

## **Bidding for an AMPS International Convention**

With the growth in the number of AMPS chapters and their demonstrated ability to host local/regional show, AMPS is now in the position to have multiple chapters request to host/support the annual International Convention. As a result, these guidelines were developed to provide Chapters with guidance on the minimum requirements for putting together a bid package to host/support the AMPS annual International Convention.

### **Considerations in making a bid:**

First let's talk about finances. Most AMPS chapters are unable to provide the necessary finances to support the annual International Convention. Financially, the chapter does not need to worry. The AMPS organization assumes all financial liability for the convention and handles all monies. This means the local Chapter does not have to pay any bills, make any deposits or have any financial liability, as the financial aspects of the International Convention are covered by the AMPS organization.

As the International Convention has grown, just managing all the information that flows in and out became a large task. AMPS provides the host/supporting Chapter with information management support for the International Convention. This includes publicity support through the AMPS web-site, pre-registration, and tour attendance (if provided). The AMPS web-master can track all this and produce reports that can make a Chapter's tasks much easier.

AMPS provides liability insurance to cover the International Convention. However, there are some requirements for this insurance which must be coordinated by the host/supporting Chapter. No one in the host/supporting Chapter is required to sign any contracts or agreements. This is handled at the AMPS organizational level.

As to the model contest, you don't need to worry about providing rules, categories or even judges. That's all taken care of at the AMPS organizational level. So, what does a Chapter need to be concerned with?

As designated in the AMPS Constitution and By-Laws, the 1st Vice President is responsible for monitoring the activities of the National Show. Therefore, he should be considered a member of the Show Committee and included in Show Committee communications. Additionally, certain show leadership positions may be manned by people designated by the 1st Vice President. These positions include but are not limited to:

- Vendor Coordinator
- Raffle Coordinator

The intent in staffing these positions with national level designees is to maximize and leverage the contacts and knowledge accumulated from prior shows. Partnering these positions with local chapter folks as a learning opportunity is very desirable whenever possible.

### **Let's take a look:**

Hosting/supporting an International Convention takes a commitment from the entire membership of a Chapter. If they are not behind it, it just won't work. Usually a group of enthusiastic members gets together and decides to bring it up to the rest of the chapter. It is up to this group to convince the rest of the chapter that an International Convention is do-able. If this 'interest group' is large enough (5-10), you have the makings of a core committee to get started. Do not agree to submit a bid until everyone on your committee is on-board with these parameters. While the Society is grateful for your bid, understand that this is the AMPS International Convention and not just a larger version of your regional show. You are to be the host, but that does not mean you are 100% in charge. Make sure you know where the limits are and what you are responsible for before you get into this undertaking.

Sources of information about possible venues in your area include the Chamber of Commerce and your Visitors/Convention Bureau. A convention bureau usually has a guide to all the area hotels/venues with square footages and facilities listed as well as phone numbers. This can go a long way to eliminating venues with inadequate space or may give you alternate non-hotel sites you had not thought about such as colleges and universities. In any case, you need to have a site that will allow you to have ample space to do the show. Don't try to squeeze it in. You will need space for the contest room, vendors' area, and judging and seminar rooms. Each of these should be separate from the others. Make sure you have all the room you need and have a few other rooms available to add, "in case".

If the venue is a hotel, try to get the space free for a certain number of room nights guaranteed, but make sure the guarantee is reasonable because if you don't meet it, it can cost AMPS dearly. You can consult the information available from the AMPS 1<sup>st</sup> VP for past International Convention trends. Get the hotel to put it all in writing before you go to present your bid. Remember you should not sign anything. Make sure you know about all the "extras", like table rental, setup and draping charges and any other

extraneous fees. These can really add up. For example, rental, set up and draped table rented from a hotel for the run of a show might cost \$30. However, it might be possible to out-source table rental for \$5 per table for the entire show and negotiate with the hotel to set up and drape the rental tables for \$5 each. This would be a cost per table of \$10 instead of \$30, which would be a savings of \$20 per table and we use a lot of tables. In addition, make sure you know whether any charges are "per day", "per unit used", "run of the convention" or any other such rate. Read and understand the fine print.

While you are negotiating, do not assume you are going hat in hand. You are potential business with a proven track record. Be a little assertive when it comes to prices, perks and other special considerations. Prices have been known to drop magically. Make sure you understand any rebate/comp room deals your venue offers. Some will give you the facility for "X" room nights, others will give you a credit per room toward the price of the facility.

