

Facilities Liaison

From Worldcon Runners' Guide

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Facilities Liaison

Key Rules for Facilities Liaisons

1. Never trust the hotel.

Even the nicest, most accommodating hotel that you've worked with for years can turn your convention into an intimidating disaster with no warning or notice. All it takes is for one or two key hotel people to change (sales rep, night manager, security manager, etc.) and you're suddenly dogmeat. You Have Been Warned.

2. Put all agreements with the hotel in writing.

Why?

- a. See Rule #1

Put all agreements in writing. If the hotel won't do it, go on record yourself by writing down and sending them immediately your interpretation of what was agreed (Be honest about this; it is no time to be creative and, anyhow, they may have been recording the meeting) including the name of the person(s) and department(s) you dealt with. Send it by Registered

Mail if you are in any doubt about them. This is not as good as a signed contract but it's parsecs ahead of trying to prove the terms of an oral (not "verbal"; all contracts are in words) agreement when the person you agreed with doesn't recall your version or, worse still, he has left the company and you're dealing with someone new who thinks he can make Brownie points by denying you something you thought you had bargained for.

- b. Hotel sales and services managers can change at the drop of a hat—and will. The average life expectancy of your sales rep is 12 months, 18 if you're lucky. After that, the rep will be promoted, transfer, or get canned.

Services reps have a life expectancy of 18-24 months, at a rough guess.

When the rep goes, all verbal agreements go down the tubes. And if some of those agreements were on critical issues like corkage, you are now in deep trouble.

3. On days when you are visiting the hotel pre-con, always wear a suit. It's the uniform of business, and with a Worldcon you're the representative of a group that will bring them several hundred thousand dollars of business.

Believe it or not, one Worldcon hotel liaison actually did all pre-con negotiations wearing jeans and sneakers. This did not impress the hotel, but rather had the opposite effect, and the hotel treated the Worldcon attendees accordingly.

4. Verify what your local convention bureau can do to help. Many of their services are often free or at nominal charge.
5. "Keep in mind that in dealing with the hotel you are dealing with mundanes who do not understand fandom and who do not appreciate many of the morays and customs of fandom, however much they may appreciate our money."—YaleF Edeiken.
6. Be sure to never trust the hotel. Yeah, I know I already said that.
7. Every phone call that results in any decisions of substance should be followed up with a note to the hotel person you talked with, and a copy to your services and/or sales rep. People Forget.
8. Caution: Never Trust The Floor Plans.

Cf. Hillis' Delusion: you don't need to physically see facilities before allocating space.

- a. Floor plans that are done as glossies were often rendered before the hotel was built, and changes may have been made.
- b. Floor plans are sometimes not really to scale.
- c. Even engineering floor plans may be out of date.
- d. Floor plans may not always show all of the alcoves, pillars, and projecting walls in a room.
- e. Floor plans can never tell you: room height throughout the entire room, presence of mirrors, type of light fixtures and quality of the lighting (along with how low they hang from the ceiling), door height, room decor (do the colors clash with what you want do? — or is the room filled with flocked wallpaper when you want to stick things to the walls?)
- f. Sound penetration and quietness of rooms is never indicated on floor plans.
- g. Floor plans rarely show windows or sky lights.
9. You have to walk a thin line at times. You are balancing the hotel's interests against fandom's. At times you will have to side with the hotel against the fans, particularly when enforcing ironclad corporate policies or local laws.
10. You must remember that SF cons use more square feet of meeting space per sleeping room and per member than most conventions do. This will adversely affect your cost negotiations.

11. Keep track of the nature of your attendance. 20 years ago, fans thought hotels were doing them a favor by letting them hold a con. Nowadays, many cons have "fans" in attendance who get miffed if the hotel objects to them barfing or breaking beer bottles in the corridors (as has happened at some regional conventions).
12. At-con, you and/or your assistant must always be available by beeper. Sorry.
13. If your sales manager and services manager are not staying at the hotel during the con, be sure to get their home phone numbers in advance. If you end up in an argument with the night manager, your only option at getting a time-out may be to get hold of one or both of these people, especially if the argument is about things that were covered in advance of the con that the night manager never knew about.

For a Worldcon, these two people had darn well better figure on spending the weekend at the hotel, and you need to push them hard on it if they balk.

14. Be sure to see a copy of the resume well in advance of the con. If possible, submit to the hotel a draft of the resume for them to crib from. Make sure the concom division heads see a draft of the resume before the hotel does.

