

# 5 Major Challenges in Planning Corporate Meetings and Incentive Programs

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*How to avoid  
catastrophes in  
planning and  
execution*



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*This is an overview of the full research report presented at IMEX. For a copy of the complete presentation, please contact Laurie Sprouse, CITE, CMP, DMCP at [laurie@uvdmc.com](mailto:laurie@uvdmc.com) or (972) 732-8433.*

# Challenge #1: Identifying The ROO

- Only one in five workers are fully “engaged”
- The cost of employee disengagement is a staggering \$300 billion a year
- A 2011 study of job satisfaction shows that 80% of employed Americans are unsatisfied with their job
  - The highest level of dissatisfaction ever recorded
- Only 12% of workers whose companies had cut benefits or perks intended to stay at their current job for more than 6 months

The study’s conclusion is a disturbing look at implications for our future...

Source: “84% of Workers Want to Quit Jobs, Find New Gigs in 2011”, *BusinessNews Daily*, December 2010;

“Despite Competitive Labor Market, One-in-Five Workers Plan to Change Jobs in 2010”, New CareerBuilder Survey Reveals, CareerBuilder Survey, Jan 2010



# Challenge #2: Balancing Perceptions

- Incentive House planners today often walk a fine line as they struggle to manage perceptions from executives, employees and even the public
- In today's economy, companies can face harsh criticism for holding events that appear lavish or unfriendly to the environment
- “Shrimp and schmooze boondoggles” are now likely to make headlines in addition to creating a negative impact on companies



Source: Meetings Can Make A Difference: Low cost ways companies can use meetings and events to become better corporate citizens, 2010 *Special Events*

# Challenge #3: Controlling Costs Without Sacrificing Strategic Objectives

- Many planners are trying to shave costs by doing more on their own and working directly with each vendor
- The time involved in setting everything up can be overwhelming and the small details that make or break the “experience” for participants can easily be overlooked
- The sheer volume of details to manage and pitfalls to avoid leaves lots of opportunities for high profile mistakes that work against strategic objectives



Source: Meetings Market Trends Survey-2010, February 2010

# Challenge #4: Properly Vetting Vendors

- With a one-week meeting, a host has several days to remedy an attendee's bad experience
- However, now with meetings lasting only one or two days, there is far less recovery time
- Each and every experience must now be perfect and selecting the most reliable vendors is critical to a successful experience



# Challenge #5: Murphy's Law... What can go wrong will go wrong

## *Weather Challenges*

- One planner found out a week before her program that the venue's roof was under construction and was not going to be finished in time for her event due to *weather delays*
- Another had no back up plan for her 1000 person event to accommodate the *record-breaking snowfall* on event day
- 1,500 hotel guests were forced to evacuate from the Gaylord Nashville due to *flooding*
- North Texas' Super Bowl XLV – *record ice and snow* - need we say more?

## *Construction Delays*

- As part of a citywide conference, a planner booked a new hotel that did not open as scheduled due to construction delays
- The result? A last-minute citywide shuttle



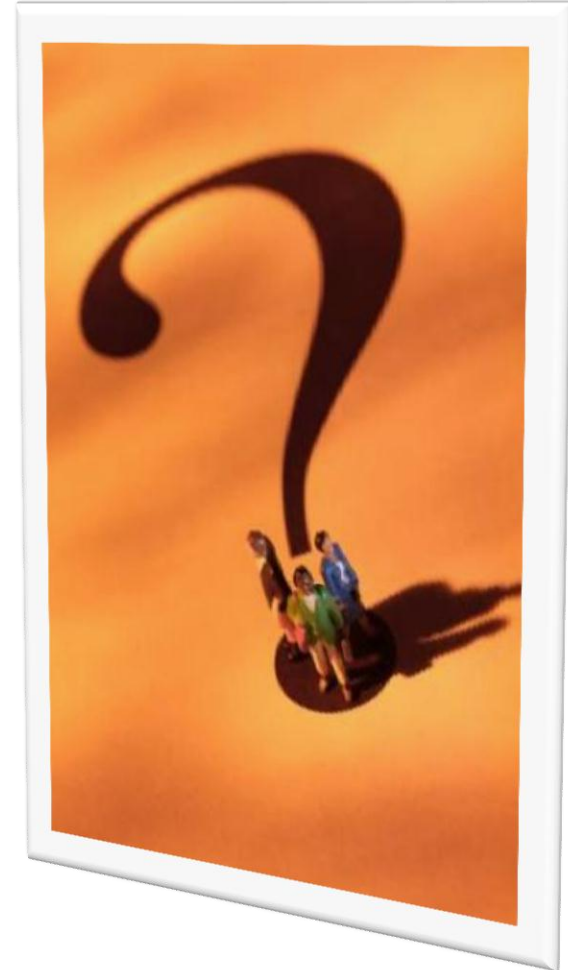
Source: "NYC, Tennessee Hotels Put Emergency Plans to Use", *Hotel News Now*, May 2010

