

Regional Spotlight

GAPPP Reaches Out to Macon



What prompted GAPPP to do these events in Macon?

We wanted to expand the reach of GAPPP outside of the Metro Atlanta area and to give member suppliers an opportunity to reach distributors outside of the metro area as well. Also, by bringing Lunch & Learns to Macon, distributors in this area found it more convenient to attend them.

How do you promote the Lunch & Learns? Does the sponsor/program presenter invite customers?

Each Lunch & Learn is promoted directly on the GAPPP website and Facebook page. As facilitator, I send out invitations to area distributors via Constant Contact. Additionally, the supplier reps/sponsors are encouraged to also make contact with distributors they already have working relationships with to invite them to the Lunch & Learn.

How do you choose a place—location, cost, ease of access, sponsor's choice, etc.?

When we're searching for a venue, we take into consideration a good number of factors: ability to host larger parties in a private setting, location and parking, food and service quality, ease of loading/unloading displays and materials, lighting, etc. For the Lunch & Learn events, we try to keep them all in Macon as most of the distributors are in Macon, or one of the surrounding cities to keep it central to all attendees. With the current and previous venues, we negotiated a limited meal menu to keep the cost at, or under \$10 per person (our current venue agreed to provide meals, drinks and gratuity in the \$10 per person package).

How does GAPPP cover the expenses? Does a sponsor/program presenter pay for all?

The supplier rep(s)/sponsor(s) pay for all. If there are multiple sponsors for an event, they split the bill.

Did you need a "minimum" number of participants to make these events work financially?

We tend to leave that decision up to the sponsor(s); however, we try to make sure we have at least 10 distributor reps in attendance. On average, we have 14 at each event, which I feel is a good number for this market. There were 13 distributors in attendance at the last event.

What's the format for the Lunch & Learns?

Meals are preordered by the attendees. On the day of the event, there is an initial time of meet and greet between distributors and the supplier rep/sponsor. Then, the sponsor(s) will begin the presentation(s) and about halfway through, the meals are brought out to the attendees. At the end of the event, there is usually time for one-on-one conversations between distributors and the sponsor(s) as needed.

What's a typical program?

The most recent Lunch & Learn was sponsored by Mike Oliver with United Promotional Consultants and Daniel Pendleton with Vitronic. Mike is a multi-line rep and presented highlights from holiday ideas for most of the lines he represents. Daniel Pendleton is a regional rep for Vitronic and presented holiday ideas as well.

How often do you do Lunch & Learns?

On average, they're held every 3–4 weeks.

What do your participants (distributors and sponsors/presenters) think of these luncheons?

Feedback from each of the Lunch & Learn events has been positive overall. I've personally spoken with many of the other distributors who have attended and all have expressed thanks for bringing the events to the Macon area. Many have also expressed that they like the timing and format of the events and feel that having time in front of the supplier reps without the everyday office distractions allows them to absorb more about the product lines. The supplier reps have also expressed that they like the ability to put themselves and their lines in front of a large group at once.



Does an “official” GAPPP person attend to make sure all goes as planned?

As the facilitator of the events in Macon, I've attended them all. As the events become more established in the area, I'll most likely look for another GAPPP member distributor rep to assist with events that I might not be able to attend.

How could the events be improved? What will you do differently next time?

With the last event, we shortened the time by 30 minutes by starting the event at 11:30 am instead of 11:00 am. The shorter time resonated positively with everyone and we will continue with this timeframe for future events.

**—Info from GAPPP Volunteer Chris Clark
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