

Subject: NEGOTIATING A NEW RFP AND A NEW RFP PROCEDURE

Negotiation News

the norman group llc

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Nancy A. Norman
President

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR RFP ...

MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

TO YOUR ADVANTAGE !

A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) is one of the most important facets of meeting and conference planning activities. In this Newsletter, I'm going to share an updated RFP form with you that a colleague of mine and I created many years ago because it is such a great document and because it continues to be universally accepted by tons of hoteliers and others all over the globe gladly and successfully.

TIPS:

- Keep your RFP unencumbered with superfluous information
 - Keep your RFP simple, straightforward, accurate and to the point
 - Keep your RFP "good looking" and impressive for full impact
 - Keep your RFP unhampered by negotiable items (put these in your Addendums to your contracts)
- It is never a good idea to book a venue that you have not visited.

Long, written RFP dissertations are unwieldy and inefficient in my opinion. Therefore, I would like to offer you my RFP which is a three page, comprehensive “charted – Table” form for medium to large events, (I use another one page form for small events) otherwise called my “Venue Request Form”. This RFP is divided into easily located sections such as:

- Complete Company Contact Information
- Meeting/Conference Title for Posting at the Venue
- History for two previous meetings with dates, city, venue, # of attendees, # of exhibits/posters and sleeping rooms booked
- Proposed venue for the event including city and state
- Two Preferred Conference Dates for the new event
- Program Format and Number of Days for the Conference
- Total Estimated Attendance, # Speakers, # of Exhibitors, # of Staff, % International Attendees, # Domestic Attendees, % Regional Attendees
- Session Room Requirements (including Days, Times Needed, # of sessions that are concurrent, # attendees, Room Set-Ups, Registration Times (days, starting and ending times)
- Additional Room Requirements (Focus Groups, Hospitality Suites, Speaker Ready Room, Press Room, Storage, Show Office, etc.)
- Sleeping Rooms (room block info)
- Exhibit Hall Requirements (Dates, Times, Viewing times, Set-up Times, Dismantling Times, type of booths (8 x 10, 10 x 10, 6’ Table Tops, 4 x 8 Poster Boards, etc.)
- Full Food and Beverage Information for Breakfast, AM Break, Lunch, PM Break, Cocktail Receptions, Dinner, Offsite functions, etc.(Dates, Times, Number of Attendees expected, Set-ups, Location of functions, etc.)
- At the bottom of the third page is space for Special Notes.

(Many times the Audio Visual needs are discussed/determined later, so I do not generally include them on my RFP, but it would not be difficult to do so, if desired). Of course, each RFP is customized for each different event.

What you won’t find on my RFP template are my “budget figures” or constraints, any food and beverage expenditure projections, any reference to maximum group room rate figures, any reference to any special VIP suites, etc., or any concessions I’d like to have or must have, any reference to any contract clause necessities or any other references to venue particulars. Why? Because – I save all of these things for my negotiations with the hotel and for

additions to my Addendum to their contract. I don't want to confuse Hotel Sales Managers with a lot of requests upfront on an RFP because they could be too easily disqualified as written and without any explanation. The Sales Manager may not like some of your requests and opt to book another planner's meeting that does not take as much work to negotiate. Do you want to wait days and days while the Sales Manager compares all of your needs with another RFP with less stated needs and is therefore, perhaps easier to book? Waiting days and days, though, is omitted if you utilize my booking method... and if needed, My Book – CONTRACT ADDENDUMS WITH NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES THAT WORK! includes all of the possible clauses you will need with explanations and techniques that will help you prepare an excellent Addendum to protect your client or company from risks and liabilities of all kinds in your contracts. Additionally, a Sample Addendum is included. SEE BELOW HOW TO ORDER.

PROCEDURE: I like to have complete control of all details of my bookings and my space requirements for every event, and I don't send my RFP to anyone prior to speaking to them on the phone about my client/company and the specific space I need for specific dates (I try to be flexible with this one, if possible) and the following is my procedure: (I'm certain that some of you will feel that you would rather use a technological procedure, and I would suggest that "my" system is actually faster, more efficient, more secure and delivers more impact when booking and contracting, but that's up to you.)

