

CONVENTION CENTERS OPERATED BY SMG

Responses are from the CVB/DMO CEOs of the following participating cities: Denver, El Paso, Greenville, Hampton, Irving TX, Jacksonville, Jefferson Parish, Jekyll Island, Knoxville, Long Beach, Oklahoma City, Ontario CA, Palm Springs, Pittsburgh, Providence, Salt Lake City, Sioux Falls, South Bend, Tucson, Tulsa

	Scope of Work	Is your working relationship strong?	Is there anything you would change in the agreement to improve your opportunity to book business?	Does the private operator book flat shows into convention center? If yes, does the CVB's conventions and tradeshow take precedence?	When SMG came on as the operator, were some or all of the union jobs replaced?	Do you have a copy of the SMG working agreement (assuming it's public record) you could share or direct to a place it can be retrieved?
City 1	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET SMG manages operations; CVB sells all Group A business.	It is now but was strained for a long time before they transferred their GM and the new GM got rid of their sales director. Much better now!	While the new management of the center is willing to work with us at every turn, the real problem is with the authority that owns the center. SMG must deal with them, too.	Yes, SMG books the public shows. We control their books 18 mos and out but are aware of their need for the revenue the public shows bring. For the most part, we are able to negotiate what is best for the city.	NO	Believe it or not, we don't have a normal working agreement.
City 2	SMG manages and operates both the convention center and the Bureau of Tourism, as well as two theatres. The Bureau of Tourism is also responsible for promoting the city as a leisure destination.	Our relationship is a constant struggle. The current management lacks innovation, creativity and organization.	SMG could be a more productive partner and could generate more revenue if they were committed to be more collaborative with the CVB but there is no leadership. The building is losing \$2 million on an annual basis. If we had more control of the booking cycle, the CVB would book more business. The SMG contract is up next year and the city is considering going out to bid.	The CVB does not have any booking goals for the convention center but even though the CVB has no direct responsibility they book most of the convention business in the building. The building is not a good partner and the CVB bookings do not take precedence.	The convention center is a non-union building.	No
City 3	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET SMG is responsible for flat shows; sells Group A within 9 months on lower demand space; and within 4 months on high demand space. CVB primarily sells Group A.	Very strong! This strength is based on the current GM. Our relationship with the previous GM was not that strong.	Nothing. We have made substantive changes to our booking policy, all with the support of the team at SMG. This is one area where we should talk so I can explain the scope and scale of what we have done with our booking policies. SMG has also been very supportive of our event opportunity process and I believe is now modeling this program in other destinations where there is the political will to do what we are doing. There are things I would change about the agreement relating to building operations and maintenance!	They do book flat shows but the larger groups take precedence.	We are a "right to work" state so we have no unions. We do have unions but are not required by law to use them. We clearly have electrical and labor unions that we contract with for show production, etc. but there is no requirement to do so.	No, it is not a public document as SMG is a private entity and for competitive reasons the contract is not public. That said, SMG may be able to share it with you as they are a private company and can make that decision if they want.
City 4	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET SMG manages operations and sells only Group B business; no Group A.	We have an extremely good and strong working relationship with them.	There is nothing in the agreement that we would or could improve. We work as one team on getting the best possible business into the center. Our executive team meets with their senior management team, as well as the center's event and catering managers on a bi-weekly basis to discuss incoming groups, their importance, level of service and opportunities.	Both sides strive to find a balance that is mutually beneficial.	Yes, some.	I don't have a copy but it is public record.
City 5	SMG is responsible for operating and managing the facility and food & beverage concessions. There is no collaboration between the facility and the Visitor Authority's marketing department and a second CVB.	Yes	No. Our procedures for booking business have worked well. FYI: we have a sales department within our marketing department that is co-located with the SMG convention center sales team.	Yes	No unions - before or since.	We have attached a copy of our SMG contract.

