

# Hosting Your Members & Guests

By Suzanne Boswell

## Ideas to increase the impact of your meeting for study clubs and referring offices



### Packets for attendees

If guests will sign-in on arrival, consider having packets already prepared to speed the process. Some host-practices prepare one packet per guest-practice with all information to be disseminated by the arriving guest-team on site. Some host-practices prefer to have one packet per person/attendee.

Packets can include the handout (provide enough handouts for each attendee), a nametag (or tags), and an agenda. You may consider including information about your specialty practice, and/or clinical tips in reference to your specialty. If you do not use packets at all, place duplicated handouts at each seat in advance of guest arrival.

### The impact of your staff

All team members play a vitally important role in presenting your practice to referring offices. Guests and club members may perceive your treatment of them as representing how their referred patients might be treated in your office. This is crucial for every team member to understand! Discuss with your team how to present yourselves in the most positive manner to guests. Some suggestions:

### Host practice identification

If possible use a visual symbol (flower, different color nametag, similar scarf or apparel etc.) to help guests know who you are and who to go to with concerns. This is very helpful when a guest has a question. Use of a flower not only has a gracious appeal, but it is typically appreciated by team members who recognize their special roles in representing the practice to others.

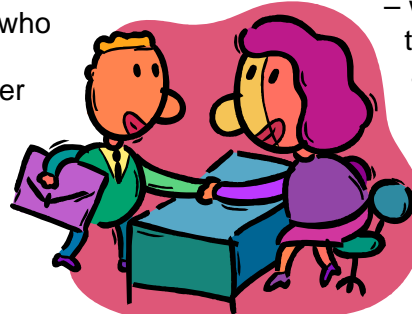
### Guest acknowledgement

If your meeting is a "Staff Appreciation Day" meeting, consider providing a token gift to every staff member in attendance. It does NOT need to be expensive. It does need to be meaningful and acknowledge their importance in the guest practices. Showing this awareness helps to set your group apart in their minds. You may opt to provide the gifts from you OR you might provide the gifts to the member/guest doctors who then have the pleasure of distributing the gifts to their own staff. Either way, staff members feel recognized for what they do.

There's a great range of options for your gift. Get ideas from your own staff (this also invests them in the process.) The gift could be a flower or small corsage (if your staff wears flowers, use different colors to signify your own staff). If you DO use flowers and your office staff wears a different color, then you might consider an alternate "thank you" for your own staff. The bottom line: Help to make this truly a special day for all staff. Your guests and study club members will appreciate your help and support in making this a memorable day for the staff members in attendance.

### Greeters

Greet your guests as if they were in your home – welcome them warmly, let them know you're glad they are there. Introduce yourself, let the guest know your responsibility in the office, and ask about them - build links. Saying "If there's anything you need today, please let me

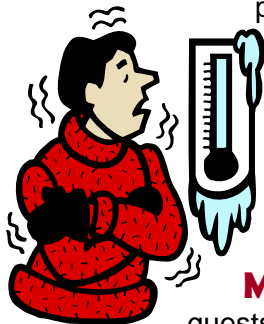


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know." is meaningful, so long as you're sincere and will follow through! With some groups this may be done during the registration period. In large groups have staff circulate in the room before the meeting starts. It is so very rare to see this happen that your office or team will stand out as very welcoming. When done effectively it can have the following impact: (1) You will be modeling for attending offices gracious behavior that can translate to their own practices (2) You will be sending clues to how patients might be greeted when referred to your office.

### Guest comfort

Ensuring that your guests and members are comfortable reflects on your group and the likelihood of how you might take care of patients referred to your office.



Assign individuals to monitor the comfort of the room throughout the meeting. Let guests know who the "Room Monitors" are.

**M**onitor the body language of guests for comfort. Arms closely wrapped to the body and outwear worn in the meeting room are likely indications that these individuals are cold. However it's only an indication. Sometimes women arrive bare-armed, unaware that meeting rooms are often kept on the cool side. Take a poll of the room to determine if the thermostat needs to be adjusted. Check with people during the breaks. If you do make adjustments based on what the majority want, then be sure to let the entire group know – it tells them that you understand and that you care. Know that a room will warm up once it's filled with people. Also, be aware that a room with a high ceiling will take longer to heat as compared to a room with a low ceiling.

Ensure that seating is comfortable. If you're using tables and chairs, be sure that there is enough room for participants to push their chairs back and to pass down the aisle as

needed. Sometimes rooms are set too tightly in this respect. This needs to be evaluated and adjusted **BEFORE** attendees arrive!

If tables are set with water pitchers, check at breaks and during lunch to ensure that water is refilled. Anticipate needs and offer solutions before the guests become uncomfortable.

If there is meal service, have one of your own team members sit with guests. This person needs to introduce herself/himself to the table group and can serve an important role in ensuring that everyone is included in conversations and enjoys the lunch. It's a gracious way to make connections and to ensure that guests are at ease.

### Rest rooms

On the morning of the meeting, be sure every staff member knows location of the rest rooms. Find out where other rest rooms are located in case long lines form! In extreme cases, if there are many more women than men, you might allocate one of the men's rooms for women – with adjusted signage, of course!

### Departure

A last impression is often a lasting impression. Close the day with guests leaving feeling good about having attended the session. Staff who warmly say goodbye to guests help guests feel valued and important. Find a comfortable way to sincerely show your appreciation for your guests. This will be remembered and they will feel good about referring their patients to such a caring office.

### IN SHORT

- Be sincere
- Anticipate member/guest needs
- Think more about your members/guests than yourself
- Encourage your staff to welcome guests
- Model gracious behaviors that represent the courtesy extended to your referred patients
- Be visible, available and accessible
- Lighten up and have fun!



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