As you plan, try to estimate your attendance; average the registrations from the last two shows from your area as well as information on attendance at past International Conventions. In addition, draw concentric circles around your venue at 8 hour, 12 hour and 16 hour drives. Drive-ins are all possible from these distances, but the numbers do drop off at each line. It can also be a guide as to where to place your publicity.

Tours are a nice plus, but are not necessary. If you have a particularly attractive site for a tour, then go for it. However, don't just put together a bunch of tours to second-rate sites just to have tours. That could actually detract from a bid rather than add to it.

## **A WORD ON SPACE REQUIREMENTS**

Of course, you can fall back on the data provided to you by the AMPS organization, but here are some numbers for you to chew on as well. These are only approximates, so use them to guide your planning. Over the past five years, we've used approximately 100 vendor tables, 60 contest tables, 20 judging tables, 10 registration tables and 6 raffle tables. The contest and vendor areas make up the majority of space needed. In general, the minimum space required for vendor and contest areas runs between 10000 and 15000 square feet. The configuration of your rooms can cause variances due to poles, doors, strange floor plans, etc. Be aware of what your local fire codes require when making your room selections. In addition, there should be separate areas/rooms for judging, seminars, registration and raffle. Model display rooms with excellent lighting always generate positive attendee feedback – and the opposite is true as well.

## **UNDERTAKING A BID**

There are two parts to undertaking a bid: the actual preparation of the bid and the submission of the bid.

## **PREPARATION OF THE BID**

The bid itself is not meant to be major project. It is a summary of what you intend with the necessary accompanying statistics and contracts. In a limited amount of space, your bid must present ALL the pertinent data, so prepare thoroughly. Physically your bid should be no more than 10 pages (excluding attached contracts), should be organized, easy to understand and should have some of your group's "personality".

The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President will send you successful International Convention bids as examples of what is needed.

Bids should include the following information:

- A brief history of your chapter's experience hosting AMPS or other model contests. Explain why you want to host/support the International Convention.
- Venue information – location, address, square footage, floor plan of the facility, number of extra room available to support the International convention, photos of the facility (inside and outside), number of parking spaces (for attendees and vendors), access to transportation (airports, train stations, subways, major highways), costs. Attach copies of any contract or rental agreements (unsigned) for facility usage. If the proposed venue is not in a hotel, then provide information on available lodging.
- A general description/outline of how you intend to execute hosting/supporting the International Convention including primary and alternate dates.
- An estimated budget – cost of the venue, table and other equipment rentals, awards and trophies, and advertising/promotion material. Also include an estimate of revenue from sale of vendor tables, entry fees, general admission, raffle sales, and sponsorships. Referring to past data is useful.
- A list of the proposed International Convention support leadership team, such as the chairman, vendor coordinator, registrar, raffle coordinator, and chief judge and any other key personnel.
- A tentative International Convention schedule including vendor set-up, registration, seminars, judging and awards ceremony.
- A tentative list of seminars and presenters, if possible.

- A tentative outline of any tours or classes schedules before the start of the International Convention. These tours or classes are not a requirement for a successful bid.
- Any additional information about your location such as points of interest, concurrent significant area events, etc.

Don't set out to "one up" all the International Conventions in the past. At this stage, unless you have done this before, please do not underestimate the complexity of hosting the International Convention. Please be conservative. Do some preliminary event planning and have your major committee heads in place. Previous Show Chairs and committee members are available for consultation. Please use this valuable resource. Your bid should let the AMPS E-Board know you gave all aspects of the International Convention consideration.

## **SUBMISSION OF THE BID**

To enable the E-board to more carefully evaluate your bid, you need to submit it to the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President four months before the International Convention in the year prior to the year you are proposing to support. Your bid should be submitted electronically so there is no need for a special cover or binder. It can then more easily be distributed to the rest of the E-board for study. If they have any questions, you will be contacted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

The E-Board will evaluate your bid on the following:

- Your club's organization, experience, resources and commitment for the duration of the process.
- Your venue.
- Your budget.
- Your proposed program (schedule, seminars, speakers, tours, etc.).
- Your location.

Note the location usually only enters the equation with regards to its accessibility and/or as a tiebreaker. Successful International Conventions have been held in smaller locations and not-so-successful ones have been held in big cities.

If your bid is selected, you will be notified prior to the International Convention so you can make a general presentation at the annual general meeting.