

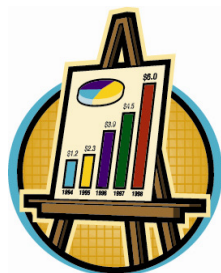
NA World Services Literature Distribution and Convention Workshops Woodland Hills, CA

Summary Notes ○ November 2007

Literature Distribution Workshop

The literature distribution workshop began with a brief description of operations at the various office branches of NA World Services, including Europe, Canada, Iran, and Chatsworth, California. Anthony provided a rundown of distribution numbers for various products in Iran as compared to other branches, demonstrating the staggering growth of NA in that region.

NAWS Financial Health



Pie graphs illustrating the makeup of NAWS fund sources and expenses showed clearly that the bulk of the work done by NA World Services is funded by literature sales, not fellowship contributions. NAWS has been making a concerted effort to communicate the importance of member contributions and fund flow to the work being done to further the primary purpose of the NA groups.

One of the basics of business accounting was explained: key balance sheet indicators are a snapshot of the financial health of a business. Basically, every business should strive to make sure that receivables and inventory are greater than payables. General accounting classes or software are available in many places.

Comparing NAWS Workload and Income to the Number of Groups Worldwide

Anthony showed a graph plotting the number of registered meetings per full time NAWS staff member over the past few years. Staff resources are always allocated based on priority of immediate crises. When we are made aware that a matter requires urgent attention, we respond accordingly.

Another chart was shown that broke down the total annual fellowship contributions by the number of registered groups in the world. In past years, NAWS received slightly over \$20 per group, per year. That number has gone down to about \$19 per group, per year. This is, in part, a reflection of the growth of NA outside the US. We are simply trying to help members understand what NAWS receives in contributions in tangible terms. For local service offices, divide your annual operating costs by the number of meetings in your area, and that is your cost per meeting of providing services. We are trying to raise fellowship awareness of member and group responsibilities to fund NA services. The bulk of fellowship contributions come from a handful of regions.

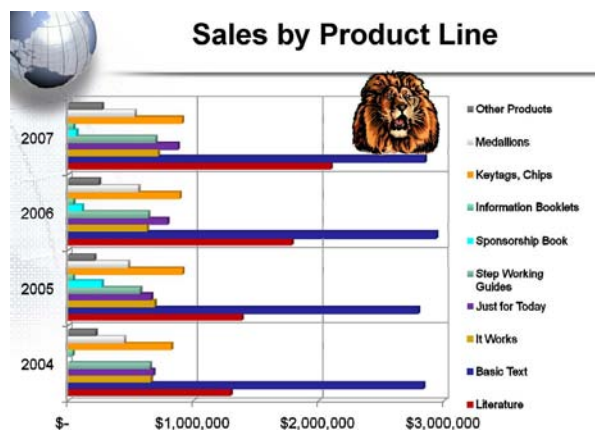
Thirty-Second World Convention of NA

The financial analysis of the world convention in San Antonio is still in progress. There were roughly 4,000 fewer financial contributors at this event than had been budgeted for. This strengthens the possibility that NAWS will operate on reserve funds at some point in the near future. Another result is that the World Board is considering changes to the convention rotation plan and will propose changes in the WSC 2008 CAT material.

Literature Sales and Pricing Recommendations

Those who provide PR/marketing presentations should be aware that Hazelden is, once again, investing heavily in recovery material. Don't be surprised if they are present at local exhibits. It would be prudent to ask about other exhibitors when attending events and try to request booth location accordingly so as not to be positioned in the immediate vicinity of exhibitors selling the same products, and more.

The lion's share of NAWS revenue is derived from Basic Text sales. Anthony showed a plot of sales of various books, including the Basic Text, *It Works*, *Step Working Guides*, *Just for Today*, *Sponsorship*, and *Miracles Happen*. Iran celebrates working through all twelve steps rather than cleantime anniversaries, hence the strong sales of *It Works* and the *Step Working Guides*. Anthony mentioned discussions in the upcoming cycle to try to understand the fellowship's lack of interest in the Sponsorship book and how that information might be useful to future literature projects. The possible approval of the Sixth Edition Basic Text makes it difficult to accurately predict the sales trends over the course of the next year.



When discussing the breakdown of discounts, Anthony pointed out that the online shopping cart has driven more and more groups to make online purchases at higher levels that qualify for the discount. As more regional service offices offer web ordering, more groups will utilize that feature and order locally.

