotion delivery, it is imperative to understand the factors influencing meeting attendees today.

This is especially important if planners are competing with various other meetings and events for attendees, and even if they are not, they are still contending for any attendee’s time, effort and money. All potential attendees will take pause to consider if it is “worth it” to be away from the office, their families and their personal priorities to attend a meeting. There is great benefit in knowing what it takes to satisfy today’s meeting attendee. Ultimately, it is about suppliers and planners working knowledgeably together to develop strategies that align with meet attendee’s preferences and behaviors.
We have more concrete knowledge about attendee behavior from a combined 16,000 prospective/current attendees who participated in Phase One in 2014, and now Phase Two of the Decision to Attend Study released in 2017.
In both surveys, destination was the number two driver for attendance, and participants indicate destination appeal and the chance to experience new places as important.

Those attending meetings are also extending meeting dates into vacations, bringing others along with them, and getting out exploring the destination while attending the meeting. In light of these findings, planners are certainly well advised to not underestimate destination appeal and should know how to market destination offerings to specifically appeal to their attendees.

#2 Driver: Destination

**Destination / Location is Significant**

78% of all generations report the destination factors into their decision, with 20-30% saying it’s the deciding factor — that it determines it. Write-in comments ran the gamut from destination appeal, to drivable distance, to airlift, to overall cost. Also mentioned was the importance of rotation and experiencing new places, which bodes well for 2nd and 3rd tier destinations.

**Destination / Location Impacts the Decision**

40% of the **Occasional** attendees indicate it’s significant for them and determines it, compared to 20% **Frequents** and 10% **Always** attendees. Don’t give up on the **Occasionals**, they can be convinced.
In order for CVBs to provide attendance promotion support that is both relevant and effective, the process must begin at the earliest stages of sourcing. The CVB sales and marketing professionals must initiate the chain of events that will help to build the most compelling promotion efforts, appealing to the specifically targeted meeting attendee and executed in full by the CVB services department.

The beauty of this step is that it is available to every CVB and every group, and is not dependent on budget and size of the CVB or meeting. The only condition is the time and opportunity for the sales/marketing professional and planner to have a consultative conversation about:

1. The importance of the destination in the decision to attend as laid out in the Decision to Attend Study.
2. and the opportunity to match destination offerings to the attendee profile, using a tool like the Behavioral Profile Template.
Behavioral profile should be done with the planner prior to the RFP, so the intelligence gathered can be included in the RFP contents.

INSTRUCTIONS: Step One: Well before attendance promotion is underway, Client/Group and CVB Sales/Services meet together (by phone or in person) to work through this short template. Use the list as a strategic conversation tool. Circle 3-5 of the most prominent behavioral nuances. Work quickly through the list; don’t get hung up. Step Two: Get Client/Group and CVB Marketing teams together to target market promotional messages!
For smaller groups, even a short conversation, which produces an informal understanding of the attendees, can help the CVB sales professional to point the planner in the right direction of destination offerings. For larger groups, the Behavioral Profile Template or another evaluation tool can be used for a more formalized assessment.

Regardless, this consultative session should inform the attendance promotion tactics employed to present unique and compelling destination factors that will directly appeal to the attendee profile, rather than a generic listing of destination offerings without thought to the specific attendee profile.
Benefits of behavioral profiling include:

- Dispels ‘assumptions’ about the group profile; develops a ‘true’ picture
- Causes planner and CVB to think about what drives attendance for each group / event
- Aligns attendee ‘out & about’ needs/expectations with what the destination offers
- Educates the group on the amenities, benefits and industries unique to the destination
- Helps focus on CVB services and destination experiences that can be provided or created
- Enhances the dialogue for both sides to partner together for mutual success = more attendees
- Informs site selection, i.e. matching the group behaviors to what the destination offers
- Gives the industry important standards for attendance promotion strategies

Source: Decision to Attend Study
Then the findings must be documented and committed to action to inform the entire attendance promotion process and suggestions rendered by both sales and services. The sales, marketing and services teams will use this group intelligence to tie destination offerings to the meeting objectives and attendee profile in both the selling of the destination and the servicing of the group. While this is an evolving practice for many CVBs, we have the opportunity to create great strides in value proposition and gain a competitive advantage for the industry if we continually commit to this process.

The marketing aspect of the meeting may not even be the responsibility of the planner. As a best practice, invite the organization’s marketing staff into the conversation.

Ask planners about the challenges they have faced with attendance promotion and what has worked well. Determine their standard offerings, and then establish how you can support them and how you can help them think outside of the box.
Section 2
GETTING OUT IN FRONT

CVB Representation at Prior Year’s Meeting

Maximizing the investment
How Do You Get the Most from Representation?

ATTEND
CVB sales or services representative to attend prior years meeting

ALIGN
Align promotional efforts with attendee profiling, including booth decor, destination video, promotional items and collateral, giveaways or raffle items.

