27 FACTORS THAT CAN MAKE... OR BREAK A MEETING

1. Have a complete agenda.
2. Start and end on time.
4. Pay attention to small details. Use coffee cups instead of Styrofoam, glasses instead of disposable cups.
5. Provide a pad and pencil for each participant.
6. Use a coffee-break alternative. Distribute Popsicles instead!
7. Provide a nonalcoholic alternative at receptions.
8. Be prompt with a post-meeting follow-up.
9. Create opportunities for members to mix.
10. Serve lighter lunches and skip dessert. This helps participants remain alert all afternoon.
11. Allow adequate break time for renewing friendships and informal networking.
12. Make your preparation obvious to everyone. Have a check-in staff that is prepared and knowledgeable.
13. Use variety in your room setups. For example, for a two-day program, use banquet rounds on day one and herringbone 6’ x 30” tables the next day.

14. Check out the audio system beforehand.

15. Make certain that meetings won’t be interrupted. Tell the facility management that calls should be held, etc.

16. Know whom you should contact if there are problems with the facility - for example, the room is too hot or too cold.

17. Check out the facilities before the meeting begins to see that room setup and AV requirements have been met.

18. Make registration simple and easy.

19. If you have a two- or three-day meeting, offer a spouse program. Check out special happenings and points of interest in the city where you are meeting.

20. Make certain that program materials are shipped to a specific person at the meeting site; otherwise, they may be misplaced. Also, clearly mark them as 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc., to avoid confusion.

21. Send a detailed cover letter along with your signed contract that explains exactly what you expect from the facility staff. Include a few facts about what you don’t want to have happen.

22. Be available. If you are unable to be at your meeting, confirm with your speaker and facility contact that, should a problem arise, you are only a phone call away.
23. Send copies of facility agreements to all speakers and other necessary meeting staff.

24. If your meeting will last more than one day, arrive a day early. If it is a single-day meeting, arrive at least two hours beforehand.

25. Have your meeting place compatible with your objectives. For example, don’t schedule meetings for 16 hours a day in a resort setting or for 4 hours a day where there are no activities available.

26. Have an agreement with your speakers about “selling” during his / her presentation. Nothing turns off an audience more than being subjected to unsolicited commercials.

27. Have your speakers available for informal discussions and functions immediately after presentations and during social hours and meals. Avoid “hit and run” presentations.