

Planning an ACSC Workshop

The following steps are offered to help guide your workshop planning:

1. Make sure the Shag Club membership feels the workshop is important enough to merit the time and expense needed to properly stage, publicize and evaluate the value of hosting the workshop.
2. Ensure that the members fully support the event. Select a working committee with broad representation.
3. Track other Workshops that have taken place in your club's geographical area which should give some idea of how many participants to expect. Call the Workshop Chairman to see how many rooms were rented and for other information which can be extremely helpful.
4. If the governing body of your shag club decides that they want to make a bid on a Workshop, you must come prepared to bid. The bid should include your selected venue and any supporting information about the area.
5. Contact your Convention & Visitors Bureau and/or your Chamber of Commerce. When you contact them, ask for director of sales for Groups and Meetings and tell that person you need assistance in bidding for an "ACSC Workshop." Tell them how many people will be attending, food needs, dance floor size, meeting space, etc. In some areas, this group will take your requirements and send them to area hotels. These hotels will have the option to bid for your business.
6. Select a hotel (if possible) which is accessible to shopping, restaurants and other features or amenities appealing to workshop guests.
7. After choosing the best possible site, sit down with the hotel/venue representatives and talk about every single contract item that you can think of at the time—make sure the initial contract is contingent upon your club receiving the bid. Following are some areas to address when negotiating your contract.
 - A. Guest room rates can be negotiated. The number of guest rooms is generally determined by each separate night of the event, i.e., normally there will be more attendees on Friday than on Thursday or Saturday. Representatives of clubs in close proximity may opt to get up early and come for the day as opposed to staying the weekend.
 - B. Based on the number of paid room nights, your club will receive concessions such as complimentary suites and guestrooms which you may then use for DJs, dance instructors, or any others of your choosing.
 - C. Contact the ACSC Treasurer to determine what the needs are for ACSC/SOS Board members; e.g., meeting rooms, etc.
 - D. Learn what the consequences are if your club fails to meet any portion of performance of the contract, or if the event has to be cancelled. Clubs along the East Coast have to be concerned about hurricanes. Have a clause that neither party will be held responsible for circumstances beyond their control. One club negotiated a contract that contains the clause that includes, but is not limited to: “acts of God, shortage of commodities or supplies to be furnished by the hotel, governmental authority, or war in the United States that makes it illegal or impossible for the hotel to hold the event.”
 - E. Decide on how much space needed for all the various functions you plan, such as the Saturday morning ACSC meeting. If your club plans to have vendors, additional space will be required, preferably a space that can be secured overnight. Do not plan events

that are in direct conflict with the ACSC meeting. It is almost imperative to have coffee in the Saturday morning meeting.

- F. The hotel almost without exception will require a minimum food and beverage revenue. The hotel will give you a menu in which the prices may look exorbitant. Give them a price your budget will allow, say for a buffet dinner, and tell them to come back with a menu for that exact amount of money. The same rule applies for the ACSC meeting lunch—tell them what the Association pays and that the budget requires the need to stay within those parameters. Check with the ACSC Treasurer to find out what the allowance is for lunch at that point in time.
 - G. For hotels with a restaurant, they will sometimes balk at bringing in food and beverages for a hospitality room. Be upfront. Tell them it's a deal breaker, that this issue is important and necessary to the success of the Workshop.
 - H. Check to see if they have parking fees and if so, if they can be negotiated.
 - I. Dance floor: compare the cost of a dance floor provided by the hotel to one rented from an outside dance floor vendor.
 - J. Security is often provided by the hotel; therefore, in that case, outside security would not have to be hired.
 - K. Once again, the drinks purchased inside the ballroom are usually part of fulfillment of the contract between the shag club and the hotel. Hotel drink prices are traditionally high; ask if the hotel can provide a few drinks at a special price and/or happy hour prices.
8. For a non-hotel venue:
- A. Make sure that one hotel is the host and can provide a room for the ACSC board to meet on Friday. Make sure to have a listing of places lunch can be ordered.
 - B. Secure a place for ACSC meeting on Saturday, if unable to have in same facility.
 - C. Reserve rental equipment such as van or shuttles, drivers, buses, tables, chairs, tents, podiums, etc.
 - D. Make security arrangements, this could cost as much as \$75.00 per person for 4 hours.
 - E. Need to decide if you will do your own bar or secure a Bar Service. Decide on amount they will be paid per night—some have 2 bars with 2 bartenders each night. During day probably only need one bar with one bartender.
 - F. Most caterers also have bartenders and can do bar—compare costs— they usually have one setup fee and corkage fees.
 - G. Need to find out if facility has ice.
 - H. Decide on drink prices and whether to sell drink tickets— 1.00 per ticket
 - I. Depending on ABC laws in area— may need special license— In SC – two day permit for beer, wine & liquor \$45.00 per day.
 - J. Purchase liquor, beer and wine on commission— pay for what you use. Find out from facility if there is a corkage fee.
 - K. Need committees— Food, Bar, Registration, Ways & Means for ticket sales of drinks, raffle tickets and cleanup.
 - L. Linens— if you do not have linens, see what the facility will rent them for. It may be cheaper to rent from caterer.

