

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS: A Planning Guide



Meetings and Conventions: A Planning Guide

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MPI

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Meeting Objectives

Chapter

1

Introduction

Key Terms



Can you understand and apply the following terms...

attendee
conference
delegate
event
goal
measurable
meeting
participant
purpose
objective
objective tree
theme

Refer to the glossary for further clarification of the key terms for this chapter.

Establishing meaningful objectives is the first step to managing a successful meeting. The aim of this chapter is to familiarize the meeting professional with developing objectives and using them effectively. This chapter begins with an outline of industry standards for meeting objectives, followed by an introduction to the development of *goals*, *purposes*, and *objectives*. The concept of an objective tree is discussed, including how this planning element can prevent a crisis during an event. A checklist is provided to aid the meeting professional in developing meeting objectives for almost any situation.

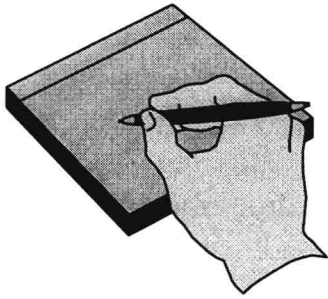
Throughout this, and all subsequent chapters, the terms *event*, *conference*, and *meeting* will be used interchangeably to indicate the function that the meeting professional is planning. The terms *delegate*, *attendee*, and/or *participant* are also used interchangeably to denote for whom the function is planned, those expected to attend. *Meeting professional* is used to describe any individual involved in the meeting planning industry, encompassing *meeting planners*, *meeting managers*, and *planning staff*.

Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- comply with industry standards for setting effective meeting objectives
- comprehend the value of identifying and writing goals, purposes, and objectives
- differentiate between goals, purposes, and objectives
- understand the role objectives play in successful meetings
- write and test planning objectives
- develop an objective tree

Test Your Prior Meeting Objectives Knowledge



Question 1:

Meeting objectives can be oral or written.

True ☐

False ☐

Question 2:

Goals are long-range targets set by the client, while objectives are short-range and apply to the immediate event.

True ☐

False ☐

Question 3:

Objectives should specify the “what”, “when”, “why”, and “how” of the event.

True ☐

False ☐

See **Appendix A** for solutions.

Question 4:

Meeting objectives can be used as a basis for post-event evaluation.

True ☐

False ☐

Question 5:

Objectives may be written in any format, as long as both meeting professional and client agree.

True ☐

False ☐

Question 6:

Meeting objectives should specify who is responsible for completion of the task.

True ☐

False ☐

Industry Standards



Occupational standards cover the role of the meeting professional when establishing objectives for a meeting. Standards describe what people should know and be able to do in their occupations. These industry benchmarks detail the skills and knowledge required to plan and manage both large and small meetings. Meeting Professionals International Canadian Council (MPICC) has developed detailed occupational standards for meeting professionals, on which this resource guide is based. For the complete set of standards, see *Meeting Manager Standards* and *Meeting Co-ordinator Standards* (MPICC, 1994). The following is a comparison of tasks for both meeting manager and meeting coordinator :

Meeting Manager

- Research and analyze background information
- Define meeting objective(s)
- Address language and cultural issues
- Address environmental issues

Meeting Coordinator

- Research background information
- Review meeting objectives

* adapted from: Meeting Professionals International, Canadian Council (1994). *Meeting Manager Standards*, Mississauga, ON: MPICC, p. iv, pp.1-8.

Goals, Purposes, and Objectives



What are goals, purposes, and objectives, and how are they used?

Client **goals** for a meeting are long-range targets that may be projected years into the future. Goals may be accessed by contacting the Research and Development (R & D) division of the organization. A goal for a corporate sales training meeting might be

To provide the tools necessary for salesperson motivation to produce a sales volume increase of 5 % per year for the next three years

or

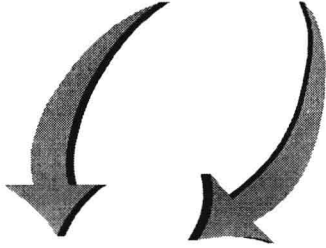
To provide an understanding of company policy and problems so sales personnel feel involved in the company to the point where sales force attrition is reduced to 3%.

Before an event can be planned, the meeting professional must have some preliminary information about the host organization and the significance of the event. **Goals, purposes, and objectives** help define the organization's needs and the desired result of the event.

Once goals have been identified, the next step is to consider **purposes**. These are generalized, immediate targets, that are more specific than goals, and are used in the establishment of objectives. Purposes relate to the desired impact the meeting will have on its attendees, and can be categorized as enlightening, problem solving, motivational, and persuasive.

More Goals, Purposes, and Objectives...

Purposes ...



To enlighten. This refers to the increase in knowledge about a subject that the attendees will acquire during the meeting. In order to achieve this, the meeting professional must know the group and how informed they are *prior* to the meeting.

To solve problems. The meeting professional can choose a number of methods to get the group involved. To do this effectively, the meeting professional needs to be familiar with problem solving techniques.

To motivate. The meeting professional must get the group intellectually and emotionally “charged up” so that they leave the meeting eager to accomplish tasks.

To influence behaviour. When persuasion is identified, it is usually in sales or motivational meetings with a format of getting attendees to lose their inhibitions.

Objectives

Objectives are short-range targets that are specific to the event. An individual meeting will have one and only one primary objective that is measurable. For example, to increase sales by a certain percentage within six months following the meeting. Accomplishing the primary objective indicates that the event was successful.

Accomplishment of the primary objective is dependent on meeting many sub-level objectives. Large conventions may have as many as 30 sub-levels, with the total measurable sub-level objectives in the hundreds.