

# Football Team Hospitality Management

## Do's and Don'ts



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## THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF FOOTBALL TEAM HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Tips from Ivan Kaydamov  
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### DO'S

-  1. Follow the draw
-  2. Get straight to the point
-  3. Reply promptly
-  4. Take your time to negotiate
-  5. Be prepared for a site inspection
-  6. Be available 24/7
-  7. Collect and update your database
-  8. Speak the same language

### DON'TS

-  1. Don't loose precious time
-  2. Don't be too fancy
-  3. Don't be unaware of the destination
-  4. Don't stay behind the process
-  5. Don't neglect the contract policies

***Although a lot of people think that managing hospitality programs for football teams is like taking care of any other DMC projects, they are wrong. It actually has its own unique requirements, knowledge sets and demands of involvement for the project manager in charge.***

Managing the hospitality program for a football team requires consideration of several aspects:

- **The process starts with the official draw verifying where the team will play**

There is difference over the terms and periods depending on the match level, either national or club.

**National teams** know their game plan couple of months or sometimes 1-2 years in advance. On the other hand, a **club team** sometimes only knows its match schedule 10 days before the game takes place. Therefore, **you need to be prepared and react very quickly** to assure the client and provide all the services they might require for the team and other delegations that are travelling.

- **Establishing contact with team representatives**

There are usually either **official travel partners** or **travel/logistics departments** within the club organisation. When working with them, try to **find the best way to show your knowledge and experience with the destination and its football field.**

Mentioning other clubs from their country that you have worked with in the past always adds value.

It might be very useful to check if the person you are dealing with is connected via **LinkedIn** with someone you have worked with before: these individuals could provide good credentials.

Plus **LinkedIn** could give you information about their background, education and interests.

- **Reply carefully to the RFP of the team**

A RFP (Request for proposal) contains all the information you need to run a hospitality program: how many persons, how many different delegations and hotels, periods of stay, vehicles needed, etc.

**Be sure to reply to all requests.**

- **Pay attention to the exact dietary requirements of the team during the stay**

Considering that they are athletes, **it is vital for them to follow a particular nutritional plan** that is provided by each team doctor or nutrition specialist. The meal requirements must be fulfilled by each hotel and/or dining venue including the way of preparing meals, specific products, etc. It is always important that this is sorted out before the team arrives and not after they get there!

- **Passion is always part of each project**

Whether you have a small team with a 30-40 pax group or a high calibre team with a 200-250 pax delegation, you should keep the same attitude through out, showing passion for what you are doing.

**Be enthusiastic** from the start of the contract until the last person leaves the security gate at the airport on his way home!

After considering these aspects of a football team hospitality program, let's look in depth at what to do and what not to do when running a project.

## FOOTBALL PROJECTS **DO'S**

- **FOLLOW THE DRAW**

**Be aware of each draw for all competitions on the national and club level** so you can react immediately and contact the respective clubs to offer your assistance. For example, **follow the UEFA webpage** ([www.uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com)) where you can find all of the information about draws, match schedule and appointed match venues.

The draws for UEFA Club team competitions, either the Champions League or the Europa League, are quite often during the **summer**. In 2/3 weeks there is a draw taking place at the UEFA headquarter. Then after September, the draw is in **December for the preliminary rounds** after the group stages,

and then 3 more times till final round. At the national team level, they are every year and a half or two years.

- **GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT**

It is important to **provide each team with all of the important logistic information**. With regards to hotel choice, hotels close to the airport and stadium are usually preferred. Consider hotels that have lots of twin rooms on the same floor, private space/hall for briefings and a separate one for dining. It's a good idea to consider hotels that have worked with football teams in the past. It is also fundamental to know the match venue, especially how many entrances and parking spaces, and to establish contact with local clubs that might help the organisation.

- **REPLY PROMPTLY**

**Be ready to submit conditions within 24 hours after receiving the team requirements**. Ask in advance for offers from suppliers based on preliminary expected numbers: it is necessary to show that you know the matter.

- **NEGOTIATION IS IMPORTANT**

If you are aware of the presence of competitors on certain football projects **try to push your suppliers hard** (especially those that are most suitable). Try to be one step ahead and adjust for the type of team (high calibre, low budget type of team, etc.).