- M. Venue rental- make sure what this includes - tables, chairs, etc.
 - N. Dance floor- see if local clubs in area have floor that you can use if facility does not have wood floor. Give these clubs complimentary tickets for the use of their floor.
9. The objective is to provide workshop planners with a financial blueprint. The budget should be specific, and include revenue opportunities (sponsorship, ticket sales, donations, concession sales, etc.), as well as expenses, for printing, permits, DJs, dance instructors, food, gift bags, etc.
10. After receiving bid:
- A. Select chair and members of your planning committees:
 - 1. Select chairs for subcommittees such as hospitality, setup and cleanup, tour guides, transportation, promotion and marketing, DJ schedule, activities, registration and logistics.
 - 2. Organize volunteers for each committee.
 - B. Get sponsors-There are a lot of grants out there for non-profits; for example Charleston-Low Country Quarterly grant, SC Arts commission, as well as ATAC (accommodations tax) that can be applied for.
 - C. Ask sister clubs in area to help with hospitality.
 - D. Hire DJ's and if possible have a signed contract. DJ that brings equipment is paid more.
 - E. Hire Dance instructors.
 - F. Contact vendors and ask if they are willing to pay for a spot, maybe include event ticket.
 - G. Provide water stations for dancers in the evening hours.
 - H. Consider selling tickets for drinks, this could be far more advantageous rather than having the bartenders do so. The hotel holds the club responsible for fulfilling the food and beverage contract, and, unfortunately, bartenders provided by hotels might come up short at the end of the evening. By selling tickets, the bartender is not required to handle money. This also provides a better sanitary situation.
 - I. Select menus and submit them for approval & decide how many.
 - J. Keep ACSC officials informed of your plans and ask for their support.
 - K. Meet with a Transportation coordinator to discuss parking/shuttle needs.
 - L. Plan the decorations and theme
 - M. Make hotel and transportation arrangements for ACSC/SOS officials. Contact ACSC for room requirements.
 - N. Mail an itinerary, tickets, hotel information and maps to instructors, DJ's and ACSC/SOS officials.
 - O. Make direction and welcome signs
 - P. Write and print the program
 - Q. Inspect the facility and request repairs to hazards, such as loose edges on stairs and upturned edges on dance floor.
 - R. Email out confirmations
 - S. Prepare registration packets.
 - T. Double-check publicity progress with marketing/promotion committee. Revise and update if necessary.

- U. Print out the guest list in alphabetical order.
- V. Brief the greeters, escorts and volunteers on their duties.
- W. Gather all presentation items such as gifts, plaques, trophies. Collect ceremonial items. Designate persons to be in charge of transporting them to the event site. (Gift bags, auction items, 50/50 Tickets, etc)
- X. Make catering guarantees/keep it to the minimum (rule of thumb is 10% less than registered)
- Y. Prepare your workshop box with any supplies, such as tape, string zip ties, staplers, clip boards, baskets etc. you may need.
- Z. Set up a meeting with the club's officials and the hotel/venue staff (registration, chef, maintenance, etc) and identify the individuals from your club who will interact with the hotel staff. Have an identifying pin or something for these individuals to wear.

11. The Big Day

- A. Arrive early
- B. Bring the logistical outline, production schedule, instructions, directions, phone numbers, banquet orders, seating charts, name tags, table assignments, guest lists, and the event supply box with you.
- C. Check all facilities and grounds.
- D. Set up event venue with place cards, signs, favors, awards, etc.
- E. Conduct sound and equipment checks.
- F. Set up registration. Be sure it is ready no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the event.