



Trade Show Report

IMEX America (Las Vegas, NV) October 13-17, 2014

Glacier Country Booth Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Destination Missoula – Mary Holmes
- Discover Kalispell – Rob Brisendine
- Explore Whitefish – Dawn Jackson

Overview:

- IMEX America is the largest MICE tradeshow in North America. 148 countries are represented at the show with 2,400 hosted buyers and 2,500 exhibitors.
- Glacier Country was matched with 15 buyers for 30 minute appointments. The appointments were shared amongst the 4 booth representatives.
- We met with an additional 16 buyers that did not have a scheduled appointment with us.
- Increased our database with 31 first time appointments.
- Next IMEX America: Las Vegas, NV – October 13-15, 2015.

Appointments and projected ROI:

The overall appointments went well and 30 minutes was adequate for each partner to talk about the venues that they had in their areas. The planners were quality and came to the meeting with a specific group or program in mind for Montana that included a profile of the attendees, dates, number of people and agenda details. Most had not been to Montana and wanted to meet with us to find something different for their meetings. We felt that there was an assumption that we couldn't accommodate most programs except for those smaller incentive groups. They were surprised when talking about all the meeting venues in western Montana. 4 Diamond properties and high end guest ranches were about 80% of the requests. We all felt that our presence at this convention highlights that Montana is serious about the meetings industry and gave us all a chance to showcase that we have more than our great incentive properties and can be that perfect choice for all kinds of meetings. Planners did not want to take printed materials so our thumb drives with information were well received along the battery pack charger-gifts.

Recommendations for 2015:

- It takes consistency and continued exposure to build relationships with meeting planners. This show, although expensive, gives the best exposure to quality meeting planners for Montana. Especially for the higher-end resorts and guest ranches at this time.
- Larger booth with warm rustic setting (leather couches and a fireplace with greenery was suggested.) If we had a larger booth, we could invite hospitality partners along with the CVB's. This might involve MTOT and other Montana CVB's.
- CVB's to plan months in advance and target certain planners for appointments. IMEX does not give out a list of who is attending, but we did utilize their contact the buyer email blast system.
- There are opportunities to do a signature cocktail hour at our booth, and the partners liked that idea if we could get the micro-breweries to sponsor that event. Or have some sort of interactive display that would engage more to stop and find out about meeting in Montana.