SUCCESSFUL
CONVENTION IDEAS!

We’re sharing some resources and examples of what is working in Louisiana conventions

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A few points to share...

- Ideas for:
  - Planning Speakers and Topics
  - Increasing Attendance to Convention
  - Ramping up the Social Event
  - Increasing Silent Auction Participation/Revenue
  - Increasing Exhibitor Participation
  - Decreasing Host hotel costs/working a deal

Planning Speakers and Topics

Let’s talk about some ideas for planning speakers

- Plan 3 hour blocks for invited speakers (which is ½ the day). Some speakers may be willing to teach 2 different 3 hour blocks or a full day, for the same amount of honorarium.
- Rather than have them book their own flights (which they often do at the last minute, for triple the costs), have the office work with the speaker & book tickets as soon as the contract is signed.

Decreasing Costs of Speakers

- Plan 3 hour blocks for invited speakers (which is ½ the day). Some speakers may be willing to teach 2 different 3 hour blocks or a full day, for the same amount of honorarium.
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Get the topics you want!

When posting your Call for Papers, announce the topics requested by your members.

Increasing Attendance

Announcing the Call for Papers to LSHA Convention 2012

Go to http://www.lsha.org/ callforpapers 2012 Call for Papers DEADLINE: December 1, 2011 for Technical Presentations January 31 for Poster Sessions

Topics include:
- Audiology Advances, Indirect Audiology, Hearing Conservation, All aspects of Cochlear implants, Nervous
Target those who have been lower in attendance

For us the AUDs were only a small percentage of our total attendance.

We created a flyer just for them and sent it out to all LA & Universities in Surrounding States.

Spread the Word

Beyond the normal fliers, emails and website announcements...

- Social media
  - Ask Board members and fellow professionals to post their own excitement about particular speakers and convention events
  - Send letters to all universities & companies in the state to announce the CEU opportunities and topics to be presented.

Ramping up the Social Event

Past Social Event Ideas have included:

- Museum tours w/happy hour
- Silent auction w/appetizers & cocktails
- General party in exhibits hall

So this past year....

We tried something new....
Increasing Silent Auction Participation/Revenue

Auction:
- 2012 - $1,297.00 (auction and raffle)
- 2011 - $844.00
- 2010 - $1,672.00

In 2012, we had the traditional silent auction, as well as the raffle for 2 Coach purses.
Raffle tickets were $5.00 for 2 tickets of $10 for 6 tickets.

Silent Auction & Raffle Success!!

SUCCESSFUL AUCTION ITEMS:
- Handknitted afghan
- Cologne collection
- Books
- Bracelet/Jewelry
- Handbags
- Themed baskets: LSU, Kitchen collection, Entertainment, Summer Fun, Wine
- Gift cards: Best Buy

The competition between universities is very profitable! Baskets along the themes of party, wine, spa, kitchen, pets, were popular.

Exhibitors: Planning for Success

Prior Protocols of organizing vendors
- Wait for them to sign up…

New Protocols to plan for vendors
- Selectively choose a new Exhibits Chairperson
- Give detailed expectations
- Include suggestions on recruiting different types of vendors (e.g., call, email, network, visit local merchants…)

Exhibitor Options
Think out of the box!
- Toy Vendors
- Therapy recruiters
- Boutiques
- Jewelry vendors
- E-stim equip. vendors
- Audiology vendors
- Book sales
- Gift shops
- AAC Companies
- Hospital recruiters
- Scrubs/uniform stores
- Software vendors
Decreasing Host Hotel Costs/Working a Deal

Several factors to consider:
- Geographical draw
- Expected number of attendees
- Negotiating factors
- # of rooms to be booked
- Return business in past & future years

Lessons Learned

Prior Years
- Rotating Locations around the state
- Choose different host hotels per city
- Follow history of prior conventions and keep things the same

Current Planning
- Follow the demographics
- Negotiate a deal for future conventions
- Be Strategic in studying past details to plan for future conventions

Current Contract Negotiated

- Best Convention results have been from a central location in state
- We’ve had a long term relationship with the Hilton Lafayette (with conventions here every 3-4 years.
- So we have now set a contact to be consistently at this hotel to be the following:

Contact with Lafayette Hilton now includes:
- Set room rate of $99 for 2014, 2015 and 2016
  - $119.00 in 2012,
  - $124.00 in 2013
- Set food & beverage minimum of $9,750
  - $11,000 in 2012
  - $15,000 in 2013
- Complimentary suite for president if 80% of room block is utilized.

Current Contract Negotiated

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Some Final Ideas

- Collect the facts from past conventions to analyze what worked and what did not.
- Brainstorm with Board members and colleagues to see what NEW things might work.
- Think out of the box to change things up a bit.
- NETWORK!

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