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City 6	SMG operates, manages, markets and promotes the convention center, and café at the library, as well as advertises, solicits and promotes the facility and its environs for conventions trade and consumer shows, public entertainment and tourism and provide services such as, housing, visitor guides and membership sales & services. All operating expenses are provided by the City.	The executive is the president and CEO of the CVB, convention center and arena.	SMG has a \$250,000 annual management contract with incentives but they think it should be higher. Also, the city has a 120-day out clause for non-performance.	Neither type of business gets precedent as long as the priority is generating hotel rooms and there is a room night goal in the contract.	No unions except for Police and Fire.	Will send a copy of our contract.
City 7	CVB handles all Group A business 18 months and out; SMG oversees operations.	Our working relationship is very strong. SMG manages both our existing CC in a 3-way partnership with the main hotel (CC meeting space) and our parking authority (1,000 space garage under the center), as well as our NBA area. They have recently been selected to be the sole manager of the new convention center we are getting ready to build - ground broken later this year.	In our current agreement, the hotel has control of the meeting space in the center. That scenario changes in the new center and was a very easy decision as the city would love to be able to make the change in the current building now.	Yes	We are a "right to work" state and there are very few union jobs in the industry. Not an issue.	I don't have the agreement but will ask the city's contract manager to send to you.
City 8	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET SMG oversees operations. CVB books 95% of Group A. If SMG books one by mistake, it gets turned over to the CVB.	Very strong - we love our partnership.	No issues. We have really enjoyed our relationship over the years to be beneficial to all parties.	It is important for the city/county agreements to benefit both the booking goals of SMG and the DMO. It will keep the competitive spirits in check and only helps the destination.	We do not have to deal with this issue.	I do not have a copy and am not sure it is public record.
City 9	SMG runs the convention center and the visitors center and is responsible for all staffing, hiring concessionaires, running the building, etc. They are provided with an operating budget out of the city's hotel occupancy taxes. SMG is responsible for all marketing of the convention center and negotiations of contracts for events that take place there. City has its own CVB sales staff for Group A.	SMG manages the DMO, convention center and many other venues in the city.	SMG's contract meets the needs of SMG and the city. The contract was originally signed in 1993 and has been amended 12 times to meet the changing needs and priorities.	Neither type of business gets precedent. We strive to find a balance between the needs of SMG and the city. Our performance is based on city priorities which includes overall revenue growth, hotel occupancy growth, tax generation and savings.	When SMG took over the building, city employees were given the option of retiring from the city and becoming an SMG employee, transition to another city job, or completely retire.	Will send a copy of our contract.
City 10	SMG manages, operates and maintains the convention center and parking garage facilities. The contract stipulates that SMG has the primary responsibility for marketing the convention center for Group B events occurring within a period of 18 months or less and that the CVB has the primary responsibility for marketing for Group A events occurring beyond 18 months.	We have always enjoyed a strong relationship with SMG and serve as the primary sales and marketing entity for the convention center and groups requiring hotel rooms booking 14 months and out. The contract is held by a state quasi entity so I can't comment on the relationship from an operational perspective but I get the impression that they consider the relationship to be strong.	It is not perfect but would say we have one of the best convention center/CVB relationships in the SMG network.	As with all CVB/convention center relationships, there is a constant struggle between high economic impact groups (with a significant room block) vs. high revenue groups for the convention center (lower citywide impact). We keep the lines of communication open and strive to find a balance between our mission and the convention center's need to generate revenue.	SMG has managed the convention center since it opened in 1993. Our center is entirely unionized (with the exception of sales and management) and we have very reasonable work rules that our clients are very happy with for the most part.	Will send a copy of our contract.