The Business Plan Group conducts an annual review of prices in order to make pricing recommendations. At one time, it was standard for NAWS to raise prices across the board. The current system of reviewing prices and suggesting changes accordingly seems more realistic. The last two price increases were put in abeyance. Based on specific analyses of certain product lines, new pricing recommendations will take effect on 1 July 2008. The specific increases include medallions, posters, group readings, and

some booklets. Flyers are available to show specific item price increases.

The Business Plan Group isn't currently recommending changes to the shipping and handling policies. One participant asked whether it is prudent to have the Business Plan Group make decisions about shipping when that group meets so rarely. Anthony responded by explaining that one of his responsibilities is to address immediate challenges as they arise and that he uses the group as an objective source for the long term business view.

NAWS-Iran

Some time was devoted to discussing the impressive growth of NA in Iran and the impressive translations efforts that have led to such high literature distribution numbers in that part of the world. Beyond a small initial startup fund (\$15,000) to establish a branch office in Tehran, NAWS does not subsidize Iranian operations. Strict regulations on the flow of money between the United States and Iran prevent NAWS from passing funds into or out of the Iran branch. For that reason, in spite of Iran's high book distribution numbers, that profit will not offset the impending price increase of products available from other NAWS branches. Funds generated by NAWS Iran are put back into fellowship development efforts in that region. The office manager in Iran is held to a very high standard by members in the region, who hold him under close scrutiny. In addition, independent auditors for NAWS can obtain financial information at any given time. In addition to the services provided to addicts in Iran, the translations that have taken place are also helpful to Farsi-speaking addicts living in other places around the world. Services and public relations in Iran provide a model for addicts in some other Muslim nations in the Middle East, though some of the content does not translate well between different sects.

Interface with NAWS Customer Service

Customer service and shipping staff were present to discuss their work areas. The database of customers has tripled since the launch of the Shopping Cart, but staff has not increased. Staff answered a variety of questions related to the effects of small orders (individuals and groups) on shipping costs and staff workload, exchange rates for international orders, sharing information about customers with bad literature debts, and online shopping cart layout, design, and functionality. Attendees were encouraged both to get to know one another in order to facilitate better communications in the future, share best practices and to contact the appropriate NAWS departments with questions, comments, and ideas. Shipping staff also answered questions about issues related to various shipping vendors (UPS, FedEx, etc.), quality control, packaging, and packing concerns. Once again, attendees were encouraged to network with one another to discuss best practices and to contact NAWS shipping and production directly to discuss other concerns.

Production Concerns

Some discussion was devoted to the issues of the quality of the Basic Text and other items produced in China. The reduction in the thickness of the paper used, which led to an increase in the number of books per case, was clarified. We are also looking at production in Eastern Europe and other countries, but want to avoid constantly changing our prices.

Service Pamphlets

Discussion then moved onto the newly developed service pamphlets (SPs). This form of service-literature development began at WSC 2006, when several regional delegates created a motion to allow the World Board to develop and approve service material for timely distribution to the fellowship. When the first round of SPs were completed, we decided to make them available at WCNA-32. The SPs are service materials created to address many of the questions that NAWS receives on a daily basis. They have a different look from our IPs because they have a different focus. They are not to be used as literature for meetings, though we understand that some groups will choose to place them on the literature table. The distinction between 'recovery' and 'service' literature needs to be clear when discussing these and when providing areas or groups with information about them.

Within a week of the convention, we heard from many members who wanted to know where the SPs came from, and who gave NAWS permission to put this material together. This demonstrates the communication gaps that exist in our service system. "An Introduction to NA Meetings", in particular, drew considerable attention and has been withdrawn for re-evaluation. It included a glossary of terms which included the word "clean." NAWS had no intention whatsoever to redefine this term for members, but rather to provide people who have never been to an NA meeting with an understanding of the terminology we use. The input we received was that the definition was not satisfactory for many members. The issue also raised the question of where the dividing line is between service material and recovery material. Is it defined by the intended use or audience, or by its actual content? Other pieces that are being developed will not be finalized or released without some form of RD review.

