

Deciphering the Official Services Contractor

By Rip Rippetoe CFE

Understanding the complex operations behind-the-scenes of a tradeshow's Official Services Contractor is useful to exhibitors coming to our Convention Centers for a tradeshow. Comprehending this knowledge allows the exhibitor to maximize their cost savings and experience a smoother show. The missing building block that creates the most favorable customer experience, however, is the body of knowledge held by Facility Managers regarding the Contractor's role at show site and beyond.

Official Services Contractors strive to educate their clients and their exhibitors on the value of this knowledge. We as facility managers can learn more about the Contractor's essential roles and create more synergistic service programs.

The following is a list of what exhibitors are exposed to by Contractors and what all facility leadership should know:

1. Understanding the ENTIRE show process is essential. Most exhibitors are exposed only to the on-site show process. Understanding the complex pre and post-show operation can help you avoid many surprises that cost you time and money.
2. Even if you use an Exhibitor Appointed Contractor (EAC), you should have a basic working knowledge of Exhibitor Kit contents and information. Kits usually ship between 90-120 days prior to a show. However, many exhibitors wait until the last minute to review the kit or order services – missing key deadlines or show regulations that drive up costs. Many defer everything kit-related to their EACs. However, working close with the Official Services Contractor and utilizing their services wherever possible can help navigate the specifics for each show.
3. Leveraging the expertise of the Official Services Contractor can help you save money. Because the Official Services Contractor has insight into and control of the show process, not just specific components, it can usually save you time and money by assisting in your pre-show planning.
4. Rome wasn't built in a day...but some shows are! Official Services Contractors are essentially building (and tearing down) a city infrastructure in just a few days – complete with “roads”, power and communications grids, plumbing networks, security forces, television and radio stations, centers of commerce, etc. -- in just a few days.
5. The show must go on. All operations are geared around the show opening on time. Understanding the sequencing and policies of move in and move out will help you understand and leverage to your advantage the flexibilities in process.
6. The Official Services Contractor is hired by the show organizer to design and produce the show. Many policies and procedures are show-specific and out of control of the Official Services Contractor.
7. Think of the Official Services Contractor in a different light. Many exhibitors are not aware of the depth and breadth of products and services offered by the Official Services Contractor, including: I&D, standard or custom exhibits, logistics services,

or specialty furniture. Using the Official Services Contractor can be very cost-effective. For example, many exhibitors are unaware that material handling is included in Official Services Contractor exhibit and specialty furniture pricing.

8. Actively communicate with the Official Services Contractor. Don't wait until show site to see if everything you need is in order. Most Official Services Contractors send out confirmations or have information available to you online. Contact the Official Services Contractor in advance to confirm orders, get answers to your questions, or to address any concerns. Official Services Contractors DO want to hear from you and to help you have a successful show.
9. Service extends well beyond show site. Official Services Contractors have invested heavily in recent years in pre-show, show site, and post-show customer service personnel and technologies to help the exhibitor have a better overall show experience. Take advantage of every tool available to you.
10. An educated exhibitor will be a more successful exhibitor. Make the investment in an accredited industry-education. Take advantage of certification programs.

The Official Services Contractor and the Facility have a common client, the tradeshow organizer. While contractors have done well with educating their client's client, they have not provided facility managers the same information. Conversely, facilities tend to preach policy instead of learning the entire show process that the users of their facility must know in order to achieve success. We should require ourselves to learn the entire show process. Consider it a key success measure. This improved body of knowledge, increased level of understanding, and synergistic approach by both contractor and facility will improve the destination's image and ability to perform at the highest level of customer satisfaction. More information regarding this mutually beneficial information to come.

Why GREEN?

By Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe CFE

In 2007, incoming IAAM President, Steven Peters, formed a task force that focused on Sustainability. It had four simple objectives:

- Raise awareness of Green building certifications - including LEED and other international designations.
- Provide for an exchange of information regarding Sustainability by way of articles, webinars, sessions at conferences, district meetings and specialty conferences.
- Begin setting the stage for best practices for facilities.

Why did President Peters and others begin this effort?

- A typical commercial construction project generates up to 2.5 pounds of solid waste per square foot

- Commercial buildings use more than 30% of energy in the United States alone
- There is over 5 billion gallons of water used daily in the United States to flush toilets

The need to go “GREEN” is often born by a mandate or desire to reduce costs in an operation. Thus the effective management of resources leading to GREEN is largely due to operational practices & upgrade choices.

The Industrial Revolution brought an age of efficiency never seen before. It also brought an age of incredible waste that required the government to establish laws to prevent damage to life and property from injection of poisons into the environment. Some say we are now reaching another Industrial Revolution - One where we have to take the basic principles of effective management and begin to design a full circle approach to maintaining the sustainability of our natural resources. Good intentions aside, we often rush to use products made from recycled content, when in fact these things were never designed with this further use in mind. Morphing them into this new form can require more energy and generate as much waste as producing the new product. All that effort only postpones the usual fate of products by one lifecycle of two.

All of these factors are what led the IAAM leadership to establish the task force in 2007 to understand what Sustainability really is.

