

10

onsite management:  
executing the plans



## ONSITE MANAGEMENT: EXECUTING THE PLANS

Events don't manage themselves. The value of a professional event management team, diligently looking after your attendees, delivering best-practice management to ensure a smooth-running event from beginning to end and giving your attendees the best possible event experience, is priceless.

Team members are first to arrive and last to leave each day. They manage problems so you don't have to. In most cases you won't even know the problems have occurred. By looking after everything behind the scenes they ensure you can focus on managing the front end with the attendees.

The checklist of on-site activities managed by a PCO is endless, but usually includes at least the following:

**AT THE VENUES:** pre-preproduction meetings with heads of department (hotel management, front office, housekeeping, security, catering, AV) and key suppliers, including a full run-through of logistics, client and guest procedures, items identified in any risk assessment and emergency procedures.

**SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** review all procedures including risks previously identified, assessments and control procedures.

**SUPPLIERS:** check with all suppliers to confirm final details, numbers attending, times and any outstanding matters.

**CHECK-IN PROCEDURE:** aiming for smooth operations, confirm the check-in procedure from bag drop to credit card swiping and obtaining keys as well as conference registration process to keep a quick and efficient flow for guest arrival.

**REGISTRATION DESK & GUEST RELATIONS:** organisation of the onsite registration desk, set with the master attendee list and attendee bags containing programs, gifts and sponsor information. Check electronic signage is operational for program announcements and updates for activities, teams or reminders.

**CHECK THAT ALL FREIGHT** shipments are accounted for and in place for unpacking and setup. Understand loading dock procedures and safety requirements well before arrival. Pack and prepare all gifts and room drops, and provide them to the hotel, clearly labelled to ease the delivery process.

**AUDIO VISUAL:** setup the day or evening prior to conference commencement, check internet connection and speeds and all pre-loaded presentations, run

content and audio, set the in-show order and go through the technical AV run sheet. Make sure there are plenty of spare batteries.

**SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS:** ensure all speaker requests have been dealt with, content enhancements, presentations, and microphone requests are run through with the AV team. Conduct sound checks and speaker rehearsals. It is imperative to run through each speaker's requirements and ensure all technical aspects work as planned, providing the speaker time for familiarisation and peace of mind.

Ensure any special staging requirements are in place for each speaker and any session change overs.

**DURING THE EVENT:** ensure all food and drinks, room setup configurations and equipment are in place on time and all requests are actioned prior to each session and break. Notify the venue if speakers or sessions are running late so food items can be delayed or brought forward as needed. This is especially important to ensure that hot items do not go cold should speakers run overtime.

**REQUEST ACCOMMODATION/ROOM CHARGES** from the previous day are provided for organiser review, allowing time to check against the budget and query any unusual items. This saves time and aids with the post-conference master account reconciliation.

**KEEP THE EXPERIENCE ALIVE** with plenty of energising music and screen content. Use photos of attendees taken during the event, product achievements or sponsor acknowledgement on major screens at the start and end of sessions.

**AFTER THE CONFERENCE:** during guest departures, check attendees off when boarding coach transfers, ensure guests have sighted their luggage being placed on board and be available to wish the guests farewell. Being present for departures is often a great time to receive feedback directly from the attendees.

**ENSURE ALL FREIGHT** is labelled and stored safely and the return journey is booked for sponsor or head office materials.

**MEET WITH THE HOTEL CONFERENCE MANAGER** ongoingly and discuss what is going well, where improvements are required and what has gone well during the conference. This is also a good opportunity to check through the final master account, including all event-related expenses, accommodation, conferencing and any unpaid personal bills, before making a plan to settle the final hotel accounts.

As you can see, a conference team works through many challenging situations to keep everything on track and tackle unforeseen problems as they arise. Here are some common issues and tactics to help avoid them turning into problems.

## OUTDOOR EVENTS

An outdoor event can be attractive in perfect weather. However, the weather does not always cooperate and holding space for a back-up plan can be costly. Compare the value of the experience to the monetary cost. For example, consider whether or not the lower cost of using a hotel conference room for a dinner, adding theming and upgraded AV lighting, is worth foregoing the outdoor dining experience which is open to the impacts of poor weather and temperature fluctuations. There are also power and generator requirements, while all lighting and equipment must be safely setup outside, making the event more costly.

The best approach is to run through the options, compare the costs and design an experience that is relevant for an indoor or outdoor event. Weigh the experience versus the cost factors and how this compares in the overall program.

## making a difference

*“The moment I really felt I had an impact on a group, was when we were in New Orleans, with 40 guests on an incentive program. We were faced with guests arriving into the city at the same time as a hurricane was also approaching. Some guests’ inbound flights were delayed, our programmed suppliers were either on limited operations or closing their businesses and staff leaving town due to evacuation warnings. Both our client and their guests were growing more apprehensive about the best course of action to take given the strong winds, impending risks, keeping our guests safe whilst continuing to deliver a first class incentive program.*

*We spent two solid days and nights working through risk management assessments, meetings with suppliers, finding solutions for the program to keep the show on the road, whilst juggling travel plans and timeframes for evacuation or leaving town as planned for phase two of the journey.*

*The result was: we produced two successful and fun nights in New Orleans, we managed to find a bus and driver (not easy when everyone is evacuating and on high alert for their businesses and their families), safely travelled everyone by bus to Nashville, hit town at 7pm and were ready to head out to have a great first night to party all safe and looking forward to the next part of the adventure.”*

## ACCOMMODATION AND ROOM ALLOCATIONS

If you have any VIP requirements and guest check-in procedures, you need to reconfirm them prior to arrival and again onsite. This avoids internal hotel miscommunication and ensures requests are briefed to the staff who are working on the day.

The best approach is to recognise that what has been agreed to with the hotel team prior to the program may not be what happens on the day, despite advance communications. These processes, in fact everything, needs to be checked during a face-to-face meeting prior to guest arrival. For example, if the hotel has taken the credit card details for any extension or in-room incidentals during online registration, they should not need to take a swiped copy at guest check-in. Welcome letters, room drops and baggage treatment are also aspects that should be clearly defined for all departments.

## ENTERTAINMENT

When entertainment is contracted for an event, the conference planning team and stakeholders have a specific vision as to what the show will look like, sound like and how long it will run. The performers may have their own ideas as to what would make a great show, but they do not know your audience, nor control the run sheet.

The best approach is to have a clear written brief and to reconfirm the details for performance with the entertainers before the event. This includes when they will arrive on site, what facilities they require to prepare, what type of content they will perform and how long they will be on stage. Having well defined requirements in the contract may enable renegotiation of the final fee payment should the performance not be as anticipated.

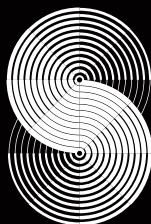


**we create events that awaken, ignite  
and motivate your people, building a  
renewed sense of connection and  
commitment to your organisation.**

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO SPEAKING TO YOU!

PLEASE CALL +61 2 9977 5546 PLEASE EMAIL [RUTH@SYNERGYEFFECT.COM.AU](mailto:RUTH@SYNERGYEFFECT.COM.AU)



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