

HANDLING EVENT CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS

CONSIDER ANY CONTRACTS / DISCLAIMERS / GUIDELINES THAT WERE IN PLACE

- **Did you have signed contracts with facilities/vendors, exhibitors/others?**
- **Did you have event disclaimers?**
- **Did you have clearly communicated cancellation policies in place?**

If the answer is yes, then ultimately you want to honor these, but...there are options.

If the answer is no, then, you've got less of a base to work from and more to figure out.

4 STEPS TO A WIN-WIN RESOLUTION

#1 – COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE!

- **If you are still determining what to do with your event OR if you've made a decision, provide information as it is available. Have a final decision deadline.**

*We are working closely with [facility, presenters, governing agency – whoever this may be].
We are looking at a number of options and will make a final determination by [date].
A formal announcement will be made public at [time] on that date.*

- **Consider a FAQ listing**

- Are you postponing, canceling, or moving the event online?
- What will happen to my current registration?
- If postponing, what if I can't make the new dates?
- Will you offer refunds? If so, what is the process?
- Who do I contact for more information?

- **Be reachable**

- Provide an easy-to-find phone number and/or email
- Let them know when they can expect a response

We know you have questions. We are monitoring the situation daily and hope to have details about this event posted to this site soon. At any time, feel free to contact [name/phone/email]. We are committed to delivering a response by the next business day.



#2 - BE TRANSPARENT AND TELL YOUR STORY

- **Clearly explain how you came to the decision to cancel or postpone.**
- **Explain how the cancellation will impact your organization.**
 - Explain your losses
 - Explain what this means to your programming/services

Without the revenue from this event, we will be unable to provide [XYZ]... offer [XYZ]... support [XYZ].

Give real examples, use real numbers, illustrate this as a real need that will not be met and tell about who that will impact.

Our industry relies on this event to [XYZ]. Cancelling it means [XYZ].

This step is important to remind the attendee, vendor, or anyone involved that while they are being inconvenienced, the impact of the cancellation is much greater for your organization.

#3 – ASK!

- **After determining your cancellation policy/plan, ask those involved to consider offering their support to help you minimize your losses.**
 - Would you consider waiving your refund/a portion of your refund?
 - Would you consider applying your registration fee to next year's event?

If you were transparent, communicated clearly and shared your story, you may be surprised at the outcome of this ask!

#4 – BE COMPASSIONATE / BE CONSIDERATE

- **What's the “story” of your registrant/vendor?**
- **Weigh out the difference between lost revenue from this event and a lost client/customer/supporter for years to come.**

Profits can be recovered with diligence and hard work, but if you lose someone's respect, you may never win it back. If you share your story, if you are understanding of their story, the support could come back to you ten-fold down the road.

- **When rescheduling, be considerate of your community.**

The tendency may be to compete for dates, locations, opportunities, but it's important for our community to work together so that ALL can get through this. Because we truly are...

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