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City 11	<i>This is a memorandum of understanding between SMG, our CVB, the city and hotel stakeholders. The MOU stipulates that SMG will work with CVB on direct sales solicitation, site inspections and convention center bookings and will provide access to the convention center's booking calendar via a software program.</i>	We do have a good working relationship with SMG leadership - it's cordial and open.	We have an 18-month booking policy and our city has not pushed this issue because of space considerations.	Our contract requires a limitation of consumer show bookings to 18 months out but that has not been adhered to mainly because our center is not well designed and is poorly located to be attractive to conventions and major business meetings.	I was not here when SMG took over management of our convention center so I don't know the answer.	I've attached our MOU with SMG but the actual contract is with the city.
City 12	N/A	Yes	No - standard agreement.	No specific booking policy but it would be good to have a Priority Booking Policy	No	I do not have a copy although you could request it from our city manager's office.
City 13	N/A	Yes, very strong. We've had a good relationship with them.	Wish we could get some SMG intel on group business that rotates in our region - have never had any success with that.	Our convention center manager bends over backwards trying to get business so we never have a rental problem. They are also on top of service and food and do a nice job.	We are non-union.	I do not have a copy although you could request it from our city manager's office.
City 14	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET Facility management. SMG only books Group B business; CVB books Group A.	YES	NO	YES and YES	Not that I'm aware of.	I don't but assume it's public record.
City 15	TOP 50 U.S. HOTEL MARKET SMG is responsible for all staffing, managing and operations of the convention center. SMG must allow use of the convention center to the CVB and the CVB must have access to SMG's operating systems.	Our relationship is exceptional. Our sales and services staff for both SMG and CVB are officed in the same general area. The CVB handles all of the marketing, public relations, social media, website, collateral, etc. so there is no duplication of effort on anything and we have complete quality control.	No, we have a fairly unique situation since the CVB is the contract administrator. SMG's performance measures include revenue goals, subsidy goals, customer service achievements, community engagement, facility care & maintenance, and the holy grail - room nights. On the latter, decisions are made about how many room nights the center generates, NOT about who gets the credit. Any room night opportunities get turned over to the CVB to facilitate, regardless of where the booking window falls.	The team in place is extraordinary; there is almost effortless synergy between SMG and our CVB team as everyone works together for the customers' benefit. Note: SMG's F&B division (Savor) has the center's F&B contract as well. We are thrilled with their quality and caliber of food service; customers rave about it and we've booked a lot of repeat business because of it.	There are no pre-existing jobs, nor a facility previously. We re-started the project and moved through the process of selecting a management company, we hired the architect and contractor so they were involved and informed every step of the way, could weigh in on operational issues and impacts of various designs and systems - a monstrous help.	We have attached a copy of our SMG contract which was just renewed in 2015 for a series of three 5-year renewals - slightly ahead of schedule so it could be locked in. Note: At the time, there were some random politic talks that may have made the contract vulnerable to having another entity, not nearly as well qualified, selected in exchange for another project but thankfully that did not happen.

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City 16	SMG promotes, operates and manages the convention center. Operating expenses are paid by the city. Responsibilities of CVB include marketing and convention sales, tourism development, and sports tourism.	Yes, I feel we have a strong working relationship with SMG's GM of the convention center and his team. Prior to SMG's arrival, the city managed the facility. The city operated it poorly with substandard customer service and little to no investment in the building's infrastructure. SMG now provides very strong customer service in the building, while the facility maintenance and food-and-beverage operation is much better than when the city operated it.	SMG is hamstrung by CC's small size—205,000 sq. ft., which includes exhibition and meeting space, ballroom, an arena, two proximate music venues, and pre-function space. Additionally, the exhibition and meeting space are in dire need of renovation. However, the arena recently went through a \$10 million renovation and provides an outstanding setting for hockey, concerts and other events. The biggest problem faced by SMG and the CVB regarding booking business into the facility is that we have no hotel rooms that are within walking distance of CC. The only technical "convention" business we book into the CC annually is seven CCJW conventions each summer and they use only the arena, along with a few meeting rooms. Otherwise, the building functions as a community center hosting auto and home shows and local events. We need at least one headquarters convention hotel to be constructed next to the CC, along with major renovation and expansion of the CC's exhibition and meeting space for it to become viable for conventions. Meanwhile, SMG is doing a good job of filling the CC with local business. There is nothing I would change in their agreement.	As noted for question #2, the great majority of our business is local. Because CCJW conventions generate room nights, they do have priority on arena dates.	Historically, all convention center employees were non-unionized city employees. It's my understanding that SMG's convention center staff includes a combination of private-sector SMG employees, along with some non-union city employees.	We have obtained the SMG contract from the city.
City 17	N/A	Our relationships has improved greatly over the years and I would consider it strong today. We are a young CVB and SMG was in place prior to our organization. It took some time to help SMG understand that the CVB is here to be a partner.	See Question #3.	We have encountered challenges with groups that have what we consider significant room nights that generate increased economic impact to the city being turned away over a consumer show. My goal is to come to a place where SMG and the CVB determine together which groups maximize the city's economy. We have made significant progress toward this goal over the last few years.	SMG was in place when the CVB was created.	I believe the current agreement is improved over previous agreements in that the city has placed more accountability on SMG and limited city subsidy. I will send you a link to the city's website to retrieve a copy.
City 18	Provide management services of the convention center including promotion, operation and management of the facilities. SMG works with CVB and the local hospitality industry to promote and market each facility for conventions, trade shows and public entertainment shows.	SMG is a great partner and we work together on a daily basis - they are invested in making things happen. The GM sits on our Tourism Board and we meet on a regular basis.	The 18-month booking policy is one that I would like to see strengthened.	SMG does book flat shows and as mentioned, I would like to see the 18-month booking window strengthened.	The previous operator was the city and they were civil servants so SMG has improved the efficiency as the city now has more revenue from the operation of both the convention center and arena.	I do not have a copy but will check on what I can obtain.

