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Meetings
Policy

Template

**Use as a guide. Some or all of this will apply to you.**

An essential element of any Strategic Meetings Management program is a Meetings policy. A Meeting policy brings clarity and efficiency to your overall program and is essential for success. Use the policy template below as a guide and as you reference this policy template, think through your corporate culture. Are you more mandated or suggested? Throughout this template you will see terms like “must” and “required”. Depending on your organization, you may want to use terms such as “suggested” or “requested”.

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1. **Purpose (based on your company’s objectives)**

The purpose of this policy is to define Company’s meeting planning guidelines to ensure that all meeting and event activities support company’s corporate goals including: XXX

(Examples include cost savings, process optimization, high-quality experience for event attendees etc.)

1. **Scope**

It is the responsibility of all Company associates, contractors, and third-party suppliers to read, understand and, comply with this policy.

**Meeting & Event Definition:**

This policy currently applies to all company sponsored meetings & events which satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

* Travel Requirements – {10} or more {employees or attendees} flying to the same destination
* {10} or more attendees requiring overnight accommodations
* Requires a hotel or venue contract
* Spend (dollar amount of expenditure, budget classification, etc.) exceeds {$X}
* Support services required (meeting planning services, event production/AV services,
ground transportation, security)
1. **Roles and Responsibilities**

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders with an interest in Company sponsored meetings and events.

*If a central Sourcing and/or Planning Department exists, include all of the following statements below.
If outsourcing any or all responsibilities to a Company approved Meeting Management Company or some
other third party, be sure to specifically address the roles and responsibilities of these suppliers.*

• **{The Sourcing and/or Meeting Management Departments}** is responsible for the procurement of meeting/event venues and overnight hotel accommodations. This includes site research, negotiation, preparation, and execution of hotel contracts, as well as maintaining relationships with suppliers.

• {**The Meeting Management Department or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)** *if outsourced}* is responsible {in addition to the above responsibilities} *if applicable* for meeting project management, coordination, budgeting, logistical planning, and execution/on-site operations {for all meetings/events as defined in Section 2}
*or define using some other criteria such as meetings/events with C-level leaders in attendance, meetings with more than {X} # of attendees, all {X} Division meetings, all customer meetings, etc.*

• **Meeting Owner** – The individual responsible for ensuring that meeting/event expenses are accurate, reasonable, and necessary to achieve business objectives. The Meeting Owner may also be the meeting/event budget owner.

• **Meeting Planner** – The individual responsible for managing the overall meeting or event logistics planning and project management including coordinating the responsibilities of the Meeting Owner, {the Meeting Management Department or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)}
and other service providers or related internal departments and business units. The Meeting Planner identifies the requirements of the meeting or event, creates, and manages the project plan, maintains the budget, and complies with all corporate policies. This may be managed by {an internal meeting planning professional, an internal occasional planner, or outsourced to a Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier.} *Define as applicable to your organization. Note that Planners may also have responsibility for sourcing, negotiating, and contracting in the absence of a separate Sourcing Department or third-party sourcing entity. Other common Planner responsibilities are listed below.*

The Planner may also be responsible for the following meeting tasks:

* Budget development, submission and tracking approval status
* Securing the authorized Company signature(s) indicating meeting approval
* Creating/completing supplier Statement of Work (SOW) if appropriate
* Attendee management
* On-site meeting execution
* Budget reconciliation
* Payment reconciliation
* All levels of reporting

• **Meeting Requestor** – The individual responsible for originating and submitting the Meeting Request Form. This may also be the Meeting Planner or Meeting Owner.

• **Group Air Provider** – The Travel and/or Meeting Management Company designated to provide group air services. Responsibilities include identifying cost-effective destinations by conducting airfare analyses, airline negotiations and contracting, attendee reservations and ticketing, and compilation of arrival and departure manifests.

**4. Policy Statement**

Live (face-to-face) meetings and events should only occur when there is a significant value add that cannot be derived from teleconferencing, videoconferencing, or other methods. Whenever possible, live meetings should be held at Company leased or owned facilities or venues where no additional charges will be incurred. When this is not possible, a Meeting Request Form must be submitted to engage the {Company’s Meeting Management Department or a company preferred/approved/designated meeting management supplier(s)}, initiate the site selection and sourcing process and ensure proper payment of meeting-related invoices.

## **Meeting Registration Procedure**

For every meeting or event satisfying the criteria defined in Section 2, a Meeting Request Form must be completed and submitted. This form summarizes meeting details, costs and the business objectives and initiates sourcing efforts. Within {#} business days of form submission, a member of the Company’s Sourcing Department {or Meeting Management Department or Company preferred / approved / designated meeting management supplier(s)} will be assigned to:

• Identify cost effective locations

• Source potential venues and/or suppliers

• Provide information necessary for the {Meeting Owner, Planner or Requestor} to select the venue/supplier.

