



SECTION MEETING DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING GUIDE

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I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Meeting Development and Marketing Guide is to serve as a resource for organizing and coordinating AOAC INTERNATIONAL Section Meetings. It provides detailed information including important functions needed to plan and coordinate a Section meeting. This guide was designed to assist Sections operating at different levels. The basic details will aid those Sections with less experience in meeting planning, and those with more experience will be able to utilize the portions appropriate for them.

Planning is the key to organizing a successful Section meeting. Organizing an effective meeting will help your Section in several ways. Acceptance by local industry, educational institutions, city authorities, and the community at large is of great importance to Sections.

Spreading the word about your Section meeting and maximizing participation takes planning, creativity, and resourcefulness. Each time one of these groups reads about, sees, or hears of your activities, they gain a stronger, clearer impression of the services AOAC INTERNATIONAL Sections provide.

For information, assistance or suggestions regarding the *Meeting Development and Marketing Guide* contact:



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II. PLANNING A SECTION MEETING

A. Goals and Objectives

Determining meeting goals and objectives will provide the basis for determining program content and should serve as the guiding principle for each element of your Section meeting. It is vital to collect the necessary information about the intended meeting audience to help formulate practical and clear goals and objectives. Knowing who the audience will be and conducting a needs assessment are the first steps in setting meeting objectives. The question to ask yourself is **“What is to be accomplished because of this meeting?”**

Collecting demographic and other critical information on past and prospective attendees is a critical element in determining goals and objectives. It is essential for Section Executive officers to understand an attendee’s primary reasons for coming to a Section meeting, as well as the expectations AOAC members have for an event. Understanding the wants and needs of AOAC members is essential to designing objectives that will serve and promote member’s professional and educational needs.

Sections with a strong history and many traditions may not be open to radical changes, and the program objectives may remain similar year after year. However, if a Section is experiencing a decline in registration numbers, it may be a sign the needs of attendees are not being met. In this case, an objective should be to take an initiative-taking approach and conduct a needs analysis. To design a needs analysis the key questions to investigate include:

1) Is attendance mandatory or voluntary?

Meeting attendees will have different expectations based on their reasons for attending the meeting. Attendees who have been sent to a meeting by their employers for industry-specific training may have different expectations than someone looking to expand their knowledge about their common interest or profession.

2) Who is paying the expenses for the attendee?

This issue will affect the expectations of the attendees.

3) How important are networking opportunities?

Networking opportunities may be offered in a variety of settings. Exhibitions offer a great opportunity for attendees to meet key industry suppliers and see the newest products and services. Receptions and meal functions offer a setting for informal discussions among attendees. Roundtable discussions offer an excellent opportunity for attendees to share experiences about a topic.

4) What professional and educational niche do we serve?

Members' current educational and professional needs are an essential part of meeting objectives. Items to identify include industry trends and changes in technology impacting the responsibilities of members.

B. Program Development

After the goals and objectives have been established the program format and topics can be developed. If it is customary to do so, a meeting title and theme are selected before content is developed. Next, outline the desired meeting format, combining an appropriate number of educational hours with social and extracurricular activities. Consider the attendees' preferences and interest levels and keep the program flexible. Plan breaks from the educational program to avoid over-taxing the attendees' concentration. Include a registration period, a formal opening, meal and social functions, exhibition hours (if applicable), and a formal closing or evaluation session.

In planning the program schedule, many factors must be taken into consideration. In addition to the meeting and learning objectives, factors such as logistical constraints of the potential meeting site, and timing of key sessions to best meet the needs of participants. Prior attendance patterns and the success of past programming choices will be the most dependable guide to scheduling specific events.

1) EDUCATIONAL FORMAT

Educational format should include a variety of delivery mechanisms. Techniques to consider for enhancing educational delivery include:

- ◆ **Presenter Format:** A panel of experts in selected subject areas is identified, each giving a brief presentation. After the presentations, the audience is allowed to ask questions about the entire panel.
- ◆ **Structured Questions:** Prepare eight to ten questions per one-hour presentation to be distributed to selected attendees in advance of the session. Presenters will have already prepared thoughtful answers, eliminating the potential for misinformation. This technique also confines the question-and-answer period to a set period of time.
- ◆ **Workshops:** This setting allows for problem-solving laboratories.
- ◆ **Roundtables:** The discussion group format provides an opportunity to use the major speakers one more time. A key topic and a topic expert are assigned to a table and attendees engage the experts in an informal atmosphere.
- ◆ **Hands-On Participation:** The hands-on demonstration is interesting and useful when discussing the appropriate topics. Demonstrating AOAC Research Institute Rapid Method Test Kits would be an example of a topic for hands-on participation.
- ◆ **Controversy Panel:** To stimulate interest and debate, arrange for two or three views of a controversial issue to be presented.
- ◆ **Poster Sessions:** Photographs, charts, and tables summarizing the topic are posted on a corkboard in a logical order. The printed program specifies when the presenter

will be at a designated board to discuss the posted material.

2) PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Working with your Program Committee is key to developing a successful meeting program. The Program Committee is a recommended standing committee of each AOAC INTERNATIONAL Section.

Responsibilities for Program Committee members may include the following items, but not all the responsibilities listed below are applicable to every Section meeting.

- 1) Meeting promotion/publicity/registration;
- 2) Development of the technical program;
- 3) Site, facilities, audio-visual equipment;
- 4) Exhibits/Sponsors; and
- 5) Social programs, meals, recreational events, spouse, and technically oriented tours.

Members of this program Committee should be selected based on their dependability, accessibility, and knowledge of the subject matter. The chairperson should be able to maintain organizational control and be confident enough in the program planning process to delegate responsibilities.

Planning sessions will be more efficient and organized if performance expectations are clearly defined. For example, guidelines might include the following:

- 1) Know and respond to all timelines and deadlines.
- 2) Report to the chairperson and staff liaison immediately if deadlines cannot be met.
- 3) In contacting prospective speakers:
 - Obtain full names, mailing addresses, and telephone, fax, and e-mail addresses;
 - Explain expectations and format, including objectives and guidelines;
 - Delineate all remuneration and fee policies;
 - Indicate the need for manuscripts and handouts; and
 - Report immediately to the staff liaison and chairperson if assignments are inappropriate or cannot be completed in the time frame allocated.

Another useful tool you may consider using to facilitate your meeting session is a “**planning workbook.**” This workbook should be sent to committee members before the first planning meeting. A loose-leaf binder provides flexibility in making additions and deletions as the program develops.

A typical table of contents may include:

- ◆ List of committee members with their work, home, and e-mail addresses, telephone, and fax numbers.
- ◆ Committee performance criteria including members' roles and responsibilities;
- ◆ Meeting goals and objectives;
- ◆ Brief history of program structure and previous year's promotion pieces and programs;
- ◆ Evaluation summary of the previous program;
- ◆ Minutes of previous program planning meetings;
- ◆ Site information including floor plans and room capacities;
- ◆ Estimated attendance and meeting dates;
- ◆ Meeting budget;
- ◆ Planning deadlines/time frames; and
- ◆ Information on other elements of the program, such as exhibits, spouse programs, tours, food and beverage functions, and accommodations for people with disabilities.

The program development plan is the foundation upon which you will build your Section meeting. Thorough record keeping and staying in touch with the needs of the attendees can assist in the development of future plans. Evaluations, comments, and feedback from attendees can provide valuable insights into the plan and its implementation.

Because the educational program is a primary reason attendees come to Section meetings, it makes sense that the plan designated to create this program is a vital part of the process. Creating a team effort around a well-thought-out and thorough program plan leads to the accomplishment of objectives.

3) SPEAKER COORDINATION

Collaborating with your speakers is another key component in successful program development.

Evaluating potential speakers once you have identified them is an excellent idea to consider. This is a list of questions you might want to ask each speaker.

- ◆ How long have you been speaking?
- ◆ What are your credentials and background?
- ◆ Do you have any videotapes, audiotapes, or written promotional materials?
- ◆ Have you spoken for other companies/associations in the same industry?
- ◆ Will you bring your own handouts?
- ◆ Will you be accessible to the audience, either before or after the presentation?

Prepping speakers is an essential function of program development. At a minimum, be sure to tell your speakers about:

- ◆ Expectations for topic and length of presentation.
- ◆ Audience size, age range, ratio of males/females.
- ◆ Session format including time allotted for Q&A.

- ◆ Name and topics of those sharing the platform.
- ◆ Dress code (business attire, casual, black tie).
- ◆ Speaker lounge or “ready room” location/hours.
- ◆ Subjects, if any, that are off limits or that might be considered controversial.
- ◆ Names of “high profile” people who will attend. Consider whether you wish the speaker to mention anyone by name. Sometimes, it helps to personalize the presentation; sometimes, it’s better left out.