Packaged Literature: Group Starter Kits

One interesting new approach that Iran has taken to literature distribution is the packaging of literature. Most, if not all, of their literature comes packaged together. Our new Group Starter Kits are based on that model of packaging. The boxes for these kits are cheaper than shrink wrap, and the kits are packaged by hand in our warehouse. These can potentially be a challenge to package with other goods in a shipment. However, there is a standard box that will fit these GSK boxes snugly. The case count is 20. Areas and regions have responded well, as these are easier to handle and store. We will continue to explore this approach with other materials as well.



When asked if NAWS could leave one of the box ends unsealed to allow service offices to insert meeting directories, flyers, product order forms, Anthony responded that NAWS can and will. Another question was raised about providing Group Reading Cards in the Starter Kits. In addition to the simple cost of the reading cards, there would also be a considerable added cost as a result of increased shipping weights. We include a white book, and some RSOs include wallet reading cards for the sake of simplicity.

There was some discussion of the idea that, rather than NAWS shipping free Groups Starter Kits to new groups, perhaps NAWS could put these new groups in touch with local RSOs/regional bodies.

FTP Site and E-blasting

Those who signed up at the workshop will be provided with a link to the FTP site to download power point presentations and the accounting program. Major changes to the NAWS website will be taking place over the course of the next year. One change in NAWS communication practices has been the use of e-blasts to disseminate information to large groups, such as conference participants. Certain types of information can be easily and quickly provided to concerned parties through e-blasts. Give us your most up-to-date email address to receive information on specific dates, timelines, production dates. We will also solicit opinions on issues such as the medallion production. This type of communication will become standard NAWS practice.

The main reason not to do that, at this point in time, is that too often we are not sure whether or not we can rely on a timely response, or any response, from local bodies. We do have a way of tracking these requests, however. If your region provides free GSKs, we can discuss bulk order availability for the region/RSO.

Another member asked if we could produce a similar package for new GSRs/trusted servants with relevant service materials. Anthony responded that Iran does produce an RCM pack, but NAWS hasn't had the opportunity to evaluate that idea. We would love to hear from regions/areas about whether or not these ideas would be well-received, and what items they would like to see included. Another possibility mentioned was creating a generic package of this shape and size that local communities can fill.

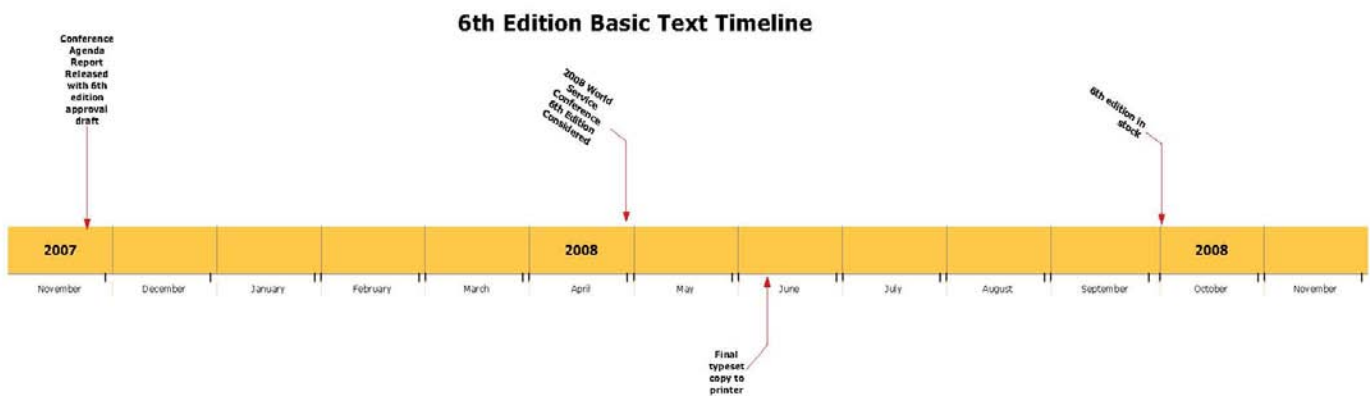
Medallions

Samples of the medallions that will be decided on were passed out to the group. The four choices are either bronze or silver-nickel, with either Roman or Arabic numerals. The costs of metals are fluctuating, which has influenced our production decisions. Once we have solicited fellowship opinion on this, we will move forward. Our goal is to run our inventory as low as possible prior to the next production run, which should be in the fall of 2008. When asked why we do not use the most inexpensive material we can find, Anthony responded that it makes a difference to enough people in the fellowship. Many members do not respond well to tin. We are trying to keep this all in consideration. The fellowship cares a lot and we will take their input.