Tip: about a year in advance, get a copy of a resume from the hotel for a group of similar size. That way, you'll get a feel for the format they need. It may also warn you of things you need to watch out for.

15. Most hotels take a dim view of their banquet manager being punched out, whether by Jack McGillis or anyone else.
16. Hotels are nearly always incapable of understanding the following concepts unless beaten over the head repeatedly with a two-by-four:
 - a. Yes, we really do use that much ice.

(When they ask you to explain what we do with it, just smile knowingly)

- b. Yes, we really do eat that much food.
 - c. Yes, the ice machines really will be empty by 6 pm every night.
 - d. The noise from our parties really will be intolerable to any non-fans (and some fans) on the floor, and they should be warned and given the option to move.
 - e. The noise of our parties is not accompanied by TV sets being thrown through windows.
 - f. We really do know our own people, and your security will have a much better chance of dealing with problems if they let our security have first crack at it.
 - g. Yes, we really do sleep that late, and the maids really will have nothing to do until about 11 am
 - h. Yes, we really will want breakfast at hours like noon or 1 pm
 - i. Unlike most other conventions, an SF con is a weekend convention, not a weekday convention. Therefore, the hotel must staff itself as for a major midweek convention (This is also why many "replenishment" clauses are in the Chicon contract), and not give most of the staff the weekend off like they normally do.
17. Work with the hotels re elevator gridlock after major events. You may want to arrange for special hotel elevator operators (or monitors) to expedite things then.
18. Other than the usual (facilities fees, room rates, etc.), the following are areas of the hotel contract that should be viewed as being critical, and should be negotiated for if at all possible:
 - a. Corkage waiver. Do not depend on verbal agreements on this! All it takes is one overzealous hotel employee to blow the whole scam!

- b. Extend the convention rate for both rooms and parking to a week before the Worldcon and for several days after. This is for both staff and regular attendees.
- c. The hotel should give you a number of complimentary room nights in rooms and suites before and after the con for staff meetings, site inspections, etc. Tradeoff: the contract should be vague on the number ("by mutual agreement") versus specifying a fixed ceiling on room nights.
- d. Parking for all pre- and post-con meetings should be complimentary. This is especially critical for those hotels where parking is handled by a third party (this is becoming increasingly common).
- e. Don't even breathe about insurance. If the hotel wants to require it, fine. If they don't mention it, then you have more leeway on your options.
- f. Try to avoid having to put down a deposit against the master account or damage. Try to use the track record of previous Worldcons as "proof" that you're an OK credit risk. Of course, if your con is right after Constellation, that may be a bit difficult...

The size of deposit depends "on your con's credit history (if any), how much they think you are likely to owe them, and how much damage they think you are likely to cause. It also varies randomly as a function of new management and the accounting department (and phase of the moon)"—Bruce Miller.

- g. A Master Account should be provided for that is payable "net 30," i.e., 30 days after being billed. Not only does this give you time to sort charges out and contest the unreasonable ones, but you can make a little bit of interest on the money (sometimes the bill will not come until a month after the con, so you can get nearly two months of interest, which on a bill of, say, \$40,000, is worth thinking about.) Strange but true: one recent Worldcon ran its master account "cash and carry," and every time its deposit ran out, things ground to a halt while the hotel frantically tried to locate the con treasurer to arrange for a fresh infusion of cash...
- h. Grab 100 percent of the facilities starting on the Tuesday before the con, if you can. Grab all the office space you'll be using at-con starting the weekend before, if possible.

If you decide later to give up some of this when the hotel wants to book a banquet in, you can do so and appear generous. In the meantime, you've kept your options. There are few things worse than being stuck with setting up your entire convention on Friday morning...

- i. The convention rate should be available not just to fans who reserve rooms in advance, but to any walk-in who is a member of the convention. Some hotels try to weasel out of this, so be careful here.
- j. Be sure the agreement you sign with the hotel is both with the hotel and the management company that runs the hotel. They are usually the same corporate entity, but not always. Be sure to find out the actual corporate names, not just the d/b/a ("doing business as".) A "sale of hotel" clause needs to be there to insure that in case the hotel is sold, the new owners/managers are reminded they are still obligated to host you.
- k. Make sure the comp rate, facilities fee, etc. is based on total room nights, not just peak night.
- l. Include an "inspection of records" clause in there, so you can verify the room-night pickup. If the hotel is sloppy, this may affect your facilities fee, and will affect your comp rooms. By the way, it's always fun to see the looks on their faces when they find out you really are going to inspect their registration records!