# Strategies for success: Make the Experience Central

*Investigate the small things that cause irritation and frustration...*

*For example, the hotel experience depends on a myriad of small details that comprise the experience*

- What is the check-in policy: If your group arrives early, will they be accommodated or hanging around the lobby?
- Cleanliness: Some hotels take extensive steps to ensure that the room doesn't smell musty or contain allergens such as dust or lingering pet hair from previous guests
- If the hotel is new does it have quality glitches in staffing, cleaning or room amenities?



Source: How to Conduct Productive Meetings, American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Donald Kirkpatrick, pg 127

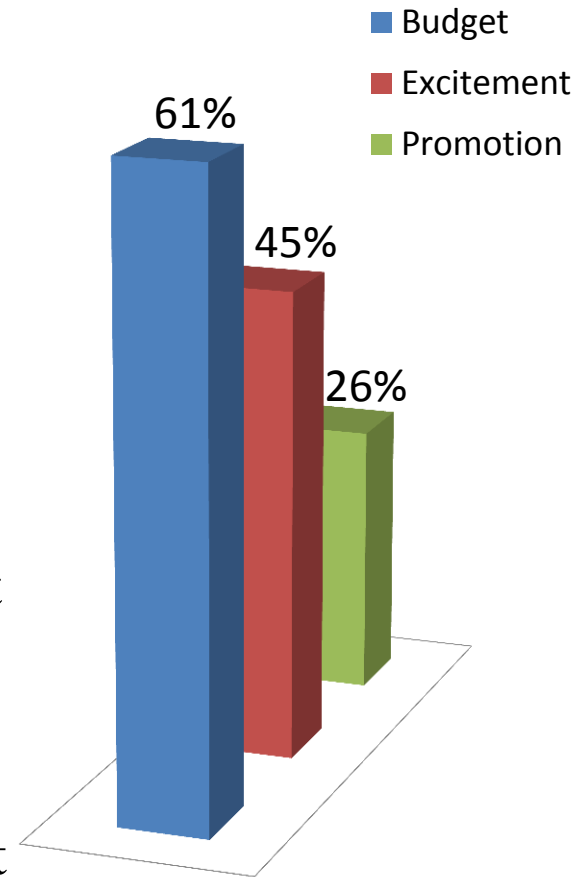
# Strategies for success: Transportation is more than a means to get from one place to another

- Transportation is one of the most important details for your event — however, it is generally where planners pay the least attention
- Reserving the proper number of vehicles and drivers does not ensure that the transportation experience will be smooth for your guests
- Drivers getting lost, failure to load passengers expediently and efficiently, driving through unsightly areas, dropping so that guests must cross traffic or walk a long distance
- Professionals attending incentive programs have different expectations than leisure groups, tour groups, or high school groups - *does the transportation company understand the difference?*
  - And, are they capable of accommodating your needs?