Helping your speakers succeed will reflect on the success of your Section meeting.

- ◆ If your speaker is to speak after a meal, make sure the table service is finished or unobtrusive when the speaker begins.
- ◆ Keep the meeting on schedule, especially for that last speaker.
- ◆ Plan your introduction carefully. Make sure not to mispronounce your speaker’s name or misspell it in any literature. If you condense the bio provided, make sure that you emphasize the critical points.
- ◆ Involve the speaker in the development of conference promotional materials.
- ◆ Make sure the speaker receives copies of all promotional material and media invitations.
- ◆ Work with the speaker to create memorable handouts. Surveys show that conference attendees rate handouts as an essential part of the learning experience.
- ◆ Keep speakers informed as the program develops. Provide a Speaker Kit outlining when materials are due – particularly as it relates to promotional deadlines.

AOAC INTERNATIONAL Speaker Representatives

If you would like to request a representative from AOAC INTERNATIONAL, AOAC staff, and members of the Board of Directors to attend your Section meeting as a speaker or presenter, fill out and return the “AOAC Speaker Request Form” in Appendix A. **Forms must be received at least 120 days prior to your meeting date.** An AOAC representative cannot be sent to your Section meeting unless a formal request is submitted. Requests will be honored based on the availability of travel funds.

C. Budgeting and Financial Management
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A good financial management system sets up a framework that monitors all elements of a meeting and allows the Section to:

- ◆ Monitor the financial situation as it relates to the goals and objectives;
- ◆ Understand where income is coming from and where it is going;
- ◆ Identify the percentage of income and expenses derived from individual areas;
- ◆ Analyze and control expenditures;
- ◆ Determine areas to increase revenues and reduce expenditures; and
- ◆ Make decisions affecting all areas of the meeting.

Establishing financial goals should be completed before any other planning begins. The budget will determine many components of the meeting and should be communicated to key

suppliers to allow everyone to work within a typical frame of reference.

The first step is to determine the expenses of the meeting. A functional expense budget allows all expenses to be categorized under the proper area of the meeting. This allows for easy monitoring of costs.

Functional areas to include in your budget are:

- ◆ Program development and production (program committee expenses, speaker expenses, program printing, and other production costs);
- ◆ Executive Committee expenses (travel and complimentary registration expenses if applicable);
- ◆ Promotion/marketing (development and production of all marketing tools);
- ◆ Exhibit costs (promotion, decorator, signage, security, and space rental);
- ◆ Registration expenses (badges, forms, personnel, computer equipment);
- ◆ Audio visual equipment;
- ◆ Social functions (tickets, food, and beverage costs); and
- ◆ Operations (duplication, postage, meeting room rental, and insurance).

Determining income is accomplished in much the same way as expenses were developed. Like expenses, income should be budgeted by function areas. Main income areas include registration fees, exhibitor income, sponsorship income, and social functions.

The most crucial use of financial statements and budgets is to allow for decision-making based on actual fiscal performance. The opportunity for continuous adjustments in the overall meeting can increase a program's profitability and benefits to attendees.

After each Annual Section meeting, financial reports and bank statements must be sent to AOAC headquarters. Financial management is essential to the success of the meeting and to overall organizational goals and objectives.

D. Site Selection

Selection of a meeting site can be a critical factor in the success or failure of a Section meeting. The needs of the event must first be identified and matched to those sites that can manage the requirements.

Prepare a list of meeting specifications to provide to potential facilities. Items on your list should be in a format by day, time, and hour so they can be reviewed quickly and compared to space availability in the facility.

The list should include:

- ◆ Preferred dates;
- ◆ Anticipated attendance;
- ◆ Number and type of sleeping rooms, if any;

- ◆ Number, size, and usage of meeting rooms;
- ◆ Range of acceptable rates;
- ◆ Types of food and beverage events; and
- ◆ Exhibits and any other special events or activities.

The meeting's objectives and physical requirements will usually dictate the general area where the meeting should be located. Political and economic factors may play a part in narrowing the choices, or organizational policy may dictate the general location.

There are several **types of facilities** that you may want to consider to best match your meeting's objectives and physical requirements. Each has unique advantages and disadvantages.