The 2007 task force accomplishments included:

- Defined Sustainability for IAAM members
 - Sustainability: The ability of public assembly facilities to fulfill client and industry needs whilst exercising environmental responsibility through use of GREEN standards, application of technologies, processes, practices and related business implications - balancing the fulfillment of human needs, now and for generations to come, while enhancing the health of ecosystems and the ability of other species to survive in their natural environments
- Scheduled Webinars and sessions
- Session at Annual Conference on ROI
- Town Hall at Annual Conference
- Developed a simple survey to investigate member experiences and knowledge
- Developed a liaison with Green Meeting Industry Council

The membership survey, with 173 respondents, provided the following information:

- 63% indicated that it was important for their facility to be environmentally friendly
- 5.1% of facilities in the USA are LEED Certified
- 1.2% are recognized under ISO 14001 International Standard for certification
- 25% of facilities have had a GREEN Audit
- 53.8% of facilities have had an Energy Audit

- 95% + have some kind of recycling program
- 12.7% of facilities use Solar or some other type of Sustainable energy
- 7.5% pick vendors based on how GREEN they are
- 35.6% of facilities have a GREEN task force

When asked what IAAM could do for Facility Managers, we received the following information:

- Give us more and more ideas that we can implement.
- Continue publicity on those locations that are leaders in this movement.
- Best practice information exchange, webinars
- If you can provide us with specifics ideas or examples about how a stadium can become a green stadiums
- IAAM can help by defining best practices and providing those documents to its members.
- Give us more information about what other facilities are implementing, the issues they are facing and how they overcame them, and contact information of other facilities to discuss ideas.
- Education resources at district, specialty and national meetings. Library of green information online. Green workshops. Introductory to senior courses. Green guide for dummies.

These initial accomplishments and the needs of the membership have lead to the creation of a permanent IAAM Sustainability Committee.

2008 Sustainability Committee

Mission:

The Sustainability Committee reports to the Chair of the Industry Affairs Council (IAC) and will work to promote the concept of sustainable facilities in the sports, performing arts, convention/expo and entertainment industries. The committee will also continue to promote awareness of technological developments relating to the betterment of the public assembly industry.

Roles & Responsibilities

1. The committee will pursue four primary objectives relating to sustainability:

- To create a liaison to the U. S. Green Building Council, and other relevant international agencies, regarding Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).
- To improve industry awareness of sustainability issues.

- To create opportunities for the exchange of ideas and information in support of sustainable facilities in the public assembly industry.
 - To develop practices and procedures that will support sustainability efforts in public assembly facilities around the world. (Best Practices Guidelines for the industry).
2. The committee will inform IAAM members of notable developments relating to “Going GREEN” within the public assembly industry through IAAM e-news, along with contributions to *Facility Manager Magazine*.
 3. Provide resource information to members regarding sustainability development and practices, as well as other technological developments.
 4. Solicit input from members regarding their own work to establish practices and procedures for facility sustainability.

The Sustainability Committee has based its protocol on the fundamental principles of:

RECYCLE –REDUCE –REUSE
Leading to Zero Waste

- An environmental concept since the 90’s
- Embraces triple bottom line approach –economic, environmental and social
- Maximizes recycling, minimizes residual waste, reduces consumption.
- The goal of Zero Waste is to ultimately eliminate waste.

Practical examples of this include:

RECYCLE

- Food Composting
- Paper, cardboard
- Wood, metal, plastic
- Glass, lamp ballasts, fluorescent bulbs
- Construction materials
- E-cycling (electronic equipment & devices)
- Mixed recyclables
- Batteries and printer ink cartridges
- Wood pallets

- Copper wire

REDUCE

- Schedule HVAC to match daily activities
- Reduce lights\Install motion sensors
- Use energy efficient equipment; turn off equipment or unplug equipment
- Print double-sided or not at all
- E-mail documents rather than print multiple copies
- Choose paper sourced environmentally with post-consumer content
- Choose bio-degradable & reusable products (gift bags, product containers, wastepaper bags)
- Water Conservation
 - Low flow and automatic toilets & sinks
 - Drip Irrigation
 - Plant drought tolerant and slow growing greenscape
 - Use mulch to reduce irrigation needs
 - Replace old chillers
- Energy Efficient Electricity

REUSE

- Choose products made from post-consumer material
- Use whiteboards instead of flipcharts
- Use reverse side of single-sided print
- Re-use boxes and packing materials, office supplies
- Use a “materials exchange”
- Purchase products with biodegradable, recycled materials
- Collect green waste
- Purchase recycled cleaning towels
- Refurbish phones
- Donations Program

Why GREEN? Because environmental awareness is at an all time high. More and more customers and companies are purchasing based upon their environmental values. It makes business sense through marketing, operational efficiencies, and saving money. If you don't address it, you miss the opportunity to be environmentally responsible, more profitable, and a healthier place to live and work.

Ultimately, the practicality of your particular situation and region will dictate how GREEN you become. The committee and IAAM will continue to provide information and educational opportunities regarding Sustainability and Going GREEN.

A quote from John Kasich may best sum this up –

“If we intend to provide a better life, and a better world, for future generations, we can't ignore the quality of the environment we leave them.”

May be a better question is “Why not GREEN?”.