

BLOCK BENEFITS

15 reasons to book within the official group block.

BY AARON D. WOLOWIEC, MSA, CAE, CMP, CTA

Q: What's the best way to fill my group room block during my upcoming convention? There are so many available choices, from vacation rentals through websites like Airbnb and VRBO, to discount hotel stays through sites like Priceline and Orbitz.

A: Booking within the group block is the right thing to do to support the organization and to ensure the event remains financially viable. It also offers attendees a broad range of benefits. Following are 15 reasons attendees benefit by booking within the official group block. Consider customizing this list and sharing it with your members and attendees via marketing materials prior to your next big event.

1. Official hotels are inspected by the organization prior to your arrival.
2. Greater informal networking opportunities exist in hotels within the group block (as this is where a majority of attendees are staying).
3. It will take you less time to travel from the meeting to your hotel room, making it easier for you to adjourn to your room to nap or work during down time.
4. The important announcements and information the organization may share with attendees at check-in are provided only at those hotels within the group block.
5. Any room drops arranged by the organization or its exhibitors are only available to those staying at hotels within the group block.
6. The organization is able to conduct high-quality meetings at desirable sites for a reasonable registration fee because a significant block of hotel rooms is reserved.
7. Friendly booking terms (e.g. no full prepayment) are negotiated as part of the organization's hotel contract.
8. You'll get a reduced room rate (negotiated by the organization).
9. Low group rates are guaranteed prior to the established cut-off date and are usually extended three days pre- and post-event.
10. Attendees receive negotiated benefits and amenities contracted for the group room block (e.g. fitness center or bottled water).
11. Reservations within the group block are protected from hotel relocation (also known as walking).
12. Complimentary shuttle service may be provided to/from the airport, conference center or local attractions.
13. The size of the official room block determines priority status for function space. By booking rooms outside the block, the organization may not get its preferred dates or function space.
14. A smaller room block makes it more difficult for the organization to gain favorable hotel services, concessions and function space both this year and in future years at new/different properties.
15. The hotel provides certain concessions to the organization based on filling the group room block (which help to offset registration rates).



Aaron Wolowiec

is founder and president of Event Garde, a Grand Rapids-based professional development consulting firm. Event Garde works with association leaders who want to deliver dynamic, meaningful and compelling education and networking experiences.

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 eventgarde.com
 616.710.1891



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