

Case Study

Experient Assists RWA in Relocation Within 48 Hours After Flooding Shuts Down City

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 tradeshow around the world.

Background

Romance Writers of America (RWA) is a Houston-based, non-profit trade association dedicated to advancing the professional interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy.

The association represents more than 10,000 members in 145 chapters offering local or special-interest networking and education.

Each year, RWA hosts an annual conference for authors to network with industry professionals and fellow writers, and give editors and literary agents an opportunity to find new talent. The conference offers 2,000 attendees more than 100 workshops with topics ranging from beginning writing skills to the business side of writing.

Challenge

RWA was scheduled to host their 30th annual conference in Nashville at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center on July 27. Torrential storms in the Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi areas dumped a record 13½ inches of rain on the region, causing the Cumberland River to crest above flood stage and spill into the city of Nashville on May 3.

With Opryland's indoor atriums slowly draining from 10 feet of water and the venue closed for the next 90 days, RWA needed to find a new location for its conference fast. And once all the other groups received notice of cancellation from Gaylord, there was a fury to book rooms elsewhere—leaving RWA less option to find a facility able to offer sufficient meeting space and sleeping rooms.

Solution

The Experient account representative for RWA immediately began the search for a facility suitable for RWA's event. The initial thought was to try to keep the location drivable to minimize changes to travel plans, but a review of the event registration list showed that attendees were coming from all areas. Many of these attendees were also bringing families. This helped the Experient account representative narrow down her search, and she contacted the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando.

Results

On the morning of May 5, Experient had a proposal from the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin. By afternoon that same day, there was a signed contract in hand.

Because Experient has great relationships with the national sales managers as well as standard contracts already in place for hotel chains, the deal with the Swan and Dolphin was done effectively and efficiently. RWA had a fantastic turnout despite having to move attendees, exhibitors and suppliers at the last minute, and the staff at RWA was pleased with the way Experient handled the challenge.



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“The deal we got would not have been possible without our relationship with Experient.”

Allison Kelley, CAE, executive director, RWA