

## Tips for Successfully Booking Group Blocks

- Call sales department to schedule a site tour of the property and to talk to a salesperson face to face
- Make sure you would consider the salesperson you are working with a trusted advisor. If they're not the leave. They need your business more than you need their services. Hotels are abundant and competitive in almost every market.
- Check rates on hotel website before appointment. Check AAA and advance purchase rate. Normally try for at least advance purchase rate, but beware of booking advance purchase as it is not refundable and sometimes doesn't have a guaranteed room type.
- The larger the group the larger the discount should be, unless of course market demand is high for the season or there is a city wide event going on. Try to book as far in advance as possible.
- Don't book on the first visit or accept the first rate. Countering offering is a good suggesting.
- Limited service hotels are going to be your best value. i.e. complimentary breakfast, parking, complimentary shuttle to and from airport, and internet in most cities. Definitely double check these options. Try to get something complimentary, examples are smaller meeting spaces hotels might have, 1 free room night per 20 consumed, extra rewards points or meeting planner points.
- Should you need a full service hotel for banquet space also ask for complimentary items which will normally be contingent on the amount of rooms consumed. Examples would be breakfast, internet, banquet space rental, 1 complimentary room per 20 consumed (normal industry standard)
- Make sure the contract gives at least a 30 day cancellation policy and try not to sign off on an agreement with an attrition clause or they will try to charge for 1 night stay x the number of rooms for that night. This is very hard to do. You should not have to leave a credit card for a courtesy group block. If reservations are made individually the individual guests' card will be placed on hold and not charges until check-out.
- Always hold rooms on a credit card and not a debit card. The hotel holds money for a few days for incidentals and could tie up your funds for a few days on a debit card.
- Make sure the contract states when individual reservations can be cancelled by without penalty. Ideally cancellations can be made by 6pm day of arrival.
- Ensure rate is good a certain number of days prior to and after the dates in the block (typically 3 days prior and 3 days post)
- Make sure you know the cut-off date or the last day rooms can be picked-up before they are released back into regular inventory and if they are flexible with discounted rates if a few people book late
- Industry standard for cut-off dates is 1 month, they can do 3 weeks

- Ask what policy is on adding more rooms to block if needed. They will try to get you to agree to less rooms than you actually think you need.
- Ask for rooming lists every so often so you can see the number of people that have booked in the block.
- Ask about the area, restaurants, attractions, etc