



What to do if affected by pirates/poachers?

- Cease and Desist letter from your organization's legal counsel
- Messaging – Electronic eBlasts to attendees/exhibitors
- Messaging – Event Website & Housing Website

Proactive Strategies

- Communicate/educate what a pirate/poacher is. Do it early and often (start at prior year's event).
- Develop reasons/messaging that is relevant to your demographics - i.e. Top Reasons to book your hotel room in the Official Hotel Block
- Be consistent and repetitive with messaging
- Encourage users to notify organization or housing provider of any communication from poachers that they receive. Reward those who "turn in" pirate/poaching companies to event organizer.
- Always have a disclaimer on your housing page of your website with the official housing company highlighted. Also in marketing materials and social media avenues. Be clear that no one should be soliciting them for housing.
- Teach participants how to verify the identity of who you're booking with.
- Add a disclaimer on housing page about how booking within the block allows the host organization to get better hotel rates year over year.
- If you know of any companies targeting your organization, put their names on your website but do not slander them.
- Offer "value adds" to get attendees to stay in your hotel blocks – i.e. free internet, discount at outlets if you show your badge, etc.
- Create a pop-up message regarding housing scams on your hotel web page.
- Work with the airport shuttle company on a discount and make it available only to those that book in the block. Also make hotel shuttle service to the convention center only for those who book in the block as well?
- Add pirate clause to hotel contracts.
- Create discounts on registration, onsite bookstore, etc. for those who book within the official block
- Have an Official vendor seal for all approved vendors
- Do a random drawings/ prizes on a weekly/ monthly basis for people who have booked within the block. Discounts can vary to discounts on education, free admission to special events, VIP Meet and Greets, etc.
- Protect your exhibitor/attendee lists by making them password protected.

Exhibitor Specific

- Hold sub-blocks for exhibitors and allow them to book 1-2 weeks before your general attendees.
- Create a priority point booking system for your exhibitors. Give additional points for booking in the block.
- Penalize exhibitors who stay outside the block through their placement in the exhibit hall next year.
- Offer incentives to any exhibitor that is solicited by a pirate if they collect their contact information and submit it to the host organization.
- Don't publicize exhibiting companies on the website until they have been contacted by the official housing provider.

Need to get your leadership/marketing team to understand the importance? Here's how piracy/poachers affect your business:

- Loss of revenue
- Inaccurate (lower) pick-ups may affect ability to get space/rooms where you want – will lead to higher hotel rates as the group doesn't have solid history
- Takes time away from planning
- Legal fees
- Attrition penalties
- Impact concessions (current and future)
- Creates attendee/exhibitor dissatisfaction
- Negative affect to brand/reputation – Those affected blame the hotel, organization AND housing company.
- All size events/room blocks as well as all industries are targeted.