

TECHNICAL *Corner* Concessions



Facility Hiccups

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Came fast... didn't it? You were gliding right along when suddenly you realize in one week your attendance is about to triple. It's what we live for, right? Better button-up those last minute facility repair items... the restroom fixtures have some leaks... maybe it's best to repair the AC... get the concession stand tuned up... the box office needs new headsets. And the list just grows.

It's those annoying repair or replacement hiccups that keep popping up no matter how long you hold your breath. More attendance means more guests... means more foot traffic... means more repairs... you know the equation.

How do we deal with facility hiccups when they come too fast? Where do you begin?

A) **Safety.** Rule #1 in our books. Items deemed hazards to our guests or staff should be addressed quickly and efficiently. Pull out your trusted vendor list and make the call, before they get booked up or slammed with orders, putting needed parts on back order. If you can do-it in-house... do it! Put the poster room reorganization on hold and eliminate that dirty word called "liability." All the well painted exit ways won't add up to much when a guest complains about an injury due to ordinary maintenance oversight.

Take a moment to re-educate the staff on safety and security. Verify your complex is on schedule for its Life\Safety System PM checks - meaning fire alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting. It's a good feeling when the management staff has been through a fire drill and actually heard what their alarm sounds like.

B) **Secure your profits.** "A" is taken care of. The broken tiles are fixed and the staff's no longer running with scissors in hand, what's next? Assure your cash flow. Repair the items in the concession stand that mean "bank" to you. Yes, the back-up popper better work. A good question to answer is; "What piece of equipment can't you live with for more than 2 hours if it goes down and your profits with it? Yes, it's a judgment call, but being prepared can save you some big bucks. Be reasonable with this... don't spend money on too much back up equipment (for a refresher course, read September 2006 NATO *Previews* article *Spare Parts - To buy or not to buy*).

Make or update the all mighty **Vendor Emergency List** and post it where all management can quickly access it. Categorize the list into different aspects of your theatre, such as Concession, Restroom, AC, Projection, Locksmith, etc. Put any specific account numbers or pertinent info by the vendor's name, it will speed up service calls. Vendors do change, so assure the date is placed on the list and updated each time it is altered. Dispose of old list to avoid confusion. Keep a hard copy... computers can fail and sometimes you will need to walk with it.

C) **Patron Comfort.** So... you feel pretty good now with A & B under control. Do your guests feel good? Attend to patron comfort. Replace those ripped cushions, scratched mirrors and lost cup holders. Bring house 4 down to comfortable temperature. Clean the carpets and repair the restroom paper towel dispensers.

D) **Stay on top of the cleanliness.** Your janitorial crew will experience some tough cleaning situations. Please stay in good communications with them, assure they have what they need and

support each other for the benefit of the complex and your guests. With those occasional midnight shows turnaround times for a janitorial crew can mean serious hustling. It's a double whammy, large business and shortened night. Sometime this means the ushers will need to be a bit more detailed with their closing duties to allow the janitorial crew to clean correctly on a condensed schedule.

Finally... items break and repairs will always exist. Prioritizing is key and follow-up a must. More than likely you'll be bouncing between all the above categories. With that stated, there will undoubtedly be a guest or two effected in some way at some time. Handle them with care, even when the summer shine grows dim within you. Seeing that one special summer movie is often an once-in-a-lifetime event. If it goes amiss for a guest due to a facility issue, take a pause and get them back in the door. After all, they chose you to share it with... be honored.

As always, when doing repairs or replacements in-house, safety comes first. If at any time you have a question or are unsure about your work call a professional. ▼

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