Gold-plated medallions do not sell, so they will be discontinued. When asked about keytag vendors, Anthony explained that the most important part of the keytags is the hard metal split ring. Due to the volume we produce, we have been able to control the cost. When it comes to medallions, it's a bit more difficult to control our costs due to smaller distribution numbers. With gold medallions, tri-plates, and multi-colored medallions, the issue is the same for NAWS: we have a limited availability of storage space, and every additional item we carry takes up space.

Sixth Edition Basic Text

One of the issues facing the Sixth Edition Basic Text is that of the timeline involved. The approval draft will be included in the CAR in November 2007, and will be up for approval at WSC 2008. If it is approved at the conference, then it will take six weeks for final typeset. It won't take much time at all for members of the fellowship to stop buying the Fifth Edition. Your regions and RSOs will need to be prepared to survive without Basic Text income. At NAWS, three months of lost Basic Text sales will put us into reserve funds. Expenses will not drop or go away, they will remain the same. It's best to have a plan in place.



The World Board is currently discussing some of the issues related to translations of the Sixth Edition. With the Sixth Edition, we will have our first universal Basic Text that represents a worldwide fellowship, and our translations policies will need to reflect that. There will be no such thing as a "book one" Sixth Edition. Communities that have already translated Book One of the Fifth Edition should be able to continue distributing that until they translate the Sixth Edition. We do not expect to allow communities to create their own personal stories for Basic Text translations or begin new translations of the Fifth Edition. They will still be able to create their own personal stories for the White Booklet. More information about translations will be available in the CAT.

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One member asked about whether or not there will be pocket-sized Sixth Editions. There are no plans on the table at this point in time. Another asked why large print and the line-numbered Basic Texts are not the same price. The line-numbered version was created to facilitate access for people who cannot read. As an accessibility product, the line-numbered version was priced at the same level. Our focus for the time being is just to see if the Sixth Edition is approved, then to print in hardcover and softcover. Then we will be able to consider Sixth Edition large print and Sixth Edition pocket-sized.

There was a **question about the reasons for Sixth Edition price increases**, and Craig R, World Board Chair, explained that the Business Plan Workgroup makes recommendations to the World Board. They do not make policy. Currently, our world services are funded primarily through literature sales. The board is working to raise awareness among the fellowship of the need to support these services through contributions, but the reality of our financial situation remains the same. The Basic Text is sold at a very reasonable price that has changed very little since it was published. This change of pricing has been discussed at length. We have considered best business practices, our strategic policy, and the incorporation of our spiritual principles.

The Sixth Edition Basic Text will have no “Book One” and “Book Two” distinctions. They will be called “Our Program” and “Our Members Share.” The Fifth Edition had 38 stories, whereas the Sixth Edition will have 51 stories. This is close to 140 additional pages. A book block showing the size and shape of the Sixth Edition was shown, at half an inch taller and half an inch wider. The design of the cover will be different so that it is recognizable at a glance. The current amount of pages is between 416 and 436; we will know for sure when it’s typeset.

There was **some discussion about leftover quantities of Fifth Editions.** Service offices and committees can continue to sell those until they’ve sold out, but they should let their customers know what they’re getting. The idea of using Fifth Editions for H&I purposes has been discussed, which could be a good way to address the issue. Those decisions need to be made at the local levels.

In order to avoid further **issues with *Just for Today***, the conference will have an opportunity to decide on a plan to simply remove the source citations from *JFT* entries if and when literature changes, and put a footnote in the front of the book stating that quotes without source citations come from previous versions of our literature. This would avoid the need to revise *JFT* every time literature is changed or removed.

A question was raised on illicit versions of the Basic Text. NAWS will never have the necessary resources to sufficiently police what takes place at local levels. Fellowship-approved literature belongs to the fellowship, and it is the right and responsibility of groups everywhere to make sure people are not violating the copyrights. If the groups don’t tolerate copyright infringement, it will stop. When this happened in the past, the fellowship got fed up and they stopped it. NAWS can pursue it, spending millions of dollars, but that still wouldn’t solve anything. The fellowship has to make that decision. We will pass information along to local members when we hear that something is going on in their area. NA members are free to choose whether or not they agree with NAWS approaches to various issues. Members are not free, however, to violate copyright laws as a result of their opinions about NAWS.

