

July 19-21, 2018 — Evanston, Illinois
Critique or Exchange?

Inviting someone from another multi-district PETS event to visit your event is of great value! Newer events can learn from veterans, smaller events can learn from larger ones and vice versa.

1. Consider whether your event's planning committee wants an in-depth critique of your event or a simple exchange to facilitate the sharing of ideas. In fact, each direction of the visit could be for a different purpose: one critique and one exchange.
2. Determine if they are interested in visiting your event and having you visit their event.
3. Be clear as to the intention of each visit among all planning committee members — not just the two members visiting each other's event.
4. Take care of your guest. Arrange for their lodging and communicate clearly anything they need to know from the weather to the dress code. Send them advanced materials — especially agenda details. Inquire as to their needs such as dietary restrictions. Know their travel itinerary and be sure that they are welcomed and properly introduced upon arrival. Include them in your meetings while on-site. Be sure to take care of them during all fellowship functions and meals — dine with them. Share with them.
5. When it's over, everyone needs to have enjoyed the visit (good will and better friendships).

Costs

Most of these are funded as follows: The visitor provides their own transportation and the receiving event covers everything else. This arrangement is reciprocal.

A PETS steering committee should consider budgeting for either the Critique or the Exchange. Either way, an additional room will be required for your visitor as will food and space during your banquets. Space constraints tend to be a very big concern for several PETS and before you invite someone from another PETS, make certain you can host your guest. Additionally, if you agree to conduct a full Critique, plan to provide your guest with everything you will be giving your Presidents-Elect (and Nominees and Assistant Governors if your PETS conducts these additional training seminars). Sometimes our materials deserve a fresh look, too.

General

Discuss in advance if you want to assign a steering committee member to assist your visitor. There are times when information can readily be exchanged during the visit and other times when total unaccompanied immersion into the PETS works best. Lastly, let your training staff know you are hosting another PETS visitor. The visitor should be treated as would be any other staff member. No special recognition is necessary or desired as one moves from one training session into another.

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Critique

This meeting attracts leaders from each of our multi-district PETS. Some of us are newer to our respective events and some are veterans. Each of us possesses different skill sets as to event management, organizing, technology, or training. Seek out the person who has the skills that you believe will provide the most benefit your event.

The objective of a critique is a candid report of findings and potential recommendations that might be of interest to the event's planning committee. The result is about sharing ideas that can lead to the improvement of our events, not grading each other's success. We can all improve. Unless you are confident that your event is already perfect, invite someone to come to your event with the specific purpose of offering a candid, objective review.

Select someone who you perceive as having a thorough knowledge of as many program areas as possible. Is their personality important to you? Do you believe that they will "hit it off" with your team? Do you trust their perspective? Be crystal clear as to the scope of the visit and the expectations of each visitor and each respective planning committee. The entire receiving team needs to embrace the visitor's purpose and presence.

When preparing comments from the Critique visit, be mindful of your audience. The intent of the visit is to learn, not tear down. As the Alliance was established to benefit all by sharing of ideas, a Critique should be a candid document meant to thoroughly examine all aspects of the PETS' operation and to provide the host PETS' steering committee with a useful document. It should be considered more appropriate to provide constructive observations as opposed to suggestions for improvement. All PETS have the same mission; provide the best training *from the available resources* for each of our Presidents-Elect. The Critique should be considerate of those resources available to the host PETS. Take careful notes during your visit. Be ready to provide some initial comments immediately following the completion of the PETS, if requested. Upon returning to your home, organize your thoughts and prepare a draft document. Contact your PETS host to dialog about your draft document prior to issuing the final Critique to the respective PETS steering committee.

Exchange

A super opportunity to visit another event and see what you can glean that might be useful for your event. If you want to go visit another event but don't necessarily require a reciprocal visit, the same suggestions apply. It's just that you are asking if you can visit an event versus being solicited to provide a critique. Your primary objective in this visit is to take new ideas back to your event.

Note: This outline is intended to be a dynamic reference. Please contact us to share your questions, experiences, or suggestions. Authors: steve.denning@carolinaspets.org, ken@gkmorgan.com and ericgrubb77@gmail.com