Registration

From Worldcon Runners' Guide

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Registration

Key At-Con Liaison Roles

The following liaisons are **critical** to the overall performance of the convention at-con:

Site Selection and Hugo Awards

Need to be provided with lists of member information when ballots are first issued and given periodic updates thereafter. Work flow for processing new memberships which are included with the ballots needs to be determined before the ballots are distributed.

Needs to be provided with lists of existing member information (pre-con), and new members at-con.

Daily Newsletter

At the end of every day, information about the number of new registrations and total registrations needs to be given to the daily newsletter for publication. "How many people are here?" is the second most commonly asked question of con committee. (all right, #1 is: "Where's the nearest restroom?")

Finance Division

Each day, the Finance people must know how much new money has arrived and from what sources. This information is important because many problem-solving decisions hinge on the answer to "how much money is available?"

Laying Out the Registration Area

In order to avoid lots of confusion long lines, ropes and stanchions can be used to snake people through the correct routes to the proper registration person. However, many hotel fire regulations limit the extent to which you can put ropes and stanchions in the middle of a foyer area. Check with the hotel liaison on this.

There may be a charge for ropes and stanchions. Check the contract.

At the end of each line, and overhead at each registration station, should be a sign indicating what that station is for. Specific stations include Alphabetical breakdowns for pre-reg, alphabetical breakdowns for at-con, transfers, trouble desk (which is always staffed by one of your top people!).

Key Problems

Program Participant and Staff Registration Pick-up

What a nightmare! No matter what you do, there are problems!

Your options:

1. Have special packets at registration.
2. Have a note at registration to be given to the registrant to report to Program Ops to pick up special reg materials.
3. Have program participants go directly to Program Ops for everything.

The main problem with (3) is that people are added to and dropped from the program up until the last minute, and that programming will have to pull all the packets for all program participants, and lots of people get confused as to where they're supposed to go.

Dealer membership pick-up

Experience has shown it's best to have the dealers room manager handle these, since the dealers are going to show up with their vans at the loading dock. The dealers room manager can hand out materials as they check in (and make sure they've paid)

Plastic

It is now pretty much standard procedure to accept Visa and MasterCard.

Shop around for rates. The corporate rates for different banks vary widely.

You should get Visa/MasterCard capability no later than when your memberships pass the $50 mark. You will discover that when your rate crosses the $50 line, and particularly the $75 line, that a large number of new members will want to pay with plastic.

Registration at Regionals

As part of your con's ongoing publicity, and to help encourage people to join, a registration table should be set up at major regionals and at Worldcons prior to yours. This is particularly important just prior to a rate increase date.

A kit should be put together that can fit into a travel bag and be handed to the team going to a particular convention. It should include:

1. Stacks of flyers
2. Receipt books
3. Visa/MasterCard whackita-whackita machine
4. Visa/MasterCard slips
5. Visa/MasterCard table placard
6. Cashbox
7. Posters
8. Pens
9. T-shirts and other memorabilia being sold pre-con
10. Hotel and tourism flyers

Stinking Bodges

Yes, you do need steenking Bodges!

A good convention badge should have the following qualities:

1. It should be easily recognizable at a distance as being a badge for your Worldcon.
2. It should be difficult to counterfeit. In particular, if a reasonable facsimile of your badge can be done with a color photocopier and a laminating machine, then you have blown it.

   Some variations that have been successful:

   a. Molded plastic badges with unique designs.
   b. Flat badges with a unique design printed on them.
      Not as good as (a), but can work.
   c. Badges that have a hologram laminated in (like on a credit card)
3. **The NAME of the fan should be in VERY large letters so it is visible from several feet away!**
   While the **concom** needs to have badges that are identifiable and non-counterfeitable, the average fan primarily uses badges when walking up to a group of people to figure out who they are. If you have to get within two feet to figure out who a person is, you are being rather intrusive.
4. If you have categories like daily memberships or under-drinking age designations, these should be easily visible from, say, ten feet away.

5. It should have room on the back to hold a printed copy of the program items the person is on. This is supplied by programming, either in program ops or at registration.

Membership Packets

It is theoretically a good idea to have membership packets to hand out to each member, rather than having piles of stuff that either the member or a staff member has to hand-collate. However, the purpose of registration is to register people. Putting together membership packets is extremely manpower-intensive.

If you have the spare bodies to do this, fine (or if a commercial sponsor will do it for you—great!); otherwise put pre-con packet assembly as a very low priority and let members pick up items they want individually at-con. This can be done easily by putting up a set of tables that members must pass by as they exit from the registration area (and that members who have not yet registered cannot access).

Such packets can include:

1. Program book
2. Pocket program
3. First issue of daily newsletter
4. A "READ ME FIRST" flyer if the concom put one together.
5. Flyers/promo materials for cons, movies, restaurants, specific local tourist destinations, etc.
   In general, because of the hassle of putting these packets together, this type of material should only be stuff that the producer has **paid** your con for the privilege of including in the packets to be handed out. Otherwise, they're welcome to use the freebie tables.
6. Restaurant guide
7. Tour brochures for the city
8. Map of the city and/or the area around the con site.

What should the packets be inside of? Ideally, you can talk someone into either providing plastic bags of appropriate size, or paying for them to be produced (with the sponsor's ad on them.) Possible sources of such revenue include book publishers, Worldcon bid committees, film studios, etc. (If you offer it to Worldcon bid committees, make sure the current year's bids get a chance at it first, and that ALL of the current year's bids are given an opportunity to sponsor! If you don't, it's a good way to make unnecessary enemies).

If you do packets, you need to stuff them somehow. One way is to have a stuffing party a few days before the con (which would of course invite early arrivers to help out!) Sometimes the local convention bureau will provide staff (and sometimes even bags!) — if they're not free, you may get enough money from the sponsor to pay for them.

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