

Vendor Relations

Explore the Possibilities

Melvin Weekley, Seniors Computer Group

San Diego, CA



Description

The world of User Groups and their relationship with Vendors is changing rapidly to a much different way of doing things. This session will discuss the changing role of Vendors in the world of User Groups.

Collected ideas will be shared and you will have an opportunity to hear about what works and what doesn't work.



Known Facts

- ❑ Major changes have taken place in the User Group/Vendor relationship
 - ❑ There is no magic formula for establishing good Vendor relationships
 - ❑ Relationships will vary from group to group
 - ❑ We can help each other
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Vendor Climate

- ❑ The time of Vendors clamoring to come to our meetings to present is over
 - ❑ Budgets are smaller
 - ❑ Vendor interest is declining
 - ❑ Return on Investment (ROI) is being closely evaluated
 - ❑ User group size is declining
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The “Don’ts”

- ❑ Don’t exaggerate attendance numbers
 - ❑ Don’t cut the Vendor short on time
 - ❑ Don’t fail to give the Vendor CLEAR directions to your meeting place
 - ❑ Don’t “cut off” presentation when the usual time allotment is over. Give him/her a chance to conclude smoothly.
 - ❑ Don’t “bad-mouth” the company or product
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The “Do’s”

- ❑ Coordinate with the Vendor to determine the amount of time needed for the presentation.
 - ❑ Learn before hand if they have any special needs.
 - ❑ Take time to understand their plan for the presentation.
 - ❑ Let them know of any restrictions or limitations that will be present during and after the presentation
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Selecting a Vendor Coordinator

- ❑ Don't have multiple persons trying to coordinate with the Vendor. (Avoid duplication of effort.)
 - ❑ Don't appoint a representative with an abrasive personality or a negative attitude.
 - ❑ DO appoint a representative that understands diplomacy and careful handling of difficult situations.
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Keep Vendor Expenses Low

- Minimize travel expense
 - Provide facilities for Vendor
 - Meeting location
 - Loudspeaker system
 - Computer projector & screen
 - Internet access
 - Provide dinner
 - Offer honorarium
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Keep Vendor Expenses Low

(cont'd)

- ❑ Assign member to provide transportation
 - ❑ Provide sleeping accommodations
 - ❑ Line up additional User Group meetings
 - ❑ Adjust meeting dates, times to accommodate multiple presentations
 - ❑ Have a combined meeting to increase audience
 - ❑ Close coordination by Program Chair(s) is essential
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Keep Vendor Expenses Low

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From Gene Barlow's presentation at the
Southwest User Group Conference - 2006:

Average Travel Expenses = \$500

Average Additional Days = \$200

Three Presentations = \$900 - \$1000

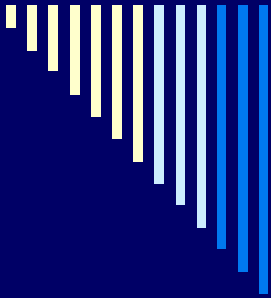
AZACC Tour = \$8,000 - \$10,000



Meeting Tour Considerations

from Gene Barlow

- Fill in gaps (no blank days)
 - 2-3 presentations per day is possible for some Vendors
 - Leave adequate time between meetings
 - Food
 - Travel
 - Keep very small groups off tour (<10)
(Try to get them to combine with others)
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Combine Meetings

from Gene Barlow

- One large meeting vs. many small groups
- Coordinate 3-4 groups
- Heavily promote combined meetings
- Central location
- Saturday afternoon (not evening)



Set the Stage for Success

- Understand the Vendor's motivation
 - Help them in every way possible
 - Be flexible in your scheduling to accommodate their schedule
 - Discuss any possible issues with them before the meeting
 - Let them know you appreciate them and their company's efforts in the user community
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Keys to Success

- Remember the Vendors are guests at your meeting
 - Treat them as guests
 - Be considerate of them
 - Treat them as you would wish to be treated if you were in their place
 - Protect them from the “negative” people in your group
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Keys to Success

- ❑ Promote the product and the presentation in your newsletter and other communications with members and via guest e-mail list
 - ❑ Promote the meeting in your local newspaper(s)
 - ❑ Promote opportunities to purchase products
 - ❑ Endorse their product to your group
 - ❑ Help Vendors sell their product
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Bottom Line...

TEAMWORK –

- with the Vendor
 - with other groups
 - with members of your group
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Open Discussion

- All attendees participate
 - AZacc (Arizona Alliance of Computer Clubs) representative available to answer questions about organizing area groups
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