

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

CONVENTION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Successful events require careful advance planning! Here are some handy tips for organizing the convention planning committee.

General Chairperson

Responsible for the ease and co-ordinated action of the entire committee structure. Reports to the Executive Committee of the convening organization.

Vice Chairperson

Acts for the General Chairman in his/her absence or incapacity and co-operates with this position on all matters.

Treasurer

Is custodian of all monies, maintains all financial records and pays all bills after proper certification. It is desirable that this person be capable of being bondable.

Secretary

Maintains all files and records of the organization. Issues, calls for and keeps minutes of Executive Committee and General Committee meetings. Handles all general correspondence.

Executive Secretary

Works with the General Chairman. This office may warrant a full-time salaried executive for a reasonable time prior to, during and after the convention. Many organizations already have a permanent executive secretary on staff who would naturally fill this role. This position is responsible for all matters not readily handled by the General Chairman and committees.

Functional Committees

Each functional committee should be given clear and specific instruction concerning the duties with which it is charged. Very often, confusion arises when the local committee's activities and the provincial or national headquarters activities are not co-ordinated. Unnecessary errors or duplication sometimes result.

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Budget Committee is the most important committee. It handles all finances and determines how much can be spent and where, and will set the registration fees. An outline of the usual expenses encountered is shown in the following sample budget.

EXPENSES

Mailing and Postage	_____
Printing:	_____
• pre-mailings, programs, etc.	_____
Signs and Decorations	_____
Speakers and Invited Guests	_____
Registration Desk Staff and Materials	_____
Extra Help - What kind?	_____
Local Transportation	_____
Entertainment	_____
Exhibit & Exhibit Space	_____
Meeting Room Rental, Reception	_____
Nutrition Breaks	_____
Cost of Meals	_____
(whether borne by delegates entirely)	_____
Gratuities	_____
Other Facilities:	_____
• PA System, Sound Recordings, etc.	_____
Gifts	_____
Companion Program	_____
Miscellaneous	_____

The Finance and Budget Committee should also keep in mind the following important points:

- Who will make payment for the various functions?
- When is payment due?
- What is the policy on accepting cheques?
- What is the policy on refunds?
- Ticket prices for various functions
- Who will check out funds at the start and check in at the close of each session or function?
- What is the cost and number of meals? (Estimate high as to cost)
- What is the guarantee on final number of meals? (Estimate so as to guarantee at the time)
- When is the guarantee required on meals?

INCOME

Registration Fees	_____
• Delegate and Companion	_____
Partial Registration	_____
Override on Functions	_____
Contributions and/or Sponsorships	_____
Parent Body Financing	_____
Exhibit Space Rental	_____
Fundraising Events	_____
Other	_____

HOUSING AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The Housing Committee is set up to ensure satisfactory accommodation for all guests and delegates. This committee will work the hotel manager and the hotel staff.

- Make a tentative booking of the required number of rooms in hotels and motels
 - Negotiate room rates
 - Gathers information on hotels and their regular or special convention rates to send out as promotional material
 - Checks emergency housing availability for latecomers.
 - Determine room requirements and advise hotel
 - Identifies A/V needs of speakers
 - Co-ordinates with Awards and Entertainment committee
 - Liase with silent Auction/Merchandising Group
- Information the Headquarters Hotel should have from you:
- Date when the majority of the group will arrive
 - Date when the majority of the group will depart
 - When available - the exact time and date each delegate will arrive and depart
 - Updated information regarding reservations coming in to hotels or motels
 - How VIP's accommodation will be paid for (by your organization)
 - Where exhibitors can be housed if your convention plans to have exhibits.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Public Relations Committee has a two-fold duty. Promotion of your convention to gain maximum attendance (focusing attention on the important objectives) and the publicising of your convention are the two facets of this committee's work. A good job of publicising will help your convention be a successful one.

Some methods to consider are:

- Newsletter, Association Publication, etc.
 - Home town publicity to promote attendance
 - Direct mail to promote attendance
 - Send advance information on your convention to the press, radio and TV
 - Invite the news media to meeting and banquets
 - Set up a press table when considered necessary (with telephones)
 - Obtain copies in advance of all speeches for the press
- Speakers and convention officers available for interviews with the press
 - Personally call on city editors and on radio and TV stations' program directors (allocate responsibility for these calls).
 - Set up a room area or place for press headquarters
 - News releases and pictures of speakers for home town papers
 - Home town coverage of your convention in progress and after it is over
 - Arrange for a photographer

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Transportation Committee handles all the details involved with helping delegates and speakers get to the event and access all event facilities.