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City 19	SMG manages the facility and books Group B business; CVB books Group A.	Our relationship with SMG is good but takes effort on both sides, as well as the headquarters hotel that is located adjacent to the center. We try to maintain communication through team building opportunities and regular meetings. For the most part, mutual respect exists between SMG and the CVB teams. The CVB handles all marketing and advertising for the center. We also encourage SMG to weigh in on decisions the CVB makes that they feel positive about.	We would change our booking policy to a closer window for the CVB. The policy states that the CVB is charged with booking all Priority 1 (meeting conventions booking 1,000 or more room nights at any time) and Priority 2 (business producing 300-999 room nights 18 months out or more). We'd like to see the 18-month window reduced to 12 or 15 months. The Priority 3 business (Embassy Suites) is able to book 100-299 room nights using the center's exhibit space for multiple days with 18 months. SMG is able to book Priority 4 events (100 or fewer hotel room nights) using the center's exhibit space for a single or multiple days. Priority 5 events are those that use only meeting or event space in the center. The center's management books all Priority 5 events.	Although our contract gives us priority on convention bookings, our greatest challenge comes from SMG's desire to hold space for annual flat shows. The same challenge exists with the hotels efforts to push the limits of the booking policy. These become barriers when our sales team is looking for open dates for conventions. We sometimes feel we are fighting for space with the decision ultimately resting on revenue generation for the city.	We do not have a union presence in our city. The city owned and operated the convention center prior to its contracting with SMG. City employees were given the option to apply for a job with SMG or to apply for other city positions. Many stayed on at the center with SMG.	I do not have a copy of the most recent contract but can inquire if it's available to share.
City 20	CVB books the "majority" of conventions; SMG manages operations.	I can't say enough about SMG. We have a very close working relationship and in fact, initiated monthly alliance meetings soon after they took over which brought our organization, the center, our downtown organization, performing arts center, hotels, etc. together to ensure messaging and efforts stay consistent. We also attend a few tradeshow together throughout the year.	In general, we couldn't be happier with SMG and their management of our convention center. Great company, great executive team and very good communication.	Yes	As far as I'm aware, none of the staff is union but the staff was still retained to the best of their ability. SMG retained most of the staff upon taking over. The only exception was in catering, which they assumed management from a secondary company. This proved to be an essential component of the bid process. Prior to SMG, our center was managed by Global Spectrum and the catering was managed by Centerplate. Needless to say, this was not a good model. SMG manages the entire operation and it's been a huge improvement.	I don't have a copy of the working agreement. SMG has a working agreement with the city and we are directly affiliated with the Chamber so we're fairly separate but collaborate wherever and whenever possible.