PROGRAMMING FESTIVALS / CONVENTION

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Programming Objectives

1. What's your objective? Be honest.

   a. Are you doing this for the dancers?
   b. Because you think you can do a better job than the last guy?
   c. Trying to impress someone? I.e. the festival committee or even the famous featured caller.
   d. To get better calling slots for yourself?
   e. To keep some else from getting better slots…….

   ……or

   f) Because you care about the activity, you are up to the task, and you desire to make your state or local festival more successful than ever despite the fact you have taken on arguably the most thankless job on the committee.

Programming Pros / Cons

1. PROS

   a. Programming can make or break a festival. It's all about the presentation. Packaging is a major selling point and can help folks overlook other shortcomings, i.e. sound, floors, or climate control.

   b. Giving dancers the best bang for their buck. I can't tell you how often I hear dancers are not attending state conventions because they don't want to spend $1,000 to dance to "Joe Blow" who basically calls once a year (at the convention).

2. CON………only one……..

   a. Taking the heat. You will never make everyone happy so don't even try. Stay focused on the best plan for your convention and customers. But be prepared to possibly even lose friendships over some of your decisions.

Programming a Caller Run Festival

- Programming starts even before the weekend arrives. Understand your demographics and who you are recruiting for the weekend. Obviously, you will not be recruiting brand new recent graduates for a no holds barred DBD weekend.

- Consider your levels and dance space. 3 levels but only two halls require some manipulation. When you are getting folks registered, it's a good idea to query their primary dance level.

- Consider your staff. Only two callers for two halls will restrict your dance time in order to rest the callers properly.

- Special choreography sessions, i.e. Intro's, old calls, Hex, Progressive, etc.

- All singing call hour. Often best with all staff at the end of the evening.

- Callerama for visiting callers.

Preparing to Program a Convention

- Are you the Program Chairman or just doing Squares? Make sure you recruit team members who will add to your success.

- Dancers or callers doing the schedule?

- Attend committee meetings to get an understanding of overall objectives.

- Learn the layout of your facility. How many halls, distance between halls, dance times, levels.

- You'll need to map out a plan in a spreadsheet or software designed for programming.

- Time slots for each level. Based on caller availability and dancer attendance.

- Timing for special choreography sessions, i.e. Intro's, old calls, Hex, Progressive, etc.

Programing the Convention…..a Philosophy

1. Learn about all the callers, their capabilities and limitations. This is a slippery slope and confidentiality is key. Use profiles but remember they can be fudged. Contact other people you trust for opinions.

   a. Group by abilities to understand where they fit best
      - Level calling, experience
      - Local, regional, travel, festivals, teaching, etc.
      - Availability for the convention

2. The plan…..
   a. Workshops
   b. Special interest sessions
   c. Prime time (priority given to experience and product)
   d. The rest………..

3. Don't expect the high level callers to be happy with only calling high level. Generally they worked hard over the years to reach this level of expertise. Their talents should be shared across the board. I generally start by assigning these callers first beginning with the highest level working down to the lowest level.

QUESTIONS

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ANSWERS