

Case Study

DCoE Contracts with Experient for Full Life-cycle Conference Management to Improve Processes and Cost Control

About Experient

Experient leads the industry as one of the best-known and most respected brands in the event management world. Its core services include providing registration, housing, event planning and management, site sourcing/contract negotiation, and lead retrieval services for association, corporate and government clients. Experient employs professionals dedicated to fulfilling its vision of perfecting the event experience to deliver leading-edge thinking, experience and technology solutions for meetings, conventions and tradeshows around the world.

Background

Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) assesses, validates, oversees and facilitates programs for psychological health and traumatic brain injury to ensure the Department of Defense (DoD) meets the needs of the nation's military communities, warriors and families. DCoE is under the TRICARE health care program for those entitled to DoD medical care, which is managed by the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA), a field activity of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

TMA has set up a network of 20 main contractors to provide services to organizations under its management. Capgemini Government Solutions, formed to offer U.S. Government agencies deep transformation, consulting and IT expertise, is one of the contractors that implements programs, transforms their organizations and solves some of their toughest issues.

Challenge

DCoE organizes 20 to 25 meetings per year, ranging in size from 50 persons all the way to approximately 800 for the DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference. In setting up these meetings, DCoE had faced three challenges:

1. Short lead times and the resulting lack of planning
2. Ineffective cost control, leading to variances as high as 20% from budget
3. No in-house dedicated meeting planners

The breadth of players and multiple agencies makes coordination of activity and budgetary tracking issues difficult to monitor and consolidate.

Solution

DCoE and their contractor Capgemini turned to Experient to provide full life-cycle conference management, including planning and implementation services, for the DCoE Directorates and Centers.

Experient started out managing two meetings, then, based on performance and history with TMA and a competitive bidding process, won the contract to manage the remaining events and conferences.

Experient now provides full life-cycle meeting management, acting as in-house planning contractors, attending all planning meetings and handling all related budgets. In the process, Experient not only liaises with DCoE and TMA, but also achieves accuracy and saves staff time by expertly interfacing with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the National Institute of Health (NIH), the United States Public Health Service (PHS), and all branches of the United States Armed Forces to plan and manage DCoE conferences.

Results

Using proven experience and expertise based on more than 35 years of successfully planning and executing events of all types and sizes, Experient brings creativity, flexibility, outstanding attention to detail and risk management to all DCoE meetings.

The benefits to DCoE of contracting with Experient are many and include:

- Accountability for established budget, the budget process and conference policy.
- Created a conference requisition process to facilitate acceptance and implementation.
- Adherence to the TMA conference expense policy was greatly improved.
- Realistic timelines were developed: Increased awareness among personnel regarding a proper planning horizon for major conferences, increasing it to six months from three months.
- Increased the number of cost-efficient options for conference sites based on the extensive Experient database of public and proprietary information combined with the purchasing power resulting from sourcing more than 2,000 events per year.
- Decreased variances from 20% to less than 5% from budget with streamlined cost controls



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