Poster Sets and Other Merchandise Ideas

New poster sets, like the ones displayed at NAWS workshops with various languages in color around the outside, are now available for \$18. One participant suggested that we provide a cheat-sheet to let people know what each language is. In the past, we have done very little merchandising outside of WCNA. The Business Plan Group has considered and evaluated a few merchandising ideas, and welcomes input from members with ideas or suggestions. Ultimately, it costs money to have items on the shelf. When it comes to space in our warehouse, IPs will always come before any sort of novelty merchandise.

Small Group Discussions – Best Practices

Participants were asked to discuss best practices in small groups at their tables.

Regional Service Offices

- Online store front
- Quick turn around - three days or less
- Automated shipping. Computer generated exact cost per vendor shipping which can be downloaded, point of sale quick books, first class, DHL, UPS, Media Mail, Fed Ex and so forth. The person that does shipping is charged to make that decision. You can download some information from the US Post Office.
- Online store/web page
- Advertise for example with Google, Yahoo, and so forth. The more money you spend the further up the list you go when people do searches which creates great revenue. Lone Star Region invests forty dollars a month.
- Accessibility

Regional Offices

- Transactions policy – No Cash electronic transfer, accept no cash, money order, certified checks
- Order processing, online interactive

Areas

- Electronic, such as order forms
- Monthly reporting to area on financials and inventory

Individuals/Groups/Committee

- Quick delivery
- Umbrella groups for more bulk buying

Discussion

We cannot place everyone in one box in terms of literature distribution. Some members think we should be able to get literature at cost, regardless of how much it costs to ship, store, handle, and distribute. Automated systems and online processing will help to reduce these costs and the time involved in literature distribution. The best way to avoid theft or embezzlement is to eliminate cash. In some places, the person who makes the payment is the same as the person who collects the payment or manages inventory. With random spot checks by board/service committee members, we help to make sure that everything is well-documented and organized, so there is no worry about mistakes or theft.

Lit Distribution Wrap-up

We would like to see regional service offices, as well as literature distribution committees at all levels, communicate with each other via online discussion boards. NAWS will work to help facilitate that. There are no plans to change the literature distribution process at this time, but it is always being discussed. The Business Plan Workgroup has prioritized the idea of buying a building, rather than changing the system of literature distribution, for the time being. The issue of self-support will continue to appear in *The NA Way Magazine* for the next three years and will be more prominent in our communications. We will also continue to communicate with and visit RSOs. We may also ask to see financial statements. We urge you all to be very conscientious and careful in your financial documentation and in your tax reporting. Consult professionals where necessary, including auditors and tax professionals.

Convention Workshop

Guest Panel: Hotel & Conference Professionals

The convention workshop began with the introduction of a guest panel including representatives from Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt and Conference Direct. They were present to help explain the hotel side of conventions and to answer some questions our attendees had. The guests included Maria Moore from the Hilton, Gigi Wells from the Marriott, Ed Smith from the Hyatt, and Brian Landers from Conference Direct.

What Is an RFP?

The first topic of discussion was the key item any convention committee needs to know and understand before planning their convention. That item is a Request for Proposal, or RFP. An RFP is the first thing to do before you approach a property. Generally, an RFP is the document you send to hotels and convention centers during the bidding process which details the specifics of your event. This document allows properties to determine the cost/benefit of your event. The more information you include in your RFP the better a property can determine how they might be able to proceed with your event.

What Is the Relationship with NA and Hotel Chains?

NA as a whole is a big client for many of these hotel chains. With the number of area and regional conventions held by NA worldwide, we tend to be good business for hotels. Some of these hotels have assigned national account representatives to handle NA's accounts. Panelists from the various hotel chains were present to let these convention volunteers know that they can deal with NA account reps.

So What Does that Have to Do with My Convention?

Having a resource like a national account representative can be useful in a variety of ways. For instance, say you are having your convention at the Hilton in San Antonio and all of a sudden you have no more rooms. What's more, the hotel won't give you any more rooms at the group rate? What do you do? First, you would contact NAWS. NAWS can help determine whether or not there is a resource such as a national account representative at the property you are having your convention at. If we do in fact have a national account representative for that property, in this case the Hilton, NAWS would help you get in contact with that representative and they may be able to work with the specific property to get you more rooms at the discounted room rate.