**There are teams that have high budgets**. The only thing that counts for them is the superb organisation of the stay and they do not allow any compromises in this respect. They could afford a more expensive partner but they want to be sure about the quality of the services. On the other hand, **there are teams that have limited budgets** and are using regular flights, cheaper hotels and cheaper conditions overall. In that case you need to be flexible with your range of suppliers, giving the best options in terms of value for money.

- **BE PREPARED FOR A SITE INSPECTION**

**Be available for site inspection right after the draw or in the following days**. This is essential because to be chosen for a site inspection means a 90% possibility of confirmed business.

During the site inspection you must to **be aware of all the important locations** of the site: the match venue, the city, hotel variants, local club authorities, police, airport, dining options, etc. Know how to offer different options before the client even asks for it! When running a site inspection, **you might want to offer some "complimentary services"** such as transports, free rooms, a client dinner at your own expenses, etc.

Sometimes due to the short notice of some events the client is arriving during a weekend or on bank holiday; still **you need to be available** and that makes a huge difference to other **competing agencies**.

- **BE AVAILABLE 24/7**

As the event approaches and during the event, you need to step up and show the client that **no matter when they need of you, you will be there – they can really rely on you**. It could happen at any time. For instance, if the client has forgotten to order additional vehicles for the following day and he informs you late the evening before, you need to react immediately, informing him that the vehicle will be there and then go straight to contact all your suppliers to make sure you will have them there in the morning.

- **COLLECT AND UPDATE YOUR DATABASE**

**Collecting information** about the teams you work with allows you to know what teams usually want, what aspects to consider and what parameters to think about for the next hospitality program you run. Knowing this information will be useful for when you contact the team in the future. In these databases, remember to include contacts from the club and contacts from the official travel partner (if there is an official one).

- **USE THE SAME LANGUAGE**

Some football clients really appreciate the fact that you use **their native language**.

At least try to learn some basic words (e.g. greetings phrases) to start the conversation. It always makes a good impression!

## FOOTBALL PROJECTS **DON'TS**

- **DON'T WAIT TO CONTACT THEM**

**Don't lose precious time when contacting the clubs.** If you decide to establish contact on the day after the draw, it will surely be a waste of time. Every minute counts.

- **DON'T BE TOO FANCY**

**You don't need to prepare stunning presentations or graphics.** Instead, you have to immediately send conditions and simple information.

The information you have to be sure to provide includes key figures about match venue, distances between airport and hotels and between hotels and match venue, and hotel room numbers.

- **DON'T BE UNAWARE OF THE DESTINATION**

Football clients are always looking for **adequate info** about the place where they are going to play. If you are not able to reply to simple queries they will turn to someone else.

- **DON'T STAY BEHIND THE PROCESS**

**Be ready for anything and prepared for everything.** Try to double check all the suppliers and still be aware that something could go wrong.

Stay focused on the overall picture without losing an eye for the small details. For example, it is unlikely that team & staff will make the regular check-in at the hotels. You need to prepare all room keys in envelopes with names and to give them either at the airport or when they arrive at the hotel.

- **DON'T NEGLECT THE CONTRACT POLICIES**

You should **have your contract with the football client based on the policies of the agreements with your suppliers.**

Once the hotel gives its terms & conditions check the deposit instalments and the rooms cancellation policy.

## FINAL REMARKS

When you work with football teams, or any client for that matter, you must offer a level of service and an experience that is unrivalled, guaranteeing our clients' security and peace of mind.

***You need to go for the goal!***

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Ivan Kaydamov has vast experience in the field of Football Hospitality Management. He has handled more than 50 teams in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia on both the national and club level and, together with other European AIM Group Offices, has managed teams from Portugal, Hungary, Czech Republic, Belgium and Italy.

He has built a large network of contacts with many teams and federations and their respective travel partners. Ivan has played an important role in placing AIM Group International into this sport niche and establishing the company as a trusted partner.

## ABOUT AIM GROUP INTERNATIONAL

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AIM Group is committed to helping its clients reach their goals, to personalizing their event experiences, to providing an innovative environment, and to making a difference. Our strong sense of identification with client projects means that we are constantly striving to provide solutions, even for issues they aren't yet aware of. To this end, we adopt a progressive approach to technology and marketing techniques. This sense of identification also means we value and promote seamless interaction with clients' own teams, and ensure the best value is obtained from their event budget.

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