• Negotiate favorable contract terms and conditions

• Obtain all necessary signatures to execute contracts according to procurement guidelines or SOPs.

• Prepare a preliminary budget or cost estimate

* Report on KPIs during Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs)

**Meeting Registration with an Approval Procedures:**
All Meetings must be registered via the Company Meeting Request Form with {insert entity name here} *if central Meeting Management, Corporate Travel/Meetings or Strategic Meetings Management Department exists – this should address who will be reviewing and overseeing meeting requests.*

The Meeting Request Form summarizes anticipated meeting specifications, including meeting costs and business justification. Submission of a Meeting Request Form initiates a formal request for approval of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the Meeting Owner or designated Meeting Planner to ensure that the appropriate project and budgetary approvals have been secured for each meeting. Expenditure approvals must be obtained for the total estimated cost of the meeting. Meeting Owners or Planners should refer {to the General Procurement Policies*} or reference by a hyperlink or include approval requirements below* for specific approvals required. Written or electronic documentation of all required approvals is necessary prior to signature of any hotel, venue or group air contract. *Note that the approval types highlighted in red above vary by company. Strike or edit the statements above as necessary per the Company’s meeting approval requirements.*

In addition to prompting appropriate meeting approval(s), submission of the Meeting Request Form will also initiate the following processes:

• Meeting Hotel/Venue Request for Proposal (RFP) preparation

• Hotel/venue sourcing including availability and bid comparison information

• Supplier selection

• Contract negotiations to establish favorable terms and conditions and apply Company Contract Addendum clauses

• Obtain all necessary signatures to execute contracts {according to Signing Authority guidelines (see section c.4)}

• Engage Group Air Provider if air travel is required

• Initiate the Corporate Meeting Card (CMC) application process

## **Group Air Travel**

Airfare discounts are generally available to groups with 10 or more people traveling to the same destination. Group air contracts must be used whenever possible to reduce costs and flight reservations must be made with the Company designated Group Air Provider(s) {Travel Management Company, and/or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)}. The Sourcing Department {or the Meeting Management Department or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)} will coordinate with the Group Air Provider upon receipt of a group air requirement (as indicated in the Meeting Request Form). An airfare analysis must be conducted to compare the travel costs of possible destinations based on the cities from which attendees will originate. Cost effective options should be selected whenever practical. Use of preferred airline suppliers for meeting and event air travel is required.

## **Supplier/Venue Selection**

Priority will be given to any suppliers for which Company has paid a cancellation fee that may be available as a credit towards a future program. Company preferred transient (business travel) hotels or Group Preferred Hotels are to be used whenever possible. The Sourcing Department {or the Meeting Management Department or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)} will identify Company’s preferred hotels and suppliers with outstanding cancellation credits when compiling site selection results:

**c. Hotel/Venue Selection, Sourcing Responsibilities and Contracting**

**c.1. Hotel/Venue Selection:**
Meetings or events must be held at a site that minimizes travel and overnight accommodation expenses when most attendees are from the same location. Whenever possible, use of Company owned/leased facilities must be given first consideration, followed by the Company’s preferred hotels when contracting for meetings or events.

**c.2. Sourcing Responsibility:**
All meeting and event hotels/venues are to be sourced by one of the following authorized personnel:

• Company Sourcing or Procurement Department professionals

• Company Meeting Management Department professional meeting planners

• Company Preferred / Approved / Designated Suppliers with expressed written authorization (via a Master Services Agreement) granted by the Company

**c.3. Sourcing Procedures:**
All meetings and events will use the formal procurement practice of selecting suppliers through an objective RFP and resulting bid comparison process.

**c.4. Contracting and Signing Authority:**
The approved Company Contract Addendum must be used for all U.S. based hotel agreements to mitigate Company’s risk. Approved regional variations of the Addendum should be used for. hotel agreements outside the U.S.

Only {state who authorized by title or role} is/are authorized to sign hotel/venue/supplier contracts on
behalf of the company.

## **Lead Time for Meeting Requests (Optional)**

The further in advance a meeting hotel or venue is secured, the greater the chance of finding appropriate accommodations within the meeting’s or event’s budget parameters. Large meetings and events, or those with very unique specifications require more advance lead time. The following are the minimum recommended lead-times to submit a Meeting Request Form and engage {the Meeting Management Department or a Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)} in the site selection and sourcing process:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of Attendees** | **Recommended Minimum Lead Time** |
| Less than 50 | 3 months |
| 50-100 | 3-6 months |
| 101- 300 | 6-9 months |
| 301 – 500 | 9-12 months |
| >500 | 12+ months |

## **Payments**

Every registered meeting will be assigned a unique Meeting ID number. This number must be included on all invoices, including any prepayments that are made to meeting related suppliers including hotels/venues. Company is responsible to pay all meeting/event related invoices for which contracts are executed directly between the Company and the supplier. The Meeting Owner and/or designated Planner are responsible for ensuring payments are made in a timely manner. Requests for payments that do not include the Meeting ID number will not be paid until a valid number is provided to {Accounts Payable or the entity responsible for payments}. *State whether Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s) are authorized to make payments to suppliers on the Company’s behalf and if so, under what conditions.*

## **Compliance**

Meeting Owners and/or designated Meeting Planners are responsible for complying with the Company Code of Ethics or Conduct, General Procurement Policies and any applicable laws regarding the management of meeting-related expenditures. {Insert position or title here} will monitor compliance with this policy and instances of non-compliance will be reported to senior management.

