

## Thought Force Topic: Area Events - Convention

**Background Information on the Thought Force** – This thought force is convened to gather information from our current AWSC panel on our collective knowledge about Convention. Please answer these questions individually and also feel free to discuss the topic at your table. Make sure that you do not try to reach a consensus answer – a wide variety of perspectives is being sought. We need your thoughts on Convention, whatever they are.

**Historical Info:** There are three convention reports as well as a sheet listing the Convention Succession for your historical information. If you participated in any of these conventions, please make notes on the back and give your thoughts – good and bad.

**Financial Impact:** The Convention has become a key part of our Area income. It is also the most attended and supported Area Event we have. As such, it is vital that we attend to the details and continue to support the efforts each District makes on behalf of the Area.

**Charge:** Discuss your experiences with, and thoughts about, our Area Convention. As an event. Do not try to reach a consensus answer to any question – but listen to each other, and allow yourself to communicate thoughts, experiences, ideas, suggestions, concerns. If you would like to be involved in future Task Forces regarding this Event, be sure to include your name and email somewhere on this paper.

### Five KBDM Questions

1. What are my needs, wants and preferences regarding our Area Convention?  
What do I like the best? What do I wish would change?
  - I love the convention, meeting new people, I wish they were always in the same location (7)
  - I love the workshops and speakers (36)
  - I like seeing “family” that I don’t see often enough
  - I love the fellowship and the Speakers (19)
  - I wish the workshops weren’t so long and boring
  - I like the fellowship best (19)
  - Great turnout year after year
  - I like the diversity of themes and having it in different locations (21)
  - I think we need new Guidelines (28)
  - I think we should use a Meeting Planner to get the best contract each year, it’s free and makes us more professional (4)
  - This doubles as a low-cost vacation for me and my family (9)
  - I wish it was cheaper (11)
  - I like that I can just show up, no requirements of me
  - I love to volunteer – host workshops, work in boutique, etc (25)
  - 48 hours of great recovery
  - Autonomy is good, very present in Convention, not sure if they have connection to all the information they need
  - Legal stuff does need to come through Area, I assume that is taken care of
  - I prefer locations closer to my home
  - I love the interchange among members and hope more people volunteer
  - I like the conventions I’ve been to, but I’m not happy with the sense of competition that is developing
  - I’m happy with my experiences (35)

- The food is poor
  - Drop the circuit speakers and use local members (11)
  - I wish there were descriptions of the workshops (4)
  - I wish we had more time to get from one location to the other
  - Say what you will, it's all about the money. Registration fees continue to go up.
  - I'm glad Districts rotate this. I'm hearing things today I've never heard before. I'm really learning.
  - If I could change one thing I'd ask for more night time meetings for us night-owls! (3)
  - Keep it simple. What about fewer workshops and more fellowship?
  - We should build on the success of this Event. What about combining our Alateen Roundup with Convention?
2. What do I know about our resources (finances, member participation, etc) about Area Convention?
- We always seem to come out ahead (9)
  - Since everyone loves it, everyone enjoys making this contribution to the Area (34)
  - I know it is a financial positive while also being a lot of fun (11)
  - Such great participation makes it a financial boon to the Area (12)
  - Good documentation and reports
  - Area gives each District a chance for this growth opportunity
  - Too much emphasis on making money
  - Lots of opportunities to help and be part of the Event
  - I hear about it at Area, District and in my Group
  - I have attended 26 NF Conventions in a row and would have to be in a hospital to miss one!
  - Has our attention to the income begun to divert us from our primary spiritual aim?
  - Area should work with the Convention to budget more start-up funds
  - It takes a lot of members to make it work (40)
  - It's important to get the registrations in early to give the Convention Committee money to work with
  - Too many people seem to "flake out" on their volunteer commitments (5)
  - It seems that money must be raised to get it going by selling novelties
  - Why can't we have more workshops on The Legacies?
  - How can we get more Area-wide volunteer participation?
  - I've seen the committee start out worried about finances, but then that changes as time goes on

3. What do I know about the current realities (membership, culture, etc) and our fellowship's environment (technology, geography, demographic, etc) that may impact Area Convention?
  - New technology helps us reach more people (23)
  - I wish the cost was more affordable (13)
  - Our membership likes to do this near a beach
  - Technology helps make it more accessible (26)
  - It may not be affordable to a lot of people (27)
  - It seems to be growing well
  - The more things to do in our Area, the better the turnout at convention
  - We don't seem to be reaching minorities. What can we do about that?
  - I'm concerned about Hospitality "requirements" of the Districts – I'd like to see a request or a way for Districts to volunteer.
  - Can we better use Twitter, FaceBook, SnapChat, to take advantage of free advertising?
  - I wish every Officer and Coordinator would create the equivalent of the Convention Chairman's notebook to pass on to the next person.
  
4. What are the pros and cons about our Area Convention? Are our decisions consistent with our spiritual principles?
  - Pro: Fun, fellowship, new ideas (33)
  - Con: Some people can't afford it (21)
  - Pro: Experience strength and hope, fellowship, meeting people from other Districts (32)
  - Con: Can be a lot of work for some people
  - Pro: people work so hard (make sure to thank them!)
  - Pro: helps us be self-supporting
  - Pro: Working together makes us feel like we're part of the Area
  - Con: Too much power given to the committee
  - Con: Too much emphasis on making money (16)
  - Pro: Great Money maker
  - Central location would make it more accessible (13)
  - Pro: being on the Committee helps me practice these principles in all my affairs
  - Pro: I'm glad there is a Hospitality Room
  - Pro: Good outreach to friends and families of alcoholics
  - Mostly pros because it is a spiritual lift for me
  - The convention brings us all together (29)
  - Pro: strong support, money raised, carrying the message (9)

- Con: trying to outdo last year's even threatens unity
- Con: mediocre food at banquets
- Consider having the Convention every other year
- Pro: spiritual growth topics are the best (21)

5. What do I wish I knew, but don't? (use the back if necessary)
  - Why don't we offer each District a scholarship?
  - If the Convention was cheaper would more people attend?
  - I wish I knew how we could do this great Event only to have it cost less
  - What price point can members afford?
  - Are we excluding minorities?
  - I wish I knew where it will be next year?
  - I would like to know about the challenges of past years, even though I'm not a Convention chair
  - I wish I knew the criteria used for speakers. It really makes me mad when they bring someone in who doesn't show growth in the Al-Anon program.
  - What does it cost?
  - What participation level is there?
  - Are there electronic meetings at the convention?
  - I wish I could see the Convention notebooks
  - How many people does it take to put one on?
  - Would it be possible to have fewer and larger workshops?