



IBT CONVENTION



The 2001 Convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) a gathering of 2500 members from the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada - was a benchmark event for the organization: It reaffirmed the union's cause and served as a forum for considering important issues and policies, as well as for transacting official business, including the nomination of officers.

Beyond that, the 2001 Convention was an opportunity for the IBT to project a new, stronger and more forward-looking image, using the event itself as a powerful and effective communications tool.

From a production and financial standpoint, this meant structuring an entirely new kind of event - one that combined concept, content and presentation technology to work well for a range of interests within and outside the union.

To achieve its goals, and with only six weeks to go, IBT turned to Group Inc to assemble a complete production and event management team with the highest level of capabilities. Our task was twofold: first, to get the convention loaded in on time and on budget; second, to create for the Teamsters a flexible event communications architecture that would convey a variety of messages with dramatic effect - both inside the hall and to remote audiences. Initially tapped as consultants, Group Inc's role evolved quickly into one of managing most aspects of the convention - from exhibit areas and drayage to stage management, video segment production and live camera coverage. A convention highlight was a Group Inc-produced patriotic opening session video, depicting Teamster members at work across America providing a wide range of services to the nation. The piece is now used by locals throughout the country and as an introductory piece for board meetings.

Among Group Inc's challenges was the need to negotiate fair prices with vendors without compromising quality and to produce a clear accounting of funds expended for the convention. We created a cost-plus model, increased the transparency of compensation for all vendors and devised a consolidated event budget with a chart of accounts for better management, tracking and reporting of all production expenditures. The result was a highly successful event and millions in savings for the Teamsters.