



# 3<sup>RD</sup> EFAPCO congress

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## 3<sup>rd</sup> EFAPCO GENERAL ASSEMBLY & ANNUAL CONGRESS

Warsaw, January 10 to 12, 2008

### CONGRESS PROGRAMME



## The role of Meeting Planner and PCO in the chain of service

*Daniela Serrati, Italy*

Professional conference organisers are companies specialised in conference organisation. The PCO is the link between the separate liaison person and the suppliers. While the committee must be the final arbiter, the PCO is the project manager, ensuring the whole program runs without a hitch. The PCO can also act as consultant to the Committee in many different areas. Professional conference organisers have vast experience and knowledge in planning meetings.

In fact, the Events Professional is essentially a communicator business, which plays an important role: the expertise guaranteed by the selection of an experienced PCO will ensure that the time-consuming and complex elements, such as budget management and event planning, are taken care of and you can be assured of a successful congress.

An effective bid for an international conference should be the result of a strong team co-ordinated by the national organising committee, PCO, for understanding how to work with the headquarters or international organisation for a win situation.

Meetings and conventions bring people together for a common purpose, and meeting and convention planners work to ensure that this purpose is achieved seamlessly. Meeting planners coordinate every detail of meetings and conventions, from the speakers and meeting location to printed materials and audio-visual equipment. The first step in planning a meeting or convention is determining the purpose, message, or impression that the sponsoring organization wants to communicate. Today's planner possesses exceptional visionary and procedural skills, patience and fortitude to execute strategic, effective meetings. Many of today's top executives are teaming that a meeting planner's contribution to a company's measured success is valid, valued and essential.

Meetings have a significant return on investment (ROI) for an organization's corporate mission, financial goals and a positive economic impact on host cities. The trend today (and for tomorrow) is to utilize corporate meetings as a prime revenue generator, strategic communications tool and a significant part of a company's marketing effort.

### **Relations with hotels**

It is my opinion that we should create a kind of ethical collaboration between the organizers and the hotels and conference structures to give an accurate and unilateral reading to the final user: the customer.

We, professionals of events, could give a great contribution:

- To certify the host structures
- To verify the minimum requirements needed to be places of conference events
- To training all the professionals involved to this field.

The most important thing, and let me say the most difficult, is to convince the hotels that they are partners in the project and they deeply contribute to the success of the event.

### **Relations with Convention Bureaux**

The Convention and Visitor Bureaux are, according to me, a very useful to those who organise events.

This kind of organizations, mostly non-profit, are established for the purpose of affirming the values of their city, their province or their region and they have the task of helping, in a objective and neutral way, the realization and the organization of the event.

In addition, the CVBs do marketing activities, provide detailed information on the structures and suppliers, coordinate inspections. They have good relations with the personality of the place, they can organize social activities and provide all information and promotional material.

### **MICE industry in Italy**

Regarding the MICE situation in Italy, there is a strong trend in growth. The area that is having the most significant development, in the last few years, is the area of the highest level micro-events with less than 50 participants.

What is lacking, and we hope that arrivals from Italian Authorities, is a careful analysis and review of taxes, which are highly discriminative due to the fact that we need to compare our situation with the benefits offered by other competing countries. Many countries, in fact, have state facilities relating to remission or VAT refunds.

Anyway, I'm glad to say that this year, after a lot's of meetings at government level, the Minister Rutelli granted the deduction of 50% VAT at 10% and for the next year, it's planned the total deduction of VAT at 10%. This is, without any doubts, the first big step of the Government to help whoever makes our job... hoping it will be only the first of a long series.

**Case study**

Among others, Studio Esse, organized the First International Congress of Graphology- City of Milan. It is a classic example of associative event, open to the paying public, with the participation of eminent personalities and speakers. The preparation was organized through the analysis of different subjects. Each subject has been designed, according to the specific skills, to a collaborator, whose work was monitored and controlled in details by Mrs Daniela Serrati, president of Studio Esse.

The different organization' steps were:

- Search of: location, hotel, speakers, patronage, sponsorship (Montblanc, Borla Ed., Lasergrafica Polver, UPM)
- External Services: technical equipment, hostess, simultaneous translation service, transfer service
- Layout of: brochures, posters, invitations, registration schedules, badge
- Press Office
- Press conference
- Advertising
- Relationship with the participants, the speakers, the press
- Gala dinner
- Complementary events at the Conference

**Studio Esse**

We are a PR office specialized in organization of events, image promotion, public relations. We look after everything leaving the client free from any trouble.

We organize events such as: conventions, seminars, product presentations, meetings, press conferences, promotions. We take care of: invitations, advertising campaigns – contacts with the media, hall layout – electronic material and more specialized staff – hostesses – stewards.

Image promotions: design experts, able to create innovative esthetical solutions, without neglecting good taste; computer programmers, strictly pros of the web language, able to improve your presence on the world wide web; marketing, the sales department is one of the major means for success, and it is aimed at analyzing different business strategies and market surveys; press office, the new-born department, able to give you the trump card to get into the lime – light in the media world.

Public relations: we find out the basis for a long-lasting partnership a possible partner to share projects with; we trust in creativity, quality, professionalism.

These are qualities of a firm which has been on the market for several years and which does not forget how important clients' necessities are!

*Daniela Serrati, EFAPCO Board Member, President of Studio ESSE*