ACCESS & INFORM
While on site, conduct an assessment of the group and attendees to supplement prior attendee profiling (confirm or deny) in order to support and inform attendance promotion activities going forward.
Representation by the CVB services or sales staff at the organizations prior year’s meeting is often negotiated between the CVB and planner when business of a certain size and economic impact is bid upon or booked in the destination. Too often, this process becomes a “one size fits all” approach and does not allow for real intelligence to be gathered prior to attendance or distilled after the CVB staff representative has returned from the meeting. These commitments should also be made as a standard part of the RFP process so that expectations are solidified.

There needs to be a better understanding of the “why.” What is the role of the representative, and what are the planner’s expectations? This should help guide the mission and leverage the investment to send staff and spend resources.

Don’t bother to send someone who is just going to sit in the booth and pass out brochures!
It should be noted that even when physical presence of CVB staff is not appropriate at the prior year’s meeting, we can use the attendee profile to suggest the most appropriate collateral and editorial for the planner to use as they announce the site of next year’s meeting.

There is also an opportunity to use this collateral and editorial for the event’s virtual audience to perhaps attend next year’s meeting.

**When attendance is appropriate, it is somewhat standard for the CVB to ask the meeting organizer for:**

- A complimentary booth near registration or other high traffic area
- Hotel accommodations for CVB staff
- Opportunity for presentation to attendees during closing general session
- Inclusion of next year’s meeting site in the groups app and social media
The CVB will typically provide

- 2-3 days on site by staff
- Airfare for staff traveling
- Booth props and decor
- Destination video
- Small promotion items/collateral
- Giveaway for raffle; larger item that features a destination special attraction/offering

Example of Execution
Example of Execution

Attendance Builder/Pre-Promote Policies

At VBCVB, we don’t have a codified SOP for when and how we do an Attendance Builder/Pre-Promote for an incoming group. However, I am outlining what we generally do.

When:
1. Client Requested as outlined in RFP/Bid Negotiations
2. New City-wide convention to our destination – fact finding/logistics to better address client’s needs

What/How:
1. Try to make it minimal cost to CVB:
   a. get convention rate or comp room at hotel
   b. We ask for a complimentary booth/table, preferably near the registration area to set up
   c. schedule to be there during peak times for maximum visibility
2. Destination Video – to be shown at opening/closing session, key lunch or at the booth dependent on client’s wishes or best time for scheduling.
3. Services person or other CVB representative to speak at opening/closing session or other designated time – can be in conjunction with video or stand alone.
4. Booth Materials to include: Banners/images, décor, Brochures – attractions, dining, maps and small giveaways (pins, pens, other small items).
5. If requested by client and we are handling housing, we will have an iPad or Laptop to assist with making hotel reservations on site to drive pre-registration for the future convention being held in our city.

Other Items:
1. If an in-person pre-promote is not possible (scheduling conflict or client does not wish to have someone in-person), we can send a box full of marketing materials – brochures, etc (just like an in-person booth) to be placed at some designated location near/at registration.
2. We can also send a destination video to be shown at closing session or other time as the client may see fit.
3. For more elaborate pre-promotes that involve sponsorship of a meal/function or as requested by a client, other members of the CVB Team may travel to assist in Pre-Promote activities.
4. Occasionally, a city official or other city identified celebrity may be requested to be in attendance or to send a message. We can either produce a video with that person, send a welcoming letter to be included in conference booklet or even live stream that person.

Example of an Internal Policy from Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau.
Example of Execution

PRE-PROMO OPTIONS
(SELECT ONE)

1. **Save the date** – Travel Portland will customize an inspirational “Save the Date” marketing leaflet chock-full of Portland-related information, the dates of your upcoming convention in Portland, and a list of compelling reasons to attend. Travel Portland will provide the leaflets, while distribution and delivery logistics will be up to the host organization. You could organize a room or plate drop or insert them into your program to get attendees excited about Portland.

2. **Let your local committee do the talking, plus a Portland gift basket** – We know your local committee members have been attending the meeting for years and are eager to welcome friends and colleagues to Portland. Travel Portland will create and ship a customized tradeshow panel with next year’s meeting dates to display at the current meeting. The panel is yours to keep and may be used to promote your Portland meeting for a whole year. We’ll also furnish promotional Portland materials and fun Portland giveaways for your local committee to distribute. In addition, Travel Portland will provide a basket of Portland goodies that may be raffled, donated or used in a social media promotion. Travel Portland will even give you a list of best practices when using social media to promote your Portland prize.

3. **Conference underwriting** – Trying to find a last-minute sponsor for a coffee break? Need someone to fill a full-page ad in your program? Do you need help funding opening or closing receptions? Let Travel Portland provide a contribution to help underwrite the cost of your meeting. Contact your Convention Services Manager for more details.

4. **Portland preview** – A Travel Portland representative will attend the preceding year’s conference for two days. Travel Portland will educate attendees, distribute promotional Portland materials and provide fun Portland giveaways. In addition, we ask for five minutes at a general session to talk about next year’s meeting in Portland and to play our Travel Portland video. Association must provide a 10x10 booth in the exhibit hall, carpet, furniture, electricity, freight charges (incurred by decorator) and one hotel room for three nights. Show attendance must be confirmed through your Convention Services Manager at least two months prior.