HOWEVER, my main thrust here is to encourage you to keep control and to advise against sending your RFP out to several venues and then waiting while the venues decide if they can or wish to accommodate your meeting or not...or waiting for phone calls that never come.

1. Configure and compute all space needed for meeting sessions, food and beverage sessions including receptions, exhibits, press et al and allowing for attendee comfort in all cases, as well.
2. Research three venues in your preferred meeting city with regard to ambiance, location within the city, transportation sites, etc. in consideration of the wishes of the expected attendee body and your intended market for the conference.
3. Consult the 1st desired venue's floor plans and meeting space capacity chart on the internet to determine if the "fit" for your meeting is appropriate and easily workable at that facility.

4. If the dimensions et al are a good fit, print a copy of the venue floor plans and capacity chart.
5. “Scope out” on the floor plan with colored pencils/markers, the rooms you’d like to reserve according to the various space needs of the meeting applying correct, specific square footage and the ideal configuration needed for the various function and session rooms. Indicate and assign rooms in neat, legible, printed handwriting/typing on the floor plans for each session & function of the upcoming meeting. Be careful and thorough in your deliberations in order to be perfectly clear about the detailed specifications you wish to have for your meeting **PRIOR** to speaking with any proposed facilities. (This document will be attached to and become part of the contract to avoid any possible misunderstandings about the function locations that are required and reserved.)
6. Call the venue Sales Department (or your favorite contact at that venue, if you have one) to reserve your dates and space for the conference.
7. Request to reserve the space by SPECIFIC room names on your first choice dates for the event. Make it clear that the space and its configuration is paramount to the success of your event. If the hotel will not do this, I, personally, would decline to book there because it generally means that they want to be free to move your meeting all around pending other business opportunities. Most of the time, the Sales Managers love to be told what you’d like because it saves them from trying to figure everything out themselves – it is completely systematic, pertinent, powerful and time efficient!
8. Tell the Manager that you need to know the hotel’s availability right then. If there is an extenuating circumstance of some kind whereby someone else has a “hold” on part of the space or the like, tell the manager firmly that you’ll wait 48 hrs. for his/her answer as to availability but of course, that you’ll have to continue to research other properties in the meantime. (The situation may be real, OR, the Sales Manager wants extra time to see if he/she can do better with another, more profitable event...so...)
9. Repeat steps 3-8 and call the venue Sales Department of your second choice of venue. If this second choice has the space available, reserve your meeting space and if everything else seems in order, tell them to please send you a contract immediately.
10. If Venue #1 does call back within 48 hrs. and all is well – ask them to send you a contract immediately. also.

11. Compare your two contracts and all of the other specifications you'd like, if you get both – and **YOU** make the decision as to which venue you'll select.
12. If Venue #1 **does not** call back and you really want to go to that venue, ask to speak to the Director of Sales or the General Manager – and also refer to the fact that you did not receive a return call from the hotel.
13. **The rooms are reserved, and a contracts are on the way.** The contract must always contain an Agenda for the meeting noting specific dates, times, type of function, room set-up, expected number of attendees and the name of the particular room you've reserved for each of those functions along with a copy of your configured floor plan of the venue.
14. **In your Addendum to the Contract,** include a clause stating that the specific meeting space is not to be changed without your written consent. If the hotel phones and is adamant about changing your space – if you can come to a resolution that will inconvenience, but not spoil your event, you could agree to change your space, but not without some sort of financial concession from the hotel to do so. (My book described below includes an appropriate clause for this situation with negotiation techniques to use for your Addendums)
15. **Negotiation of the contract takes place,** agreement is reached and you're all set – in a fraction of the time it would take you to arbitrarily send out many RFPs and then wait for **possible** responses.

THE KEY, HERE, OF COURSE, IS TO SHARPEN YOUR NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. KEEP THE BALL IN YOUR COURT, PREPARE WELL AHEAD OF TIME AND NEGOTIATE EVERYTHING WITH THE VENUE AFTER THEY ACCEPT HOSTING YOUR MEETING.

*It has been rare that my first choice could not accommodate my events – partially due to reasonable flexibility such as considering my 2nd date choice or even another suggested possible space configuration that meets my needs.