Points to consider include:

- Negotiating special rates for convention delegates on air carriers, train and bus lines
- Courtesy transportation between meeting site(s) and hotel(s)
- Local transportation to shopping and other attractions – tours and partner programs
- Parking availability

AWARDS AND PROTOCOL COMMITTEE

- Engage entertainers for award ceremonies
- Publish program for Saturday awards
- Overall responsibility for Friday Community Night
- Co-ordinate speaking opportunities for elected officials

WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

Often this committee's functions are combined with those of the Registration Committee. The Reception and Hospitality Committee will be host for the delegates of all functions. They will welcome all guests, members of the press, and visiting dignitaries.

Check over these points:

- Hospitality suite
- Welcome banner for headquarters hotel
- Meet planes, trains and buses carrying delegates or guests, – welcome banners or posters are effective
- Obtain information from the visitor bureau on shopping, attractions and events in Saint John
- Flowers in rooms for guests, speakers and/or dignitaries
- Invite local dignitaries to special events
- Arrange to welcome local dignitaries, advise them if they are expected to speak

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PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The planning of an interesting and informative program and the co-ordinating of all convention functions is the job of the Program Committee. It will work closely with the Entertainment Committee in tying together the business and social functions of your convention to assure a smooth running chain of events. Work closely with organizers from national offices.

A checklist of duties would include the following:

- Book meeting rooms
- A complete program schedule including all business meetings, social functions, time for viewing exhibits, time for shopping and sightseeing, and plenty of time for various recreational activities
- Provide program information for pre-conference promotional material
- Written notice to each chairman outlining specific responsibilities and the exact time and place they will appear on the program
- Contact the outstanding speakers in your field well in advance of your convention
- Obtain biographical material for the speakers introductions
- Inform the speakers of the time and date to speak, and the amount of time allotted to them
- Financial arrangements for the speakers understood by both parties
- Someone to introduce the speakers to convention officials and make them welcome to the convention
- Furnish programs, courtesy tickets and gifts to the speakers
- Arrange for special properties needed by your speaker such as a blackboard, chalk, easel, pointer, projector and material to be distributed.
- Alternate speaker available in case scheduled one does not show
- Provide for any other change in the program
- Speakers' Ready Room available for speakers to test audio/visual equipment
- Provide directional signs to the meeting rooms
- Make arrangements for speakers' rooms, transportation, etc.

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Registration Committee will be in charge of setting up whatever facilities are necessary for your group's registration. It will also be responsible for your convention's headquarters and information centre.

This committee's checkpoints include:

- Staffing of registration desk - clerks, typists and cashiers
- Registration forms and badges, committee ribbons, etc.
- Ticket Sales
- Desks, tables, chairs and wastebaskets
- Cash box, receipt book and float
- A person who is responsible for handing registration money
- All facts of the convention and registration procedures for registration staff
- Registration procedure for delegates (policy re: part time registration)
- Registration procedure for guests and dignitaries
- Extra tables, chairs and desks
- Sufficient forms, programs, pencils, note paper, etc.
- Instructions posted for filling out forms
- Informative material on Saint John and New Brunswick
- Information desk and clerk
- Bulletin board for messages and phone calls
- List of registrants for officials and the press
- Facilities for photocopying

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

The function of the Entertainment Committee is very important. It is in charge of all entertainment for the various banquets, luncheons and social events (except the Saturday Awards).

The entertainment committee should check:

- Special entertainment for regular program (i.e. entertainment at registration)
- All social functions, including bars
- All menu decisions for meals, making provisions for any special dietary requirements of delegates
- Decorations for banquets and social functions
- Banquet tables set up - head tables, notify those who sit at head table where they will be seated through the appointing of a head table marshal
- Number of places to be set at banquet
- Favours, menus and place cards
- Exact serving time
- A printed program and menu for each banquet
- Provision for meal tickets. Giving the hotel a "guarantee" figure, when required.
- Tickets to be taken at table or door
- Ticket sales to latecomers
- Sightseeing tours

EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

The Exhibits Committee will be in charge of obtaining space and providing information about the space to all who may desire to use it. It will handle all rental policies and arrangements, and will prepare material about the exhibits for all delegates.

