



# International Caterers Association

International Caterers Association - 3601 East Joppa Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21234 - (410) 931-8100



## Peer to Peer Learning – ICA Roundtable

### *Dealing with a large planning Committee*

Timothy Richard – June 22, 2015

**Q: Here is a situation I run into all the time. Would love to hear your thoughts.... How do you navigate working with a client who is part of larger planning committee? What do you when you can't get in front of the decision maker?**

**A: Margot Jones-** My first instinct is to run!!! I suppose that really listening and asking a lot of questions so you have the best proposal is a good start. You also have to know when to decline the opportunity if you feel like you're just being used to get several proposals.

**Fausto Pifferrer-** So true Margot

**Cheryl Phillips Raiken-** Ask who is the decision maker. Then tell them you will only work with one person who will be the one to authorize things.

**Enjolik R Oree-Bailey-** I would just ask to present to the decision maker (in addition to the information gatherer) so they don't feel slighted.

**John Serock-** I always ask who the decision maker is and what the timeline is for making a decision. I also make sure I write a proposal that leaves NO questions unanswered. I met with a group this morning who I had sent a proposal to 4 months ago for an event they were supposed to have in May that they moved to October. The first thing they told me when I walked into the meeting, which I thought was an interview to try and get the event was that when they got done going thru my proposal I had answered every question they had come up with from looking at the other caterers proposals and they were hiring us because of that. If you are getting put in a pile with 5 or 6 other proposals, you only have 1 shot to stand out. Tell the story of how the entire event will unfold from what time your staff will arrive to what they will wear to what time clean up will conclude.

**Timothy Richard-** Love the idea of a detailed timeline John Serock!

**Calvin Coleman-** I love all these answers. Obviously you have never had to work with a group of Southern Ladies putting together a shower, a tea or a fundraiser. No ONE person is in charge, they ALL

have an opinion and a say and you can try all the professional wrangling and verbiage you like, but in the end it's gonna be like herding cats. You do the best you can and accept the fact that someone isn't going to like it. ☺. Me? I shoot to please the ones in the group that are actually my regular clients. LOL.

**Timothy Richard-** If I feel it is a good lead, I will "volunteer" to sit on their committee as an event planning specialist.

**Julie Ann Knott-** Lol! Calvin Coleman! So true!

**Jeremy Nguue-** From my own experience, I realise it comes down a lot to how much clout you have with them. Chances are if you have a strong reputation and are well known with the team for outstanding work, they'll trust you with many of the decisions and make less revisions. Good luck!

**Cory Gosik-** Always a tough situation. After the first obvious questions I always ask for a timeline when a decision is going to be made. I also just am straightforward and ask how many proposals they are seeking. Usually based on their answer to that question you can gauge what type of planning committee this is and how serious they are. But I agree with Margot Jones, run! hahah