Even further, a national rep with a history with NA can contact a hotel and vouch for NA and possibly get that hotel to be more flexible. But remember, NAWS is your primary resource! The balance is to make sure a convention committee has taken care of their end such as having guidelines in order, and having tried to make contact with the property from the beginning. Most importantly, if you plan on getting assistance from one of our national hotel reps, contact them early so they can actually help!

Question and Answers with Guest Panel

Q: *If we send our RFP to a national chain via the web, will it go to our account rep?*

A: Sometimes yes, and sometimes no. Also, remember that we don't have reps for all properties

Q: *If we already have an established relationship with a property, will seeking additional assistance from a national rep ruffle any feathers?*

A: It shouldn't.

Important RFP considerations

- ◆ **Be as specific as possible with this proposal so that the hotel can see your needs.**
- ◆ **Don't be afraid to put all the details in this proposal.**
- ◆ **Provide accurate data from your past conventions.**

What Can a Company Like Conference Direct Do for Our Committee?

A company conference management company like Conference Direct will usually have many different clients. With that, they have relationships and clauses set up in their contracts that may be better than any kind of contract a committee can set up on their own. What’s more, we were very lucky to have Brian Landers from Conference Direct present at the workshop. He has agreed to work with NAWS to create a template RFP which should be available soon, and will be posted on our website. A company like Conference Direct can be extremely useful to a convention committee, however you must remember that the earlier they get involved, the more use they will be. For example, they cannot help negotiate a contract that has already been fully executed.

Trends in the Industry	Possible Effect on NA Conventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demand for hotel rooms exceeds availability ◆ Corporate & leisure travel has increased considerably ◆ Significantly higher numbers of individual travelers ◆ Travelers will require a greater degree of amenities in rooms ◆ Corporate meetings are more willing to pay higher rates in exchange for more services ◆ Hotels are generally less dependent on convention business than ever before ◆ Tougher smoking laws will result in less and less smoking rooms and smoking areas in most facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hotels rates to increase at up twice the rate of inflation ◆ Hotels less willing to give concessions ◆ Hotels may be much more willing to turn away business ◆ Decrease in availability of smoking rooms ◆ Decrease in availability of rooms with two beds ◆ More meeting room rentals ◆ Tougher attrition and cancellation clauses, including larger penalties ◆ Financial penalties for smoking in non-smoking rooms ◆ Greater risk of liability

Revenue Management and Hotel Bottom Line

Revenue management can be described as the art of predicting future demand over a particular time frame and employing a pricing strategy to maximize RevPar (revenue per available room) over that period. RevPar is derived from a formula based on average rate & occupancy.

Demand-based pricing recognizes the time-value component of a perishable product or service (such as a hotel room or airline seat) based upon local market conditions, day-of-week value, seasonal value & competitive value.

Your ability to negotiate will depend on:

- your overall program requirements
- your flexibility
- your knowledge of the hotel “demand indicators”

A hotel’s ability to negotiate will depend on:

- demand.

Some Helpful Tips for the Process from RFPs to Post-Cons

A sample RFP was handed out to all attendees and Tony went through the questions on the RFP and made some suggestions on how to answer them. The following is a synopsis of the Q&A:

- Special needs – make the hotel aware of the needs of our fellowship so that they can be prepared. The more information you supply, the more the attendees will enjoy themselves and the more revenue the hotel can make. Try to be realistic about who we are. At times when we have to share public space with another group they end up being really unhappy.
- First option and second option – when you fill out the RFP and send it to the hotel you will be told if you are first choice or second – meaning that there may be another event before you that is just looking at space and has not

blocked out the space. If it comes back as first choice that means no one else is looking at the space for those dates yet.

- If you are holding a convention for the first time it is good to look at the areas in your region and how many people and how far they are away from the hotel to try to gauge how many people you would expect at your event.
- How do we deal with a hotel that gives a body member or someone that negotiated the contract a room that was not in the contract? This is something that the committee should work out among themselves.
- When a hotel talks about a committee's history they are talking about how many rooms you used not the money spent. Where committees get in trouble is when they go to a hotel without a history of past conventions.
- How do we get information that the hotel are not telling us? Can we find out why a hotel is not getting back to us? There is nothing for the national reps to look at to answer these questions.
- How much self policing should we do before coming to the sales rep of the hotel? Please do as much as possible because there have been groups that were completely out of control and they will not be asked to come back. The one thing that will help prevent this is open communication with the hotel. Also, some conventions police themselves by having serenity keepers.

