

About: *Achieving Objectives in Meetings*

("Achieving Objectives in Meetings" ("AOM") was the nation's (world's?) first book with a system for controlling the development of business meeting agendas and programming. All previous books had been discursive, with advice to perform certain functions but without providing how-to materials or instructions.

In addition, a number of multi-author books were published and proved popular. However, although the advice given by each author could be excellent, individual articles did not necessarily comport with its neighbors; and, if taken together, they did not deliver a workable system. So it was cut-and-paste all selected materials into a possibly-deficient personal style of approach. Assisted chaos?

In contrast, the how-to materials of "AOM" were those developed by the author while a co-originator of the first consulting service for the business-stage--at United Attractions, Chicago, in 1960. United was then the producer of banquet entertainment for major national business associations, two of which requested business-stage service. At that time, business-stage service was not available from producers except as an adjunct to a dog-and-pony show . . . not wanted by the associations. United's advice: Use simple visual material as learning aids in the convention address. Soon, other associations responded, as did some corporate members who viewed the presentations: Professionalizing of the business meetings field had just begun!

Again: "AOM" deliver a system, together with the word's first PERT Diagram that visualized the control of various (committee?) functions. These function lines relate to the "Coordination and Control" material in Section IV. With a PERT Diagram properly employed, forgetfulness or duplicate efforts disappear. However, a meetings industry freebie magazine then printed a paper-flow chart (how an envelope travels from office receipt to recipient) and called it a PERT Diagram—as if any complicated chart will do. No complaints from the meetings industry 'authorities' in a trade which was slow in becoming professionalized.

Until 1960, visuals in business meetings were considered to be extraneous. Acceptance and growth of the biz-stage concept grew in association meetings (and then their corporate clients) until 1964. At the NYC World's Fair of 1964, Kodak stunned the Fair with its Spectacular! hemispheric, overhead screen. Instantly, insecure business-meeting callers demanded 'Spectacular!' as the salvation of their own meetings. Emphasis shifted from meetings content to presentation techniques. Kodak was selling film; most business executives and their companies are not.

Worse, in the same Fair year, Marshall McLuhan's mantra ("The medium is the message") cemented the defective practices, and the purveyors to the new 'Spectaculars' industry acted and benefited: the majority of purveyors took over all meetings-associations' voting system (decades to morph fully) before the advent of the web—when magazine editors still controlled access to print. Meetings Content lost the competition for space and articles. Attention went toward production and presentation style. McLuhan's mantra was discredited, but the mantra is still used by purveyors to meetings to sell 'stuff'.

Update: The importance of intelligent content to employee communications and also the irrelevance of 'Spectacular!' were proved to every company that already produced such major (usually sales staff) showy programs at high cost in huge venues . . . in order to be 'current'. Change vehicle: COVID-19!

COVID forced most major-show user-companies to cancel their national meetings. Then remote-work forced the use of simple communications like phone calls and e-mail. Surprise! Company employees

could understand and work with clear statements of issue, assignment, and expectations! Productivity remained at about the same productivity levels . . . some, a little lower and some, a little higher. But companies survived . . . while saving huge amounts of money and production problems. New issue: Were those companies prepared to enhance their delivery methods for program objectives/messages?

Brief calendar: Following the end of WWII, central bashes (called 'executive conferences') for previously-stressed executives became the business norm. Such conventions stressed relaxation and fun-and-games. When the IRS began to demand evidence of business purpose for deductions, the conventions were expanded—most often into national sales meetings. Executives can benefit from meeting their peers; national sales forces cannot.

Current problem: Despite having seen that better results are obtained in meetings and training programs with smaller groups in regional and/or local settings, many large companies have not yet digested the meanings of their own COVID experience: Concentrate on their own purposes and objective, each time! Therefore, the temptation to return to business-as-usual is being nursed by special travel and hotel deals by the purveyors who have the most to lose by any corporate return to sanity when it's delivered by response to the needs of the individual meeting-callers and their messages and directives . . . not to the hyped 'need' for 'Spectacular!' components and their attendant high costs.

So, the meetings *field*, while undeveloped, became today's commercialized meetings *industry*. Distinguish between the field (company meetings coordinators/planners; university researchers; needed suppliers) and the industry (purveyors that dominate votes and direction to company-users). During half a century, there's been no un-biased, independent research done or sponsored, nor is there any acknowledgement of university research with contrary findings.

