



IMEX 2011 Association Day

Monday 23 May | Messe Frankfurt

Summary of roundtable discussions

Roundtables organised by MCI



Committee Management

Moderator: Carole McKellar, Helms Briscoe

1. How to engage and keep focus of a multi-cultural committee with different styles and approaches.
2. The importance of ensuring each committee has a clear objective and remit. Easy with technical committees but not so easy with standing committees.
3. Challenges where volunteers' allegiance is to the discipline rather than the association.

Solutions discussed for all of these topics included the importance of clearly defined strategy, leadership from the chair, clear communication to committee members about expectations, and clearly defined roles. Understanding of different cultural styles and chairing effectively to accommodate these. Also the importance of processes to ease the burden of administration and deputies so that tasks are completed even when committee members are busy.

4. The challenges of getting younger people engaged. Ask them! They are keen to meet with experienced professionals for potential job opportunities. Encourage their involvement in existing committees. Make it easy for them to join and become engaged.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Moderator: Kerrell Farmelant, The next great event LLC.

Our table defined CSR as how a company's business practices can have a positive impact on society and/or the environment.

Often times it is a decision that is strategically planned and tactically executed, but sometimes it can also stem from damage control/crisis management.

The biggest question brought up at our table was, when is CSR actually CSR, and when is it just a ploy to get good PR?

We all agreed that CSR can start with something small - may be focused on community growth and development, may include public interest, may just be making a conscientious effort to regulate your own business practices and maintain high ethical standards.

Moderator: Gina Van Dijk, ASH

- Interest to understand CSR / Trends / Best Practices / Benchmarks
- Some best practices:
 - Reducing impact of events
 - Marketing and Promotion: moving fully to e, and social media
 - Recycling materials used for exhibitions
 - Food & Beverage => using local & regional products => foodwaste; restrictions to donate
 - Energy
 - Checklist
 - Reference associations: GMIC, ASAE, PMI

Delegates ROI

Moderator: Suvi Saxen, CMM, Society of Exploration Geophysicists

- What did the participants actually want to measure: quantitative – qualitative?

- Who sets the objectives and success factors (learning, application and impact objectives)
- When do we measure the ROI from the association's perspective and the individual participants/members perspective?
- Different ways of measuring ROI where discussed.
- What type of meeting are appropriate for measuring? Rotating large scale meetings only?
- How do the associations use the ROI – for immediate and long-term purposes? Are the results applied in association strategy development?
- Different measurement tools available: Meeting Metrics, Event Flick, Institute of ROI

Education Programme Development

Moderator: Anne Blouin, ASAE

- Getting content accredited by different countries
- Discussion around feasibility of online learning
- Partnering with universities for in structural design

Moderator: Carole McKellar, Helms Briscoe

1. Challenge of delivering training in different languages. Challenges are high costs and quality of translations. Solutions proposed included: conducting training in English but with transcriptions of key messages on slides/handouts; utilising local chapters/trainers to conduct training in local language and make available online.
2. This linked to a discussion about accessibility of educational programmes: online solutions were an effective solution catering for small target audiences, location, time zones and languages.
3. Core competency/curriculum framework – some professional areas are still developing and not recognised. Core curriculum still developing.
4. The slow speed of getting accreditation for CEU/CPD points. No answers but associations see importance of accreditation in creating added value for their content.

EU Affairs

Moderator: Wilhelm Engström, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

1. It was concluded that there is a hidden market comprising regular meetings of small EU-consortia meetings (15-50 persons) that each coordinator of an EU contract is in duty bound to hold every 6 months during its 3-5 year running time. Such meetings are often organised by departmental secretaries in a non-professional way. It was agreed that there is room for improvement. Moreover in the experience of this group outsourcing is becoming increasingly important. Many association executives must find ways to do 'more with less' as well as increase the value for meeting attendees. It is necessary to understand the challenges associations face and to offer solutions which help them to get more value for their meetings.
2. It is important to read calls before applying for EU-financed contracts because terms differ. It is also important to scrutinize the final texts when it comes to co-ordination costs because this is where the limits and limitations are stated.
3. It is equally important to set the agenda for how co-ordination and meetings should be organised at the beginning of a contract.
4. It is important to know that also organisations can be partners in some EU-contracts.
5. It would be an advantage if a new type of product could be developed, i.e. a "ready to go" EU co-ordination meeting including travel, hotel, meeting room etc. at a cost level which is within the limits of the EU rules. Considering that every meeting has its own character depending

on e.g. geographical site, meeting theme and the personality of the meetings convenor, organisers with a strong global network and good knowledge of the meeting market could be helpful in developing such concept. It was suggested that the idea could first be pursued in Brussels.