# Strategies for success: Activities that enhance the experience

- Planners say their top 3 challenges are staying within budget, generating excitement among attendees, and promoting the program
- With the imagination and ingenuity of local partners, you can create special events and activities that will:
  - Enhance the company image
  - Leave long-lasting positive memories with participants
  - Utilize local resources to create excitement and engagement
  - Capitalize on activities that also give back to the community
  - Provide options that maximize your budget



Source: Incentive Travel Cuts Hurt Sales, Morale, and Retention, Meetings Net, 1/4/10

# Strategies for success: Partners can help

- There are so many aspects to planning meetings
- Focus on that which no one else can help you with — your meeting objectives — and let others focus on what they do best
- Local partners such as a destination management company (DMC) can leverage their relationships, negotiation skills and buying power for you and will have the ability to pull “rabbits out of hats” when needed



# Working with a local expert provides additional benefits

## *A local partner allows you to:*

- Save time via their knowledge and connections
- Capitalize on their experience and relationships
- Have peace of mind knowing your local partner will help avoid pitfalls with contingency planning



Source: Incentive Travel Cuts Hurt Sales, Morale, and Retention, Meetings Net, 1/4/10

# DMCs can save money and headaches

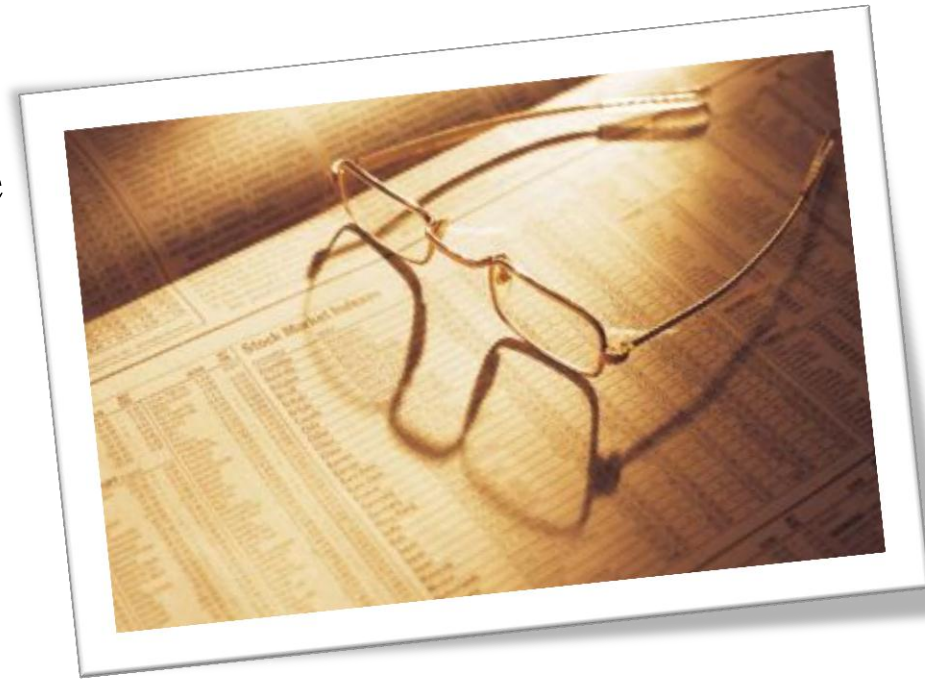
- They can orchestrate all the local elements of a corporate meeting or event
- They know the places off the beaten path and have in-depth knowledge of location transportation, hotels, etc. that can literally save meeting planners a great deal of time and headaches
- They find venues, hire talent, vet vendors and do everything a planner wants done inside and outside of the hotel



Source: The Meeting Planner's Outsourcing Guide: When You Can't Always Do It Yourself, Start Here, Meetings Net, accessed August 6, 2010

# A local specialist can also help you balance perceptions

- A local DMC can give advice and guide you in cost effective activities that can engage employees and create a positive CSR footprint that everyone feels good about
- Added bonuses potentially include media/press and consumer goodwill
- Enhancing the meeting experience is what DMCs do



# Strategies for success: Selecting Partners

## *Look for a partner who...*

- Has a hands-on, high-touch service model with highly defined processes which leave nothing to chance
- Has strong relationships and partnerships with local venues for buying power that you can tap into
- Is tenured with many years in the destination and knows that their job is to *make you look like a star*
- Has a loyal, experienced workforce that understands each and every detail that will make your meeting successful



# Look for a partner who...

- Receives a score of at least 95% in approval ratings from its customers
- Is award winning in creativity as well as logistics planning
- Exhibits understanding of your ROI and ROO requirements and understands their role in achieving those requirements



# Look for a partner who...

Has undergone the due diligence you expect:

- Accredited by the Association of Destination Management Executives (ADME) - the only non-profit organization governing the DMC profession
- The ADMC accreditation requires annual qualification on essential criteria such as:
  - Financial stability
  - Insurance minimums
  - Having a Destination Management Certified Professional (DMCP) on staff



# A Word From Our Sponsor...



# We deliver peace of mind...

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- We at Ultimate Ventures believe that we can help you to avoid the challenges presented in this study
- Please allow us to tell you a bit about us!



