

Planning For Audio-Visual, Lighting & Staging Of Your Event

Exciting new technologies like interactive computer use, live video enhancement of speakers, and teleconferencing can be utilized but the associated cost of these new technologies can be steep. The type of AV support you will need for your meeting or event may be simple or more complex. Be sure to review all your options and plan ahead:

- Get a list of all speakers' needs well in advance of your meeting date and schedule a rehearsal.
- Allow for rehearsal and set-up time in your meeting rooms.
- Give speakers a chance to rehearse with equipment they will be using.
- Test equipment immediately prior to the beginning of the event.

Check acoustics

Clap your hands sharply... talk loudly... listen carefully

Check to see if there is an echo or dead spots.

Do drapes or acoustic panels need to be added.?

Plug-in and test the audio.

Is the public address system working?

Is there any feedback at working level?

Are the speakers correctly placed?

Are there enough microphones, cords, stands?

Have spare bulks and extension cords on hand.

If you are taping, is the tape recorder microphone working? Check to see if you have to erect a stand or move a table

Is the audiovisual the right distance from the screen, rigid and level?

Know the location of circuit breakers and fuses

Have spare fuses and standby circuits ready

Test the intercom system.

Is the emergency work light ready?

- Having a technician available to attend to your needs throughout the meeting may be your best insurance policy.
- If the facility where you are holding your meeting has AV equipment available check to make sure it is in good working order.
- Remember that poor-quality AV equipment can ruin a meeting.

To maximize your audio visual budget, try the following:

- If using an outside vendor, choose a reputable company and reserve equipment early. If you have never worked with the supplier before, ask for references and check them.
- Negotiate all costs. Package deals are good for you and the rental companies. If they know your needs and have your timelines, it will be more cost effective.
- Make sure all agreements are in writing. If one company is not able to meet your needs, look at other companies until your needs are met.

- Provide clear instructions in writing. Include agendas and room layouts so your vendors know exactly what you expect.
- If you need help, find experienced production managers and technicians to oversee the AV portions of your event. Introduce yourself to the technicians who will be working your event, and find out how to contact them should the need arise.
- Barter goods and services with your rental companies. They may want to advertise in your publications, exhibit at your trade show, or acquire leads from your attendees.
- Guaranteed performance is often a policy of AV companies. They will compensate clients for rental costs in the event of equipment failure. Even better, many will provide on-site back-up.

Check the audio-visual equipment that is available at the meeting facility you are using. Many facilities have their own in-house audio department. Ask if any audio-visual equipment is included in your room charge? Be sure to check out the quality and age of the equipment provided.

Most facilities only provide a podium and microphone, so you will need to rent additional equipment from a qualified local audio-visual rental company. The facility where you are holding your meeting can provide recommendations.

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