

Planning a Great Meeting

Some solid tips for planning a network marketing opportunity meeting

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Planning a network marketing opportunity meeting? MLMLegal.com asked veteran meeting planner, Greg White of San Diego based Hamilton LaRonde Associates for some solid tips.

Get the word out

Plan the meeting at least a month in advance, if at all possible. Let your upline and downline distributors know the time and place of the meeting. Make phone calls to prospective recruits early so they can plan their schedules. The best time for meetings is after 7:00 p.m. on a weeknight or on a Saturday. If you intend to place ads in the local paper, make sure they run at least a week in advance. Also, let the company know about it ahead of time and they may publicize it or send company representatives to participate. Pick a convenient place. Most national hotel chains have excellent meeting room space. Remember to book ahead for best rates. Parking is essential, and if it's free, so much the better. If people will be coming in from out of town, an airport hotel is always great. There are plenty of hotels near every major airport. They have shuttles for those arriving by air, and they are staffed to handle late arrivals and early departures, and often have extended restaurant hours.

Keep it short, stupid

Yes, the KISS principle is applicable to business opportunity meetings. Remember, these people are doing you a favor by attending. They have groceries to buy, errands to run, Little League games to watch. Keep the meeting under two hours and show that you respect their time. Keep it lively. Get to the point.

All the Important Details

Details, details, details! One mark of a great meeting is that things go so smoothly that nobody knows you've gone to the trouble of looking after the details. But as they say, it's the little things that make the difference.

Meeting planner Greg White has these suggestions regarding the small but crucial details:

Seating

The goal is to avoid a meeting with lots of empty chairs. Assuming a meeting for 150 people, set up the room with 100 chairs theater style (placed in the front 70 percent of the room). As a back-up, have 50 chairs stacked in an adjacent service area. Also, leave some area at the back of the room.

Displays

Place one 8-foot, narrow table on the front wall with a pitcher of water. This table can be used for display items, speaker notes, materials, etc. Place two 8-foot, standard-width tables on the rear wall, end-to-end, or on one side for displays. Ask the hotel to have all the tables skirted.

Registration Area

Place one 8-foot table in the registration area outside the meeting room. This too should be skirted. The following items should be placed on this table:

- Name tags. These are easy to forget, but don't. They really help people talk to one another. You can pick them up at most stationery stores.
- Registration cards. Make sure to record who is in attendance, so you can follow up later. Either have an attendance sheet on the registration desk as people walk in or consider having a drawing or door prize as an inducement for attendees to fill out registration cards.
- Company sign or banner. Place this near the registration area to create recognition. Remember, many meetings may be going on in the same hotel at the same time.

Hotel Lobby

Make sure your meeting is on the hotel marquee of events or televised monitor. Don't assume that the hotel will do this right. Before the meeting, double-check the monitor or sign board and be sure that the notice includes the name of your company, the time of the meeting and the designated meeting room. A nice touch is to have a host in the lobby to direct guests to the meeting area.

Sound System

Ask the hotel for one microphone to be set up on the podium with a long cord. The cord should be long enough to reach the rear of the room. Lapel microphones are effective, but remember to let the hotel know ahead of time.

Podium

Ask for a single podium at the front of the room, placed on a 6-foot by 12-foot riser.

Drawing Board

You'll probably explain the compensation plan at your meeting, so make arrangements to have a chalk board or white drawing board with appropriate writing utensils or a screen for a PowerPoint presentation or video.

Water

Ask the hotel to supply a water station. Soft drinks ordered from a hotel get expensive very fast. The hotel should set up the water station outside the room one hour before the meeting, and should replenish it during any planned breaks.

Beverage/Coffee Service

If you'll be offering coffee, order it by the gallon rather than the cup. This will save you a lot of money.

And the Bill Please?

Obviously, the cost of a meeting can vary widely. So, shop around. Your basic costs will be for:

*Room rent,

*Podium/microphone and

*White\Blackboard\Screen for PowerPoint or video presentation

Big Returns

"You are going to increase your investment ten-fold by paying attention to detail," says Greg White. Your effort in planning a great meeting will be reflected in the growth and higher productivity of your sales organization.



Jeffery Babener

On any given day you can catch Jeffrey Babener, Babener & Associates, lecturing on Network Marketing at the University of Texas or the University of Illinois, addressing thousands of distributors in Los Angeles, Bangkok, Tokyo and Russia, or writing a new book on Network Marketing, an article for *Entrepreneur Magazine* or a chapter for a University textbook.

Over two decades he has served as marketing and legal advisor to some of the world's largest direct selling companies. An active spokesperson for the industry, he has assisted in new legislation and served on the Lawyer's Council and Government Relations Committee of the Direct Selling Association (DSA) as well as serving as General Counsel for the Multilevel Marketing International Association.

He is an MLM attorney supplier member of the DSA and has served as legal counsel and MLM consultant on MLM law issues for many DSA companies. He has chaired more than 50 national conferences on the subject of "Starting and Running the Successful MLM Company". He is editor of one of the most informative and popular websites on Network Marketing, Direct Selling and MLM, www.mlmllegal.com.