As you get acclimated to this procedure, you'll find that it will save you a great deal of time and effort. You won't have to wait for many Sales people to get back (or not) to you while they compare their own booking situations to yours, or so you can compare this venue with others or to then take time to weigh their decisions for the space you need or the rooms you'd like, etc.

Depending upon how many meetings you book, the procedure keeps

becoming easier as hotels realize how you work – if you, in turn, can negotiate with skill and knowledge and then return the contract in a short amount of time, this is to your credit and a great plus, as well.

The norman group llc has a new, comprehensive RFP GUIDE to assist you if you are interested in the above information. The Guide includes:

- RFP template for medium-large meetings
- RFP template for short meetings
- Comprehensive detailed Procedure instructions
- Sample RFP Venue Floor Plan indicating how to scope out space
- How to easily compute various square footage measurements when configuring the meeting space you need, including
 - 8 x 10 booths
 - 10 x 10 booths,
 - 6' tabletops
 - 4 x 8 poster boards
 - Standing room for attendees (receptions, et al)
- Square footage needed for various room set-ups in relation to the number of attendees expected such as:
 - Classroom Style
 - Theater Style
 - Chevron Style
 - Banquet Style
 - Conference Style
 - U-Shape Style
- Appropriate clauses to use regarding reserving, preserving and adjustment of meeting space

Please send your contact information along with your check for twenty-five dollars (\$25.00 – includes domestic tax and shipping) to:

Nancy A. Norman
President
the norman group llc
The Preserve
Ten Forest Lane
Hopkinton, MA 01748

Again – my book, CONTRACT ADDENDUMS WITH NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES THAT WORK! will be of immeasurable assistance when you are ready to negotiate your contracts. This book includes fifty-five clauses (55) and negotiation techniques that I have used and negotiated successfully for many years without complications of any kind.

The clauses included deal with the risks and liabilities that appear in every contract you will be negotiating. It's a fantastic reference for your desktop. **Please see below how to order.**

(Two RFP forms (and many other forms) are included in the book described above, but the other RFP information is not presented there.)

SEE BELOW HOW TO ORDER

the norman group llc

REFERENCE BOOK ON NEGOTIATING

**CONTRACT ADDENDUMS WITH
NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES THAT WORK!**

TO ORDER :

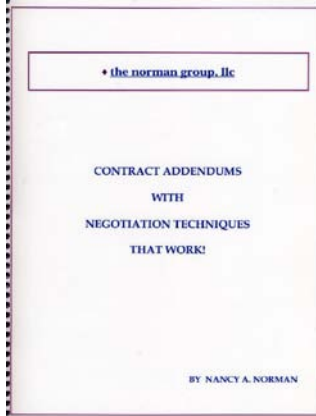
THROUGH THE MPI WEBSITE BOOKSTORE: www.mpiweb.org

(members receive a 20% discount)

**CLICK ON "MARKETPLACE", THEN "BOOKSTORE", SCROLL
DOWN AND CLICK ON PAGE 4 TO SEE MY BOOK LISTED**

OR

**THROUGH the norman group llc WEBSITE:
www.thenormangroup.net
CLICK ON THE BOOK/WEBINARS TAB**



THIS 125 PAGE REFERENCE BOOK INCLUDES FORMS FOR ATTRITION CALCULATION FOR GUEST ROOMS AND F+B, TWO RFP CHART FORMS, HOTEL CONCESSIONS, SAMPLE ADDENDUM, FIFTY-FIVE (55) UNIQUE CLAUSES WITH EXPLANATIONS AND TRIED AND TRUE NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES I HAVE USED, AND MUCH MORE!

THIS BOOK WILL ENABLE YOU TO REACH A NEW HEIGHT OF SUCCESSFUL EXPERTISE IN YOUR NEGOTIATING ABILITIES, WHICH IN TURN, WILL INCREASE YOUR INDISPENSABILITY AT YOUR COMPANY AND ELSEWHERE!



CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Nancy A. Norman
President
the norman group llc
The Preserve
Ten Forest Lane
Hopkinton, MA 01748
Direct Phone: 508-435-4609
Direct Fax: 508-435-2028**

**nnorman@thenormangroup.net
www.thenormangroup.net**

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