

*The following was a query posted on the MPI LinkedIn Page. Several ADME members took the opportunity to respond. Interestingly enough, this posting was removed within two days.*

## **Need Feedback from Planners: What benefit/value do you perceive getting from a DMC vs. dealing directly with CVB member vendors directly?**

Interested in understanding the "default mode" that many planners and incentive companies utilize, which is, when planning any type of meeting in a new market, the initial (and sometimes only) request from a CVB is for a DMC as opposed to quality vendors for the various services needed. In an economy and industry suffering from cancellations and budget reductions, is there still perceived value in the DMC concept and paying the "markup" of 30%-40% as opposed to working thru a CVB to get quality vendors directly? And, if there is perceived value, what are your thoughts about the concept of a FEE-BASED only DMC, as opposed to a hidden mark-up?

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Responses:

The differences between DMCs and CVBs are numerous. A main benefit to the planner is that YOU are the DMCs client and the DMC has your best interest in mind. Most CVBs are membership organizations and provide planners with a lengthy list of paid members that the planner must sort through and conduct due diligence on. During an initial phone conversation a good DMC can determine the best venue, a perfect entertainer, a reputable cater, reliable transportation, etc. Saving the meeting planner time and headaches, a DMC then manages multiple vendors and elements of a program from start to finish insuring the program's success.

Additionally, many DMCs would welcome a fee-based request if presented to them.

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The Arrangers | Colorado Destination Management and Event Planning Since 1969

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Jeff, I will be happy to provide some explanation as well as clarification for you! First, please remember that every CVB operates differently. Some are for profit, others are not. Some are fee based memberships while others are not. Some CVB's work very hard to vet their members and make sure the new member actually provides the services they state in their application while others just accept at face value the application, cash the check and list the new member. Because the vetting process of new members varies so widely from city to city, planners who want 'every option available in the city' are best served working through a CVB while planners who don't want to spend hours and energy combing and interviewing companies that may or may not meet their service needs are better serviced through a DMC. And a savvy planner knows this.

Choosing to use a DMC is not 'default mode' it is a sound business decision right for many but perhaps not all. In these tough economic times when all of us are expected to do more with less, to vet all members in one service category of a CVB costs the meeting planner time (don't have it) & money (don't have that either) that may be better spent on their other job responsibilities or meeting needs. Please remember, meeting planning is not a full time job for all meeting planners. For some it is just a small percentage or portion of their full time job. The DMC provides a one-stop, one-phone call AND one-contact which so simplifies their meeting needs and assists in keeping their lives on an even keel. A meeting planner working with multiple vendors for multiple services for a program may find themselves spending more time than necessary putting a program together, more apt to making errors, stressed out and unhappy.

A good DMC has already done their due diligence and vetted the vendors and partners that best serve them in their destination. A good DMC also always keeps their door open to working with new vendors and opportunities including other CVB members. In return a good vendor knows the DMC is not just a client but their partner as well and just as with any company, competent and knowledgeable sales are only half of winning their business. It is delivering up to the standards of the DMC and in turn, the end client (meeting planner and their clients!).

As for the DMC "markup" of 30-40% can I please go work for that DMC?! Seriously, a DMC mark up ranges extensively based on what the market will bear in their destination however they do receive volume discount from their vendors and pass those savings onto their clients. Every DMC is different just as every CVB is different.

Jeff, I am a DMC / Event company owner in South Florida and as a DMC, my personal opinion is we sit on the fence of meeting planning every day. Sometimes a meeting planner want us to book the sleeping rooms for them, handle the meeting set ups, AV, coffee breaks, registration, etc. So are we meeting planners as well? I prefer to think of us as a meeting partner and tell my clients I am here for as much or as little as they need us. We sweat the small stuff so our clients don't have to and of course it is for a fee as that is what a 'for profit' company is about. A DMC is the Meeting Planners best partner when entering a city they are unfamiliar with for all of the above reasons & more!

I would be happy to speak to you further Jeff off line and answer any questions you may have!

[Rachelle Stone, DMCP](#)