Note: This implies you have a computerized registration system, so you can check the hotel's records against your more accurate ones. But then, we're all running computerized registration now, aren't we? Aren't we?

m. Restaurant restrictions: other than not serving alcohol to minors and requiring shoes and shirt, you need a clause saying all con attendees are to be served in the hotel restaurants. This is in case the hotel freaks and tries to refuse to serve members who are in costume.

n. No overbooking! No! No! No!

19. Less critical than previous item, but still useful:

a. Complimentary parking spaces, in an expedited manner, so you can get logistics staff in and out quickly.

Warning: this can be difficult to negotiate, as the custom now is for the hotel's parking garage to be contracted out to a third party that doesn't care a whit about your convention.

b. Get the complimentary parking spaces extended to a week before and after the con. This can save you hundreds of dollars in parking fees, and the hotel usually will sign this clause without even thinking.

c. Be sure to put in a clause stating that all furnishings in meeting rooms (chairs, tablecloths, blackboards, easels, trash containers, etc.) are at no charge. Some hotels charge for some of these items, so this will let you find out about it.

Be sure the microphone policy is spelled out clearly. This is always a problem.

d. Ask for a minimum of one working house phone in each meeting room. You'll be surprised at how many hotels do a double take on this and claim that no one has ever needed a phone in the XYZ room before.

e. Throw in some early warnings about some rooms not being cleanable, having your own locks on them, collecting all hotel keys for a room, etc. You'll need this for areas such as ops, film storage, treasury, etc.

f. Make sure ice water is supplied and refreshed virtually everywhere at regular intervals. This shouldn't be a problem.

g. 24 hour restaurant hours are nice, but not always obtainable.

h. A pet policy allowing not just seeing eye dogs but other "support animals". In the Midwest we have a handicapped fan who is sighted but otherwise disabled, who has a support dog; we don't want her being hassled.

i. You should put in a clause specifying arbitration in case of a disagreement. If you can get away with it, throw in a clause saying, "or at the option of the convention, a specific action may be brought to litigation"—thus, if you really want to make a stink about it, you can bypass arbitration.

j. Add six or eight "inexpensive" rooms in each facility, for staff use. Many hotels will agree to this.

20. Be sure to have a chat with your logistics and con suite departments about the need to be discreet when bringing in supplies, particularly alcoholic ones. If I had a nickel for every con that had a twit bring the beer in through the main lobby with no covering on it, I could afford to buy out Spelman & Son.

21. The trend in hotel contracts in the Midwest is to have them cover "only" rates, dates, and space. If you sign only this, you are a fool. You should provide a supplemental document, sometimes called a Specification Sheet, to cover all the other stuff you want to make sure they know about. Having two documents is OK, providing the hotel rep signs both.

The supplemental agreement should be drawn up by you, and if possible a clause should be inserted saying that where there is a conflict, the supplemental agreement is the controlling document. They may not go for it, but it's worth a shot.

The rates, dates, and space portion should include the following:

a. Dates of the convention

Hard as it may be to believe, at least one Worldcon botched the con dates in their hotel contract, and had to scramble rather than being able to set up and tear down in a leisurely manner. Many contract omissions can be corrected at a later date; con dates, however, is usually not one of them.

b. Specific listing of function space granted to the convention, and dates and times when it becomes available and must be given up. Also, any fee structure for the space.

The magic words here are "all space hold" (if you are using everything) and "24 hour basis." If the latter is not included, you may find the hotel wanting you to clear the dealers' room at 6 pm so they can hold an 8 pm banquet for another group.

Be sure to include checkrooms and cloakrooms, if possible. These can make nifty offices at very convenient locations.

c. Number of sleeping rooms blocked, by night.

d. Complimentary room rate schedule. In the Midwest, 1/50 is standard. At some cons, the hotel can be talked into throwing in a suite, also. A chart should be provided to give the comp rate for suites taken by members.

e. Check-in and check-out time.

f. Room rate structure, including:

i. Dates the room rates apply

ii. Suite prices

iii. Cut-off date for reservations.

g. Credit arrangements: each individual is responsible for their own room, tax, and incidental charges. Also list all credit cards accepted, plus the fact that cash is acceptable (yes, there has been at least one con where the hotel refused to take cash!)

h. Complimentary microphones. Try for 1/meeting room, with the right to move them at your option.

i. Any special arrangements for ice.

j. Corkage waiver or conditions.

k. Costs for dealer tables/chairs/tablecloths, if any.

l. Parking arrangements.

m. Pre- and post-convention meeting arrangements.

n. Rollaway bed charges.

o. Charges for children staying in rooms.