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**DMCNETWORK**  
COMPANY

# Who we are...

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- At Ultimate Ventures (UV), we are destination experts passionate about bringing the best experiences to your Dallas/Fort Worth meetings
- Our events are recognized as some of the most engaging and successful in the destination management industry
- We believe in acting as the ultimate partner, thinking ahead on behalf of our clients



# Benefits we bring to you...

- We offer you a hands-on service model
- Only ADME accredited DMC in the DFW area
- 190+ years of industry experience on our team
- 97.9% client satisfaction rate
- More awards for creativity and logistics than any other Texas DMC
- Celebrating 18 years in business
- Member of the **DMCNETWORK**<sup>®</sup>



# Recognized industry leadership...

- Actively participated on ADME's standardized contract and best practices task force
- Co-wrote the transportation chapter for the new Best Practices in Destination Management handbook published by ADME
- **Due to recent tax legislation pushed through by UV, "Qualified Texas DMCs" now receive tax benefits which are passed along to YOU in the form of savings and better service**



# Experience the difference...

- Expecting the unexpected – “What if” Experts
- Doing the right things because they are the right things to do
- We value:
  - ✓ Positive attitude
  - ✓ Accountability
  - ✓ Creativity
  - ✓ Flexibility
  - ✓ Planning proactively
  - ✓ Growth



# What our clients say about us...

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- “If you want a job done right and done efficiently within a reasonable budget, hire UV — you won’t be disappointed.”
- “UV people are just awesome! They don’t get flustered when things happen. The smile is still on their faces. No matter what comes their way, they just make it happen.”



# A step you can take today...

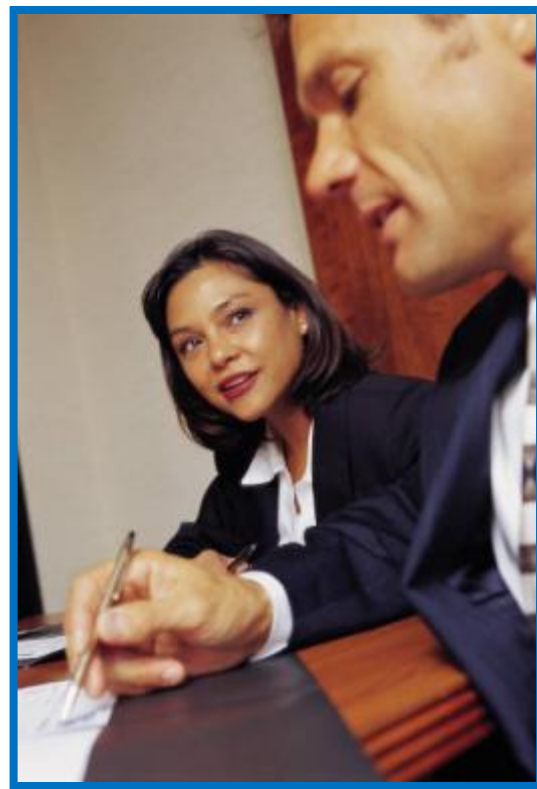
Take advantage of our complimentary offers:

- **The Ultimate Strategic Jam Session**  
(valued at \$500):

- A 60-minute phone consultation with an account manager and transportation logistics expert or member of the executive team

- **The Ultimate Site Inspection**  
(valued at \$850):

- Upon qualification, a free half-day accompanied site inspection including round-trip airport transfers (*does not include air, meals or hotel accommodations*)



# Are you ready to get started?

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Protect your meeting...

Protect your goals & objectives...

Protect your job...

Utilize a partner who can help you  
make this happen

**CALL NOW**

**972-732-8433**

or visit

**[www.uvdmc.com](http://www.uvdmc.com)**

# Thank you!