- ◆ Metropolitan hotel
- ◆ Suburban hotel
- ◆ University
- ◆ Airport hotel
- ◆ Resort
- ◆ Conference center

Site selection is the most important phase of planning a meeting because it is here that a successful meeting begins. **The process should follow six basic steps:**

- 1) Identifying the meeting objectives;
- 2) Developing the format of the meeting;
- 3) Determining the physical requirements of the meeting;
- 4) Defining attendees' interests and expectations;
- 5) Selecting the general area and type of facility; and
- 6) Evaluating the choices.

E. Exhibitors

Having exhibits at your Section meeting can be an excellent way to generate additional revenue as well as interest from attendees. If you are planning to have exhibits at your Section meeting, you will need to determine the scope of your exposition and compare the costs to the expected revenue.

Items to consider include:

- ◆ Number of exhibits
- ◆ Type and size of exhibits
- ◆ Timing and format relative to technical sessions
- ◆ Electrical usage
- ◆ Security issues
- ◆ Availability of space to accommodate exhibits
- ◆ Signage

- ◆ Clean-up following the exposition
- ◆ Materials and services to provide
- ◆ Increasing traffic by holding breaks in the exhibit area
- ◆ Materials to include in the Exhibitor Kit

Many AOAC Sections choose to provide a tabletop with skirting and no electrical services for their exhibitors. This has been a successful way for the Section to generate additional revenue without increasing their costs substantially. The fees charged range from \$100 to \$350 per tabletop display. To receive a sample Exhibitor Kit, please contact the Manager of section programs at AOAC INTERNATIONAL headquarters.

F. Registration Procedures

Registration is the first impression that attendees will have of the Section meeting. A carefully planned registration process that is quick and easy as possible for attendees to utilize will be appreciated by attendees. Poor registration will frustrate potential attendees and possibly make an otherwise outstanding program.

The pricing strategy will be different for each Section. Some will choose to include all Section meeting activities in the registration fee. Others may choose to keep the fee as low as possible so as not to discourage people from attending. Activities and special events are added as optional fees in addition to the meeting registration fee.

Other items to consider when determining the registration process include:

Including an **advance registration** option can dramatically simplify on-site traffic problems, improve attendance, and generate cash flow during the months preceding the meeting. An advance registration announcement or brochure should contain complete information highlighting registration procedures, such as:

- ◆ Fee for each category of registrant (AOAC member, Section member, Early Bird, Advance, On-site, etc.) **Note:** Per AOAC policy, all AOAC product and service fees (including section activities) must have a lower rate for **AOAC members** vs. non-members. This is a **required** policy that must be considered when determining registration fees for Section meeting attendees. Sections may choose a pricing structure that allows for different rates for Section-only members, but it is not required.
- ◆ Materials and amenities included in the fee.
- ◆ Deadline for receipt of advance registrations.
- ◆ Policy on credit cards, checks, purchase orders, foreign funds, and wire transfers.
- ◆ Cancellation and refund policies.
- ◆ On-site fees that will apply (if different from advance fees).
- ◆ On-site registration location and hours.

Attendees should be able to register by mail, phone, fax, or online. Confirmation should be expedient, with a follow-up mailed, faxed, or e-mailed within 48 hours. Payments should be received by check, money order, or credit card.

For those Sections without the necessary equipment to process credit card payments, AOAC is offering a service you may want to consider. AOAC can process credit card payments for Section meeting registrations on an “at cost” basis. This means 5% of the total charges will be deducted from the consolidated check sent to the Section as a processing fee (passed on from the credit card companies).

Sections collect the registrations for meeting attendees and then send data to AOAC, all at one time, for processing. For each transaction, the Section must provide AOAC with the following information:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1) Cardholder’s name as it appears on card | 3) Account number |
| 2) Expiration date | 4) Transaction amount |

Accepted credit cards include Visa, MasterCard, and American Express.

Please contact the Membership Coordinator, Section Programs for additional details regarding this Section benefit.

G. Meeting Evaluation

Meeting evaluation should be incorporated into your overall Section meeting management strategy. Evaluation allows you to determine whether the goals and objectives of your meeting have been met and can be used for planning future meetings and defining the needs of your attendees. You might also utilize this form as a recruitment tool to identify future volunteers.

Some questions you might want to include in the meeting evaluation include the following.

- ◆ Did attendees feel the meeting was of value to them?
- ◆ Did the program meet the attendees’ educational needs?
- ◆ Were the promotional efforts for the meeting effective?
- ◆ Did attendees like the location of the meeting?
- ◆ Were social events entertaining?
- ◆ Were speakers informative and interesting?
- ◆ Were the networking opportunities sufficient?
- ◆ Did registration run smoothly?
- ◆ Did the hotel and meeting rooms meet attendees’ expectations?
- ◆ Were exhibitors pleased with their sales leads?
- ◆ Are you interested in participating in future Section meetings?
- ◆ What topics would you like to see in future programs?

