BENCHMARK
RESORTS & HOTELS

GLOBAL SALES TEAM

a planner's playbook

5 ICEBREAKER GAMES THAT CAN GET ANY AUDIENCE MOVING

At our sixth annual Cubs event, we got 160 meeting planners out of their seats across from Wrigley Field and talking. Here's how we did it, plus four more games that work for any crowd, from a sales kickoff to an incentive trip. Use them at your next event, or bring one to your next client pitch.

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game one · the one that started it all

THE AMAZING RACE

We ran this at our sixth annual Cubs event, on a rooftop across from Wrigley Field during the last home game of the season. Our goal was to get planners talking to our salespeople. Instead of the usual mingling, planners went looking for our team, and several salespeople left with RFPs in hand. Swap in your own hosts and it works for any audience.

BEST FOR
Receptions and offsite venues with room to roam

TIME
One cocktail hour, or the length of the event

YOU'LL NEED
A match list, name badges, phones and prizes

HOW IT WORKS

1. Before the event, match each guest to one host, such as a salesperson, speaker or sponsor.
2. Guests find their match somewhere in the venue, have a real conversation and snap a selfie together.
3. Every selfie earns a prize. At Wrigley, it was a two-night stay at the host's hotel.

PUT IT IN YOUR PITCH

Planning for a client? Rename the race after their event and add it to your proposal. It shows you've planned how attendees will connect, not just where they'll sit.

"The coolest thing we saw was how many customers and meeting planners were around the venue looking for salespeople to talk to."

John MacMullen, Senior Director, Business Development

PLANNER TIP

Keep the selfies. They match every face to a name, which makes your follow-up personal.

game two · for the welcome reception

CONNECTION BINGO

A classic, tuned for professionals. Every square is a conversation starter, so nobody has to invent small talk.

1. Fill a 5×5 card with prompts that fit your group: “has planned an event on three continents” or “knows the best late-night spot in town.”
2. Guests find someone who matches each square and write that person's name in it.
3. First full row wins a small prize. A full card wins the grand prize.

BEST FOR
Welcome receptions and first nights

TIME
30 to 45 minutes

YOU'LL NEED
Bingo cards, pens and prizes

PLANNER TIP
One name per square, so a winning row means five new people.

game three · for the dinner table

TWO TRUTHS AND A DESTINATION

A travel twist on two truths and a lie. The stories come out fast, and so do the follow-up questions.

1. Each guest names three places they've been for work or play, with one short story about each.
2. One of the three is made up. Tablemates vote on which one.
3. The best bluffer picks the next round's theme: best meal, worst flight or most memorable event.

BEST FOR
Seated dinners and small tables

TIME
20 to 30 minutes

YOU'LL NEED
A table card with the rules

PLANNER TIP
Mix companies at each table, so every story is new to someone.

game four · for mixing up teams

THE MISSING PIECE

Every guest arrives holding part of a picture. To finish it, they have to find the people holding the rest.

1. Cut destination postcards into four pieces and hand one piece to each guest at check-in.
2. Guests circulate until they find the three people who complete their picture.
3. That foursome becomes a breakout team, with one question to answer about the place on their card.

BEST FOR
Kicking off breakouts and team challenges

TIME
15 to 20 minutes

YOU'LL NEED
Postcards cut in four, one piece per guest

PLANNER TIP
Use images of your host destination, so the game previews what's ahead.

game five · for showcases and expos

PASSPORT STAMPS

Turn a room of tables or booths into a journey. Each conversation earns a stamp, and a full passport earns a prize.

1. Give every guest a passport that lists each host, property or sponsor in the room.
2. Hosts stamp a passport after a real conversation, not just a hello.
3. Full passports go into a drawing at the end of the event.

BEST FOR
Trade shows, sponsor showcases and multi-property events

TIME
The length of the showcase

YOU'LL NEED
Printed passports, stamps and a prize

PLANNER TIP
Give hosts one question to ask every guest. You'll have notes for each follow-up.

make any game work

FOUR RULES WORTH STEALING

GIVE PEOPLE A REASON TO MOVE

A simple challenge pulls guests out of their seats and into conversations they wouldn't start on their own.

REWARD THE CONVERSATION

Tie the prize to meeting someone, not to showing up, so every interaction counts.

PICK YOUR MOMENT

The right date and setting do half the work. We booked the final home game, betting on a pennant race.

CAPTURE PROOF OF CONNECTION

A photo, a stamp or a signed square turns a quick hello into a name you can follow up with.

BRING ONE TO YOUR NEXT PITCH

Most proposals cover dates, rooms and rates. Add a game built around your client's event and you're selling the experience, not just the agenda. It could be what wins the business.

LET'S BUILD YOUR NEXT UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

From retreats to summits and incentive trips, our team helps you plan every step of the way.

Submit an RFP

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