---

Conditions: Above selections are only available to citywide groups who are utilizing the Oregon Convention Center as their primary meeting space and who have signed hotel contracts with room nights totaling 600 or more on at least one peak night. Meetings must not have been held in Portland in the last four preceding years.
MEET MINNEAPOLIS PRE-PROMOTION GUIDELINES / REQUIREMENTS

Pre-promotes are typically provided to groups utilizing 1,000 or more peak nights room and the Minneapolis Convention Center. Most times, they are negotiated during the bidding process.

Additionally, we request that your Association provide the following:

- A complimentary hotel sleeping room for the duration of the pre-promotion (walking distance to the convention center preferred).
- A booth space must be located in a high traffic area during the busiest days of the meeting (3-day maximum, dependent on travel time).
- Furnishings for the booth space to include a 6-foot rectangular table (skirted on 4 sides in black), 2 standard chairs, and one trash bin.
- Booth cleaning (vacuuming, trash/recycle pick-up)
- Complimentary drayage, or to be paid for by the Association.
- OPTIONAL – If the Association is able to provide electricity, a flat screen television, and DVD player, the Meet Minneapolis will provide DVD’s that can play in the booth.
- MEET MINNEAPOLIS RECOMMENDATION – The Association should display a sign indicating the date/location of the next meeting/conference, in an effort to maximize the impact of the pre-promotion, and reach out to attendees that may not have time to stop by the booth.

Meet Minneapolis will supply:

- 1 person to staff the booth
- “See You In Minneapolis” stickers
- Discover Minneapolis brochures
- Visitor Maps
- Other promotional materials
- 10’ pop-up booth or pop-up banners
- Airfare for Meet Minneapolis staff person
- Pay all other travel expenses – i.e. transportation
- Giveaways
- Please direct all further questions to your Convention Services Manager.

Thank you.
It is important to note, the more closely this practice is tied to the findings of the planner consultation and profiling of meeting objectives and attendees behaviors and interests (Section I), the more likely the CVBs staff presence will generate real curiosity on the part of the attendees and begin to fuel the later attendance promotion steps instituted by the CVB and planner.

From our review, there seems to be a standard disconnect as attendance at the previous year’s meeting is approached without prior methodology or post-reporting.

It’s imperative for CVBs spending time and staff resources to have a documented process in place to send a staff member who knows the attendee profile in advance and one who has the job to inform the attendance promotion activities that will follow their return.

"This process is as much about gathering intelligence as it is about giving destination information."
Marketing Tools and Support

Create engagement of the attendees with the destination by building interest, enthusiasm and excitement.
How Can You Fuel Your Planners’ Digital Marketing Toolkits?

DESTINATION LINKS
Provide meeting resource links to destination website

CUSTOM SITES
Create a custom landing page or microsite

EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA
Support email marketing, data mining and social media campaigns
These marketing tools allow the CVB to aid the planner and their marketing team with both generic and customized resources to support the digital advertisement of their event.

For large and small meetings, these tools help the planner tell a story of the upcoming meeting experience and directly connect with their potential attendees to captivate their attention through various channels and solidify attendance. Use of these tools aids the planning of a campaign life cycle engaging attendees.
Help event organizers create a plan by considering:

- Generic or custom: what does the particular group warrant in terms of time and financial commitment from the CVB?
- Relevancy: what information is most relevant/compelling to communicate to the particular group of attendees?
- Timing: What are the key milestones of the event and the frequency of communication needed?
- Effectiveness of channels: where are the particular attendees plugged in? What will be the most effective places to communicate?

The choice of templated or custom marketing offerings largely depend on size of group and their internal marketing support. In the case of many larger groups this marketing support is handled internally.
VISIT DENVER institutes a marketing call, once a group is turned over to convention services, with the planner, their marketing team and the CVB marketing team. Through a “Go To Meeting” they review a PowerPoint presentation explaining all of the programs and tools available. As previously noted, many times the planner is not the person responsible for marketing, social media, etc. and this connects the marketing teams of the organizations.
Destination Links and Microsites

The planner of a smaller meeting can include on their event page links to the destination’s website. For larger groups, customized landing pages/microsites can be produced to more directly relate to activities and amenities in the destination that attendees will naturally gravitate towards.

A microsite is an individual web page or a small cluster of web pages that act as a separate entity for a brand. A microsite typically lives on its own domain, but can exist as a subdomain. Microsites can be used to highlight a specific offering or be targeted to a specific buyer persona. They can be used to tell a short story or inspire a specific call to action.
Example of Execution

Example of how VISIT DENVER educates and illustrates their microsite personalization offering.
Section 3

Example of Execution

NACUFS 2017 National Conference
A creative melting pot that seamlessly stirs together rock, country, bluegrass, jazz, and more. Music City also blends in world-class art, award-winning cuisine, unique shops and boutiques, and outdoor activities to create an unforgettable experience filled with sweet southern soul. Allow Music City to draw you in and become a part of its song.

Personalization with event branding.

No local hotel booking options.

