

12 STEPS TO MAKING A DECISION ON A MEETING/EVENT SITE

1. WHERE TO START

- a. Meeting Objective - Determine the purpose of the meeting
 1. Education
 2. Professional liaison and idea exchange
 3. Personal growth
 4. Motivation
 5. Product introduction, training
 6. Reward - incentive meetings
 7. Combination
- b. What do you want attendees to learn
- c. Review Meeting Function Checklist

2. GATHER INFORMATION - MEETING REQUIREMENTS & HISTORY

- a. Number of participants
- b. Sleeping room block/pick-up
- c. Food function attendance, amount spent
- d. Location where held
- e. Meeting rooms and other facilities used
- f. Budget for sleeping rooms and meeting rooms

3. DEFINE THE ATTENDEES

- a. What percentage of the group is male or female?
- b. Age, gender
- c. Interests
- d. Status/level of education, sophistication
- e. Corporation, professional association, "blue collar" association, religious organization, government group
- f. Spouse attendees? Children?
- g. Expectations

4. DETERMINE THE BUDGET

- a. Who has authority to make final decisions

5. PROGRAM FORMAT OR MEETING SPECIFICATIONS

- a. Does the site meet our meeting objectives?
- b. Are general sessions used? If so, how many & what size?
- c. Are breakout meetings necessary? If so, how many & what size?
- d. Are audiovisual requirements required? If so, what will be needed?
- e. Are group banquets anticipated? How about dancing?
- f. Are dine-arounds a must?
- g. Is extensive sightseeing and/or shopping required?
- h. Are leisure activities to be included? Who's covering expenses?
- i. Is entertainment important?

6. COMPLETE A MEETING PROFILE OR RFP (found on the hotel's Web site)
 - a. Name of organization and contact name
 - b. Name and purpose of meeting
 - c. Description of meeting
 - d. Dates or optional dates of meeting
 - e. Sleeping room types and numbers required for each day of the meeting
 - f. Food functions and estimated attendance
 - g. Meeting space requirements for each day, including set-up times, exhibit space, office space, etc.
 1. Note any special ceiling heights, room configurations or other special meeting needs
 2. Allow for growth if appropriate
 - h. Special requirements, amenities or services necessary in the immediate area
 1. Golf, spa, tennis or other sports
 2. Unusual AV equipment, professional or staff services
 - i. When response needed and when decision will be made
 - j. Review RFP before submitting

7. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING YOUR MEETING OR EVENT
 - a. Weather (related to time of year of the meeting or event)
 - b. Accessibility (transportation availability and travel time)
 1. By air
 2. By ground
 - a. Special needs

8. BEGIN SITE RESEARCH - HOW TO FIND THE PERFECT MATCH (OPTIONS)
 - a. www.destinationhotels.com
 - b. National and regional sales offices
 1. Send meeting profile and history
 2. Advise them if working with hotels directly
 - a. Recommendation from other planners, MPI members
 - b. Trade publications -
 1. Official Meeting Facilities Guide, Hotel & Travel Index, OAG Travel Planner
 - f. Internet

9. SITE REVIEW - NARROW YOUR SELECTIONS
 - a. Evaluate the selections online through their Web sites, images and virtual tours
 - b. Evaluate Research Data
 - c. Narrow preferred properties to no more than three (3)
 - d. Get references from organizations with a similar profile that have been there in other last year
 - e. Review floor plans and diagram online or have the property send a copy
 - f. Check flow of meeting space
 - g. When was the hotel or resort recently renovated?
 - h. What are the recent accolades?
 - i. Who else is in house during the time of your meeting?

10. SITE INFORMATION - WHAT TO EXPECT YOUR SITE TO FURNISH
 - a. A detailed description of the # and type of accommodations your requiring
 - b. Detailed summary of the hotel's rooms
 - c. List of technical equipment and support services
 - d. Description of relationship with convention services manager
 - e. List of special features that make property unique
 - f. Complete description of property's restaurant, sports facilities, entertainment areas and shops
 - g. Information about special rules or regulations about licenses, taxes, beverage control, union contracts, automatic charges, gratuities.

11. ULTIMATE DECISION - MAKER - SELECT FINALISTS
Use Site Inspection Summary to present to:
 - One individual
 - Committee of decision makers
 - Board of Directors

12. MAKE THE DECISION