22. Never trust the hotel. Really.

23. Some sample Worldcon facility contracts are in a format where there is a paragraph or so of text, then a few blank lines where the hotel is supposed to write its response, suggest modifications, or initial approval.

Psychologically, I think that this is a very bad idea. The attitude that you need to go in with is that your supplemental agreement is on the whole a reasonable, tested, well thought-out document. The hotel comment format tends to imply that each paragraph may need modification.

Presenting it as a whole document rather than as a collection of individual paragraphs tends to imply a unity. In this situation, you should have the attitude that what you are asking for is reasonable and that the burden of making changes is on the hotel. With the advent of PC's and word processors, any changes are easy to make anyway.

24. Keep in mind that: "A contract doesn't dictate the course of events. It records an agreement reached with the hotel, but doesn't force the hotel to live up to that agreement. At best it gives you grounds for legal action after the fact." If the hotel turns on you (see Rule #1 et al.), then the hotel will think whether "this is a big enough matter for you to go to court over. If the hotel thinks so, they will probably back down—if not, they expect to get away with it."—Bruce Miller.
25. "Some of the hardest problems to resolve are the smallest. Since neither side thinks they are very important, neither sees much reason to give in."—Bruce Miller
26. If the contract includes clauses that affect the fans, particularly if they are out of the ordinary, it is your job to let the fans know—in the progress reports and program book, and (depending on the seriousness) maybe even at opening ceremonies and the daily newsletter.

For example, Hyatts tend to be finicky about having anything posted on a wall, and will normally insist on a nothing-posted-on-walls clause in the contract. If you don't let the fans know about something like this, the hotel could come after you with a bill for repairs from masking taped signs being ripped off of flocked wallpaper.

27. When negotiating, find out exactly what type of tables the hotel has (both in width and length) and in what quantity. If you can't make do, you'll probably end up having to rent extras. Make sure the rental is at no more than the hotel's cost.
28. Keep in mind that though the hotel would like you to think you are negotiating with a unified monolith, a hotel is often a collection of semi-independent fiefdoms. This is especially true with the current tendency to completely farm out the gift shop, parking, etc. For example, you may run into conflicts between accounting and sales. "Sales only cares that you pay what you owe, and is inclined to be flexible about things; everything is negotiable. Accounting often seems more concerned that you follow all their rules than whether you actually pay anything."—Bruce Miller.
29. If you see something you don't like in the contract proffered by the hotel, ask them about it. It may turn out to be something they can waive, or maybe trade off for some other concession.
30. Make sure you verify the information the hotel uses both for answering questions coming in by phone, and for what it posts on the daily activities sheets. You really don't want your treasury location listed as a program item.
31. When the reservation mechanism is set up, but before the reservation cards are sent out, try calling the hotel to make a reservation, and see if they know about the con.
32. If the hotel wants a weapons clause, put it in. Let the fans blame the hotel, then.
33. Run your draft hotel contract past the division heads and board of directors. Also the final contract, with notes as to major changes from the draft. This won't catch everything, but it will make everyone comfortable and will catch a lot of stuff.
34. All divisions and major departments at-con must be supplied with a copy of the hotel contract and resume. This will cut down on the number of beeps for the hotel liaison, both by enabling concom to look up answers themselves, and also to enable them to (politely) show the contract to hotel management they are dealing with, without needing to call in the hotel liaison as an arbitrator. (Be sure to budget for the repro on this—it will take many trees to their doom...)

35. Get on the mailing list of key hotel industry publications (Successful Meetings, Meetings & Conventions, etc.).
36. Have business cards made up that look real official. Give one to every hotel staff member or union person that you meet during the years preceding the Worldcon. It will help them to remember you.
37. Did I tell you to never trust the hotel? Just checking.