Plenty of access to destination information.
Example of Execution

Customized microsite created by Visit Indy.
Section 3

**IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL COME**

Example of Execution

Philadelphia showcases the city’s offerings to attendees of a sporting event in a microsite.
Email Marketing and Social Media Support

Email and social media campaigns can also be supported by the CVB with fill-in-the-blank templates showcasing destination highlights, or custom campaigns can be designed that are highly personalized to the group.

*Define the frequency/timing of social media posting or the delivery and relevancy of email to captivate attendees and encourage attendance to the meeting.*
Customized Electronic Convention Promotion: The PHLCVB works with citywide conventions to develop customized websites to promote attendance to upcoming meetings in Philadelphia. Some services apply to citywide conventions (those with 2,000 or more rooms on peak night) only. Please check with your Convention Services Manager for details. To see an example of a customized convention site, click here.

In addition to customized websites, the PHLCVB also provides the following customizable email templates.

- Arts and Attractions
- Dining and Nightlife
- Explore More
- Free is Good
- Shopping
- Take Two
- Why Attend

To download the email HTML, right click and choose “Save Link As.” Open the HTML file in an application such as Dreamweaver to edit the text. Then send the file as you would any email.

Download all the files by clicking here.
Example of Execution

Dear David,


Entertaining.

Restaurants & Nightlife
Within walking distance of Downtown hotels and the Convention Center are more than 200 eateries, with fare from casual and family friendly to elegant and upscale.

Come nighttime, venture out into one of America’s safest cities. The Cultural District is always buzzing. You can bet that Rivers Casino has 24/7 fun. Or, try the neighborhoods of North Shore or the Strip District for a real taste of Pittsburgh. Loved for its low prices, gritty charm, sidewalk vendors and proximity to Downtown, the Strip is a distinct Pittsburgh experience.

Refreshing & Fun.

Things to Do
Choose from more than 100 public golf courses in the region, including Olde Stonewall and Nemacolin Resort’s Mystic Rock. Explore the city’s three rivers with Kayak Pittsburgh, renting kayaks near the Roberto Clemente Bridge on the North Shore. Check out the breathtaking views of Mt. Washington at the top of the Duquesne Incline. Take in the views of Downtown and the mighty three rivers converging at the Point State Park fountain.

Pittsburgh LOVES its sports! PNC Park is one of the best ballparks in the country and home to the Jolly Roger-raising Pittsburgh Pirates. Whatever you decide to do in Pittsburgh, there’s always something fun right around the corner!

Convenient.

Plan Your Trip
Pittsburgh is drivable and strategically located to nearly half the population of the United States and Canada. Pittsburgh International Airport continues to rank among the world’s elite with direct service to 38 destinations, domestic and abroad.

Sustainable.

The Place To Meet
The David L. Lawrence Convention Center offers a welcoming environment with simple floor plans, high ceilings, natural lighting and ventilated halls. You’re just steps away from being outdoors with exceptional views of the riverside.
Example of Execution

Custom Email Signatures

Nashville design of custom email signature banners.
Example of Execution

ATTENDANCE BUILDING TOOLS

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISIONS
The PHLCVB has useful connections to experts and resources in several markets thanks to our three unique business development divisions: PHL Life Sciences, PHL Diversity and PHL Sports. Through these PHLCVB divisions we can offer connections to educational institutions and experts, speakers, student outreach and sponsors.

PHL LIFESCIENCES
A Division of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

PHL DIVERSITY
A Division of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

PHL SPORTS
A Division of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau

The PHLCVB has three business development divisions focused on specific priority markets – PHL Life Sciences, PHL Diversity and PHL Sports. Each has its own advisory committee comprised of local leadership and industry influencers, who help connect their work to the broader community. Depending on the scope and focus of a convention, they work through the appropriate division to leverage their advisory committee networks to build awareness and drive attendance.
The PHLCVB works through INFO USA to build a targeted e-mail program to promote upcoming conventions and meetings in Philadelphia. INFO USA assists the PHLCVB in generating a list of potential attendees and exhibitors within a 250 mile radius of the city. Once the email lists are created, the PHLCVB works with the customer to craft a ‘Why Attend’ message which the customer distributes.

DATA-MINING TARGETED E-MAIL PROGRAM*
Through INFOUSA, we can identify and confirm direct e-mail and business addresses for contacts that are most likely to be your target attendees, exhibitors and buyers. This gives you information about industries, companies and key decision-makers in your field, providing a competitive edge that allows your marketing message to instantly reach hundreds of relevant contacts within a 200-mile radius of Philadelphia.

Data mining program (available for 3,000+ rooms on peak).
Here for a meeting or business trip, or just tagging along with the family or a friend? During your downtime, check off some of these items so you can brag about your Austin trip to your friends back home:

1. **Eat barbecue and Tex-Mex.** You shouldn’t visit Austin without trying what were most known for - barbecue and Tex-Mex. There are too many spots to name for just one visit, but here are some of our favorites to get you started. If you don't eat meat, consider these instead. But, remember, vegetarians can eat queso too! We’re also known for our unique **food trucks**, which can be found all over town. If you leave hungry, you’re just not doing it right.

