

SUCCESSFUL SALES FOR MEETING SUPPLIERS

Partnering with DMCs

You're a hotelier and you're more than halfway to your monthly quota, yet things are getting increasingly challenging. A prestigious company you've been pursuing for several months has a potential piece of business. The meeting requirements include: 60 percent of your property's sleeping rooms; 50 percent of available conference space with significant food and beverage; two themed events with elaborate decor and entertainment; a team-building event; a full-day spouse tour to include a cultural activity, lunch and shopping, all within a one-hour drive of your

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property; an offsite cocktail reception and dinner at a unique venue, including luxury coach transports; coach, van and limo transfers to

and from the airport; and a VIP event.

You are concerned that the hours required to research and accommodate this client's needs may cut into profitability and take your staff's focus away from other meetings and events at your property. Nevertheless, it is a tantalizing opportunity with an organization that has plenty of potential for future business at your hotel.

The Solution

There is an easy and convenient solution to your concerns. A destination management company (DMC) is your hotel team's partner in securing and executing meeting and convention business. (Many DMCs actively participate in local MPI chapters.)

DMCs—resident experts on a region—are relatively new, but specialists have been performing DMC functions for years. The company's area of expertise is essential to a region, its hotels and to meeting planners. DMCs can take on the role as planning assistant to the hotel as well as to planner clients.

DMCs will research all non-hotel related projects, including event theme, decor and entertainment, team-building programs, offsite tours and transportation. This information can be presented within the hotel's proposal or sent directly to the client.

The Benefits

This concept presents a picture of industry cooperation to the client. Meeting planners are familiar with DMCs and regularly use them when planning meetings. When a hotel demonstrates a partnership with an established, reputable DMC, the hotel shows the planner involvement and participation in its hospitality network.

In the time it could take your team to research and price one team-building option, an efficient DMC can present you with pricing on that component of your event plus five



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additional components. While you are preparing your room and F&B proposal, the DMC is working to research, price and complete the other pieces of the puzzle.

DMC teams are staffed by veterans of the meetings and hotel industries, and are therefore familiar with hotels' concerns. They have a concise understanding of what a hotel's concerns and needs are—and can work within those parameters.

DMCs have done extensive research into the reliability and dependability of local service providers. Will the coaches arrive on time? Will drivers be courteous and professionally attired? Are the entertainers first-class, a fair value and a quality entertainment experience?

Convention Sales

As planners consider venues for meetings and conferences, they need to know that all players in a destination work together—including DMCs, hotels and CVBs. When you work to secure a group, mention your familiarity with DMC resources. The planner is aware that your particular specialty involves the features and benefits of your hotel. Your hotel will have a distinct advantage if the planner knows you have partnered with professionals from whose services they will benefit.

Fee Structure

DMCs often establish preferred pricing agreements with suppliers. For example: a hotel contacts a local entertainment company for a quote on a DJ for an on-property event and are quoted \$1,000. A DMC contacts the same company (for the same DJ) and obtains a \$700 rate. The DMC takes over all logistical/communications work with the DJ, saving the hotel and planner labor expense and time. The DMC then up-charges the entertainment fee \$300 to come up with the same \$1,000 the hotel was quoted. The DMC services are now "complimentary."

How Does a DMC Fit In?

DMCs are selling tools for hotels. By incorporating DMCs into your proposal or by advising your client that an exceptional DMC will contact them to handle specific elements of their program, you present a complete turnkey package to your client.

Locating a Quality DMC

Contact your local MPI chapter, CVB or the Association of Destination Management Executives. Check references and determine the level of expertise the DMC team has by meeting with the group. Creativity and enthusiasm are key. Keep in mind that when working with a DMC, it takes time to prepare pricing and proposals to avoid the "cookie-cutter" approach—something your clients will appreciate.

Specialized DMC services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Creative proposals for onsite or offsite special events, including concept, decor, audiovisual, entertainment, centerpieces, transportation and more;
- Entertainment procurement such as DJs, musicians, impersonators, comedians, games and interactive events;
- Team-building activities;
- Customized offsite tours;
- Airport transfers;
- Onsite registration and hospitality services; and
- VIP amenities.

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