

## Selecting the Right Destination Management Company (DMC)

*Adapted with permission from Christopher Lee, DMCP © 1995*

### Step 1 – Locating Candidates

- The Association of Destination Management Executives (ADME) has a searchable member directory at [www.adme.org](http://www.adme.org). The most professional DMCs will be members
- Suggestions from the local Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- Ask the hotel for their top recommendation(s)
- Member directories (i.e. ASAE, MPI, PCMA, SITE)
- Referrals from other meeting planners

### Step 2 – Narrowing the Field

- How long has the company been in business?
- Is the DMC an Accredited Destination Management Company (ADMC)?
- How many full-time and part-time staff do they have and what is their experience level?
- Does the company have any Destination Management Certified Professionals (DMCPs) on staff? Or any other certifications (i.e. CMP, CMM, CSEP)
- Who will be your contact(s) in advance and on-site? Are their values and personalities compatible with yours?
- Require proof of at least \$1 million insurance coverage, ask for proof that their vendors are adequately insured as well
- Request a list of references that you can contact with programs similar to yours in size and scope
- Notify eliminated firms and thank them for their efforts

### Step 3 – Make Your Choice

- Meet with your finalist(s) in person or conduct a site visit of their city and or offices
- Give your finalist(s) all the group particulars:
  - Group Demographics and Interests
  - Program Agenda/Time Constraints
  - Past Program Information/Group History, what has worked and what hasn't in the past and or any numbers such as tour pick ups or beverage consumption
- Request a Proposal, the RFP should include:
  - The objective of the program
  - Number of attendees per activity or event
  - Any specifics you require (i.e. staffing ratios, acceptable airport transfer wait times, meal requirements, etc.)
  - Program Budget, overall or broken out per activity or event
- Keep all proposal information confidential unless otherwise permitted

### Step 4 – Key Questions/Information for Specific Services

- **Airport Transfers:**
  - Number of airport Greeters recommended
  - Vehicle types acceptable for your group (i.e. most groups do not use limos)
  - Maximum passenger wait times
  - Does the DMC have 24-hour phone support



- ***Shuttle Services***
  - Number of passengers assumed or ratio per room in room block
  - Quality and quantity of vehicles and signage
  - Proposed Routes and Staffing (staffing at HQ location or each hotel?)
  - Estimated numbers moved and passenger wait times on each route
- ***Special Events***
  - How much experience does the DMC have at producing your scale of special event? Check references and request photos/video
  - Have they produced similar events at the venue(s) you have chosen?
  - What resources does the DMC have in-house vs. subcontracted?
  - Are all expenses (i.e. power, union labor) included in the proposal?
- ***Tours and Recreation***
  - Times and dates available for tours and recreation
  - Are they hosted, or do individuals pay?
  - Do spouses/guests participate?
  - Include lunch/dinner as part of the activity?
  - Include on-property programs at the hotel or convention center: educational seminars/speakers, fitness class, craft workshop or local speakers/celebrities?

#### **Step 5 – Contract Inclusions**

- Listing of all services to be provided including: where, when, number of participants and associated costs for each element provided, include minimums and maximums where applicable
- Policies regarding fuel surcharges or other prices that cannot be locked in at time of contracting due to how far out you are contracting or fluctuation in prices
- Payment Terms including deposit schedule, acceptable forms of payment and expectations on when you will receive the final invoice following the program
- Cancellation terms and refund policies, for the whole program or specific elements if applicable
- Force majeure and mutual indemnification

#### **Step 6 – Program Follow-up**

- Request a Post-Con to go over any loose ends and discuss the overall program success and any area of concern
- Ask the meeting attendees or other meeting planners within your organization to evaluate the DMC services
- Capture actual numbers of participants and consumptions numbers/trends for future planning
- Ask the DMC if they have offices in other cities or for referrals to other DMCs in locations that you have future programs
- Provide them with a testimonial or letter of reference if you were pleased with your DMC's services

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