Checklist for briefing Hotels on What a Worldcon is

1. 1st con: 1936

1st Worldcon: 1939; 2nd: Chicago. held ever since

2. size: 3500-9000. sensitive to location, economy (vac \$\$)

Estimate: curr 5100; expecting 5500-6000

3. Recent and upcoming locations
4. largest con in country with all-volunteer staff
5. demographics: computer programmers, teachers, librarians

1/3 female, age: 18-35

only about 500 on expense account; remainder on vacation

spouses and children come, too. And participate.

no spouse programming

6. primarily a social convention; people not rooted in one room

casual dress (jeans & t shirts); 10 percent in costume (qual varies)

7. 24 hours/day
8. parties noisy but low damage; our security participates
9. physical room blocking. low no-show rate
10. Heavy use of ice machines and soda machines
11. heavy use of bars and moderately priced restaurants
12. parking: heavy; but once in, relatively little in-out
13. dining: stay close to hotel

decision made on (1) close (2) ethnic/exotic (3) moderate \$

14. daily newsletter
15. Minimal dry cleaning
16. Checkin heaviest Thur/Fri. Checking higher than it looks because of heavy use of doubles and roommates from across the country arriving at separate times.
17. We understand that normal hotel policies are that hotel staff not participate in an in-house convention unless they get permission from their managers. We would like you to know that **our** policy is that if any of your staff would like to attend, and have their manager's permission, then they can see the movies, buy books in the dealers' room, etc., without buying a membership—their Hyatt ID will get them in.

Sample Reality about Unions

These are notes from Chicon V covering the basics of what Unions are all about. Material of this type needs to be circulated to department heads, preferably via the Committee Apa.

A summary of Union jurisdictions and restrictions

This is a **brief summary** and is meant to give an **outline** of the situation. Not all possible situations may be covered, because in many cases union jurisdiction is a matter of a judgment call—by the union, not by us. If there is **any doubt** about whether your particular situation may be affected by the unions, **call me!!!**

Note:

1. A "Call" refers to the act of calling in a union worker for a period of time. Different tasks require a certain number of minimum hours. See below.
2. Rates given are for "straight time"—normally 8-4:30 M-F. Evenings, night shift, Saturday, Sunday, and Labor Day are at higher rates—either time and a half or double time. See below for specifics.
3. The rates in the Sound & Stagecraft brochure are correct except: (a) projectionist rates have gone up (i.e., the hand corrections), and projectionists are available from multiple sources (see below), and (b) Teamster rates have gone up.

A. Riggers Union

The only one we don't have to worry about. Riggers have jurisdiction when heavy equipment (dynamos, tractors, etc.) are moved into the hotel for exhibits. Unless you count some of our larger members, this is not a problem.

B. Teamsters

The Teamsters have two jurisdiction points: the loading dock in the East tower and the loading dock in the West tower. If your situation does not involve crossing a loading dock, the Teamsters are not relevant.

In the West tower, we have obtained a waiver to move in supplies and material for internal convention use, **provided we give** the Hyatt a schedule in advance that lists what will be arriving **and approximately** when.

In the East tower, a crew of five (four workers plus a supervisor) is required **whenever anything is** crossing the loading dock. Minimum call: 4 hours. Rate: \$35.25/person/hour on 8-4:30 M-F; double time otherwise.

Implication: dealer loadin/loadout will have to be concentrated as much as possible. **Any other** Chicon material to be passed across the East tower loading dock will have to be done during dealer loadin/loadout unless that division wants to pay for a separate Teamsters call.

The Teamsters are willing to waive their right to carry everything themselves.

C. Decorators/Carpenters

Jurisdiction: Entire hotel, **wherever putting** up anything involving ladders, tools, posters, banners, etc. is involved. Anytime drape and pipe is needed.

We have a specific waiver (Data Sheet, pg. 5) allowing us to set up our own art show and dealers room.

Main problem area: anyone wanting banners hung, or decorations added to walls in the hotel.

We have a waiver allowing us to use nonattached decorations (balloons) in the ballrooms. They will also allow us to post posters from the children's art show, provided no ladders are used and pins or very non-stick tape are used to attach.

Note: we will be **responsible** for any damage caused by affixing posters in the ballrooms, and the Hyatt **will charge** us if any damage occurs.

Cost: \$50/hour, one hour minimum call. They will quote for specific jobs in advance.

D. Stagehands

Jurisdiction: Grand ballroom, Regency Ballroom, Columbus hall.

Primary areas of concern: Setup of any projection screen larger than 10.5' x 14', or running any spotlight.

Cost: For a screen, four hour minimum call for two men to setup, and the same to strike. Straight time: \$46/hour 8 am-4 pm M-F; \$69/hour 4 pm-12 pm M-F, 8 am-4 pm Saturday; \$92/hour midnight-8 am M-F, all day Sunday and Labor Day. Performance call for spotlight: 3 hour minimum.