Solution: Companies, address your real meetings needs for grounded/factual format, intelligently presented, together with a logical assignment for each participant . . . Forget your purveyor-taught second-hand wants.

Helper: "AOM" or its expanded update cousin, ten years later: Dow Jones-Irwin's "Sales Meetings That Work." Same how to materials-reused, plus an updated PERT /Diagram, slightly enhanced by reader/user comments.

Finally: How was "AOM" accepted? At a NY convention of meetings planners on publication (1973), "AOM's" meetings-field publisher distributed the enclosed dice game with a pair of mini-dice . . . and challenged all attendees to play the Meetings Game . . . and to succeed by a roll-of-the-dice (tiny pair attached in plastic bag to each game sheet), if they could. Most did not, but they learned the lesson: You can plan your program well—but unforeseeable things often happen. Planning is essential, BUT: Cavalier's warning: "You can plan for sun at a picnic without affecting the weather." Needed: a Plan B for every essential/non-repeatable segment—to avoid overall disasters.

Like the game? The year noted in the center was current on introduction. But it's not related to the sum of the spiral returns or any other gimmick. The year '73 was the number of boxes—fifty more years will not be added; so consider the process for the time when playing the game.

"AOM" was created by an author who helped to create the biz-stage function that set the parameters for all subsequent professionalizing efforts. Industry problem: Purveyor voting control and viewpoints. The business-needs viewpoint that has been presented as a rational approach has not survived the profit motive of the purveyors. When purveyors control the votes in a user-company association, might there

be built-in conflicts of interest? If so, how does your company protect itself? Learn from “AOM”! Is the book flawless? No. Two complaints: a) An industry magazine criticized the “turgid prose” of the book, as exemplified by an obvious error during paste-up of the manuscript (long prior to the web). No industry publisher wanted the book. So its meetings-company publisher, Corporate Movement, used typewritten pages and a letter press. Unfortunately, an unnoticed new thought was covered, leading to an obvious glitch with sentence that didn’t comport over a half-empty line, followed by a line that started, without capital letter, in mid-sentence. Seek a flaw?

The books were already printed, but a rubber stamp added the missing sentence’s starting words—before first shipment. New perfection? b) the book does not have a traditional index because the same terms appear so often in so many different contexts that a string of page numbers is worthless and time-consuming. Traditional indexes search ‘words’; this Author correlated concepts and ideas in sections. If you knew what you wanted to find, you can find the topic easily.

Useful? Books were shipped on order with invoice following. Several of the purchasers had left their companies before the invoices were received—all had taken “AOM” with them.

Starters and best professional helps are indicated in the book-cover banner above. The blue-cover “SMTW” book is an identical reprint of the original DJ-I book—itsself now out of print—no click. Yet, because “Sales Meetings That Work” was an updated cousin of “AAD” and re-used its system and forms, it was also pre-proved in action. Only the PERT Diagram was slightly enhanced, via user comments. A half century later, intelligent communication still works! Reason and facts apparently couldn’t convince the meetings industry. Tough times can: Thanks to COVID-19?

END



who
says
meeting
planning
is
a game?

Anybody who thinks he can create a perfect meeting by chance!

If you know meeting planning, you've realized that the likelihood of succeeding by chance is slim. The better way, obviously, is to take the first, right step.

Coordination is a precise and indispensable part of success. And Meeting success is a matter first of knowing what needs to be done. . . then of knowing how to do it. . . then of measuring results to validate the success. . . and building this feedback into plans for the next meeting.

Meeting success is a gamble if any one of these steps is omitted.

If you take the first step outlined — defining purpose — all else follows.

Corporate Movement understands that secret. We help you to think, to weigh alternatives and select, and to implement the selections.

Only Corporate Movement can offer a comprehensive meeting service. . . because we understand you and your needs. We can coordinate details in your name. . . freeing you for the sensitive tasks and decisions which must be yours.

Our viewpoint is different. . . We want the coordination and program development responsibilities and all that it implies. We offer the services by which to create successful meetings everytime:

- Consultation

- Coordination and production of

 - † Message

 - † Media

 - † Transportation

 - † Facilities

- Post-meeting analysis

Our Personal Involvement in your plans and objectives — is the critical difference whatever our specific assignment. Request all or any of the services you need, as a comprehensive package or as single component.

Need proof? Take a chance: Roll a pair of dice against prospects for a successful meeting. The game is in the center fold of this brochure.

