

Tips for Innovative Meetings/ Events (T.I.M.E.)

Topic: Politics & Meetings

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INTRODUCTION

Don't forget to vote today.

This issue of T.I.M.E. takes the topic of politics and highlights some things we can learn from that arena to apply to meetings.

We have published this issue seemingly on the heels of the October issue. However, in the interest of timeliness it seemed only appropriate to publish it today, on Election Day.

You won't hear from us for several weeks until we publish the December issue mid-month. Unless, of course, we can be of assistance in any way...

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For your ease, sections are numbered and separated with “___’s”; Scroll down or use Ctrl +f to locate a specific section.

1. FACE-TO-FACE IN POLITICS

Politics is an interesting arena to watch the use of face-to-face meetings. On the campaign trail, the use of television has irrevocably changed political campaigns. However, beyond campaigning consider whether these activities could be successfully accomplished in a format other than face-to-face:

Foreign Policy Negotiations
Lobbying
Conventions
Press Conferences
Trading of Votes
Personal Campaign Appearances
Alliances like the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Face-to-face meetings are the ultimate communication vehicle when it comes to:

- Confronting difficult issues
- Conveying emotion and sincerity
- Creating energy
- Allowing disparate groups or individuals to communicate their position or stance
- Creating consensus and an action plan

2. POLITICS AND MEETINGS

What can we learn from political leaders to enhance our own leadership style and the next meeting we are involved in?

Here's a brief list from well-know politicians. (This is not intended to be a paid politic commercial nor intended to indicate support for a specific candidate or party.)

Al Gore:

Often uses a circular room set-up to foster group collaboration

Schedules his time into 20 minute blocs and sticks to the timeframe and agenda

Uses a Palm Pilot to schedule all meetings

Uses technology to enhance the meeting – examples are advance emails for preparatory material, electronic white boards

George W. Bush:

Determines specific goals for each meeting

Insures that subject matter experts are included in all meetings. He solicits the opinions of these teams.

Ralph Nader:

Is often credited with being able to put himself in other people's shoes.

Another quality often attributed to Nader is the ability to take the long-term view of an issue.

A loyal staffer comments on Nader "...he's been around long enough to know that every little flare-up between parties doesn't mean that's the end of communication between them".

And leaving the Presidential scene, Jesse Ventura offers his five secrets for successful meeting leaders. Here are some quotes from the Governor himself:

Know your Audience

"You'd better do your homework on who's attending the meeting and be able to speak in a language they understand. Talk over their heads and you'll lose them."

Be Honest

"If you're discussing a serious problem, don't gloss over it. I always speak from the heart."

Welcome Questions

"I'll ask any question to anybody in a meeting, and I expect others to do the same."

Stick to the point

"Stick to an agenda, make your points..."

Be positive

"I always end staff meetings on a positive noted by telling a joke or funny story..."

(Excerpted from Successful Meetings, 10/2000 and 9/2000)

3. HUMOR

Republican Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado recapped the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia:

“The thing is part convention, part circus, part flea market.”

4. HIGH TECH LESSONS FROM POLITICAL CONVENTIONS

The Democratic National Convention partnered with an on-line event planning company for this year’s Presidential Convention.

The use of technology enhanced delegates’ ability to organize events, communicate with each other, and find people with similar interests.

Attendees were able to

- Send out email invitations to events
- “Chat” before, during, and after the convention with other delegates
- Search the database for delegates with similar interests
- Access vendors to help plan “as hoc” events

You don’t need to have a political convention to enjoy the same benefits.

Many people prefer to receive notices about meetings and events on-line.

Associations may discover their meetings enhanced when participants can connect before the actual meeting.

Specific issues can be posted before a meeting helping to insure the content is directed in the most productive way.

Some of these tips can be implemented independently. Others require the resources of an on-line event planning companies and tools. As reported in Successful Meetings, The Democratic National Convention used Event411.com.

What comments, experiences, ideas, and questions do you have with on-line event planning tools that you are willing to share? Email us and we will publish a summary of the input for everyone’s use and evaluation

5. FREEBIES

If you would like a summary of comments about other’s experience with on-line planning tools, please send an email titled “ON-LINE SUMMARY” to stinnish@ameritech.net.

If you would like to make a comment, please also send your comment us at stinnish@ameritech.net.

The summary will be sent out in December after accumulating comments from subscribers of T.I.M.E.

We have offered the following “Freebies” in past issues:

May: Teambuilding – New York Times reprint and summary on why teambuilding miss the mark.

June: Green Meetings – List of books that have 20-30 minute exercises for meetings and events.

July: American (Values) –Meeting Analysis, a 1-page document that will outline the scope and needs analysis for your next meeting.

August: Minimum/Minimal Meetings – Web Winners (web resources to make you and your meetings more productive)

October: Evaluations—Sample evaluation questions

If you would like a past “Freebie”, just email us at stinnish@ameritech.net.

6. FUTURE T.I.M.E.

We welcome any comments or suggestions about the newsletter or topics you would like to read about. Our December issue will talk about Toys!

Please forward this newsletter to your associates and colleagues! Your recommendations are key to our success. Or anyone can subscribe by sending an email to stinnish@ameritech.net.

Past issues of T.I.M.E. can be requested by emailing us.

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