

# THE BOARD TABLE



In the spirit of David Letterman, let me share my Top Ten tips for getting the most out of the upcoming IFEA convention in Denver, Colorado this September 21-23, 2012.

## #10 Don't Spend All Your Time with People You Know

While I love attending IFEA each year to get to reconnect with great friends and peers, there are always a bunch of new people to meet from around the corner or across the globe. You'll discover the connections you make at IFEA will become an essential part of your professional network.

## #9 Practice Intellectual Larceny

As the old joke goes – If you steal one idea, it is theft...If you steal two or more, it is market research. IFEA is a treasure trove of great ideas, pertinent examples, useful templates, stories of success and even some spectacular failures. You will find an idea-rich collection of festival and event professionals who are more than willing to share what they know. Take advantage of it!

## #8 Bring Your Shopping List

What do you buy for the event that has everything? You'll find a robust marketplace of products and services that specialize in our crazy industry from portable restrooms to fireworks, radios to entertainment, parade balloons to liability insurance: and everything in between. And, IFEA Vendors are professionals who really "get" our business.

## Top Ten List to Maximize the 2012 IFEA Convention

## #7 Decide In Advance What Dream Vacation You Would Like to Take

Each year, the members of IFEA donate auction items providing remarkable VIP access trips to such iconic events as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and Rose Bowl Game; the Kentucky Derby Festival and the Indianapolis 500. In past years, the IFEA Foundation Night Auction has included condos in Hawaii and Mexico, catamaran sailboat trips in the Caribbean and cabins in the Puget Sound. Talk it over with your spouse, friends or co-workers in advance and let the bidding begin.

## #6 Seek Out Industry Giants and Buy Them a Drink

At no place on earth, and at no other time during the year, can you find more of the 'Who's Who' of the festivals and events industry all together, including some of the titans of our profession. People like Jean McFaddin, former Producer of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade for 25 years; Bill Flinn, Executive Director of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses; William O'Toole, author, educator and perhaps the world's leading information repository for international events; Johan Moerman, Managing Director of Rotterdam Festivals in The Netherlands; and many, many more. They will all welcome your questions.

## #5 Discover What Makes an Award-Winning Festival

The IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards recognize the best work being done in the festivals and events industry during the past year. Not only can you experience the awards as they are announced, but the following day you can take your time to carefully review each and every award-winning entry. It is a veritable incubator of ideas to take home to apply to your next event.

## #4 Take Some Time to Explore Denver and Colorado.

Colorado is a wonderful place to visit in September. The aspens are turning a shimmery gold. The days are sunny and the nights are crisp. There are hundreds of cultural options in Denver and the Rocky Mountains are bursting with color and bugling elk.

## #3 Plan Your Schedule and Block Out The Seminars and Presentations You Want To Attend

Check out the IFEA's SCHED\* online conference schedule in advance and plan your days ahead of time. If you are coming with others from your organization, divide and conquer, splitting up for different presentations. You'll find great topics on every aspect of festival and event planning and management. And don't miss attending an Affinity Group...it's like a support group for those who do the same thing that you do, day after day.

## #2 Take Notes

Your brain will run out of disc space. There are just too many tips, ideas and examples to remember everything. Many presenters provide their outline or PowerPoint, but be ready to take notes. I like to keep a page in the back of my portfolio for random "IDEAS." If I hear something in a conversation or a presentation stimulates an idea, I keep those on a separate page so they don't get lost in my notes.

## #1 dfest®/Dixie Flag Event Services Team Hospitality Suite!

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We look forward to seeing you in Denver!

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