2. **Get outdoors.** The Lady Bird Lake hike & bike trail is just across Cesar Chavez from the Austin Convention Center and is a great way to run off those breakfast tacos while seeing Austin’s skyline. Have a little more...
San Francisco Travel ensures attendees make the most of their San Francisco visit utilizing a social media checklist. They ask for meeting or event website, Facebook page, Twitter page and Hashtag (#), and then customize a social media experience specific to the meeting.

Customizable options
Example of Execution

**PROMOTING YOUR EVENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**

- **Facebook**
  - Promote the event on your branded page
  - Create/Follow the Event Page
  - Post questions to increase engagement
  - "Friend" show attendees via FB groups
  - Make weekly posts pre-event
  - Utilize Galveston materials
  - Use FB Live @ event

- **Twitter**
  - Connect with an event hashtag (#)
  - Join Tweet Chats related to the event
  - Publicize your event # and invite people to RT
  - Follow and RT attendees and sponsors
  - Tweet @ event

- **LinkedIn**
  - Follow & engage in event relevant groups
  - Connect w/ attendees & sponsors
  - Look for business connections

- **Pinterest**
  - Create an Event Board
  - Engage with other pinners attending/sponsoring
  - Pin your Products

- **RSS Feed**
  - Write a pre-event blog & post to all SM outlets
  - Blog from the event
  - Ask other relevant bloggers to re-post/share your content and blog about the event (pre/during/post)

- **Galveston Island CVB curation**
  - of social media options/suggestions for groups.

**Take-Aways for what SM can do for your event:**
- Create Buzz
- Increase attendance
- Make new connections
- Increase SM presence
- Engage with attendees
- Promote future events

#LoveGalveston
Key Marketing Collateral & Editorial

Curate key destination information making it easy to access and repurpose
How Can You Reduce Friction and Give Planners the Destination Materials They Need to Promote?

**IMAGES**
Image gallery with proper usage rights

**MAPS**
General maps or custom map (with contracted hotels and meeting venues plotted)

**VIDEOS**
Promotional videos and b-roll

**TRANSPORTATION**
Airport and ground transportation options (public, taxi, ride share, complimentary hotel vans)

**DINING-ENTERTAINMENT**
Dining, nightlife, entertainment, music, sports, arts and culture

**LOCAL INSIDER**
Deals and discounts for groups, local event calendar, local news and weather
With key marketing collateral & editorial, CVBs provide planners of both small and large meetings with key destination information that will be easy for them to access and repurpose. The primary purpose is to remove any friction the planner may experience marketing the destination.

We want to make images available with the proper usage rights and provide compelling video and b-roll footage. Additionally, high-level destination information that planners will want to convey to attendees should be cataloged in a way that makes it easy to get an overview of the destination’s offerings and creates a sort of “grab and go” shopping experience for the planner.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

We value items that make it easy for us to make a case for choosing the city!

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

Content creation is important. Give me blog posts, articles, guides, and infographics to easily repurpose and use in my marketing materials.
Example of Execution