Expending to Asia

Moderator: Stephan Wurzinger, World Tobacco Association

- Understanding the cultural differences when arranging meetings in China – language, culture, customs
- Finding solutions when Chinese doctors do not respond on time, mis-interpret messages and are unclear in their responses
- Discussion on the role of the CMA (Chinese Medical Association), as the licensee of all medical events in China
- Adjusting expectations, time-lines and planning priorities when doing events in Asia Pacific
- Highlighting some of the marketing channels available to international congresses

Generating Delegates

Moderator: Roy Palmer, Seafood Experience Australia Ltd

- Make the meeting match the delegates rather than other way around
- Destination is important
- Collaborations with other groups to maximise support
- Recognise your market
- Innovative and creative programmes
- Delegate involvement in programme
- Special promotion to younger groups
- Promotion through media and social media

Green Meetings

Moderator: Kerrell Farmelant, The next great event LLC.

Green Meetings has been increasingly important to more and more associations when planning their conferences/events, but it's not necessarily attainable all at once. One suggestion was to create a strategy for "greening" your meeting, then tactically implement those ideas one at a time.

Carbon offset programmes can be a great start. Start with making it a voluntary donation to get your attendees used to it, then perhaps in a year, it can be a mandatory part of what you charge for registration.

Sustainability efforts during a conference can include: use of locally sourced foods, use of more eco-friendly technology (such as LED lights, video conferencing, etc.), modifications to give-aways (such as doing away with printed programmes, use of stainless steel water bottles, conference bags made from recycled materials, etc.)

In the US, many people assume that properties recycle, but it was pointed out at our table that in many countries, facilities may not be available nearby, so even if a property separates the paper, plastic, aluminium, glass, you need to ensure that they are actually taking it to a facility to be recycled.

Hybrid & Virtual Conferences

Moderator: Michael Foreman, European headache and Migraine Trust International Congress

The Hybrid meetings group was very small and made up people who did not have any idea what a hybrid meeting was. The discussion was mainly an opportunity to present what the definition of a hybrid meeting.

Definition - A hybrid meeting features physical, in-person elements and virtual elements. Every live event at a hybrid meeting may not be (and probably will not be) duplicated virtually, while other aspects of the meeting may be virtual-only. The virtual elements of a hybrid meeting may continue after the physical event ends.

It was felt that there is an opportunity at Imex or other similar events to educate associations further about Hybrid meetings as it was concluded that developments such as these in the Meeting Industry can no longer be ignored.

Insurance for Events

Moderator: Dixie Arthur, ASAE

- Not sure what advice to give clients about purchasing coverage
- Complex buy – hard to compare what's being quoted
- There are prices vs. coverage issues
- Not clear on who the coverage works or which underwriters write the coverage
- More information is needed _> education on how the coverage + pricing works
- Are organisations really prepared to take the risk?

Hybrid & Virtual Conferences

Moderator: Eric le Gal, CESIO (World Surfactant Congress and Business Convention)

- Hybrid and Virtual Conferences are a way to beat natural catastrophes and economic hard times.
- The cost and quality of the tools allowing virtual meetings is progressing quickly in the right direction.
- Virtual Trade Fairs on the internet are at a start but in one sector already working well: Job Fairs.
- It is also today the most sensible way to do product training, especially when employees are geographically spread.
- The one thing missing is of course networking. However the capacity to outreach the whole world creates new encounters and ties which can lead to “real” face to face meetings.
- In an association where volunteer time is scarce, it allows doing more meetings without the burden of time consuming transportation.

