Building Valuable Connections in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry: A networking Panel Event

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Abstract

Project Information

The purpose of the project was to organize the first hospitality industry networking event by the students in the Hospitality Administration program. Networking events are organized gatherings that encourage professionals to meet and engage with one another to build valuable connections (Career Contessa, 2023). This networking event allowed attendees to build professional connections and established the relationship between industry partners and hospitality students. In addition, paving the way for internship and job opportunities for the hospitality administration students in particular.

Methodology

In planning and producing this event, the class was organized by committees. These committees included catering, catering set up, registration, floor layout, parking, signs, marketing, programing, and the executive committee. The executive committee talked about responsibilities within each committee. Weeks later the executive committee had a check-in with each group to ensure that everything was cohesive.

Results

The outcome of the event showed each committee successfully accomplishing their task. The event had fifty-two attendees and one hundred percent satisfaction. The catering group successfully planned and executed a wonderful menu of hors d'oeuvre. The menu consisted of Ham and cheese pinwheels, cake pops, cucumbers served with a veggie dip, pimento cheese and Caprese skewers. The catering group used cost control skills to price each hors d'oeuvre based on sixty-five attendees. There was no food waste, and everyone enjoyed the selections. Catering set up labeled food items and planned the

layout based on food color and taste profile. Parking contacted the parking office and with the information provided, parked our guests successfully. They emailed industry partners attending a labeled map, parking pass and thorough instructions. The floor layout committee created a floor plan that was easily accessible based on event functions and room limitations. The registration committee created sign-in procedures and created the moment of truth for our event. Here they handed out name tags, signed people in and handed out bags full of small gifts. The signage team communicated with CCPD (Center for Career & Professional Development) who let us borrow their signs. The marketing team created fliers for the event to pique interest. To ensure hospitality students knew of the event they went to hospitality classes and explained the event to fellow classmates. The programming committee created a schedule to ensure each panelist had an ample amount of time to talk. The schedule also reflected time to eat the hors d'oeuvres and then followed the networking part of the event.

Post Event Feedback

Did you create a connection with someone new?	Did this event meet your expectations?	Any improvement for next event
• 99% student; 1% panelist • 100% yes	• 100% yes • Overly exceeded expectations	• More panelists • Increase time for Q&A and networking

Takeaways

The post event survey revealed that all the guests would come back to the next networking event. The students at the event felt welcome and that they got good networking practice. The panelists that attended mentioned that they could not wait for the networking event the following year. This event was successful in showing the importance of networking to students. The students enjoyed connecting with panelists so much that they requested adding more panelists to the next Networking event. The best thing that happened was one of the students was hired by MCI because of the networking panel event.

References

Career Contessa. (2023, September). *10 types of networking events actually worth your time.* Job Search. https://www.careercontessa.com/advice/5-worthwhile-networking-event-types/#:~:text=Simply%20put%2C%20networking%20events%20are,intention%20to%20build%20professional%20connections.