VISIT DENVER's grab and go marketplace.
### Section 4

**MAKE IT EASY TO GRAB & GO**

#### Example of Execution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Things to Do Articles</td>
<td>Article URLs</td>
<td>Newsletter Blurs</td>
<td>Social media (suggest using a link shorter like Bitly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Denver’s art and cultural museums curate and host world-class exhibitions, providing a calendar filled with must-see opportunities. Find out what is on display and on the horizon at the Denver Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver Museum of Nature &amp; Science, History Colorado Center and more.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/must-see-art/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/must-see-art/</a></td>
<td>Denver’s art and cultural museums curate and host world-class exhibitions, providing a calendar filled with must-see opportunities. Find out what is on display and on the horizon at the Denver Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver Museum of Nature &amp; Science, History Colorado Center and more.</td>
<td>From contemporary pieces at the Denver Art Museum to the abstract paintings of Clifford Still, Denver’s art scene is a must-see. [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charming historic neighborhoods filled with shops you won’t find elsewhere, outdoor shopping places that double as gathering spots, and indoor malls with retail’s biggest names are part of Denver’s rich shopping experience. Beware, a little time spent in the shopping capital of the Rocky Mountain West may result in the need for a larger suitcase!</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/denver-shopping/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/denver-shopping/</a></td>
<td>Charming historic neighborhoods filled with shops you won’t find elsewhere, outdoor shopping places that double as gathering spots, and indoor malls with retail’s biggest names are part of Denver’s rich shopping experience. Beware, a little time spent in the shopping capital of the Rocky Mountain West may result in the need for a larger suitcase!</td>
<td>Need a break? Re-energize by exploring a vibrant, outdoor city with 302 days of sunshine. [KloveDenver (shortened link)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Explore The Mile High City during meeting and conference breaks with VISIT DENVER’S suggestions for must-see attractions and neighborhoods. Have an extra day or two in your schedule? Discover great places to visit only an hour away or spend a day taking in the vistas at Rocky Mountain National Park In Estes Park.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/must-see-denver/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/must-see-denver/</a></td>
<td>Explore The Mile High City during meeting and conference breaks with VISIT DENVER’S suggestions for must-see attractions and neighborhoods. Have an extra day or two in your schedule? Discover great places to visit only an hour away or spend a day taking in the vistas at Rocky Mountain National Park In Estes Park.</td>
<td>A Denver favorite; Union Station is the best place to enjoy an amazing dinner, wash it down with a local beer or get to and from the airport! [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not only is Denver Union Station a handy transportation hub for light rail, Amtrak, buses and free shuttles, it is a recently renovated 1914 Beau-Arts beauty in the heart of downtown, featuring 10 chef-owned restaurants and bars, boutique shops and the 112-room Crawford Hotel. It’s a favorite gathering place for locals and visitors alike.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/union-station/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/union-station/</a></td>
<td>Not only is Denver Union Station a handy transportation hub for light rail, Amtrak, buses and free shuttles, it is a recently renovated 1914 Beau-Arts beauty in the heart of downtown, featuring 10 chef-owned restaurants and bars, boutique shops and the 112-room Crawford Hotel. It’s a favorite gathering place for locals and visitors alike.</td>
<td>A Denver favorite; Union Station is the best place to enjoy an amazing dinner, wash it down with a local beer or get to and from the airport! [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Denver rolls out the red carpet for visiting children. Endless fun can be had at the zoo, aquarium, interactive museums, amusement parks, water slides, trolley rides and plenty of wide-open spaces. The Mile High Culture Pass makes it easy and affordable to hit the highlights and plug into the interests of the whole family.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/kid-friendly/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/kid-friendly/</a></td>
<td>Denver rolls out the red carpet for visiting children. Endless fun can be had at the zoo, aquarium, interactive museums, amusement parks, water slides, trolley rides and plenty of wide-open spaces. The Mile High Culture Pass makes it easy and affordable to hit the highlights and plug into the interests of the whole family.</td>
<td>Staying for the weekend? Bring the family to the wild Denver Zoo, go under the sea at the Aquarium or ride all day at Elitch’s! [WamFun (Shortened Link)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>For attendees with a bit of free time between meetings or a few extra days in Denver, a Mile High Culture Pass ($25 three days or $50 five days) is an incredible deal. Get admission to three art museums, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Zoo and Denver Museum of Nature &amp; Science, plus discounts on other attractions.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/mile-high-culture-pass/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/things-to-do/mile-high-culture-pass/</a></td>
<td>For attendees with a bit of free time between meetings or a few extra days in Denver, a Mile High Culture Pass ($25 three days or $50 five days) is an incredible deal. Get admission to three art museums, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Zoo and Denver Museum of Nature &amp; Science, plus discounts on other attractions.</td>
<td>Free admission is never a bad thing! Get the Mile High Culture Pass for free entry to some of Denver’s best attractions! [Shortened Link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Dining Activities</strong></td>
<td>Article URLs</td>
<td>Newsletter Blurs</td>
<td>Social media (suggest using a link shorter like Bitly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>From Denver's most try restaurants could be a mile long but VISIT DENVER has curated a list of hot spots and Denver's locals favorites. Savor the culinary bliss at several chef-owned, neighborhood eateries that spotlight the city's setting-edge and out-and-coming talent as well as Colorado fresh products from the area.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/must-try/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/must-try/</a></td>
<td>From Denver's most try restaurants could be a mile long but VISIT DENVER has curated a list of hot spots and Denver's locals favorites. Savor the culinary bliss at several chef-owned, neighborhood eateries that spotlight the city's setting-edge and out-and-coming talent as well as Colorado fresh products from the area.</td>
<td>Denver is full of dining hot spots and culinary masterpieces. Here is a list of must-try restaurants while in The Mile High City. [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>As the birthplace of Chipotle, Noodles &amp; Company, Guizn’i’s, Tokyo Joe’s and MAD Greens, Denver offers healthy food on the go. But fast-casual dining doesn’t stop there. Also check out Avent! Food &amp; Beverage, a food hall with several delicious restaurants under one roof, and food truck events.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/fast-casual/mixing">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/fast-casual/mixing</a></td>
<td>As the birthplace of Chipotle, Noodles &amp; Company, Guizn’i’s, Tokyo Joe’s and MAD Greens, Denver offers healthy food on the go. But fast-casual dining doesn’t stop there. Also check out Avent! Food &amp; Beverage, a food hall with several delicious restaurants under one roof, and food truck events.</td>
<td>Need a quick bite between sessions? Denver is the birthplace of Chipotle, Noodles &amp; Company, MAD Greens and more! [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>For a sweet end to a busy day of meetings, head straight for scrumptious desserts with a dollop of originality. Check out all sorts of gourmet delights at D Bar, slices of homemade pie at Wednesday’s Pie, and all sorts of locally sourced flavors at Little Man Ice Cream. No sweet tooth will go unsatisfied!</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/delicious-desserts/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/delicious-desserts/</a></td>
<td>For a sweet end to a busy day of meetings, head straight for scrumptious desserts with a dollop of originality. Check out all sorts of gourmet delights at D Bar, slices of homemade pie at Wednesday’s Pie, and all sorts of locally sourced flavors at Little Man Ice Cream. No sweet tooth will go unsatisfied!</td>
<td>Sweet for sweeter? End the day with a delicious Denver dessert at places like D Bar, Little Man Ice Cream &amp; more! [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Beer &amp; Nightlife Articles</strong></td>
<td>Article URLs</td>
<td>Newsletter Blurs</td>
<td>Social media (suggest using a link shorter like Bitly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sip, savour and toast to a trip to Denver by exploring the Denver Beer Trail. Sample all sorts of ales and enjoy a little repast at some of the breweries listed on the trail like Great Divide, Renegade, Tivoli, Wynkoop, Blue Moon and Denver Beer Co. There are more than 100 brewpubs, breweries and tap rooms in the metro area.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/denver-beer-trail/">http://www.denver.org/visithdenver/restaurants/denver-beer-trail/</a></td>
<td>Sip, savour and toast to a trip to Denver by exploring the Denver Beer Trail. Sample all sorts of ales and enjoy a little repast at some of the breweries listed on the trail like Great Divide, Renegade, Tivoli, Wynkoop, Blue Moon and Denver Beer Co. There are more than 100 brewpubs, breweries and tap rooms in the metro area.</td>
<td>In a city known for it’s craft beer, it’s impossible to try just one! Follow the Denver Beer Trail to find amazing brews city-wide! [shortened link]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4