Negotiating Good Contracts

Once the property gets the RFP the sales rep looks at the availability and the formula. Sometimes in the beginning you don't get the best rate, but it may be possible to negotiate it lower. This also depends on your dates and flexibility. The hotel will come back to the committee with availability based on the information that was given, and may ask for further clarification.

Items/Services to Consider Negotiating/Renegotiating

Sleeping Rooms	Table décor & other décor
Rates and Structure	Reception food service
Room locations	Guarantees and cut-off dates
Complimentary rooms	Extended restaurant and room service hours
Suites for VIPs	Attrition/slippage terms
Staff rates	Meeting & Exhibit Rooms
Upgrades	Space charges
Check-in and check-out times	Room locations
Guarantees, deposits, cut-off dates	Set-up charges
Food & Beverages	Price structures
Menu items	AV equipment and labor
Meal, reception and break prices	Pads, pencils, candy
Gratuities vs. service charges	Refresh schedules
Waitperson ratios	Schedule personnel

Contracts: Question and Answer Session

In the question and answer session about contracts, a number of concerns were addressed. For starters, there is no base rate for convention contracts, but rather a room to rate ratio. Contract negotiations begin once the committee has communicated their needs so that talks can proceed about the goals and needs of both the hotel and of the convention committee. When a committee has negotiated a multi-year contract, the hotel should be contacted immediately when changes to the initial negotiations are on the horizon. If there have been bad relations between the

hotel and local NA community, members can explore the possibility of repairing those relations by mentioning the issues in future RFPs or by inviting the director of sales from the hotel to lunch to discuss matters. Finally, with coffee/food negotiations, the committee shouldn't hesitate to try to negotiate for affordable accommodations. This might be done by letting the hotel representative in charge of catering know what sort of budget the committee is operating with, requesting lunch portions rather than dinner portions for meals, or asking for fewer side items.

To Market or Not to Market?

The convention committee can consider whether or not flyers are the proper avenue to inform members about their events. Flyers can be a valuable tool in driving members to pre-register, but committees have sometimes been disappointed in the response. Eastern New York Region makes one flyer to showcase all of their events.

Some convention committees have trouble with over-producing t-shirts for pre-registration merchandise and funding people to go to other conventions to market their convention. These issues tend to cost a lot of money. One region in Texas doesn't do any pre-registration merchandise, as they don't see a need for it. A community in Oregon treats it as a sponsorship issue, so members encourage sponsees to pre-register. Some conventions encourage registration by requiring attendees to have a registration badge in order to be on hotel grounds.

Website

There are a few ways that committees can work to use the Internet to encourage participation. A good place to start is by networking with local members who have expertise in areas of technology or merchandise. The committee can also use the NA Way and the NAWS events web page to spread the word about the convention and the convention website.

Diversity and Speaker Selection

We discussed the topic of speaker selection and diversity among who we get to speak. There are a number of solutions that attendees use in their selection processes. For starters, some committees make an effort not to be diverse only in terms of race, but also in terms of age or other factors (youth, etc.). That could also include people from a variety of different places. It is also helpful if the program is passed by the whole committee, so everyone has an opportunity to provide input about the diversity of the selection of speakers. One participant suggested that NAWS provide a page where local convention committees can post calls for speakers. Another suggestion was that programming committee members should have two years of experience on the convention committee. Having speaker requirements in writing will help committee members to utilize common criteria. Many convention committees believe it is important to make sure that speaker tapes have a clear message of recovery, and that the convention has a fair mix of women and men. Finally, some committees formulate a conscious outreach effort to specific minority groups in order to involve them in the programming selection.

Merchandise

The next topic of discussion was effective merchandise creation. To begin with, it is important that the committee knows the customer base, especially in terms of taste and economic status. The committee should figure out what members will like and what they will buy. It is helpful to have a merchandise chair who has some experience. The committee itself can track what works and what doesn't work from one year to the next. Over time, the region might grow and change, as well. It will be useful to pay attention to whether or not there are more groups and meetings, or more members involved. Many members also appreciate merchandise that is discreet—purposeful and tasteful. Simple logos and themes make that possible. Some conventions have found that pre-registration only merchandise, items that are only available to members who order in advance, allow for smoother merchandise operations. In at least one region, the regional service office has taken over responsibility for convention merchandising, which allows the convention committee to focus on other issues.

