

USNA Alumni Association San Diego – Dark Ages Black Tie Event
Lessons Learned / Feedback / Frequency

The Chapter signature Black Tie event this year has received great reviews. Going forward, we are looking for your input. Listed below are a number of comments and suggestions. We hope that you will add yours and email the results back to Bryce Whiting (brycewhiting@hotmail.com). This is an interactive form that you can complete on-line and email without printing.

1. Typical comments received:

- “It was first class all the way. I have spoken to several SD alums who don't normally attend our events and they too were delighted. This event hit a niche we had been neglecting and hit a home run. Well done.”
- “My wife and I attended and we enjoyed ourselves immensely. Don't know what glitches occurred behind the scenes, but none were evident from where I stood. Yes, it would have been nice to have more sponsors but that's a tough nut to crack...especially in this economic climate. Thanks to you and other members of the committee for pulling off a first rate inaugural event. The Dark Ages have never been brighter!”
- “I think it went very well and was certainly well attended for the first time start. Thanks to everyone for a terrific collective effort.”
- “From the very first Black Tie Team meeting to the singing of Navy Blue and Gold at 10:55 on Saturday night, this has been an amazing tour de force. All of your efforts paid off on Saturday night as the evenings events came off virtually without a hitch. I've been involved in a lot of projects and few if any have ever gone so well and so smoothly. Bryce's ability to “herd cats” is unsurpassed and when you combine that with Barbettes ability to manage the last minute details, Gilda's decorations, Diana's invitations, Mike's updates, and the entire team's efforts on all the myriad minutiae it is an absolutely amazing accomplishment. I said it many times to many people throughout the evening that I did very little and the accolades really belong to all of you on the Black Tie Team. I cannot thank all of you enough.”

Your comments/suggestions:

PRE-EVENT

- The 'save the date' business cards were great, but need to include a website or POC for more info.
- We need to decide menu and a means for collecting RSVP information before we ask for RSVPs - we missed a lot of guest names and several meal selections.
- Establish an RSVP close date sooner.
- Book speaker earlier if at all possible.
- Post information on the web ASAP and update accordingly.
- Hyatt – Sold out of discounted rooms. Ensure in writing or no limit.
- I would revamp the sponsorship plan and just try to get as many \$500 to \$1000 donations that we could get from the 501C3 non profit angle that we could get, unless we have a nationally recognized speaker who might be a draw, then we are just going to get charity in this fiscal environment for the next year or two. It may pick up after that, but not for next year.
- Recommend having a larger sponsorship team.
- Invite someone from Academy/Alumni Association early.
- Improve communication around parking/discounted Rate. Some people did NOT get the rate. Pay at the check-out and not on parking.
- Try to get more buy-in and participation from the Parent's Club.

Your comments/suggestions:

EVENT

- D&B (bugles and drums) weren't the best dinner music. Tough for people to talk.
- Recommend larger signs on the tables.
- Recommend having someone with the 'map' to the table assignments inside the dining room when the doors open.
- Actually have someone do the chow calls.
- Different Room Layout – Dance Floor broke up the group
- 10 FT Screen was great.
- BAND: tough to play to all the ages. Need younger sound to the band - to slow. Need more excitement. Consider at DJ.
- Decorations: less was better – minimal set-up was fine. Minimal costs were great.
- Check-in tables – two tables (one for checking in and one for name tags)
- 2-3 Greeters were great. Definitely recommend doing again.
- Would be nice to have some presence (people, video clip...) from the Academy/Alumni Association
- Venue was perfect. Food was good.
- Speaker – Positive and Negative Feedback. Maybe someone everyone could relate to. Local Speaker might drive local interest. More entertainment than info.
- Open Bar was very well received and frequented...

Your comments/suggestions:

3. Feedback on frequency...

- Think every other year would be a good format and we did want to get the family picnic going. But those are two entirely different demographics. Young couples with kids aren't going to pop \$200 for a formal dinner. I'm not sure, but I don't expect those who attended this event would be interested in a family picnic at Admiral Baker or beach BBQ party at PB. So within the limits of our planning resources, we could do both in the same year. That's really the Chapter Officer's call as to how big a bite they want to take on. Alternating years sounds right to me. This Chapter doesn't turn out for more than 1-2 events/yr.
- I believe every other year for the Black Tie will suffice and on other years plan a more informal event. Ideas include: Family picnic, Padres Ball game including meeting in one of the Padres community areas., group wine tasting by bus to a local winery, day on the bay on Hornblower, etc.
- If we do not do something every year, we will lose any momentum built from the previous year.
- Recommend alternating themes to keep it fresh. Propose doing a "Casino Night".

Your comments/suggestions: