

## **Meetings Coordinator**

### **Final Report**

#### **Pittcon 2020 - Chicago**

The Meetings Coordinator is responsible for the assignment of all rooms, as well as some exhibits on the Expo floor. This means that there is a room assignment or space allocated for virtually every Committee. A comprehensive spread sheet should be maintained. The MC is responsible for:

- Room assignments and Special Activities (mixers or other special events in the convention center)
- Room Diagrams and Room Set-up forms
- Convention Center Furniture and Specialty Furniture Order
- Electrical
- Landline telephones
- Coat/Baggage Check
- Water Coolers
- Event Memorandum
- Scooters
- Product/Program locators
- First Aid Station (work with Security)
- Expo Floor – Primarily ordering electric and furniture for Pittcon booth, Apple/Souvenir booths, Nexus theater, Expo office, Seminar rooms with ceiling, Lab Gauntlet, Tech Hub, Pittcon Planetarium, etc.

#### **Suggestions/Changes for moving forward:**

- It is important the Meetings Coordinator (MC) has a copy of the convention center license agreement and the GES contract as soon as possible. The convention center license agreement has the allocated space both exhibition hall(s) and meeting rooms. This document has the dates the rooms are available for Pittcon use and when the rooms need to be vacated.
- A master key for all of the meeting rooms was provided to the MC and MC chair-elect for Pittcon 2020. This was very useful. The master keys were ordered from Security Committee. I would recommend the MC and MC chair-elect request a master key for all meeting rooms in the convention center whenever possible. There was no additional cost for these master keys.

- Continue to place committees in offices together whenever it makes sense. For example: Labor Pool, Committee Arrangements, Meetings Coordinator, President, and Vice President
  
- Coat/Baggage check, water coolers and food in certain offices should all become the responsibility of Committee Arrangements. All of these typically are arranged through the food service vendor at the convention center. For Pittcon 2020, the food service was dealing with three different committee chairmen and became confused with invoicing and ordering. Activities was ordering the food for the committee offices, Committee Arrangements was ordering the committee lunches and Meetings Coordinator was ordering water coolers (need to order electric) and coat/baggage check (most convention centers this is arranged through the food service vendor).
  - All food/beverage including water coolers become the responsibility of Committee arrangements.
  - Meetings Coordinator will still arrange for the location of coat and baggage check but the information then should be passed along to committee arrangements to finalize the order.
  - Meetings coordinator will still order electric for the water coolers and will need to place the water coolers on the room diagrams but the order information should be sent to Committee Arrangements to finalize the order.
  
- This allows for one invoice and one Pittcon contact person for the food and beverage service to interact with. The invoice can be reviewed by Meetings Coordinator, Committee Arrangements, Activities, or whatever committee(s) are involved.
  
- The responsibility for ordering Scooters for committee/CWS use during Pittcon should be moved to the Security Committee. The scooters need to be available early and late for security and PIE use. This year the scooters were needed on Wednesday through Friday. Most committee members including Meetings Coordinator do not need to be at the show site for that length of time. I talked to the 2021 Security Chair and she agreed. She handled the receipt of the scooters this year since the MC was not arriving before the scooters were needed.
  
- **Room diagrams** need to be standardized. Room diagrams need to have furniture, chairs, electric, landline telephones, file cabinets, waste baskets, etc. placed on the diagram.
  - Val Cassidy provided the best room diagrams for Short Courses. She used a program which would be helpful for all staff and committee to use. Some chairs

provided diagrams but many of the diagrams were made by the meetings coordinator. Both GES and the convention center request diagrams for each room/area. GES will only provide diagrams for the rooms/areas they are providing furniture and/or set up(counters). The convention center required room diagrams/area diagrams for all areas used. The convention center must have these diagrams to get approval from the fire marshal before set-up.

- Many of the rooms used for Pittcon 2020 were the same rooms used the last time the conference was held in Chicago (2017). The MC sent the room diagrams from 2017 to chairman to approve or make changes. Only some of the chairman used these diagrams and sent them back. Many sent diagrams from other years and many did not send a diagram at all.
  - Worked with GES to obtain final room diagrams of all offices and areas that GES was responsible for setting before sending these to the convention center. This is to avoid having many revisions to a diagram. It is important that MC, GES and the convention center have the same final room/area diagram to work from for set-up.
  - Used diagrams from previous Pittcon in Chicago, changing the dates, for each technical program session room as well as for Coulter/Plenary session. These were all required to be sent to the convention center.
  - Program session rooms, short course classrooms and Coulter/Plenary diagrams need to be sent to the AV vendor (AVPG) too.
  - GES will provide blank diagrams of the meeting rooms in the convention center.
- **Room Set-up Forms**
    - MC sends a template of room set up form to Chairs, CE and office staff to be completed for each meeting room or area.
    - These forms capture the following information:
      - Room contact (Chair/CE)
      - Dates and times to set-up and tear down room
      - Dates and times of room use
      - Times to clean/refresh the room
      - Equipment (laptops, copy machines, printers etc.) and electrical requirements
      - Landline telephone request
    - These forms are sent to both GES and the convention center. A form needs to be completed for all meeting rooms and areas being used in the convention center.