Keep in mind the following:

- Prepare an information folder on rental prices, space available, and floor plan of the exhibit area. Mail folder to list of potential exhibitors.
- Check on availability in the exhibit area of: electrical outlets, steam and water supply, a carpenter, and electrician, a plumber and a sign painter.
- Some provision for continuing clearance or liaison with hotel regarding regulations on size, weight or nature of exhibits.
- Check on floor load and ceiling heights, including truck door dimensions.
- Schedule exact timing for moving exhibits in and out.
- Check customs regulations for out of country equipment and materials and/or arrange for customs broker to handle
- Liability insurance or protection against "loss or damage" in respect to exhibitor "materials" and against suit from hotel for damage and against suit by anyone being injured by exhibit
- Security
- Contact display company who may assist in above area

PARTNER PROGRAM

The Partner Program should be stimulating. It should not conflict with the delegate program. Balance the program with a variety of activities. Try not to crowd in too many events.

- Allow some free time for shopping as part of the program.
- Provide a hospitality room where coffee, tea, etc. are served. Craft displays and demonstrations may be set up in this room for one morning or afternoon.
- Prepare an information sheet of specialty shops, antique shops, galleries, restaurants, etc. which you think your guests might like to visit on their own time. Include this list in the partners kit.
- Provide schedules on other events during your convention such as theatre productions.
- Guided tours can be arranged for groups to visit many Saint John and area attractions. A luncheon or coffee concluding the tour may be considered.
- Arrangements could be made for a speaker or entertainer to make a suitable presentation for the group.
- Consider arrangements for some sport activity for variety: tennis, golf, bowling and trail rides are all available in Saint John.
- Send a newsletter advising the guests what is planned for the Partners Program so that they are prepared to bring along the proper clothing and/or equipment if a sporting event is scheduled. If the program looks interesting this will spark enthusiasm for increased attendance.
- Work closely with the registration chairmen to determine number of partners attending. Put together information packages for each of them. Consider a small gift or souvenir for each partner and guest.
- If pre-registration is required for some of the activities, make arrangements for this.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Will there be children attending the convention with their parents?

- Day-care or nightly babysitting arrangements
- Special activities for children
- Meals suitable for children

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TIMELINE

18 MONTHS - 1 YEAR BEFORE

Set Date
Strike Committees
Executive
Finance
Registration
Housing
Public Relations
Exhibit
Entertainment
Program
Hospitality
Arrange for meeting space
Arrange for accommodation
Budget
Expenses outlined
Income outlined
Pricing

1 YEAR - 6 MONTHS BEFORE

Delegates lists and addresses
Establish conference/convention agenda

Contact keynote speakers
Contact potential exhibitors
Develop mailout
List convention needs

Equipment
Audio visual
Extension cords
Photo copier
Typewriter
Facsimile
Easels
Secretarial services

Facilities
Parking
Unloading
Stairs & elevators
Washrooms
Telephones
Exhibit space
Registration space
Common area
Security

Establish room size, shape & set-up

Theatre
Boardroom
Banquet - style, number
Head table

Transportation
Buses/Taxis/vans
Limousine service

Delegate Entertainment
Tours
Entertainers/bands
Cultural/Sports events

6 MONTHS - 3 MONTHS BEFORE

Food & Beverage Needs
Number of meals
Menus for meals
Bar service
Cash
Complimentary
Coffee breaks
Receptions
Wine selection
Price arrangements
Delegate packages (maps, pamphlets, etc.)
Registration set-up
Contact decorators
Publicity needs (TV, radio, newspaper)
Security
Registration hot-line (information)

3 MONTHS - 1 MONTH BEFORE

Mail out registration/invitation
Receive completed registrations
Deposit cheques
Organize registration
Weekly/daily reports & updates
Assign accommodations
Confirm exhibitors
On-site staffing needs
Flowers & gifts/table favours
Telephone access for messages & calling out

1 MONTH - 1 WEEK BEFORE

Confirm food & beverage needs
Confirm facility & equipment needs
Name tags
Confirm entertainment
Check out all facility & equipment set-up

1 WEEK BEFORE EVENT

Guaranteed number to facilitators
Directional signs
Evaluation forms
Registration set-up
Convention material to site

DURING EVENT

On-site staffing
Information/message centre
Pre-use facility check-out
Host/hostess service

AFTER EVENT

Evaluation forms
Analyse & report on feedback
Financial statement
Collect all outstanding monies
Convention material removal