Note: apparently some stagehand issues are callable by the electrical steward. See below.

E. Electricians

Jurisdiction: **the entire hotel, anytime anything** is plugged into electrical outlets. Video camera operation. Anytime taping (audio or video) is done.

Costs: Straight time: \$45/hour electrical, \$55/video.

The electrical steward has been quite reasonable about our situation, and has given us a number of waivers and quotes for specific situations.

The letter I wrote in May has been agreed to verbally by the electrical steward. He will not sign it for (as near as I can tell) two reasons: 1. Much of the letter is judgment calls on his part—if there is a problem, he does not want to get in trouble with his union higher ups. 2. Much of the letter is vague about specific setups—he reserves the right to change his mind if the situation that actually occurs is not as I have described it to him.

He has given us the following waivers:

1. Except for major events in the ballrooms, we can plug in anything that uses a standard outlet, if sufficient standard outlets are in the room.

Exceptions: movie projectors, slide projectors (under projectionist union), video cameras, recorders for professionally taping sessions.

This includes boom boxes, etc., **provided that we** do not tie into the house sound system. Anytime we tie into house sound, there is a charge; I must know in **advance** what our needs are so I can get quotes.

Tie-ins to the sound system are in general \$75 one-time charge with no electrician being required to operate the equipment. See me for specifics.

2. Microphones will be hooked into house sound at no charge as long as no more than no more than four things (microphones, cassette decks, etc.) need to be tied into house sound in a given meeting room.
3. Specific waivers for the major events in Grand Ballroom are the same as in the May letter—Marie should contact me if any questions.

Primary impact: I need to know about anything that **is planned on being** plugged into electrical outlets, so I can insure we're covered.

Videotape: they will not bend on wanting union personnel available if video cameras are operated or if professional recording is done. See me for prices.

F. Projectionists

Jurisdiction: Grand Ballroom, Regency Ballroom, Columbus Hall, **any time a movie** projector, video projector, or slide projector is used.

The Jeff Berry proposal is only worth considering on the labor side **if** the Chicago steward and Jeff's steward can cut a deal.

Cost: There has been quite a bit of confusion on this. As near as I can tell the situation is that as long as we use **Chicago-approved union projectionists**, we can get them from any of the following sources:

- a. Sound & Stagecraft, the Hyatt's in-house service, at 31.50/hour straight time.
- b. From Essaness, a local projection equipment supplier, at \$25/hour.
- c. Directly from the union steward, at \$20/hour for film projectionists, \$15/hour for slide projectionists.

The reason for the above (as near as I can tell) is that Sound & Stagecraft and Essaness add their own surcharge.

Time and a half for: after 8 hours of work M-F, 8-am-midnight Saturday and Sunday.

Double time: midnight-8 7 days, after 8 hours of time-and-a-half, all day Labor Day.

A projectionist is required for each room in which **projection is done**. I.e., they will **not let** us get away with only one union projectionist for a two-track film program.

Turnaround: Minimum call is five hours for films, 8 for slides. If one man is on, and has to come back after being off for less than 8 hours, an extra "turnaround" charge is levied. We can **avoid turnaround** charges if we use more than 16/hours/day of films by asking for two projectionists and splitting the day in half: for example, 20 hours/day of films = 2 projectionists for 10 hours/day.

35MM: If we want to go 35MM, two union projectionists will be required, plus a supervisor. Additional stagehands and electricians may also be needed.

If functions still has an interest in 35MM, I will be happy to meet with them and discuss the logistics.

Areas of concern: Programming and other areas needing slide projectionists.

Sample Miscellaneous Hotel Questions

This is a set of questions that were asked by various departments during the months prior to the convention. As with the above, sets of answers like these need to be circulated via a method such as the Committee APA.

1. Cost for extra house phones: \$25/day.

I must know the total needed (and when and where) ASAP.

2. Cost for outside lines: \$150 one-time charge plus cost of long distance calls plus any local message units incurred.
3. Can we get ropes and stanchions in the con registration area?

Yes, but the floor plan for them must be approved in advance by the Fire Marshall.

4. Cost for drape and pipe?

3' high: \$3.75/foot. 8' high: \$5.75/foot.

Plus decorator install time. For 2 20 foot lengths for masquerade: 2 hours at \$45 for setup, same for teardown.