Many chairs did not complete these forms. MC had to complete the forms for many committees.

- The forms need to be revised for the electrical requirements. Please see the information below concerning electrical issues.
- **Electric**-each convention center handles electrical responsibilities differently. In Chicago, GES provided the electric in show offices, expo floor, and common areas. The convention center provided electric in session rooms and wherever food/beverage were supplied. Of course, there were exceptions to this rule which was confusing.
  - MC needs to clarify with the convention center who provides the electric throughout the space during first site trip (September/October).
  - The MC needs to find out either from the convention center or Pittcon AV committee how many microphones are provided per meeting room. These need to be placed on the diagram and electric needs to be ordered for the microphones and LCD projector in each technical session room.
  - There was more electric ordered in some meeting rooms than necessary for Pittcon 2020.
    - A separate room was used to house the scooters with electric. This is not needed. One drop with a multi-strip is sufficient in the Security office to charge the scooters.
    - Electric was provided in the committee lunchroom for the scooters but this was not used.
  - Some committees have the exact electrical requirements for their area and others are left up to the meetings coordinator to decide. Some electric is provided in watts and other in amps.
    - It would be helpful if there were standard electrical requirements that could be developed for commonly used items such as laptops, cell phones etc. in one standard unit. This could then be used for the request for electrical on the room set-up forms.
- **Furniture**-both the convention center and GES provide furniture for meeting rooms. Each convention center provides different furniture. Each convention center has different size rectangular and round tables. Also, the food service vendor will provide tables and chairs in meeting rooms where there is food/beverage ordered. Usually, except in Philadelphia, the food service vendor will order the electric they need for any food/beverage service.

- September/October or during first site trip, MC should find out from the event coordinator from the convention center what furniture is provided in meeting rooms/offices. In Chicago, each office was provided with 4 tables and 2 chairs per table complimentary. For Program technical session rooms and Short Courses classrooms, the tables and chairs were all complimentary. There was no limit on the number of tables and chairs. The limit is only in meeting rooms being used as committee offices. Some convention centers will provide waste baskets and garment racks while others these items need to be requested from GES. (Note: make sure you understand exactly what the convention center is offering. In 2005, I was MC in Orlando. The convention center told me they could provide garment racks for me instead of going through GES. However, they neglected to tell me they were only providing the garment rack and not the hangers necessary to actually hang coats. I had access to a car and drove to a dollar store and bought plastic hangers which I then shipped back to the office at the end of the show.)
- Standard practice in most convention centers is the first set up of a room is complimentary and then there is a re-set charge if you wish to change the room configuration. For convention centers with union labor an additional labor charge would be added along with the re-set charge. The event coordinator for the convention center can provide the re-set charges for each room to the MC. The charges vary based on the size of the room.
- Specialty Furniture Order
  - GES provides a master spreadsheet to for specialty furniture which keeps track of the expenditures towards the maximum allowance.
  - Deadline for specialty furniture is determined by GES but is usually December/January
  - Any unused specialty furniture cap not used for Pittcon offices/areas will be applied to the Pittcon booth or other areas that Pittcon is using specialty furniture mostly on the expo floor.
- GES will provide diagrams labeling the tables and chairs differentiating between GES or convention center tables or chairs for any offices or areas where both are providing furniture.
- **Meetings Coordinator Chair-elect**

- Responsible for scheduling the ancillary meeting rooms. These rooms are used by society partners/publishing partners etc. Pittcon provides one electrical drop per room. The society/publishing partner is responsible for the cost of any additional AV or food/beverage.
- Responsible for working with the office staff on the event memorandum.
- It is recommended that the MC chair-elect canvas the rooms and areas during the show and talk to both the current chair and chair-elect of each committee to see if the space/area assignment needs any changes for the next year. This will help the chair-elect decide room assignments for the next year.

### **Timelines:**

Many of the timelines for meeting coordinator are dictated by the GES deadlines. Typically, the convention center can make changes up until move-in. It is important to avoid making any changes or additions to room set ups once move in starts. The costs for these changes can be significant from both GES and the convention center.

### **July-September**

The meetings coordinator should prepare a draft layout of room assignments for each committee based on information gathered from the previous Pittcon and the last time Pittcon was in a particular venue.

- It is helpful to try to keep Program technical session rooms and Networking rooms all together.