Evaluation typically occurs after an event has happened. The best results will be achieved if

forms are gathered immediately after a session or workshop while opinions are still fresh.

Guidelines for Designing the Evaluation Form:

- 1) Keep the evaluation form short and simple.
- 2) Ask specific questions.
- 3) Make it easy for attendees to complete evaluations.
- 4) Provide for convenient collection of evaluations. If evaluations are collected on-site, receptacles should be clearly marked and readily available. If possible, have volunteers collect evaluations as attendees exit the meeting room.
- 5) Make sure your form is designed so you can conduct data analysis with the information.

III. PROMOTING A SECTION MEETING

A. Promotion and Marketing

The success or failure of a meeting is due, in large part, to the quality of planning. After a meeting is organized, however, promotion becomes a critical factor in the meeting's outcome. Promotion is the aspect of marketing that deals with achieving meeting objectives, such as generating program awareness within the market or reaching specific attendance goals.

Strategies for promoting Section meetings to potential attendees include direct mail brochures, flyers, letters sent via mail or fax, articles and advertisements in newsletters, and information posted on the Internet.

As soon as you know details about your meeting, pass this information on to the AOAC Manager, Section Programs, so the information can be included in the AOAC monthly magazine *Inside Laboratory Management* and added to the AOAC website. Please provide contact information along with the meeting details. You may want to send the essential information to begin publicizing your Section meeting and then forward additional information as it becomes available. Of course, you will also want to add this information to your own Section website.

B. Printed Promotional Materials

1) BROCHURE:

The number of brochures you should produce to promote your Section meeting will be determined by the size of your mailing list, the number of contacts provided by AOAC, how many attendees you are trying to attract, and the size of your budget. A typical response rate would be approximately 5%. A 2,000-piece mailing should result in about 100 attendees. These response rates will vary due to the types of contacts on the mailing list, the quality of the program, and other promotional factors.

Cost factors to consider when producing a brochure include design, typesetting, paper, and ink used in printing, mailing preparation (inserting materials in envelopes, labeling, sorting, etc.), and postage. Photocopying is a cost-saving alternative option to printing if high-quality photocopying is available and if the piece is designed to be reproduced on paper that is compatible with photocopying equipment.

It is recommended that Sections send two mailings to promote the meeting. The first should be mailed six to eight months prior to the meeting, and the second should be mailed three to four months before. Your first mailing may include a "Call for Papers," if appropriate for your Section, to save the cost of sending separately. Self-mailing (label and postage are affixed directly to the piece) brochures are popular and economical since you save the cost of envelopes and reduce the weight of mailing.

When producing a direct mail piece to promote your Section meeting, you need to consider the mailing's design, cover, content, and timing.

The brochure should be **designed** specifically to generate attendance at your Section meeting. Copy or text should be clear, concise, specific, and written in the active voice with short sentences. Be sure to include the benefits of attending and instructions for the potential attendee (register today, call, or send an e-mail now for more details, etc.). Depending on your resources, you may choose to have one of your talented volunteers design and layout the piece on word processing or desktop publishing equipment or send it out to a graphic designer. Most graphic designers do typeset as well as design; however, if you provide the copy or text on a disk that is compatible with your designer/typesetter's equipment, you'll save the cost of having the copy entered.

The **cover** of your brochure is the first part of the piece the audience will see, so its appearance and message are very important. It should include information such as:

- ◆ **Title** – to capture attention and convey the purpose of the meeting.
- ◆ **Specifics** – dates and location
- ◆ **Audience** – whom the program is designed to serve
- ◆ **Summary** – a brief description of the program
- ◆ **Sponsorship** – program being offered by “Name of your Section” of AOAC INTERNATIONAL
- ◆ **Logo** – AOAC logo and/or Section logo

The content of the brochure should provide complete information, including details that will encourage attendance. The copy must convince readers of the value of the meeting and elicit a response. Use headlines and motivating teaser copy to capture attention and highlight key information.

Include the following details of your Section meeting:

- ◆ Title of the program.
- ◆ Date, time, and location.
- ◆ Sponsor.
- ◆ Objectives.
- ◆ Who should attend and why?
- ◆ Speaker's names (as well as their titles and affiliations).
- ◆ Program schedule.
- ◆ Fees and what is included in the fee – **include a different fee for AOAC members and non-members, as mentioned in the “Registration Procedures” section of the Meeting and Marketing Guide.** This is a **required** policy for all AOAC products and services. Sections may choose to have a pricing structure that allows for different rates for Section-only members, but it is not required by AOAC policy. All promotional materials for Section meetings **must** include a lower rate for AOAC members.
- ◆ Special events and functions.
- ◆ Lodging information – include a cutoff date for housing registration in addition to the address, telephone number, rates, and other lodging details.

- ◆ Facility information.
- ◆ Cancellation policy.
- ◆ Registration procedures and deadlines.
- ◆ Use a registration form and/or another reply to vehicle to capture the names of interested parties.
- ◆ Contact information – “who” potential attendees should contact and “how” to contact them to obtain additional information.

A sample brochure is in Appendix B. If you would like to receive an electronic copy of this brochure sample, please contact the AOAC Section Manager.

2) PRESS RELEASE:

To maximize the publicity for your Section meeting, you may want to consider drafting a press release to submit to appropriate publications, including journals, magazines, associations, newsletters, and local newspapers. Potential attendees will see any resulting articles, which can increase the impact of your promotional message. Many trade and professional publications offer complimentary calendar listings of appropriate meetings.

Once the Section meeting date, location, and program are set, you should prepare and mail a press release to your press list. If your meeting moves to different locations each year, you will want to supplement your press list with publications local to the meeting site. The more details included in the press release, the more likely it will attract the attention of potential attendees. A well-known speaker or hot new topic will generate the most interest.

A press release must be prepared and sent at least four or five months before the meeting date due to the four-to-ten-week lead time for most publications.

Press releases should:

- ◆ Be double-spaced and dated;
- ◆ Provide the basic facts (who, when, where, and why), program highlights, and special features of the meeting; and
- ◆ Include contact information such as “who” potential attendees should contact and “how” to contact them to obtain additional information.

C. Mailing Lists

Each AOAC Section is responsible for developing and maintaining its own Section mailing list. Contacts in the list may include past meeting attendees, Section members (if applicable), AOAC Manager of Section Programs, and potential meeting prospects. The prospects include government, industry, and academic scientists.

A list of current, past, and prospective AOAC INTERNATIONAL members is available upon request for Section use from AOAC Headquarters. Contact the AOAC Manager, Section Programs if you are interested in receiving a list to add to your current mailing list or to use separately to promote your meeting. These lists are available in both printed and electronic formats. Labels may be available, depending on the number of contact names being requested. Please let us know your preference, and we will be happy to accommodate your needs.

Members of the Executive Committee and others involved in the meeting promotion should continually identify sources of prospective meeting attendees. Sources might include national, state, provincial, county, and city government laboratories; manufacturers and processors in the food, pharmaceuticals, drugs, cosmetics, agricultural chemicals, and other fields relevant to AOAC and who have laboratories; University professors and University laboratories; contract laboratories; laboratory equipment and supplies manufacturers; and other scientific associations.

The Section mailing list should be kept current. Executive Committee members should inspect the list periodically to cull outdated names. You may wish to send a postpaid return card to list contacts to verify if they want to continue to receive information regarding Section activities or develop a policy for deleting names of people who have not responded after a specific number of years.

Postal Considerations – Your Section budget and resources will determine the method of mailing. Mailing houses are equipped to manage large mailings in a timely manner and, if affordable, the option for your Section. Before mailing, inquire about postal regulations that may affect the piece. There are certain restrictions as to what can be sent third-class under a bulk rate number. First-class postage is preferred when the timing is tight, as delivery is usually 3-5 days.

It is essential to mail all materials on time. Each day after the optimum brochure mailing date can cost a percentage of the total registrations. For example, if it were only 2 percent, a two-week late mailing could result in more than 25 percent fewer attendees.

D. Web site

Online communications are the fastest-growing medium for promoting all types of products and services. Advertising your Section activities on both the AOAC website and your individual Section website should be included in your meeting marketing strategy.

E. Telephone Contacts

Another popular marketing strategy to encourage section meeting attendance is making personal telephone contacts for qualified candidates. As the meeting date approaches, you may be able to increase the number of attendees by providing one-on-one explanations of the features of your meeting. This strategy can often convince Lab Directors and others who make these decisions that they (or other members of their staff) should attend.