5. Cost for electrical outlets in Wacker hall?

If ordered in advance:

1 outlet: \$110 plus 6% tax

4 outlets: \$110+29.30 plus 6% tax

If ordered at-con:

1 outlet: \$148.85 plus 6% tax

4 outlets: \$148.85 plus \$39.70 plus 6% tax

Outlets heavier duty than standard are extra. See attached sheet.

6. Cost of extra electrical outlets elsewhere in hotel?

Price quote will be made for individual cases by the electrical steward. I need to know ASAP.

7. Parking rates in Hyatt garage?

\$8/day, tax included, with in-out privileges.

8. Clearance of Hyatt garage?

6'8"

9. Where can larger vehicles go? Normal vehicles?

Larger: Soldier Field Lot "C" (outdoor lot).

Other nearby: Prudential Plaza, 3 Illinois Center, Amoco Building

10. Can we park a con truck in West Tower dock?

Maybe. (in process) In any event, we cannot park it in advance of our move-in to the hotel.

11. Have we gotten a written confirmation of \$21 per 8 foot table?

Yes.

12. Will the former "Catch a Rising Star" be available for us?

Maybe. (in process)

13. Tunnel between Hyatt and Swissotel

Agreement in process. Supposedly, it will be open til 11 on Thursday and Monday, 24 hours for F-S-Sun.

14. Glass room in concourse available?

No. Belongs to Hyatt decorator.

15. List of major Hyatt department heads?

In hand.

16. House phone directory?

In process.

17. Message board locations?

Best possibility so far: by con registration (to its right).

18. Does the Hyatt have screens that can be used to subdivide small meeting rooms?

No.

19. Can the Beese dogs attend Chicon?

Daytime only, not overnight. Hyatt is concerned about urination on rugs. I can take this further if desired.

20. Hotel limo to Wilmot WI for Stopas?

- a. Can't—limo not licensed to cross state line.
- b. N/A anyway—Stopas want their car when at con.

21. Rules for party-holders bringing in supplies.

- a. Ice will be available at per-bag from hotel, probably on concourse level.
- b. Hotel bellmen will be instructed to ignore supplies being brought in.
- c. Anyone holding a party cannot **order anything** from **room service** (ice, glasses, plates, silverware, etc.) or corkage **will be** charged.

22. Can people ship packages to the Hyatt before 8/25 (when we check in to the hotel)?

Sure, but they'll charge us \$5-10/package (depending on weight) for storage.

23. Costs for in-house video?

If we want to broadcast for:

4 hours/day: \$350/day

5-7 hours/day: 500/day

8-12 hours/day: 800/day

24 hours/day: 1500/day

Also, tapes must be delivered to a North Michigan avenue address. They are normally closed on weekends, so dropoffs after 5 pm Friday would have to be prearranged.

Note: when we told the hotel there was no way we were going to use their video broadcasting at those prices, they acted surprised, then a few days later called us back and asked us how much we were willing to pay. A compromise was eventually reached that allowed broadcast of Hugos and Masquerade. The in-house broadcast facilities and costs vary DRAMATICALLY from facility to facility.

24. What is projectionist rate for Saturday?

midnight-8 am.: double time

1st 8 hours worked between 8 am and midnight: time and a half

Any hours over 8 worked between 8 am and midnight: double time

25. Can we move any projection/sound equipment ourselves?

Yes. My understanding is we can move it into place, but not set it up but not run it.

Stagehands are needed to set up any screens larger than 10.5x14 feet.

26. Are union projectionists needed to operate overhead projectors? (i.e., for foils)

No.

27. Do we need projectionists for the slide projectors for the Hugos?

Yes. 1.

Checklist of questions to ask the hotel

Again, this is a sample.

1. Dock hours?
2. Truck in dock?
3. Written verification of OK of floor plan/dealers.
4. Art show setup/ data sheet pg. 5
5. Electrical charges/dealers
6. Teamsters vis a vis unloading?
7. Drape and pipe costs? 20 feet each way from stage.
8. Fire marshall: ballroom: can stage cover past doors to hall?
9. Decorations for dance: balloons OK? Crepe/posters on walls?
10. Package charge if we in hotel?

Address to send to?

11. Need list of suites and who has reserved them.
12. 7/20 moot, 25 people, 10-6, 15 passes
13. Can we affix signs to doors?
14. Parking costs: \$8? \$8 plus tax?

Garage sheet on nearby parking?

15. video service
16. 7/27 — is hotel busy in morning so we could do a walkthru?

Notes on onsite Hotel Liaison function

Immediately pre-con

1. Hold a separate meeting with the hotel security people, to go over what a Worldcon is, explain our unique situation (e.g., roving troubleshooters), etc.

Insist that this meeting include the people who will be heads of shifts during the convention, especially the people who will be running the night shifts, which is when most party-related problems occur.

2. If there is money available, a small gift can be given to each of the following: your sales rep and the rep's secretary, the Convention Services rep and the rep's secretary, the Banquet and Catering rep, Exhibit hall manager and the manager's assistants, the major union stewards, etc. The purpose of this gift is to instill warm fuzzies, and an ideal gift is one that is both useful and that has the convention name on it. If your Sales to Members area has them, obtaining a couple of cases of mugs with the con logo or drinking glasses with the convention logo are perfect—they're both useful and pretty.
3. Provide a box of candy for the phone operator staff. Be sure to provide one box for each of the (usually three) shifts, so that the night shift people don't feel like they're getting leftovers.

On Site

1. Facilities liaison staff who are on duty should wear suits (female staff should wear formal clothing that is the equivalent of a suit.) Note: this is controversial and some experienced facilities liaisons say it isn't necessary because by this time you have either built up a good relation with the hotel or you haven't. Ye Editor politely disagrees, maintaining that during the con the facilities liaison people will meet with many, many people who have not been dealt with up until that time, and those people are used to dealing with groups whose facility liaison people wear suits.
2. The head facilities liaison needs to relax now and then, and will be spending days running around. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that a night shift hotel liaison be appointed to take over during party hours (say, from 10 pm-8 am), with the understanding that the head Facilities Liaison is only to be paged if the police and/or fire department is being called.
3. **Hot Potato Pager**

A "hot potato" Facilities Liaison pager has been shown to work quite well. When you have two or more Facilities Liaisons who are taking turns at being the primary liaison on call, a pager should be reserved that is the "hot potato" that is passed around to the current liaison on duty. The number of **that pager** is the one that is given to the hotel and to committee. Meanwhile, the individual liaisons have their own pagers, and those numbers are given out to a select few.

Note: giving hotels lots of pager numbers to call is not a good idea. They like one-stop troubleshooting.

4. The Football

Just as the President has an aide with him at all times carrying the nuclear trigger codes, so the Facilities Liaison on duty carries a clipboard or attache case containing the vital information that may be needed at a moment's notice:

- a. Complete set of floor plans
- b. Copies of the Master Contract and all important addenda
- c. List of committee pager/phone numbers
- d. List of hotel department head pager/phone numbers

(including home phone of sales rep and services rep)

- e. Copy of the Hotel Resume
 - f. Pocket program
 - g. Logbook, to note important occurrences so that the next shift can be briefed
5. Grease

The liaison should carry a slush fund of about \$200 in \$5 bills for those situations in which a problem can be solved by a wink and application of a Lincoln or two. For those inexperienced in using grease, the beginner's guidelines are simple:

- a. Never offer grease to management unless they make it excruciatingly obvious that they will cooperate in return for specific considerations. In normal circumstances, offering grease to management is an insult.
- b. The most common use onsite is to tip bellmen who are assisting in moving con-related material of a questionable nature (e.g., party supplies) or staff (such as teamsters) who have busted their tails on the con's behalf.

Liaison with Party Runners

The facilities liaison is one of the key factors of success for parties. It is critical that the facilities liaison provide party runners with accurate information re hotel policies.

The facilities liaison must provide the progress reports with information on hotel rules, and requesting that party runners contact the facilities liaison.

When contacted by party runners, the facilities liaison should do two things:

1. Make sure that the group has a reservation at the party hotel. The liaison should talk to the hotel's reservations office and make sure that the parties are clustered as closely together as possible.
2. Send out a generic mailing of party throwing information.

Three weeks prior to the con, the facilities liaison should send out a mailing containing:

1. Letter delineating hotel policies and party information, including:
 - a. Where and how to get ice
 - b. Nearest liquor sources
 - c. Legal drinking age
 - d. Any hotel policies that are relevant
 - e. Location of nearest grocery stores, with information on hours
 - f. Information on grocery delivery services, if any
 - g. How to get hold of the hotel liaison at-con
2. Map of downtown area, with hotels, grocery stores, and liquor stores marked.
3. Sample ad flyer from nearby grocery stores, to give groups an idea of selection and prices.

This information should also be available online.

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