Play it now.

Then try it our way.

perfect meeting in

'73
Congratulations.

Go to lunch with suppliers.
19
Advance to 54.

Sign contracts with producer for multi-media show.
20
Advance to 23.

Sign contracts with facility.
21
Advance 2 spaces.

Sign contracts with airlines.
22
Advance to 23.

We're getting there.
23

Inspect several facilities for first time.
24
If moving from 18 Advance to 29.
If not throw again.

Call committee meeting.
25
Switch assignments.
Go back 2 spaces.

Round up available speakers.
26
Popularity counts.
Advance 2 spaces.

Call committee meeting.
27
Vote on speakers.
Advance 1 space.

Gonna be a fun meeting
28

Establish preliminary agenda. If moving from 13
18
Advance to 24.
If not move back 1.

Good happy committee
17

Call second committee meeting.
16
Vote assignments.
Advance 1 space.

Call first committee meeting of volunteers.
15
Talk generalities.
Advance to 17.

Secretary gets engaged, loses files.
14
Go back 7 spaces

Establish preliminary budget.
13
Advance to 18.

Fill out a lot of forms and checklists.
12
Look busy.

Sam's brother-in-law can get it wholesale.
11
Advance to 54.

Phone hotels/halls for quotes. Verbal agreement
10
on free services.
Advance to 54.

Phone airlines for quotes.
9
Consider ski package at discount.
Advance 2 spaces.

Phone producers for quotes.
8
Win free advice.
Advance to 54.

Everything checks out.
7

Take names of volunteers who want to help.
6
Advance 6 spaces

Clear prior decisions with top management.
5
Advance to 12

Establish the audience profile.
4
Advance to 12

Name coordinator for meeting.
3
Advance to 17

Establish the message profile.
2
Advance to 12

Decide purpose of the meeting.
1
Document it.
Advance to 13

LET'S HAVE A MEETING
START HERE

Hire local help.
55
Advance 2 spaces.

Airline rep. transferred.
56
Return to 22.

All downhill from here.
57

Plan workshops. Produce materials.
58
Advance to 61.

U.S. dollar devalued.
59
Panic.
Go back to 33.

On a par with last year at this time.
60

Outline specific message and post-meeting assignments.
29
Advance to 39

Ask speakers what they want to talk about.
30
Advance 1 space.

Make slides for speakers with ready scripts.
31
Advance to 38.

Start building exhibits.
32
Advance 6 spaces.

Draw up firm budget based on estimates.
33
Advance to 38.

Airlines schedule changes.
34
Go back to 22.

Engineering department announces product change.
35
Go back to 30.

Stop work on slides. Kiss budget goodbye.
36
Change scripts.
Go back to 30.

Facility remodels main hall.
37
Go back to 21.

It's falling into place.
38

Nothing for nothing silly.
54
Return to Start.

Call full committee meeting to confirm schedules and accomplishments to date.
53
Advance to 58.

There must be a better way.
52

Stage spectacular over budget.
51
Go back to 33.

Hotel sales manager resigns.
50
Go back to 21.

Take production quotes on message support materials.
49
Contract for one.
Advance to 53.

First 100 years are the toughest.
48

Name qualified speakers to program.
47
Advance to 49.

Engineering department wins delay argument.
46
Go back to Start.

Announce meeting and agenda.
45
Advance 2 spaces.

Let's get our bearings.
44

Prepare mailers for announcement.
43
Go back 2 spaces.

Determine specific message and follow-through.
42
If moving from 39 Advance to 45.
Otherwise back 1.

Next year we've got to get organized.
41

Engineering department wants to delay meeting.
40
Argue.
Wait one minute

Call committee meeting. Specify assignments.
39
Advance to 42.

Plan wives' programs, entertainment, free-time events.
61
Advance to 64.

Speaker dispute over idea ownership.
62
Arbitrate.
Go back to 30.

Checklists inadequate.
63
Return to 15.

Call full committee control meeting.
64
Check all details.
Advance to 68.

Local suppliers short on equipment.
65
Scramble.

New Committee meeting. Who's in charge?
66
Advance 1 space.

Production costs under budget.
68
Cheers.
Advance 2 spaces.

They told me it would be a snap.
67

Gentlemen: You've made a rather interesting claim. We would like to know more about your services. Please, call us for an appointment.

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Participants arrive for a

☐ Business Meetings ☐ Convention ☐ Incentive Program