When implementing this strategy remember to:

- 1) Create a list of your best prospects.
- 2) Divide the list among those who've agreed to make the calls.
- 3) Provide each caller with complete meeting information.
- 4) Send the program and registration form to interested parties.

F. Conclusion

A successful marketing plan is the key to building attendance at your Section meeting. To make the meeting as successful as possible, you must reach the appropriate audience and motivate them to attend. To accomplish this, the proper market must be identified, and suitable media must be used to reach them. Your promotional resources should focus on the different strategies highlighted in this Meeting and Marketing Guide. These include direct mail (brochures, flyers, and letters) sent via mail or fax, articles and advertisements in newsletters, information posted on the AOAC website, as well as your individual Section website, and personal telephone contacts. After your Section meeting, you should review registration statistics. Correlate significant receipt dates of responses to the dates promotional pieces were sent. Evaluating the current year will benefit planning for the next Section meeting.



AOAC INTERNATIONAL

Speaker Request Form

Sections may request one (1) visit each year from either a member of the Board of Directors or a staff member. See the list of available speakers on the following page. During the visit, the Section's meeting should feature the AOAC representative as the technical speaker and/or as a presenter on general AOAC activities.

To arrange for an AOAC representative to attend your Section meeting as a speaker or presenter, complete and return the "Speaker Request Form" and the "Pre-Visit Report" to the Manager of Section Programs at AOAC Headquarters. Requests will not be processed until both forms have been received. The requests must be submitted at least 120 days prior to the meeting date. Every effort will be made to schedule a speaker for your meeting. Requests will be honored based on the availability of AOAC travel funds.

SECTION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Section Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

MEETING OPTIONS

Please check one:

Our Section is requesting a speaker to give:

A Technical Presentation

A General Overview of AOAC Activities

Both a Technical Presentation and General Overview of AOAC Activities

SPEAKER SELECTIONS – Return as soon as possible to receive full consideration.

1st Choice: _____
Name of Board Member or Staff Date Requested

Topic: _____

2nd Choice: _____
Name of Board Member or Staff Date Requested

Topic: _____

Please direct any questions or comments about this program to:

Director of Membership and Section Programs
Telephone: +1-301-924-7077 ext. 114,
Fax: +1-301-924-7089 or E-mail: members@aoac.org



AOAC INTERNATIONAL

Speaker List

Contact AOAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For questions regarding AOAC activities and/or functions of the Board of Directors, please contact one of the staff members listed below at 301-924 7077.

AOAC STAFF

- **Katerina Mastovska, Ph.D.**, *Deputy Executive Director and Chief Science Officer*
- **Deborah McKenzie**, *Deputy Assistant Executive Director & Chief Standards Officer*
- **Pam Coleman**, *Chief Innovation Officer*
- **Brad Stawick**, *Senior Director, AOAC Research Institute*
- **Shane P. Flynn**, *Senior Director, Laboratory Proficiency Testing Program*

General Overview of AOAC Activities and Discussion of Section Issues at Executive Committee Meetings

- **David Schmidt**, *Executive Director*
- **Dawn L. Frazier**, *Deputy Executive Director, Engagement*
- **May Rose Jones**, *Director of Membership and Sections*



AOAC INTERNATIONAL

Section Pre-Visit Report

Please fill out and return the “Section Pre-Visit Report” (along with the Speaker Request Form) to the AOAC Membership Coordinator, Section Programs.

SECTION CONTACT INFORMATION

Section Name: _____ Contact Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Section Management/Leadership:

- 1) How does your Section recruit or encourage participation in Section activities? (e.g., Announcements, letters, telephone calls, etc.)
- 2) Did your Section send a representative to the AOAC Section Leadership Development and Training Session at the September AOAC Annual Meeting and Exposition?
- 3) How many of the current officers have already served as President/Chair of the Section?

Technical and Educational Programming:

- 1) How does your Section determine the type of program topics to offer?
- 2) Where does your Section find speakers?
- 3) What type of networking opportunities does your Section offer? (e.g., Workshops, roundtable discussions, exhibits, etc.)
- 4) Does your Section need additional assistance in finding topics to present?

Membership Development:

1) Does your Section have a membership recruitment program to attract new AOAC members?

Membership Development:

2) Does your Section have a membership recruitment program to attract new Section members?

3) What percent of your Section members are NOT AOAC members?

4) What do you think are the reason(s) that Section members do not join AOAC?

5) Does your Section produce a membership handbook or directory?

