**Standard Operating Procedures for Hosting a Section Meeting**

**Introduction**

Hosting a SES Meeting can sound daunting to a small or inexperienced chapter. It doesn’t need to be. The bottom line according to the Section Bylaws, is an actual meeting, everything else is extra and not required. A chapter can start small and build from there depending on the chapter’s resources.  The SES Vice Governor is the Board contact for help. It’s generally best to find a meeting location near several core members who will plan the meeting.  It only takes a few members to plan the meeting, hopefully, a few more members will help during the meeting, this will decide the scope of the meeting. You can also call on members from other chapters to help during the meeting. It’s recommended that at least one member from the chapter attend a previous meeting.

1. Find a place to meet. This can be any venue. Many facilities are free, especially to non-profit groups.  Schools, colleges, libraries, FBOs, and private businesses are all possibilities.
2. Venue requirements:
3. Seating for approximately 50.
4. While the bylaws only call for the section meeting, it is customary to have a board meeting (open to all members) in the afternoon or evening the day before. Meeting space for approximately 1.5 hours on a Friday afternoon for the board meeting and approximately three hours to four hours on Saturday morning for the business meeting.
5. Head table to seat eight, the rest can be classroom seating.
6. Projection for a PowerPoint program.
7. Handicapped accessible.
8. Microphone is a plus.
9. Consider babysitting services so members may attend without distraction. Girl Scouts, high school programs requiring community service and Ninety-Nine family members are all options.
10. Any Ninety-Nine member may attend a section meeting for free.
11. Set a budget.

That’s it! It’s recommended this be accomplished 12-18 months prior to the meeting date.  This allows for the best pricing and availability, especially for hotels. Set the date in concurrence with the SES Board. Late April or early May for Spring and late September or October for Fall. Think about any large events in the area that might affect travel. You also should recommend both commercial and general aviation airports near the venue. If you have an established relationship with an airport operator, this can be a great resource. They may offer facilities to use, and perhaps some price breaks on fuel, tie downs, etc.

**Doing more**

What would be the next step should your chapter choose to do more? Most members want to arrive on Friday to be on site for the Saturday morning meeting so recommending a hotel is the next logical step.

1. Hotel considerations.
   1. Proximity to the meeting site.
   2. Available transportation to the recommended airports.
   3. Pricing/amenities.
   4. Do they offer a discount rate for a group?
   5. Do they have meeting rooms in case you want to meet there? Is there a charge for the meeting rooms?
   6. What type of food service do they offer, i.e. complimentary breakfast?

The two important considerations here are the group rate, which will require a contract with the hotel, and any charges for the meeting rooms if this is considered an option. Should you wish to enter a contract with the hotel, this **MUST BE** submitted to the SES Board and Martha Phillips at legalcounsel@ninety-nines.org for approval. Do not sign any contracts without legal approval.

If there is a charge for meeting rooms, you must decide if this is within your chapter budget or do you need to charge membership a registration fee to cover it?

It’s important to know that any member may attend any meeting (just the meeting) without registration. This is a rare occurrence but must be considered.

Any chapter may request a loan of $1000 from the section to fund expenses before registration fees are collected. This must be repaid to the section within seven days from the end of the meeting weekend.

**Deciding to charge a registration fee.**

This will depend on what you decide to plan. In today’s world electronic registration is the way to go, but you will still want to have a contact address for the submission of a mail-in registration. If you don’t have a chapter member with the knowledge to set up electronic registration, the Vice-Governor can assist you in finding help. It is recommended that you consider opening a second checking account to keep the registration fees separate. If you decide to expand to additional activities, consider if they will be at a cost that may require additional charges in the registration fee, or will they be activities “on your own”.  If you have a registration fee, you will want to have a spot at the meeting for those who have registered to check in. A spot in the hotel lobby or other room always works. Name badge holders and lanyards are usually available from the previous host chapter.  Many chapters like to provide a welcome gift at the registration table.

**Other Optional Activities**

Deciding on other activities may require some brainstorming based on chapter size, location, etc. Your local chamber of commerce can assist you with hotel selection and attractions for the area. One of the things that makes the 99s unique among organizations is the friendship and mentoring we hold dear. Members like to have some guidance for planned or optional activities when they arrive at a meeting location. Planned activities may or may not need to be included in the registration fee. For activities “on your own” it is best to provide members with a list of local ideas for places to visit and dine.

**Optional Activity Ideas**

1. **Hospitality Room**. 99s enjoy and appreciate this option. It can be as simple as a few snacks with something to drink or something with more elaborate food and “party drinks”. When deciding where to have the hospitality room a big consideration is the hotel food service you would be competing with. In most cases, they will restrict food or drink in a common area. Be sure to check hotel policies. However, if you elect to have food and drink in a guest room you have rented, they can’t restrict you from having friends in for refreshments. Renting a suite, with one room that has a mini kitchen in it has proven to be a good option.  Chapter members have often donated food/drink for this and have fun making something at home to bring in. Again, take this into consideration with the registration fee.  The schedule for the hospitality room is up to the chapter depending on other activities, and manpower. The only restriction is that it is not open during the Saturday business meeting.

1. **Friday activity**.  This is totally up to the chapter, depending on their resources. It may be “on your own” with a recommended venue.  Other ideas are a tour of some kind, a special activity or a planned meal. These are also items to be considered in the budget. Planned meals can be at a restaurant or catered into some other venue like an FBO. It just depends on what the chapter has access to.

1. **Saturday afternoon activity.** This is the same as Friday. If tours are considered, transportation needs to be thought out. It can’t conflict with the business meeting.

1. **Saturday evening activity.**  Again, this is optional. If the hotel has meal service, perhaps a sit-down dinner. If not, perhaps they have a large common area where a catered meal can be brought in. Imagination is the key. Again, you can take the simple route and just have dinner “on your own”.

1. **Silent Auction.** This is a popular chapter fundraiser which is optional. The hospitality room can be a location for this.  You could also set it up in the business meeting room and complete it after the meeting.

**Registration Considerations.** Depending on optional activities, the responses you will need on the registration form will vary, i.e. who will be attending these activities should be considered. If you have activities requiring transportation, get a count of who needs a ride or is car-pooling a possibility. For members flying in, it’s good to get information on arrival and locations. Decide if you can provide transportation to/from either the general aviation or the commercial airport or both.

**Registration Fee Considerations.**

1. Any rooms rented.
2. Any room set up, i.e. technical assistance (many members have projectors/screens they can bring in, avoiding an extra fee).
3. Planned activities that may require an entrance fee/transportation, etc.
4. Hospitality room and any purchased food and beverages.
5. Other transportation.
6. Printing, name tags, signs, etc.

**Extra help.**

Many people and organizations support local charities. Consider asking your local airport for donations or sponsorship for a portion of the event. The Vice-Governor can provide examples of request letters for sponsorship. Even $50-$100 can impact registration fees.

Set the registration fee based on the cost of hosting the business and board meetings. Use 35-45 members as a baseline. Typical attendance is 35-55. Time of year and extras offered or local attractions can impact this. Members living in hurricane prone areas may ask for refunds due to pending hurricanes.

**In Conclusion.**  Hosting a section meeting can be as simple as just finding a meeting room. All additional activities depend on the resources of the host chapter.  The SES Board, headed by the Vice-Governor as a contact, is there to help and answer questions from any chapter.  Start 18-24 months out looking for a venue. Reach out to aviation enthusiasts, businesses or chambers of commerce. Tourists are always welcome. Lock in the venue 8-12 months out so the team can focus on incremental offerings.