PCOs vs. AMCs

Moderator: Anitha Niranjani, Conferences and Incentive Management Pvt. Ltd

- Companies who are PCO's who have now upgraded to AMC feel there is lack of clarity on job description
- Focused AMC say they have absolute clarity within and among clients
- Better job clarity and transparency to avoid misunderstanding between PCO and Association

Medical Congresses

Moderator: Ajay Bhojwani, SHRM

- The issues of current political unrest and natural calamities were discussed and how that can be planned better
- More focus on regional meetings rather than large convention
- The various aspects of medical meetings – marketing, sponsorship and
- Pharma codes and better fund raising processes
- The concept of Hybrid meetings to be adopted in a few upcoming meetings

Moderator: Michael Foreman, European headache and Migraine Trust International Congress

1. There is increasing pressure on most medical associations due to sponsors being subject to legal compliance and codes of practice.
2. Pharma companies be taking too drastic steps which could hurt in the long run.
3. Organisers need to be more creative to attract both delegates and sponsors
4. Competition – Due to the number of medical meetings, congresses need to have their own identities and USP's in order to attract delegates. They cannot just provide an opportunity to educate they must have an added value proposition
5. Networking opportunities are as important as education
6. Medical conferences must actively facilitate interaction on a one to one basis or in smaller groups, especially at the bigger meetings.
7. There is an assumption that all doctors attending Medical congresses are rich but this is not true.

Membership Benefits

Moderator: Darryl Walter, The Wildlife Society

- Good mix of trade versus individual membership organisations in the roundtable and each had a different view of membership benefits. Trade membership benefits include buyer programmes and ability to exhibit. Individual membership organisation member benefits include access to peer-review journals and other publications.
- Both trade and individual membership organisations struggle with small percentage of members taking advantage of many of the member benefit programmes such as discount programmes.

Moderator: Sarah Bachmann, National Precast Concrete Association Australia

- Important to identify all membership stakeholders (who) and their varying expectations (what) from their membership.
- Membership benefits can be communicated to potential members in a variety of ways (such as email, letters, one on one meetings) – one good idea for doing this is an online slideshow explaining benefits.
- A good way to communicate membership benefits is to quantify savings they have made during the last 12 months as a result of their membership. This may be done by tracking what they have attended/purchased etc, and allows them to justify their ROI come renewal time.
- Great membership benefit ideas discussed included member mentoring (to provide newer members with assistance), speed networking at member meetings (allowing all members to communicate) and awards schemes which are only open to members but promoted to non-members also.

Membership Recruitment & Retention

Moderator: Roy Palmer, Seafood Experience Australia Ltd

- Use of LinkedIn Groups
- Retention begins with first contact
- Member incentives - anything from journal/book offers, etc
- Mentoring programme - older, longer serving members mentor new people to ensure they are aware of all opportunities offered by association. Mentors are rewarded with various small but well-meaning incentives
- Entry and Exit surveys to keep on top of issues
- GRAPE - Growth, Recognition, Achievement, Participation & Enjoyment

Moderator: Mike Iliopoulos, European Society of Minimally Invasive Neurological Therapy

- What does the member really want and how do we deliver this in an economic way?
- Web 2.0 is the new to communicated with members and members to communicate between themselves.
- Priority is the member communication between and for themselves rather the organisation speaking for them.
- Control of communication is not possible anymore but guidance is necessary.
- “What makes members happy” is the key slogan.

Online Learning

Moderator: Anne Blouin, ASAE

- Repurposing content
- How can you create collaboration (face-to-face with online)

Moderator: Sarah Bachmann, National Precast Concrete Association Australia

- Most arguments against online learning (e.g. that people can cheat when completing online learning) can be counteracted by convincing arguments either in favour of online learning or those not in favour of face-to-face learning. For example, people can register for face to face courses and then not complete the course; even if an online course participant enlists help to complete a course (e.g. another person or Google), they will still learn.
- Online learning should be regarded as more than just paid or FOC courses/workshops/seminars – it can also be an excellent information resource for members. For example papers and presentations which are of interest to the membership can be uploaded into a member-only area of an association’s website.
- The question of whether to charge or not charge members: agreed that a good approach is to provide one free course to members and then charge for the rest – and courses should only be available to members. Members can use their completion of these courses as a way to promote themselves (via CPD or not). Members can use this as a tool for staff recruitment. Membership can also increase.
- Suggested practicalities of online learning: participants must view every slide. If participants fail more than once they cannot re-sit a course within a given time frame.
- Financing online learning: given the sometimes high course development cost, some providers will reduce development costs and then revenue share. This reduces the upfront cost to a cash limited association.

Risk Management

Moderator: Behroz Daroga, Meetings, Events & Communications, Inc.