Section Finances:

1) Does your Section have adequate financial resources?

2) What are the Section revenue sources? (e.g., Meeting registration fees, exhibitor fees, membership, sponsors, etc.)

3) What does your Section hold the total assets?

Please direct any questions or comments about this program to:

Director of Membership and Section Programs
Telephone: +1-301-924-7077 x114
Fax: +1-301-924-7089 or E-mail: members@aoac.org

INSERT APPENDIX B – Brochure Page 1

INSERT APPENDIX B – Brochure Page 2

APPENDIX C - MEETING DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

1 Year Out

- 1) Appoint Planning Committee members - Set meeting date and location for the first meeting.

9 Months Out

Hold the first Planning Committee meeting to:

- 1) Review previous years' information, including evaluation forms and post-budget performance reviews.
- 2) Establish meeting objectives and scope of the program.
- 3) **Select meeting date and location.**
- 4) Determine audience(s): members, past attendees, industry, and government leaders.
- 5) Identify the meeting theme.
- 6) Establish a working budget and set fees for registration, exhibitors, special events, etc.
- 7) Develop program and agenda.
- 8) Select speaker topics and speakers.
- 9) Assemble the exhibitor prospect list.
- 10) Prepare a master schedule of all activities including preparation of promotional materials and deadlines.
- 11) Assign program area responsibilities.
- 12) Send AOAC "Speaker Request" and "Visit Report" forms to the AOAC Membership Coordinator, Section Programs.

6 - 8 Months Out

- 1) **Identify a facility and negotiate a facility contract.**
- 2) Draft invitation letters to speakers and exhibitors.
- 3) Send meeting details to the AOAC Manager, Section Programs so information can be added to the AOAC *Inside Laboratory Management* magazine calendar and the AOAC website.
- 4) Contact AOAC Manager, Section Programs to request a list and/or labels for meeting promotion.
- 5) Review procedures for registration.
- 6) Begin preparation of meeting brochure including copy, layout, and design.

4 - 5 Months Out

- 1) Finalize speakers and exhibitors.
- 2) Send confirmation letters and exhibitors prospectus.
- 3) Print promotional materials.
- 4) **Mail promotional materials**, including the program agenda, registration form, and "Call for Papers."
- 5) Broadcast fax and/or e-mail meeting details to targeted potential meeting attendees.
- 6) Send press releases to related organizations.
- 7) Finalize speakers and exhibitors.
- 8) Confirm door prizes and potential door prize contributors.
- 9) Set time for Section Executive Committee meeting.
- 10) Send brochure and Section Executive Committee meeting details to AOAC Manager, Section Programs.

90 Days Out

- 1) Follow-up on "Call for Papers."
- 2) **Send a second mailing of promotional materials.**
- 3) Determine meeting space availability for sessions, posters, exhibitors, registration, meals and breaks.
- 4) Create an exhibitor map.
- 5) Finalize special event activities.
- 6) Arrange insurance coverage, if needed.

60 Days Out

- 1) Order badges, signs, gifts, and other meeting supplies.
- 2) Select banquet food and beverage requirements and finalize on-site arrangements.
- 3) Send shipping details to exhibitors, speakers and AOAC Membership Coordinator, Section Programs.
- 4) Arrange staffing and volunteers for registration.

- 5) Send a second mailing of promotional materials.

30 Days Out

- 1) Assemble on-site materials: registration, programs, badges, evaluation forms and AOAC promotional materials.
- 2) Provide site with final list of audio-visual requirements and finalize food guarantees.

2 Weeks Out

- 1) Ship materials to the meeting site
- 2) Review the room list with meeting site staff.
- 3) Prepare a list of meeting registrants

On-Site

- 1) Check materials shipped in advance.
- 2) Meet with site staff to confirm arrangements and review set-up details.
- 3) Meet with exhibitors for set-up
- 4) Collect door prizes.
- 5) Prepare registration materials.
- 6) Provide an accessible area for attendees to return evaluation forms.

Post Meeting

- 1) Send thank you letters to speakers, volunteers, sponsors, exhibitors, suppliers, and facilities.
- 2) Review meeting evaluation forms and perform post-budget performance review.
- 3) Send meeting attendee list, (3) copies of the Final Program, Financial statements, Executive Committee meeting minutes, Updated Executive Committee roster (with positions and terms) to AOAC Membership Coordinator, Section Programs within 30 days of meeting date.

Updated: 2.1.2024