

A person is shown in silhouette against a bright, warm sunset background. Their arms are raised in a gesture of triumph or inspiration. A sharp lightning bolt strikes down on the right side of the frame. The overall mood is one of power and achievement.

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**captivate your
audience:
crafting an
inspirational
program.**

CAPTIVATE YOUR AUDIENCE: CRAFTING AN INSPIRATIONAL PROGRAM

Creating a high-energy interactive event program that keeps your attendees focused and engaged takes careful planning. Your program planning for a conference will be very different to an incentive program, awards ceremony or product launch event.

First and foremost, the event content must be relevant to the attendees, sponsors, and other guests. No amount of showmanship will overcome a weak event agenda. To create the right content, you need to know your audience. What have they attended previously of yours? Where have previous events been held? What has worked - why, or why not?

You have to ask lots of questions: What is the purpose of the session? Do attendees need interaction in sessions to keep the energy alive? Do they like to bounce ideas around with each other and share best practice and success stories? Do they need to hear from experts in the field and then look for angles on how to apply this to their own roles? What about looking at their business with new eyes while being away from the daily grind?

What activities are best for inspiring them - outdoor adventure, team exercises, cultural experiences, or day spa and winery tours? Do they like fine dining, or prefer a casual pub environment? Do they need down time, or like to be busy for the whole day? Do they prefer a reserved lodge experience with trout fishing or high-octane activities like bungy jumping or driving laps in a race car?

Are partners or sponsors attending? Is there a separate partner program? Do sponsors participate in social or team activities?

Your conference program content must be targeted to the audience and business purpose to ensure success. Content should fit within time parameters and include relevant, inspiring messages and speakers who will attract and retain audience attention. The program must deliver content that flows and works to meet the objectives while creating the best attendee experience. It must not be rushed and should have appropriate meeting time balanced with free leisure, networking, team activities, and dinner events.

Conference sessions should be professionally delivered using innovative audio-visuals. This is the 21st century and the old 'chalk and talk' methodology - even when updated to PowerPoint and projectors - often fails to excite.

Select speakers with dynamic presentations, use entrance and exit music and an introduction video to capture attention. Put motion on the stage wherever possible. Look at different staging options, explore and make it interesting. Program sessions should include a mix of topics such as business leader updates, specialist information, industry news, business results, best practices and future growth opportunities.

Sessions should be kept short and to the point to maintain interest and audience participation. Dinner events provide a great opportunity to create fun and excitement while celebrating achievements with an awards ceremony.

The length of the conference, business rules, and tax implications determine how much time must be devoted to business-focused activities or sessions each day.

Team Activity: a team activity is a great way to incorporate an opportunity to work together and grow as individuals and as a group.

Welcome Dinner: the welcome dinner often has a more relaxed atmosphere and a shorter time frame as attendees may be fatigued from travel. This low-key event is a great way to kick-start the conference and allows time for the attendees to network. If you have clothing merchandise and gifts, it's a good time for everyone to start wearing their shirts or hats and get into the mood of the event.

Free Time: an essential ingredient of a successful conference is to give attendees time to rest or attend to any important work or family matters away from the conference. A few hours at the end of the day, between the business sessions and dinner, is typically enough time. Label it as such in the program so attendees know what is expected of them.

Awards Ceremony: a great finale to a conference, the awards ceremony is usually held on the last evening of the conference and is a time of recognition and celebration.

making a difference

“ The moments that really touch and inspire me are seeing guests’ reactions as something completely unexpected catches them by surprise ongoingly as days of layered surprises just keep coming. And then, weeks, months and even years later, the memories stay with them - they are still talking about what we did for them. This brings immense joy and satisfaction in knowing that all the elements have worked. ”

TIPS FOR CONTENT AND ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC): Using a comedian or professional moderator can aid the leadership team with warming up the crowd and keep the flow interesting and on time. The MC should be someone who can relate to and communicate with the attendees. A great MC will be well briefed, understand the business objectives, conference theme, and any special aspects of the program that will draw audience participation to achieve a desired objective outcome. An MC will participate with the group from the opening session and first dinner to the conclusion event such as an awards night.

The MC will get to know the group and use their shared experiences to relate humorous stories from the previous day in his morning recap. This technique will draw in the audience and allow the MC to focus the group for the commencement of the day's activities.

SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS: the MC will announce each speaker, providing a brief introduction before welcoming them to stage. Introduction material might include the speaker's unique business message, position and credibility, hobby interest, and best-known attribute for the audience to relate to. Using a music sting as the speaker enters is a way to create further anticipation of the presentation. Animated speaker introduction slides and multiple screens enhance the whole event. Some speakers will provide their own video or animation for the introduction.

CEO/GM UPDATE: messages from the executive or leadership team should include the strategic vision and business direction, provide the group with details on the focus and goals for the future and thank sponsors, business partners and attendees for their achievements and commitment. This is a good opportunity for management to portray their human side to the attendees.

MARKETING UPDATE: if required, a marketing update should provide information on new products and branding updates, announce new marketing initiatives, and rollouts for the coming year. Updates on marketing functions can be very engaging as they represent the brand personality and promotional aspects of a business such as new logo launches, TV ads, products, or brands.

PRODUCT OR SALES UPDATE: these updates provide information on product platforms and developments that will aid business practices and processes. They often include product announcements, including competitor activity.

TEAM ACTIVITY: focusing on teamwork and sharing a common goal, these activities often have a facilitated outcome aimed at building a strong cohesion within the group.

LEADERSHIP PANELS: these give the audience the opportunity to ask questions and for the leaders to receive feedback from the group. Through open discussion, business leaders will be able to hear the opinions of individuals within their organisation whom they may otherwise never meet.

GUEST SPEAKER: a speaker who complements the goals and theme will bring an exciting aspect to the conference program. Guest speakers provide opportunities for personal development, inspiration, and enjoyment to balance the more formalised business content. A speaker with a brief for personal growth will deliver stories of their experiences about overcoming challenges and achieving greatness.

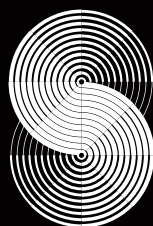
PEER PARTICIPATION: engaging a few respected attendees to deliver a presentation to their peers provides a different dimension to program delivery. Attendees relate and respect peer recommendations and best practices.



**we create events that awaken, ignite
and motivate your people, building a
renewed sense of connection and
commitment to your organisation.**

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