WEBINAR INSIGHTS

Working with Labor:
What Every Rising Leader Needs to Know

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Know the agreement before arriving on-site.** Labor jurisdictions, work rules, premium hours, staffing requirements, and supervisory responsibilities vary by market. Rising leaders do not need to memorize every agreement, but they should know where to find accurate information and who to ask.
- **Understand what drives labor costs.** Scheduling, crew size, overtime, premium hours, supervision, material handling, and last-minute changes can all affect the final bill. Strong planning helps contractors manage costs while setting realistic expectations for clients and exhibitors.
- **Communicate with labor leadership early.** Discuss unusual schedules, specialty installations, tight transitions, and potential challenges before move-in. Direct conversations often uncover solutions that may not be obvious from the written rules alone.
- **Set crews up to succeed.** Have materials, tools, work orders, booth plans, schedules, and decision-makers ready when labor reports. Clear direction and good organization improve productivity and reduce unnecessary labor time.
- **Keep exhibitor-facing information accurate.** GSCs and decorators play an important role in clearly communicating local work rules through exhibitor service manuals and other pre-show materials. Review this information regularly and update anything that may create confusion.
- **Treat labor as an operational partner.** Skilled labor contributes to safety, quality, efficiency, and the overall show experience. Mutual respect and strong relationships make it easier to navigate challenges when plans change.
- **Address issues directly and professionally.** When a conflict arises, clarify the facts, involve the appropriate labor or management representative, and focus on finding a workable solution. Document important conversations and decisions when necessary.
- **Do not make assumptions based on the market.** Right-to-work does not mean union agreements are irrelevant. Collective bargaining agreements and local jurisdictions may still determine how work is assigned and performed.
- **Use ESCA as a resource.** The ESCA Labor Management Council can help rising leaders connect with experienced contractors and labor representatives, understand market-specific practices, and work through industry challenges.

Labor Planning Roadmap

A field guide for rising leaders working with skilled labor



SPEAKERS

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ESCA RISING LEADERS COMMITTEE