



Small Market Meetings
Tuesday, September 13, 2016

FIRST YEAR OF SPECTRA BRAND SUCCESSFUL

One year ago, sports and entertainment giant Comcast Spectacor blended three of its divisions into a new, more efficient brand called Spectra. The unit includes three new sectors identified as venue management, food services and hospitality, and ticketing and fan engagement. The company segued from being merely a “house of brands” to a “branded house,” according to company executives.

Spectra hosts and provides complete entertainment management for more than 750 clients and hundreds of properties large and small all around the world, most of them in the United States. The first year of Spectra operations has been a proven success for those who run those properties and for their satisfied customers.

“It has worked wonderfully for us,” said Karen Totaro, general manager of the Atlantic City Convention Center. “We have smoothly incorporated both our food service and our venue management into one tight unit. It has helped our clients get a better feel for what we can do for them.”

Totaro and other venue managers rave about how many companywide resources they have at their disposal. Information sharing is a prime example. Totaro and her staff never hesitate to reach out to a company colleague if they experience a success story. An example of that might be when a show is working well in several cities and could potentially go over big in several additional cities as well. “That way we are already ahead of the game even before a client walks in the door,” said Totaro. “We begin to see what is important to them and what their hot buttons are.”

Big and Small

Spectra may be big and far-flung, but one executive thinks it still manages to operate like a much smaller company. Shura Garnett is division vice president for Spectra Venue Management, and Food Services and Hospitality.

“Even though we are large in the number of venues we manage, we think our greatest wheelhouse is in the many midsized venues within our family,” said Garnett. “We grew our company by using a grass-roots approach. The basic fundamentals we use in running meetings, for example, have not changed. We have not veered much from that model or mind-set. Even though we are owned by a large corporation, we still stick to the basics for managing meetings and filling our spaces, just like any other smaller company would.”

Spectra can offer meeting planners a wide range of options from large cities and venues like Miami Beach, Florida; Cincinnati; Atlantic City, New Jersey; and Richmond, Virginia, all the way down to smaller cities like Enid, Oklahoma, and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Not to be outdone, Kevin Boryczki, general manager of the newly renamed Central National Bank Center in Enid, thinks small cities can offer a refreshing change to groups wanting to meet or entertain. Spectra is right there ready to serve them.

“We are doing local and regional events and statewide conferences and conventions, but on a somewhat smaller level than other larger facilities around the country,” he said. “Our events and conferences are still staged the same way. It’s great to be able to share and network with our people around the country who have done an event like we want to do, only on a bigger scale.”

Local Touch

All three of the managers agree that people like to deal locally. Even though Spectra is part of a huge company, any of its small market venues can offer that “hometown touch.”

“A client might initially be scared off by a big national company, but our goal is to be in touch with and be part of the community so everyone feels comfortable around us,” said Boryczki. “We live here too. We are not here just to run a facility but to be an integral part of the city. We want locals to feel that this is their building because it is, and they should be proud.”

Boryczki said he and other managers nationwide go through the same company training. “We have staff that attends the same education meetings, so that ensures that we are all doing what we can.”

Rebecca Goodman, director of public relations for Comcast Spectacor, said that Spectra makes sure its clients enjoy the highest level of customer service possible when they book an event.

“Our overall company motto is ‘Together we transform events into experiences,’” she said. “We really take that seriously, whether it’s in our venues that we manage around the country or in our convention centers.”