

## Tips for Specific Types of Vendors

The information above can help you work with virtually **any** type of vendor. The information in this section offers tips on working with some vendors that are frequently used by event planners. As mentioned above, several of these services may be provided by a single vendor such as the venue.

### Travel and Transportation

If you've chosen a site for your event that is a considerable distance from your attendees' home base, you will have to **arrange transportation** to the venue. (Obviously this

is not a necessary step for every function you organize, although many of today's thoughtful employers are providing transportation – via bus or taxi – to and from company events.)

There are **four types** of transportation needs you will encounter when planning events. The first three involve:

- getting attendees to the host city via air, train, or bus
- providing ground transportation to the hotel from the airport or train station
- arranging group ground transportation for activities away from the hotel/venue

The fourth type of transportation needs involves arranging transportation for any goods required for the event, whether they're print and promotional materials or product samples. These materials will travel via cargo methods (such as **forwarding agents**) and may be subject to search if crossing international borders. It is wise to check with

a customs or forwarding agent ahead of time when you are planning on shipping goods from one country to the next.

### Air Travel

It is vital to have a transportation plan developed for the event. Once that is accomplished, a **specialist** (airline booking personnel or corporate travel agents) can be retained – usually at no additional cost – to find the lowest fares to the event, mail tickets, and handle individual traffic problems.

If you choose to use an airline specialist, they will usually provide **complimentary** or **reduced rates** for the event planner and their staff (i.e., one free ticket for every 50 sold). They may also offer negotiated air fare rates (a volume discount) and arrival and departure assistance specifically for your group.

If you end up planning a lot of conference or incentive travel, you would be wise to build a good relationship with a particular airline. Declare an airline to be the “**official air-line**” of an event, or get discounts based on long-term exclusive use of one airline.

Usual lead times for booking travel arrangements are 6 to 12 months for a domestic location, and 8 to 18 months for an international location.

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## Ground Transportation

Ground transportation should be booked as **far in advance** as possible, taking into consideration other events that may be happening in that locale. Try to get a signed contract at least six months in advance. It is also advisable to get at least three proposals. Here are some important questions to ask ground transportation providers:

- What condition and age is the company’s fleet of vehicles?
- What is the capacity of the vehicles and are they accessible to people with disabilities?
- Are the vehicles insured with \$1 million of liability insurance?
- Are the vehicles air-conditioned and do they provide restroom facilities?
- Does the driver provide assistance with storing luggage?
- What type of contingency plans does the supplier have?
- Does the supplier have enough vehicles to handle the entire group?

If you are booking taxis or limo services for a local function most of the questions above will still apply (except for restroom facilities).

