

7 STEPS to SUCCESSFUL SITE INSPECTIONS

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Q: HOW SHOULD I APPROACH A SITE INSPECTION SO I CAN BE SURE TO SELECT THE RIGHT VENUE? **A:** Successfully navigating a site inspection isn't easy; the key lies in advance planning. Once you've considered all possible venues and narrowed your choices to no more than three, the following seven steps will lead you to an informed decision.

1 GET ORGANIZED. Carefully review your request for proposal and each property's submission, as well as any photos, floor plans, capacity charts and menus. Likewise, draft overviews of both your organization and your event to share on-site. The overviews should estimate your business's value relative to other meetings.

2 CREATE A CHECKLIST. Use attendee needs and expectations to decide what you want to see and do while on-site (including tours of any off-site locations), the staff you'd like to meet and what questions you have for the team. Bring a digital camera and a tablet to document your experience, and be sure to wear comfortable shoes.

3 DON'T GO IT ALONE. Save time by collaborating with the venues, the convention and visitors bureau and even a local destination management company to develop a balanced and efficient inspection itinerary. With their extensive destination and planning experience, these industry partners are best positioned to support your visit.

4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES. Prior to arrival, request that available function space is set to your specifications. Walk the public areas, meetings rooms and overnight accommodations with your attendees in mind, assessing suitability and current conditions. Pay close attention to equipment and fixtures. Inquire about scheduled construction and renovations.

5 MEET THE STAFF. Both the sales and services teams should be eager to welcome you. If assigned, speak with your prospective convention services manager. Additionally, ask about the staff's longevity and

experience, as well as any changes in management. Note employees' professionalism and attitude.

6 EVALUATE THE SERVICE. Order room service, dine in the restaurant, connect to the Wi-Fi, use the health club or spa and observe events in progress. Ask about customer satisfaction results and how deficiencies are addressed. Gauge if staff is willing to experiment with menus and room setups. (If possible, experience the venue as a secret shopper.)

7 FOLLOW UP. Send a handwritten thank-you note to each sales manager and share any additional questions, clarifications or concerns. Furthermore, adhere to your predetermined decision date, inform each property about the organization's decision and provide sufficient feedback regarding the final selection criteria.

In the end, the right venue will align with your meeting's goals and objectives—and a thoughtful site inspection is just the ticket for successfully evaluating the property's ability to meet (and hopefully exceed) your program's requirements. 📧



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HAVE A MEETINGS DILEMMA YOU NEED HELP SOLVING?

Email your questions to coach Aaron at aaron@eventgarde.com; please write "Meetings Mag" in the subject line.