Making Functions Work for You and Your Site

Bill Blanchfield
Functions Manager
Historic New England
Waltham, MA
“We don't rent for anything...ever.”

"deal with these people"

“The first thing I do is try to discourage them from hosting their wedding here”

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We're not here to make friends. We're not savin' the manatees, guys.
Launching or re-launching a functions program

Who

Why

What

Where

Growth

Competition

Numbers
Functions at Historic New England

What we do

Maximize income earned through the rental of specified buildings and grounds while working within Historic New England’s preservation philosophy and practices.
Wouldn’t it be nice if... 

What is a function
Functions at Historic New England

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Functions at Historic New England

Why
Launching or re-launching a functions program

Who

1. LEADERSHIP
2. FUNCTIONS TEAM
3. INTERNAL SUPPORT STAFF
4. VENDORS
Launching or re-launching a functions program

Who Too

The Town
The Neighbors
Launching or re-launching a functions program

What
What about...all the stuff?
Pricing

- Identify competition
- Be aggressive to start
- Adjust toward your goal price as you become more confident in your offering
Pricing points

- Pricing can be used to control / limit interest
- The fee is not tax deductible

- Keep pricing simple and put it everywhere!
Simple plan to get the word out

• Have great material

Weddings at Barrett House

Barrett House, also known as Forest Hall, was built c. 1800 by Charles Barrett Sr. for his son Charles Jr. and daughter-in-law Martha Minot on the occasion of their marriage. The mansion sits on more than seventy acres that include perennial and annual gardens and a Gothic Revival summer house that crowns the hillside overlooking the expansive grounds. The dramatic water of the house and garden make this place...
Simple plan to get the word out

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• Have a clear and concise web page
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• Step up to for-pay listings when you want more
Caterers and tent rental companies must be chosen from our exclusive list. These companies work superbly at the Codman Carriage House and Gardens and their clients have been particularly pleased.

**Caterers**
- Boston Café and Catering
  - 781-918-9900
  - BostonCater.com
- Capers Catering
  - 781-279-5100
  - CapersCatering.com
- Chive Sustainable Catering
  - 978-969-3316
  - ChiveEvents.com
- Cuisine Chez Vous
  - 617-397-3632
  - CuisineChezVous.com
- East Meets West Catering
  - 617-269-2662 ext. 11
  - EastMeetsWestCatering.com
- Events by BH
  - 781-968-5495
  - EventsByBH.com
- Rita's Catering
  - 617-389-1601
  - RitaSCatering.com
- Swartz Catering Company
  - 617-628-1632
  - SwartzCatering.com
- Tastings Caterers
  - 508-879-9191
  - TastingsCaterers.com

**Tents**
- Peterson Party Center
  - 781-729-4000
  - PPCInc.com

The following vendors are suggested. Clients are not required to use them.

**DJs/Entertainment**
- A Beat Away Entertainment featuring DJ Joe Pelt
  - 617-813-1999
- C-Zone Music Elegant Entertainment
  - 617-320-0723
- Murray Hill Talent
  - 800-843-2263

**Florists**
- Land Escapes Floral Design
  - 617-308-7063

**Hotels**
- Courtyard Boston Waltham
  - 781-419-0900
- Holiday Inn Express Boston-Waltham
  - 866-335-6208
- Home Suites Inn
  - 781-890-3000

**Liquor Suppliers**
- Gordon's Fine Wines & Liquors
  - 781-893-1900

**Music/Bands**
- Intermezzo Chamber Players
  - 781-861-7149
- Riverview Chamber Players
  - 781-398-2240
- White Heat Swing Orchestra and Back Bay Rhythm Makers
  - 617-354-7213

**Photographers**
- Robert Castagna
  - 617-833-9271
- Paula Chandola
  - 617-661-2998
- Cordle Photography
  - 978-771-0341
- Alyssa Almeida Duncan Photography
  - 603-373-0098
- Leise Jones Photography
  - 617-671-5572
- Beth Orman Photography
  - 774-249-0565
- Anne Reacick Photography
  - 978-282-5574
Vendors can be an additional source of revenue and/or institutional support
In 1999, a drunk Giants fan crashed his car into another carrying Antonia Verni, 2, leaving her a quadriplegic. Verni's parents sued Aramark Corp., saying that a company employee kept serving beer to the drunk fan, Daniel Lanzaro, and contributed to the crash.
common sense suggestions

- Limit service length to 4 hours
- No shots
- Police presence
- Do not send alcohol home with anyone after the event…not even a “responsible adult”
- No last call
- Have a secure place to store alcohol
Additional details to consider

**Contract creation**
- Create a client contract that is hyper specific and protective of your organization
- Create a vendor contract that sets clear expectations

**Cleaning**
- Hire a professional BUT don’t charge the client explicitly
Additional details to consider

**Internal space needs**
- Set aside dates for internal use
- Annual events should be put in the calendar in perpetuity

**Membership**
- Give them a membership don’t require the to be members before booking with you
Growth

Slow and steady
- Book more!
- Raise prices
- Extract fees from vendors
- Go bigger
- Add a new type of event

Swing for the fences
- Spartan Race
- Movie shoots
- Build an ice rink
In business you get what you want by giving other people what they want.

Alice Foote MacDougall (1867-1945), U.S. businesswoman. MacDougall was a successful coffee house proprietor and coffee, tea, and cocoa merchant.