MAKE IT EASY TO GRAB & GO

Example of Execution

Tourism Vancouver's easily accessible toolkit.
Example of Execution

ATTENDANCE BUILDERS

SAVE THE DATE FLYERS

The Nashville CVC offers various Save the Date Flyers for each season as well as for kids and families.

View the Save the Date Flyer Options.

E-MARKETING TOOLS

See examples of what NCVC services can offer in the way of E-Marketing tools for your meeting.

View Examples.

PROMOTIONAL ADS

The Nashville CVC can produce custom promotional ads for your meeting promotion.

View Example Ads.

TABLE TOP DISPLAYS

Table top displays are available to use to promote meeting attendance.

View Examples.

WELCOME MESSAGES

Have a letter from the Mayor of Nashville or Governor of Tennessee customized to welcome your group.

View Message Options.

SIGNS, POSTERS, & BANNERS

The Nashville CVC can customize Welcome Posters, Airport Screens, and Street Pole Banners.

View Examples.

Visit Nashville calls out attendance builders for easy access.
Section 4

MAKE IT EASY TO GRAB & GO

Example of Execution

New Orleans CVB’s layout of online toolkit options.
Section 4

MAKE IT EASY TO GRAB & GO

Example of Execution

Cleveland’s repository of marketing materials for planners to quickly access.
Section 4

MAKE IT EASY TO GRAB & GO

Example of Execution

Galveston Island provides maps, logo, even copy and paste copy for easy reuse.
Supporting Attendance Promotion’s Call-To-Action

The goal here is for CVBs to help planners convert attendees to book inside the contracted room block.
Can CVBs Help Planners Maximize Their Contracted Room Block?

**UNDERSTAND THE DELTA**
Educate the planner and hotels on the degree to which the event attendees book outside the contracted room block.

**EDUCATE THE ATTENDEE**
Arm the planner with commonly used language to educate their attendees about the importance of booking inside the room block.

**REDEFINE THE CUT-OFF DATE**
Help planners remove any friction for last minute attendees’ decision to attend.

**BE AWARE OF LOCAL FACTORS**
Keep informed of local factors impacting occupancy.

**PROTECT A PROPER BELL CURVE**
Stay on top of all factors which will impact shorter or longer night stays.

**BE ARMED FOR PIRATES & POACHERS**
Equip the planner with both proactive and reactive resources to combat pirates.
The relationship between attendance promotion practices and the actualization of the contracted room blocks may be subtle but important.

They are important because if there are obstacles surrounding the room block then there could be obstacles for attendees to, in fact, attend.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE

CVBs can add value by helping us understand if there are demand factors in the city that will impact utilization of the block.
First, we recognize the importance of the room block for both planners and CVBs.

We have often seen planners lose future negotiation leverage and face attrition charges when actual room block expectations are not met, which causes more conservative room block practices in following years. For the CVB, most sales teams are judged on the volume of definite room nights booked, which is directly tied to the contracted room block. But more importantly, the CVB is concerned about the overall attendee experience and doesn’t want risk averse room block practices to make it more difficult for attendees.
Second, efforts related to promoting attendance should not just stop at promoting the destination, but also call on the CVB’s expertise to influence attendance and support attendees booking their hotel in the contracted room block.

As planners continue to struggle with the numerous issues surrounding their contracted room block, CVBs can play an important role as an advisor to planners by analyzing their overall room demand, ensuring the room block is set up to fully actualize, sharing successful practices of other planners, and educating them on industry research findings and other resources. Looking out for your planners’ interest is paramount to providing added value and ensuring a successful meeting in your destination.

Many large groups may depend on their housing bureau for these services, but this is real value for large to mid-size groups.
Understand the Delta.

