Outline the Needs:
Questions for Thought as You Create Your Conference Profile (RFP)

Introduction

The program format will dictate many of the physical requirements for the event. In addition to determining guest room and other requirements based on historical data, use the program plan and schedule to help determine the number of rooms needed for general sessions, simultaneous or concurrent sessions, food and beverage events, registration, exhibits, offices, and storage.

As space needs are identified, determine the length of time of each event room, office, storage, and service area is needed on a daily basis. Be sure to take into consideration the amount of time required before the event begins for facility personnel and equipment suppliers to set up, and the time needed after the event for move-out of equipment and supplies. Determine if space for a specific service area is needed continually, or whether the area can serve a dual or changing purpose.

Develop a profile – *Utilize previous data or, if first time event, current projections*

Preferred Dates
- Is the event limited to specific dates or time period?
- Does the event have date/pattern flexibility?
- Is there a need to avoid certain religious, ethnic, state or federal holidays?
  - If the event is in another country, are there local holidays that must be considered?

- Must scheduling conflicts with allied or kindred groups be avoided? Which conferences?
- Will seasonal hotel or facility rates or local union labor laws affect the decision?

Attendance
- What is the anticipated attendance for the event?
- What has been the attendance at the past 5 years' previous events of this type? Three years is adequate.
- What internal/external factors could impact future attendance?

Sleeping Rooms
- What will the total number of sleeping rooms needed each night, from the earliest arrival through the last departure?
- Consider the amount of attendees that are local and won't need rooms.
- How many hotel options in the surrounding area?
- How many rooms are needed for staff and committee members, speakers, exhibitors and others who may not have been included in the attendance estimate?
- If using previous data, must the arrival date and departure pattern be adjusted for the proposed location because of flight schedules?
- What is the percentage of single versus double room occupancy?
- What are the requirements for one-and-two bedroom suites?

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Sleeping Rooms – *(continued)*

- IEEE conferences rule of thumb is to secure guest rooms for 30% of total expected attendance. Remember, attendees will shop around and stay at lower cost hotels in the area or may be local to the event.
- Are large suites needed for entertaining? How many and what size? Who will use the suites-members, VIPs, exhibitors? On what dates?
- What is the average percentage of people who cancel reservations?
- What is the average percentage of people who fail to claim reservations (no-shows)?
- What has been the average room rate for this event? The highest? The lowest?
- Are room rates important to the group? Are discounted rooms needed for students, retired members, speakers and/or staff? If so, how many?
- Are rebates and/or housing fees to be added to and/or included in the room rate?

Event Space

- How many event rooms will be required on a daily basis? How many are needed simultaneously on a daily basis?
- Should any event rooms be held on a 24-hour basis (may be required for rooms with extensive audiovisual (A/V) setups)?
- In addition to the formal program, will event rooms be needed for committee and business events and ancillary group functions?
- What is the estimated attendance for each event/food and beverage event/session?
- Are rooms to be set up theater, classroom, conference, or banquet style?
- How will the A/V plan impact requirements for event rooms? Does the room need to have high ceilings and no columns for clear sight lines?

- Will event rooms separated by air walls be sufficiently quiet, or do you require sound insulation or the permanent walls?
- Does the program require high speed Internet access or other advanced technology for presentations?
- Is space needed in or near the event room(s) for refreshment breaks?
- Determine the facility's flexibility concerning the tentative agenda (increases or decreases in event space.)
- Does the schedule require event rooms in close proximity to each other, to exhibits, and to public areas where traffic flows?
    - What is the ratio to your projected attendance?

Food and Beverage Events

- How many food and beverage events will be held, and when? What types- casual, formal, or themed?
- What kinds of food and beverage events will be held, i.e., breakfast, lunch, dinner, refreshment breaks?
- What is the estimated attendance at each event? What has been the attendance at previous functions?
- Are you planning any indoor or outdoor events? Do you need back-up space (space not already being used for your other event requirements is preferred) in case of inclement weather?

Exhibits/Poster Sessions

- Are there exhibits or poster sessions in conjunction with the event? If so, what is the gross and/or next square footage required?
- Will exhibits and aisle signage require high ceilings and/or column-free space?
- How much time is needed for move-in and move-out displays?
- Is close proximity of loading docks and freight elevators important?

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Exhibit/Poster Sessions (Continued)

- Are your exhibits suitable for the facility, i.e., hotel versus convention center? For example, if your exhibitors require utilities (water, electricity, gas) a hotel is less likely to have those utilities set in the floor. An exception would be if the hotel has an exhibition hall.
- Do you require a carpeted exhibit hall? If yes, a hotel would most likely be able to provide you with a carpeted space. Most convention centers do not have carpeted exhibit facilities (except in their ballrooms). Your general services contractor can provide any carpeting needs of the exhibit space and charges are passed to the organization.
- If using a convention center, is the center attached to or within walking distance of your headquarters or primary hotel?
- Are the facility's (hotel and/or convention center) workers part of a union? More than one union?

Registration
- How large an area is needed for registration purposes? Is the designated registration area in a high-traffic area, or away from general public? Can the area be secured after registration closes?
- Are adequate utilities available including wireless high-speed Internet, electrical outlets, and ample lighting?
- Is space needed for additional services, such as restaurant reservations, tours and local information?

Ancillary Space Needs
- Are all dates and times determined?
- Is storage space needed?
- How many rooms are required for headquarter offices and press offices? What size must each be?

- Does the A/V supplier need an equipment room?
- Will a speaker preparation room be needed?
- Are special lounge areas desires for exhibitors and international attendees?
- Are special hospitality suites needed? Are additional rooms required for spouse/guest or children's programs?

Other Logistical Considerations
- Are there special needs for some participants, such as people with disabilities?
- Are there any potential language barriers, either with facility staff or event attendees?
- Will tours of local related-interest facilities be required (i.e. universities or labs)? Does the facility have space for loading/unloading buses?
- Does your event warrant the presence of convention and visitors bureau (CVB) representatives during the event (visitor information desk/restaurant reservation desk)?

Site Inspection Requirements
- How many site visits are required prior to and after confirming an event?
- How frequently are visits conducted?
- Who conducts the site visits? Are staff and suppliers included? Any volunteer groups or individuals?
- What is expected of the destination and facilities in accommodating site visits?
- How long do the site visits last (how many days)?
- Who pays for the specific components of the visit – airfare, hotel accommodations, ground transportation?
- Site visits/inspections should be set up as far in advance as possible to ensure all parties/facilities are available.

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