Guest Panel: NCCNA

Creating a Successful Convention Committee

Members of the Northern California Convention Committee spoke about their operations.

Our convention committee meetings sometimes last from 7 to midnight. Potential committee members are warned in advance and asked whether or not they will be able to participate for the entire meeting. A host committee chair is responsible for helping members feel welcome, and the host committee coordinates volunteer efforts. Our committee reimburses member expenses for mileage, etc.

Northern California does not have a lot of local conventions which helps keep the trusted servants pool more available for the regional convention. Also, everybody knows what everybody is doing at the regional level and minutes are always available.

Writing Effective Guidelines

We invite all convention committees to share their guidelines to be posted at na.org. They can be emailed to davidb@na.org.

Action Steps

- Decide what you want to be
- Get professional help
- File forms
- W4
- Articles Of Incorporation
- Fictitious Name
- Business Permits
- IRS Form 1023
- Clearly describe your structure
- Bylaws
- Guidelines
- Deal with fellowship concerns about accountability each step along the way
- Regularly & fully communicate to the region

Some Dos and Don'ts

- Do create a structure that best suits your region's needs
- Do limit individual liability wherever possible
- Do consider the traditions and concepts
- Do seek legal and tax experts for help
- Do file reports and pay taxes when required
- Do take action now before problems arise
- Don't procrastinate
- Don't try to complete this work without help
- Don't make the mistake of thinking the structure you create is somehow separate in the eyes of the fellowship
- Don't discount members who might have experience with this!
- Don't give up 5 minutes before the miracle happens!!!

Facts about NCCNA

- In our 30th year
- Distribute over 22,000 flyers
- Send flyers to NAWS
- Typical registration is 4,000 people
- 60 – 75 topic meetings in 4 days
- 7 main meetings
- Marathon meetings – 3 pm Thursday to Sunday, divided up among ASCs
- 1200 room nights, 1 comp room for every 50 sold
- Comp rooms go to speakers, and any leftovers go to committee
- 2 comp suites – we meet every morning as a committee
- Use jewelry and tape vendor
- Take a Saturday night collection to offset space rental cost – typically \$5500
- Budget - \$250,000
- \$400,000 contracted
- \$900,000 taken in
- Only one incident of theft – only one person was in the treasurer room
- \$44,000 dollars in merchandise
- Conducted merchandise survey (part of registration package)
- 21 areas in Northern California Region
- Treatment centers and recovery houses are only offered newcomer packages, not a special price
- 300 indigent packages are given away, which is posted on our flyer and website
- Each registrant is asked to contribute to a newcomer fund
- We have events that are free

Guideline Considerations:

External

- Purpose
- Structure
- Composition
- Duties and Responsibilities of Officers
- Filling Vacancies
- Removal from Committee or Board
- Financial Reporting Procedures
- Site Selection/ Rotation?

Internal

- Committee Functions
- Operational Procedures
- Speaker Selection
- Financial Operating Procedures
- Newcomer Policies
- Planning Timetable
- Policy Log
- Vendor Policies

Budgeting:

Budget income/expenses leads to profit & loss. That is essentially what a budget is. But a budget can serve other purposes. How do we provide accountability, management, and training? That can come from your budget. When you are doing a budget, you are allocating your money amongst different aspects of your convention which helps a budget become a planning, accountability, training and managing tool.

You need to be fiscally responsible because you are dealing with other people's money. It is fiscally irresponsible to spend more money than you have to. This helps to use budgeting as a ground to educate people. Keeping your budget transparent may help to create trust between a convention committee and the party ultimately responsible (i.e. Region, area, board of directors).

When formulating a budget, there are a number of important factors to consider. Keeping track of past events helps a convention committee in the budgeting process. They can see what worked, what didn't work, etc. The income estimation is set low, and the expenses are usually set high. Just because there is a line-item with a large budget, it is encouraged to not spend that money simply because it is there. Sometimes you have to, but trying to avoid it is what is preferred. Member reimbursement is money that a member owes to the committee. If you are going to receive a donation in the form of discount of services, NCCNA still budgets for the full amount because that donation of discounted services may not be there next year.

Budget Considerations

- Bank Charges
- Entertainment
- Equipment Rental
- Facility Rent
- Food & Beverage
- Insurance
- Labor
- Legal/Accountant Fees
- Merchandise
- Office Supplies
- Printing/Copying
- Production
- Taxes
- Telephone
- Travel