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**ensure innovation
and success:
choosing the right
event management
team.**



ENSURE INNOVATION AND SUCCESS: CHOOSING THE RIGHT EVENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

AS THE SAYING GOES

‘always sail with the mariner who has been shipwrecked, for they know where the reefs are.’

Many companies know the value of appointing professionals to assist in some way with their events, from an advisory role to taking full responsibility. There’s a reason we have professional conference organisers (PCO) and an event management industry. The process requires expertise and a broad knowledge of a very complex industry. Contracting a multi-skilled, senior team who understand the fundamentals can be essential for a successful event.

Their expertise can save you tens of thousands of dollars and most definitely hundreds of hours. They can advise, make recommendations, understand the business role and turn your goals into a successful outcome. An experienced team will identify and provide solutions for content and attendee engagement, as well as incorporate the latest event industry innovations. For example, streaming presenters live from international locations rather than flying them to the event or designing apps to provide content pre-, during and post-event.

An experienced PCO will also have the right industry contacts to ensure you make significant savings through vendor negotiations, but also ensure the delivered product is of high standard and value for your event.

More information about the role of a PCO in Chapter 10.

Here are some of the key requirements for an event organising team:

- The experience and foresight to create a time-specific program and recommend suitable destinations and venues to deliver the complexities related to your event.
- Understanding how to implement your business vision and goals through the marketing strategy, program content and destination experience to build community, brand loyalty and specific focus. They should be armed with cutting edge innovative solutions to engage and inspire your attendees.
- A proven track record in delegate communications, registration solutions and engagement and travel management.
- Established and reliable supplier networks and buying power with hotels, travel partners, venues, audio visual providers, speakers and entertainment and merchandise suppliers.
- Project, task, timeline and goal-oriented with project management systems in which all key stakeholders can participate.

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- If the event manager cannot provide an easy-to-understand event roadmap, it is wise to avoid them.
- Budget management experience is essential, particularly the ability to set realistic initial estimates, exchange rate and foreign currency management and reworking the numbers based on changes throughout the process, without compromising attendee experience or overall quality. When combined with strong negotiating skills to obtain the best rates and an insider's industry knowledge, the event organiser will ensure a high value, on-budget event.

Creating clear team roles and responsibilities between in-house (Client) team members and the Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) leads to successful relationships.

In-house roles depend on staff skill, expertise and time availability. These usually include:

- Staff require experience and understanding of conference history and management requirements and can be utilised on a working committee relevant to their experience to add value and save on costs.
- Internal reporting processes and guidelines, including updating senior management and obtaining approvals.
- Setting business and brand objectives for conference.
- Time available to commit to the project without ignoring regular job duties.
- Budget setting and financial knowledge in management of progressive payments.
- Content development and presenting information.
- Buying power and access to internal networks, such as contracted business suppliers for travel, product placement and support, design, merchandise and print fulfilment.
- Sponsor and business partner relationships.

A PCO removes pressure from in-house resources who are often limited by time, specialty skill, and experience. The role of a PCO varies to match the needs and in-house expertise and roles within the business but ranges up to complete management and organisation of an event including:

- Setting timeframes and the project management outline.
- Establishing theme, brand and message communications.
- Developing the budget and reworking it throughout the project.
- Negotiating and contracting suppliers, managing invoice payments and reconciling the budget on completion.
- Recommending destinations with pros and cons for each which come with an understanding of infrastructure and supplier capability.

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- Travel recommendations, airline assessment, route options and flights to correspond with the program timeframes.
- Social program options with team and leisure options relevant to the group culture and interests. Outline the recommendations and coordinate all the details to ensure nothing is left to chance.
- Dinner event design and delivery including ensuring clockwork delivery of the theme, venue, food and beverage, entertainment, event design, sponsorship inclusions, audio visual effects, speaker support and event run-sheets.
- Provide an experienced team to fulfil all onsite management functions enabling you to network and focus on your attendees, business relationships and content.
- Develop online tools and apps for information pages, registration pathways, itinerary communications, session engagement, social media updates and group online networking options.
- Provide a co-ordinator for all speakers, sponsors and attendees pre-conference and onsite to create their best conference experience.
- Audio visual recommendations, design, quality control and content support. Understanding the venue capabilities and shortfalls, bringing an experienced crew to assess and manage any speaker, technical or venue situations that affect the content delivery.
- Manage all components of hotel contract and conference fulfilment including accommodation, food and beverage and meeting facilities.

making a difference

“ One of the most valuable ‘events’ we took part in was the BDM briefing session at a 2019 sales conference in Sydney. There had been a lot of work on systems and policy in 2018 to bring the event management practices in line with regulatory requirements. A key element of this was creating a more robust and detailed Travel Policy and there were some problems with BDMs not fully understanding the issues and why the policy is as it is.

In preparing for the presentation we reviewed all our practices and built real-life stories around the key elements to clearly illustrate how it all worked in the real world. We wanted the BDMs to become advocates for these new efficiencies and to eliminate all misunderstandings arising from misperceptions of the travel policy and personal requests circulating in the HCP community. Since the conference, we have noted a dramatic reduction in the number of requests to deviate from policy by healthcare professionals and BDMs. ”

EXPERT TIPS

A PCO's network of suppliers and partners will generally ensure at least a 10% budget saving through their industry experience and knowledge of what's negotiable and what's not. This assists to offset their management fee, making it a win-win scenario.

The PCO assumes the responsibility for managing the event, leaving the business team to focus on managing internal expectations, content delivery and the freedom to network and focus on the business relationships.

Create a strong working partnership between the in-house event manager and the PCO team including:

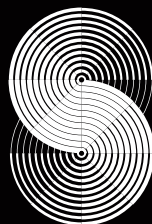
- Collaborative project development and establishment of a core management team.
- Regular work-in-progress meetings via online, in person or telephone for updating and identifying next steps or where assistance might be required.
- Establish a project plan and outline of milestones including cash flow planning.
- Agree areas of responsibility and tasks.
- Set completion dates.
- Support each other and work as a team with a healthy level of trust and solution focus.
- Focus on the business objectives, conference theme and values, ensuring they are embraced throughout the experience pre-conference and during the onsite program.
- Align skills and tasks to best complement the available resources and time.



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commitment to your organisation.**

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