### General Estimate of Rooms/Areas needed:

- Program (25-27 total rooms)
  - 20-22 technical session rooms
  - Large ballroom or lecture hall for Coulter/Plenary lecture
  - Ballroom or common area for Poster session
  - Program office and invited speaker lounge
  - Speaker ready room
  - AVPG staging room
- Networking (6 total rooms)
  - Networking office
  - 5 session rooms
- Short Courses (17-19 total rooms)
  - Short course office
  - 15-17 classrooms
  - Computer lab classroom
- Publicity/Marketing (4 total rooms)

- Publicity office/Press Room/Pittcon Today
- 3 Press Conference rooms
- Security/Camp Pittcon (3 total rooms)
  - Security office
  - Security Guard Breakroom
  - Camp Pittcon locate next to Security office
- AV Vendor (AVPG-2-3 total rooms)
  - 1 storage room
  - 1-2 staging rooms for program and short courses. If they are not close to each other then two rooms will be needed.
- Science Week (10 total rooms-no Science week during Pittcon 2020)
  - 6 classrooms (large room for planetarium)
  - Office
  - Storage room
  - Lunchroom for students
  - Large lecture hall or ballroom for Lecture Demo Presentation
- Ancillary Meeting Rooms
  - 5 meeting rooms
- Employment
  - Large ballroom or several smaller adjacent rooms
  - Employment was in a large open common space in front of the exposition for Pittcon 2020. The layout worked well and I would consider doing this again if there are not an abundance of meeting rooms available.
- Registration-large central area
  - Webmaster and Photographer shared office
- International Visitors-near registration
- Housing/Transportation-central location
- Activities-depends on whether there is a store selling goods if a space is required.
- Coat/Baggage Check area (many convention centers have permanent coat/baggage check areas otherwise GES can provide pipe and drape for the area.)
- Information booths-2-3 dependent on hall traffic flow
- Science Heritage Institute Hall of Fame display

**Committees requiring one room:**

- President/VP
  - Office (share with other committees such as Labor Pool, Meetings Coordinator, Committee Arrangements, Student Coordinator etc.)
  - Conference room with AV for International meetings
- PIE-large room with access to elevators to move items

- Computer (SmartSource) storage
- AV-sign storage
- Treasurer-typically in a secure, low traffic area
- Committee lunches-large ballroom
- Large room for Thursday Expo Lunch/Meeting
- Medium/Large room for Pre-Con meeting.

### **September/October**

- MC should work with Expo Committee at the signage site trip to verify placement of Information booths, Product/Program locator, Science Heritage Institute Hall of Fame, Housing/Transportation, International Visitors in the common space areas of the convention center.
- MC should work with Publicity/Marketing Committee to determine the location of the opening ceremony. The convention center will provide a stage, podium and microphone for the event. Sound for the event is usually provided by the AV vendor (AVPG).
- After room/space assignments have been finalized, email chairs, CE and office staff the room set-up forms and diagrams of the meeting rooms. GES can provide blank room diagrams for the meeting rooms in the convention center.
- Deadline should be early to mid- November

### **November**

- Specialty furniture spreadsheet from GES should have been received.
- Send a copy of the spreadsheet from last year to all committee chairs, CE and office staff asking them to review the furniture requests and make any changes.
- MC completes the specialty furniture spreadsheet and sends it to GES.
- Deadline for Specialty furniture is provided by GES. Usually in early to mid- December
- Work with Security and the convention center on providing First Aid station.

### **December-February**

- Finalize room diagrams with GES
- Order landline telephones
- Place electrical orders
- Send information concerning Coat and Baggage check to Committee Arrangements so they can make the final arrangements



## **February-Pittcon move- in**

- Send final diagrams to convention center
- Finalize plans for the opening ceremony
- CE and Chair work on the Event Memorandum-only need to order 250. Printed 400 event memorandums using past numbers but this number can be significantly reduced. I would suggest continuing to include an electronic version of the event memorandum on the committee section of the website. This can be edited with any changes or corrections. Print version needs to be finalized 2-3 weeks before the truck leaves Pittsburgh.

## **Contracts:**

- Complete First Aid request form
- Coat and Baggage Check (this is handled differently depending on the convention center even as a fee -based service. In Philadelphia there was a fee for staffing the area but in Chicago there was no cost to Pittcon if they received a minimum amount of revenue. (This minimum was met so there was not cost for this service at McCormick Place.)
- Scooters-this is usually a third- party company who provides scooters for the convention center. The contract is between the company (Scootaround) and Pittcon.

## **Final Thoughts:**

Communication between committee chairs and office staff is crucial. This year the communication between committee chairs was the worst I have ever seen. Chairs did not respond to multiple requests for information. Chairs did not communicate with other chairs concerning plans for their committee. Committees supported by office staff, did provide the necessary information. I could have done a better job of communicating when rooms were available in the convention center to all committee chairs. I should have sent the master room spreadsheet to the webmaster to be posted on the committee section of the website.

MC usually brings some office supplies in case someone needs a tablet, stapler, pens, markers etc. I suggest a package of AA and AAA batteries be included in the office supplies.

Respectfully submitted,

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Pittcon 2020 Meetings Coordinator

Attachments: Timeline and Master Room Assignment Spreadsheet