



Is the In-House AV Company Really the Best Choice?



You Have the Right to Choose Your AV Partner!

When Planning Your Next Event Consider These Questions:

- Will I be charged a fee for using an outside AV vendor and is that negotiable?
- Will the in-house AV staff be dedicated solely to my event?
- Are there limitations to building access for my event?
- Is the in-house AV provider paying a commission to the venue for my business?
- How experienced is the on-site AV staff?
- How can I guarantee that my event will be a success?



Six Things to Consider Before Selecting the In-House AV Provider

When booking a hotel or conference center, you will usually be encouraged and sometimes even required to use the in-house or preferred audio visual provider. But is working with the in-house AV company really your best option?

1. NEGOTIATE

Everything is negotiable. It is important to always retain your right to use an independent AV production partner by negotiating removal of any restrictions or fees for doing so during the contract stage with the hotel or convention center. Once you sign on the dotted line, you are contractually obligated to using the in-house AV provider and your options become limited with little room for negotiation.



A venue isn't going to risk losing your business because you want the option to bring in your own independent AV company. Off-site AV partners don't have the burden of paying the hotel so they have greater flexibility in providing more impact and better value for your AV investment. There are no hidden fees so your investment goes straight to the successful execution of your event.

2. DEDICATED RESOURCES

Venue-contracted or in-house AV staff are simultaneously staging several events in the facility. In the event of an emergency or equipment malfunction elsewhere in the facility, they could be called away from your meeting. An outside vendor can provide well-trained on-site technicians whose sole focus is your event and who step up the level of service because they want you to become a repeat customer.



3. AV EXPERTS

If you have many events in a given year at multiple venues, you are going to have to train an in-house AV team at each location over and over again. When you choose one audio visual provider to support all of your meetings and events, or an entire meeting series, it guarantees consistency in service and pricing. It also saves you and your team the time and effort it takes to re-negotiate pricing and re-explain the meeting flow, relieving the stress of working with a new audio visual company.



4. COST

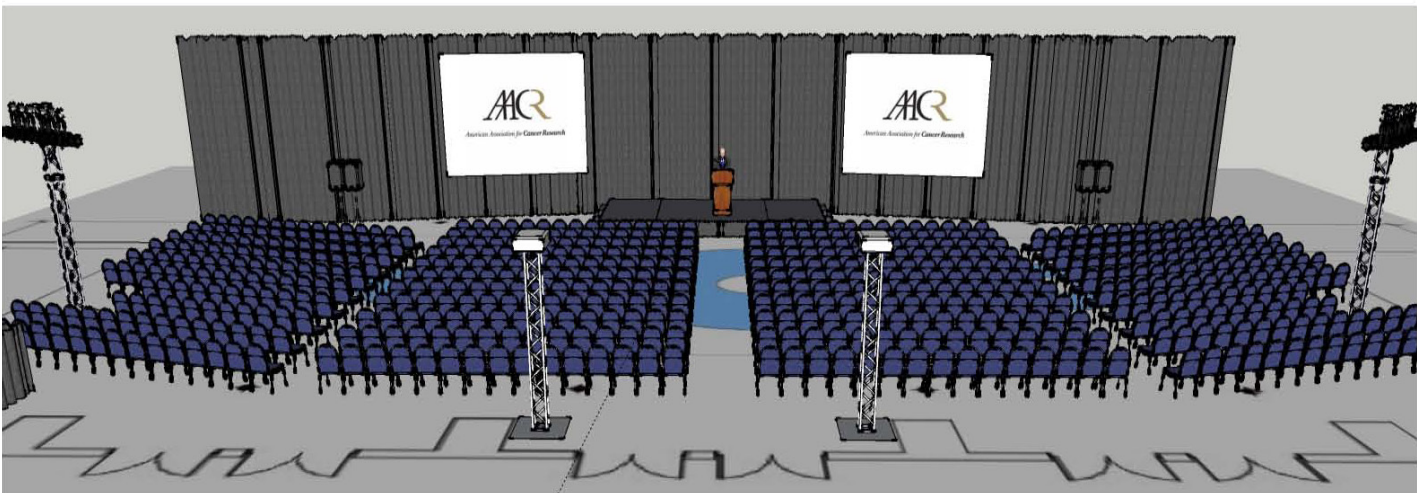
Many hotels and convention centers contract with one or more AV vendors to provide AV services to the property. In turn, these in-house vendors pay a percentage of their revenue to the venue as a commission for the business. Do not assume the in-house AV is always the more competent or affordable choice. The venue's exclusivity and lack of competition in providing AV services may lead to higher prices or less impact for your investment. There are many criteria to consider when selecting an AV supplier. You may wish to get a bid from the in-house provider, but always get a proposal from at least one off-site AV partner.

“Customers, both show organizers and exhibitors, prefer the option of choice when it comes to making service provider decisions. Exclusive in-house services also tend to add cost and over time diminish the quality of service that is rendered. For these reasons we continue to believe that free choice in the marketplace is the best assurance customers have to receive competitive pricing and appropriate standards of service.”

*-International Association of Exhibitions
and Events™ (IAEE)*

5. LABOR & BUILDING ACCESS

When working with the venue, there may be regulations that must be followed for safety and security. Some spaces may have required labor brokers or union contracts. Rigging might also be exclusive to venue-selected vendors for safety reasons, but you can still utilize an outside company for all other aspects of AV. You also should also have the right to access the meeting space for a reasonable amount of time surrounding your event. Make sure to mention timing and access during negotiations with the venue, or book the space for the day before the event starts to ensure you have enough time for set up.



6. GUARANTEE EVENT SUCCESS



Make sure you read the contract before you sign it and understand the AV policy. If you decided to use an outside vendor for audio visual or production services, you can include a buyers right clause regarding third party suppliers in your contract.

AV is a significant driver of your event's success. Bringing in an outsourced AV partner can often result in better value for your investment, a high level of service and expertise and a greater impact of AV's contribution to your event. The provider becomes an extension of your staff, enabling you to focus on your job rather than worrying about overseeing another vendor.

