

# Positioning Small Markets as Prime Meetings Destinations

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# 2025 Iowa Meeting Guide

- What's new in 2025?
- Content:
  - Planner interviews
  - Major meeting spaces
  - Arts and culture destinations
  - Sustainable venues
  - Bleisure destinations



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# Lean into Affordability

- Budget friendly venues are more important now than ever
- Planners are expecting their meetings to be just as high quality for the same budgets they had pre-pandemic
- Advertise statewide or citywide grant programs that planners can apply for and offer to help them apply
- Show off your CVB services that can save costs
  - Free marketing/promotion services, volunteer programs, etc.



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# Be Creative!

- You know your destination the best... utilize that!
- Draw in local partners to add flair to your hosted meetings
  - Partner with city trolley services to offer discounted tours of the city for attendees
  - Partner with local restaurants to offer free appetizers to attendees when they dine out
  - Take attendees to a local wildlife sanctuary for an off-site meeting
- Use whatever makes your destination unique during the meeting



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# Know your Destination

- Know off-site event options with the best price.
- Be a resource to your clients
  - Don't simply refer them to a website, be willing to listen to their needs and offer specific suggestions



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# Help when Needed

- Have your staff ready to help with larger meetings if volunteers are needed
- Create a CTA program so more people in your area know what all there is to do
- Let local partners know the importance of being involved
  - They can't just expect people to come!



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# Flexibility is Key

- When problems arise... be ready to resolve them quick
  - Have backup vendors ready for transportation, A/V or other key services
- Planners are more willing to come back if they know you will vouch for them
- Be a partner, not passive



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# Every Meeting is Important

- Your biggest advantage over larger destinations is every meeting is important to you
- Make planners know that you will do everything that you can for them
- Be hands-on before, during and after the meeting



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# Meaningful FAMs/Site Inspections

- Don't go through the motions, take time with planners to show them around and get to know them
- Understand what they need so you can best assist them
- Build relationships, not just business transactions



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# You are You!

- Your destination is unique... USE THAT!
- Showcase how people can enjoy their time in your destination, from off-site events to recommendations for downtime
  - Again, use your partners!



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# Show the Numbers

- Show planners why meeting in your destination is more affordable than larger competitors
- Come with the hard numbers
- Be prepared to show statistics (visitors, hotel occupancy during certain times of the year, driving distance to major airports, weather, etc.)



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# Build Meaningful Relationships

- Use your Midwestern Hospitality Iowa is known for!
- Planners will want to come back because they know YOU!



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Any questions?



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