The Sourcing Department {or the Meeting Management Department or Company preferred/ approved /designated meeting management supplier(s)} will work closely with {Ethics and Compliance or Accounts Payable Departments or other departments or business units} to ensure compliance with this and all related policies.

-AND-*To add consequences for non-compliant behavior:*

**Compliance:** Any attempts to circumvent this policy are prohibited and will be considered a violation of company policy. Compliance reports are provided to {Senior Management or Compliance Officer or other personnel}
*with what frequency* {monthly} and notifications are distributed to associates and contractors found to be non-compliant. After the second notification, appropriate disciplinary action, in accordance with Company policies and applicable law, will be taken against associates or contractors found in violation of this policy. Such action may include termination of employment or contract.

## **Security and Risk Management Responsibilities**

Meeting Owners and/or designated Meeting Planners selecting offsite locations for meeting venues are responsible for assessing security or risk factors and documenting any security measures taken to ensure the safety of meeting attendees. Any offsite company events, other than regular business meetings, must be approved by Risk Management. Meetings or events inclusive of recreational activities may require additional insurance and risk management considerations. Any requests for individual releases or waivers of liability or indemnification require review by Risk Management. Meeting Owners and/or designated Meeting Planners are responsible for obtaining required approval documentation from Risk Management.

##  **Ethics Responsibilities**

Personal incentive points, tickets, credits, gifts or other rewards that may be offered by suppliers in exchange for Company business are not permitted. Acceptance of or participation in familiarization trips and other services offered on a complimentary basis are also not allowed.

Meeting and Event Related Ethics:

• **Hotel Rewards Programs** - If available, hotel reward points, airline miles or any other form of organized personal compensation offered in exchange for booking event/meeting business must be credited to the event/meeting master bill or otherwise returned to the Company.

• **Familiarization (FAM) Trips** – Acceptance of or participation in familiarization trips and other services offered on a complimentary basis are not permitted.

• **Site Inspections** – Site inspections that include an overnight stay must utilize the hotel’s Company transient rate or if not available, a site inspection discounted rate should be requested. Site inspections are only permitted when associated with a registered meeting in which a valid Meeting ID has been issued.

• **Giveaways** – The Company gift policy (reference link here and in Section 6) and Code of Ethics apply in the context of meetings and events and must be followed.

**5. References to Related Policies**

Please refer to the following related corporate policies which may also apply in the context of
meeting and event activities.

{Reference Policy #} Corporate Travel and Expense Policy

{Reference Policy #} General Procurement Policies

{Reference Policy #} Finance Policies

{Reference Policy #} Code of Ethics or Compliance Policies

{Reference Policy #} Use of Company Name and Branding Guidelines

{Reference Policy #} Risk Management and Security Policy, Meeting Risk Assessment Tools

**6. Contacts**

Please refer to the following related corporate policies which may also apply in the context of
meeting and event activities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Title** | **Function** | **Role** |
| Name | VP of Corporate Services | Corporate Services | Policy Exception Authority |
| Name | Director of Meetings and Events | Corporate Services | Policy Originator, Meeting Council Leader |
| Name | Strategic Sourcing Category Manager | Procurement | Policy Sponsor, Meeting Council  |
| Name | Travel Manager | Corporate Travel | Travel Liaison, Meeting Council |
| Name | Departmental Meetings Manager | Sales & Marketing | Meeting Council |
| Name | Chief Ethics and Compliance Office | Ethics & Compliance | Ethics Liaison |
| Name | Security Director | Global Security | Security Liaison |
| Name | Financial Analyst | Finance | Finance Liaison |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effective Date**  | **Revision Number** | **Summary of Changes** | **Date for Next Review** |
| Date | 1.0 | Initial Release | Date |

**7. Issuance and Revision History**

**8. Appendices**

*Include Policy FAQ’s, Standard Operating Procedure documents, workflows/flow charts/process maps, templates and forms, SOW’s, supplier lists, etc.*

To continue building your business case for meetings management, be sure to download all of the assets in
[Cvent’s SMM Starter Kit](http://www.cvent.com/en/strategic-meetings-management/building-business-case-thank-you.shtml?cid=701o0000000dJzvAAE)