

# DESTINATION RESEARCH FOR MEETINGS - POTENTIALLY GREAT SERVICES BUT DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

Destination research resources for individuals, companies and associations have sprung up like mushrooms in the past years. So too, has the number of companies offering destination research services: websites which focus on providing information on almost any destination in the world, including venues, accommodations, local transportation, climate information, shops' opening hours, electricity standards etc are flourishing. Thus if you have to organize an event, at first glance it seems like there's nothing for you to worry about: the company managing the website can often offer you any assistance needed to organize an event in any chosen location. But, do palm trees, a state-of-the-art golf course or a medieval city centre guarantee a successful meeting? We believe there's much more to it but we also believe the location is key to a meeting's success.

When asked for a venue proposal in various cities, we avoid basing our choices solely on the participants' passion for good weather, architecture or famous gastronomy. We always go through a number of basic questions with our client to be able to tailor our research to their needs. These questions include: How important is the venue's access to an international airport? Will guest room accommodations be required? Is there a specific rate range for guest accommodations? How many attendees do you expect? Will attendees be on their own for meals? Where has this event been held at in the past? What are attendee's expectations? Among the questions are also: What are the goals for the meeting and how does this destination help achieve those goals?

This exercise may sound trivial but it is a step too often neglected. A business-oriented meeting for 400 people with great connections to the world is indeed entirely different from a meeting for 100 people who are interested in many social events and discovering new places. By scoping the needs of the event and the client, by means of such questions as those mentioned above, efficient meeting planning can start.

Once the general requirements for the destinations have been set, we develop a checklist with as much detail as possible, and follow-up on it to compare various destination options. Things to bear in mind when researching a destination are:

- ✦ As of preliminary discussions with possible venues, it is important to set-up a solid and honest relationship with the sales representative. Communicate your expectations clearly and make them explain in specific terms why the destination is or is not the perfect fit for your event. This will show you whether they understand your meeting's history and goals.
- ✦ Ask them about any renovation/remodeling plans that may affect your meeting
- ✦ Check venue and location calendars and beware of any possible competing event taking place at the same time.

Going through these easy processes, either with a service provider you take-on to assist you in selecting your destination or in your relations with potential venues, will help you ensure that the location fully matches your expectations.

You will thus start planning your meeting from a solid basis and you will be able to focus on making it a success rather than on having to deal with unforeseen issues when your event takes place.

Happy Planning.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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