Today’s multitasking planners first prioritize efficient, professional relationships between themselves and venues, and then a compelling event experience built on trust and collaboration. When it comes to building relationships with busy planners who execute compelling event experiences, venues should start by prioritizing RFP response time, professionalism, and attention to detail.

Hoteliers should also keep in mind the importance of planner considerations besides cost, such as event space and layout.

PROBLEMS CAN OCCUR AT MANY POINTS IN THE VENUE SOURCING PROCESS, BUT THE MOST FRUSTRATING THING FOR PLANNERS IS TIME. Of planners experiencing sourcing difficulties, including:

- 81% say researching venues is difficult cite the amount of time it takes.
- 17% who have difficulty comparing proposals cite time required.

TAKEAWAY FOR VENUES:
- Time is a precious resource. Be efficient and respond to requests as fast as possible so your planner can make timely decisions that help deliver a great event.

WHEN IT’S TIME TO CONSIDER A RETURN TO A VENUE FOR AN EVENT, MOST PLANNERS RANK A LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR PREVENTING THEIR RETURN.

TAKEAWAY FOR VENUES:
- “Even if a venue does not provide something we want, this should be clearly stated in the RFP response,” one planner said. “We do appreciate, however, when a venue applies lateral thinking to our needs and makes unexpected recommendations.”

The top factors preventing return to an existing venue:

- 59% Lack of professionalism in hotel staff
- 43% Venue cost
- 35% Bad experience with booking process

How can hoteliers help improve RFP responses?

- Speed (20%)
- Trustworthiness (16%)
- Thoroughness (14%)
- Conciseness (7%)
- Attention to detail (12%)
- Event space layout (45%)
- Venue cost (45%)
- Location of venue (42%)
- Availability of preferred dates (42%)
- Unique atmosphere (32%)
- Ease of networking (22%)
- Customer service (22%)

Top features influencing booking decisions:

1. Event space layout (45%)
2. Venue cost (45%)
3. Location of venue (42%)
4. Availability of preferred dates (42%)
5. Event space layout (42%)
6. Venue cost (45%)
7. Location of venue (42%)
8. Ease of networking (22%)
9. Customer service (22%)

The importance of non-cost factors is highlighted by planners’ reluctance to switch to a lower-priced second choice venue:

- Nearly three in four planners (72%) would expect a cost savings of at least 6% before considering a switch to their second-choice venue.

But other factors matter as much or more in helping your venue support an outstanding event.