What would you do to make sure delegates are safe?

- Don't panic, be calm
- Social bond, get people connected and stable
- Investigate possible further steps
- Get everyone to safe place
- Look at alternative for hotels and transport
- Delegates responsible for others to help
- Get contact information, photos from each attendee, as well as language spoken

Risk management isn't just about reacting to a disaster. It includes drawing from history and predicting key factors.

Find out what the venue's risk management procedures are in advance

When traveling to foreign countries identify local authority to assist.

Event planning partner key instead of going alone

Social Marketing & Networking

Moderator: Eric Le Gal, (World Surfactant Congress and Business Convention)

- LinkedIn is the most widely used followed by Facebook (considered more leisure). Few use Twitter but those who do use it do it very actively.
- A consensus was reached that it is somewhat time consuming but if one does not allow enough time, then the tool loses interest.
- Attention has to be paid to the "pseudo" experts writing erroneous comments in discussion forums.
- It is a very useful and incredibly rapid way to build communities around a common theme.
- There is sometimes a lack of interaction between the Web Team and the Conference Team
- Social Media is a natural step forward after web sites

Moderator: Theresa DeConinck, American Society of Mechanical Engineers

- English appears to be the most popular language with Facebook with the exception of China, who has their totally own social media tools
- Twitter and YouTube not being widely used outside the USA
- Facebook and LinkedIn really vary in popularity and use within Associations
- Many organisations while successfully using Facebook and LinkedIn really do not have specific strategies in place for their initiatives
- Very important to have aggressive facilitators or members are not staying engaged

Moderator: Darryl Walter, The Wildlife Society

- Concern about time commitments and how often to post and who should post and monitor these sites. The view is that LinkedIn is for professional networking and Facebook is for social networking.
- Some organisations are just doing LinkedIn with success while others are just posting Twitter feeds.
- Also discussed the power of video with YouTube and also sharing conference photos on photo sharing sites such as Flickr.
- Discussed correlation of increase in social networking presence and uptick in membership growth.

Strategic Alliances & Partnerships

Moderator: Isabel Mortar, SIOP

Benefits identified by the group:

- Ability to bridge gaps in your association which are important to meet your mission
- Benefit from new skills and capacities
- Facilitate cross representation (e.g. global, national)
- Multi-stakeholder approach (e.g. business, government, non profit)
- Access new customers, geographical markets, stakeholders
- Get revenue share
- Position your association

Some tips identified by the group:

- Ensure clearly defined goals
- Should be a win-win
- relationships are key
- Each partner must contribute actively in some way
- Take time to prepare a well-structured agreement
- Address all aspects of partnership – who leads, who manages finances, who is spokesman etc.
- Choosing partners with similar values and culture makes it easier

Strategic Planning for Associations

Moderator: Isabel Mortar, SIOP

Benefits identified by the group

- Move from short to medium/ long-term planning
- You can decline your strategy around your values
- Way to engage stakeholders and staff
- Great to get buy in from members

Key steps for associations identified by the group

- Scan internal and external environment
- Review mission, vision, values
- Review strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
- Set objectives and strategies to meet objectives
- Develop and monitor your action plan

Moderator: Greg Bondar, AMI Pty Ltd.

- Strategic Plans are generally for a 3 year time frame and is really a 'road-map' for the association
- Strategic Planning is best undertaken with an outside (independent) facilitator
- Staff, Board, Stakeholders need to 'buy-in' on any strategic Plan – that is, they need to have 'ownership' of it
- Strategic Plans should be reviewed annually by the Board and thus an Agenda Item at the end of the year
- Strategic Plans must have goals, objectives etc.

Strategic Planning for Associations

Moderator: Gina Van Dijk, ASH

- Challenge: smaller tradeshows/exhibitions => how handled?
- How do Congresses & Exhibitions come together (e.g. Exhibitions, including content)
- Learn Trends, Best Practices
- Challenges: what do you encounter? Per industry? Area?
 - Marketing => e marketing
 - Broaden spectrum of exhibitions/ sponsors & exhibitors
 - Venue knowledge, flexibility
 - Negotiations => work with partners => buying power
 - Support locally => get knowledge
 - Keep fresh => do not let exhibition die => innovate
 - Decision making => Board => decisions: inform them of impact/ possibilities