It has been well documented that a significant volume of hotel rooms are booked outside the organizers’ contracted room block. According to the findings of the Event Room Demand Study, on average, one out of every three (34.1%) rooms are booked outside the contracted room block compared to the total estimated room demand attributable to the event. However, the findings also reflect there exists a wide distribution of the actual percentage. Meaning some events had less than 20% outside the contracted room block compared to other events that had between 60-80% of rooms booked outside the contracted room block. Due to numerous factors affecting the room block, the study recommends individual event analysis to understand the difference (or the delta) between total room demand and the rooms actualized in the room block.

How Many Rooms Does Your Convention Really Use?

The Event Room Demand Study –
July 2015
CVBs can conduct this analysis in partnership with their customer by utilizing Destinations International’s Overnight Room Demand Analyzer (ORDA).

The ORDA tool allows for post-event analysis to understand the overnight attendance and total room demand. Armed with this information, the CVB can lead constructive conversations with the planner and hotels on strategies to influence attendees to book inside the contracted room block.

The analysis involves four steps and results in an event report. For more information, contact Elaine Rosquist at Destinations International erosquist@destinationsinternational.org
Educate the Attendee.

Do the attendees and exhibitors understand the importance of the contracted room block?

It is considered a best practice by many event organizers to educate the attendee and exhibitor on the importance of booking inside the contracted room block. The CVB can share examples of such language from other customers or share example verbiage from event organizers-importance of booking inside the block.

Don’t keep the reasons a secret!
Redefine the Cut-Off Date.

For attendees and exhibitors, the cut-off date means there are no longer any rooms available and they must find their own accommodations, when in fact hotel rooms are likely available, just not at the pre-negotiated group rate. To encourage last minute attendance and remove any friction in finding hotel accommodations in the right location, CVBs should be known if their own housing or preferred partner housing company provides this service for traceable and reportable room reservations post-cut-off.

There are several benefits of post-cut-off reservation services: 1) If attrition charges are applicable, additional reservations may help re-negotiate these charges, 2) the organization continues to be known by attendees as a housing solution right up to the start of the conference, and 3) CVBs can understand the type of hotels, length of stay, and room rates last minute attendees are booking.

Continue to sell past cut-off
Section 5

DON’T LET THEM STRAY

Be Aware of Local Factors.

Planners place a high value on CVBs for their local expertise and this includes information on what situations may impact their event, positively and negatively. This value should also apply to room block management. Many planners have become risk averse which has resulted in lower room blocks and higher percentage of bookings outside the contracted room block.

However, if there are other conventions or events which will also drive room demand, the available room inventory may be limited, resulting in greater difficulty to find a suitable hotel and driving up the friction to attend. The CVB should be on top of the factors which may affect hotel inventory and advise the planners of options to secure more rooms to protect their event attendance.

Keep planners informed on local factors impacting occupancy
Protect a Proper Bell Curve.

The CVB should educate the planner on the destination’s typical length of stay compared to other regional rotation locations. For example, for a West Coast CVB, you may find the average length of stay may be half a day longer than an East Coast destination, which will have impacts on either the event schedule and/or rooms blocked on shoulder nights. The CVB should always understand room pick-up history relative to conference programing to ensure the hotels are holding the proper number of rooms for each
Be Armed for Pirates and Poachers.

Pirates and poachers are companies which aim to divert room reservations away from the contracted room block through a myriad of techniques. The Events Industry Council APEX Initiative provides excellent resources (see resource section) for planners to defend against these companies. CVBs should routinely and proactively share such resources prior to the opening of registration and housing.
Where is the Destination Welcome Program?

While destination welcome programs are highly valued by planners and lend a sense of warm welcome and arrival to attendees in any city, the activities associated with acknowledging and appreciating a group’s presence in the destination do not fuel the decision to attend, but rather are seen as a larger part of destination services, activities and offerings.

It should be noted that destination welcome programs do play a part in closing the loop on destination appeal and promise, and can impact an individual’s perception of a destination and propensity to return in the future for both business and pleasure.
In conclusion

The many things we call ourselves: destination marketer, consultant, expert, all culminate in providing meeting professionals with solid attendance promotion support to achieve their top success metrics of attendee satisfaction and registration/attendance.

Understanding that destination appeal and offerings are a major determinant of the attendee’s decision to attend any of the many meetings and events that compete for their time away from home and office. Our ability to entice them with unique and authentic destination experiences can solidly differentiate our value in the eyes of meeting professionals.

We hope you will be inspired to review this handbook in detail with your sales, services and marketing teams as you strive to continuously evaluate and improve your attendance promotion practices and offerings. Each of the critical areas outlined provide an opportunity to equate your offerings to the standard deliverables identified and hopefully, leave room to be inspired by the creativity of your peers.

It is also our hope that as more and more CVBs apply consistency to their attendance promotion offerings and visibility in promoting them to their planning partners, we will gain a strong hold in this area as a competitive differentiator.

We at Destinations International look forward to continuing to support your efforts through our ongoing education, advocacy and research and networking opportunities.