

FAQ

WHAT IS A THIRD-PARTY PLANNER? FIND OUT MORE ABOUT USING A CERTIFIED MEETING PROFESSIONAL

For small meetings, large corporate events or anything in-between, securing a professional meeting/event manager relieves the stress associated with the planning and help you realize your objectives.

"Today, the CMP credential is recognized globally as the badge of excellence in the meeting, convention, exhibition, and event industry. The qualifications for certification are based on professional experience, education, and a rigorous exam." You can learn more about the CMP designation and confirm which professionals maintain rigorous professional development and recertification every five years online at Convention Industry Council.

So, why don't more companies use a Certified Meeting Professional? That and other frequently asked questions are answered below.

Q: WHAT IS A MEETING CONSULTANT?

Answer: A meeting consultant is a professional who is hired on a contractual basis to fulfill the needs of a client planning a convention, conference, meeting or special event. Meeting consultants offer an array of [services](#), ranging from a one-time consultation to complete event planning, on-site management and post-event evaluation.

As the client, you determine what responsibilities consultants will manage, their work schedule and those individuals with whom they interface. The consultant's role is to ensure that you and your staff do not become over-burdened with details. You retain as much control as you feel comfortable with and let the meeting consultant do the rest.

Q: WHY SHOULD I USE A PROFESSIONAL MEETING PLANNER?

Answer: You want to present the most positive, professional image to your attendees. When brought in at the beginning of the process, the meeting professional plays a vital role, establishing goals and objectives, performance standards, direction and leadership. The professional will then follow up through to post-event evaluation.

Q: MY STAFF HAS PLANNED MY MEETINGS IN THE PAST AND THEY'VE BEEN OKAY. HOW CAN A PROFESSIONAL DO BETTER?

Answer: Without the professional in charge there is always an element of risk. As a manager, you use systems to strategically minimize or eliminate risk to your objectives. The Certified Meeting Professional knows there are more than 27 meeting planning functions that need to be considered for a successful meeting or event. Your staff person, whose primary function is not meeting management, is probably not experienced in these 27 areas. Additionally, a CMP has individual contacts which puts him/her in a better negotiating position.

The Certified Meeting Professional can make an average meeting or event a spectacular success in a cost effective manner while eliminating the risk factor.

Q: I'M NOT SURE I CAN AFFORD A PROFESSIONAL MEETING/EVENT MANAGER. HOW CAN I WORK IT INTO MY BUDGET?

Answer: When brought in at the beginning, the professional meeting/event manager can help you with your budget, suggests ways to fund the event and secure sponsors. Plan Ahead will also work on a consulting basis, laying out the plan for you to follow, fitting it within the tightest budget.

A knowledgeable meeting consultant is experienced in managing a client's requirements and can maximize return on investment. Meeting consultants use a billing structure similar to other professional consultants; they may charge on an hourly basis, by the project or based on a retainer. When hired, To Plan Ahead can help you determine the best structure based on your needs and budget.