



## KEEPING YOUR EVENT HIGH ON THE AGENDA

IN TODAY'S CHALLENGING ECONOMIC CLIMATE, YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS TO WORK ESPECIALLY HARD TO ATTRACT DELEGATES AND SPONSORS TO ITS EVENTS. THIS REQUIRES THE CREATIVE USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES. SOME ASSOCIATIONS USE PROFESSIONAL EVENT ORGANISERS, AND OTHERS PREFER TO ORGANISE THEIR EVENTS IN-HOUSE. EACH HAS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES.

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WITH REGARD TO ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS, A NEW FACTOR TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IS HOW TO OFFER AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE EVENT

Content will continue to be key to draw in your audience. With a growing number of events on offer, content needs to have an immediate appeal to the audience you want to reach. Common topics for presentations and panel discussions are green issues, technology, lifelong learning and skills exchange. These are all very interesting, but in a competitive market what are some of the more unusual topics that might set your event apart? What special knowledge, unusual debate issues and unique skills will appeal to prospective members, supporters, authors and sponsors?

With regard to organisational details, a new factor to take into account is how to offer an environmentally responsible event. International destinations need to prove the

benefits of sustainable solutions - including air travel - as this issue becomes even more high-profile for the corporate world. Even local events need to show green credentials, but if these are part of the plan from the outset, they are unlikely to incur an extra cost and will pay dividends if marketed effectively to delegates. One option includes providing documents only in electronic format. A growing number of conference organisers are integrating social responsibility into their conference package, for example, by donating excess food from cocktails to local programmes that feed the homeless or offering delegates the opportunity to contribute time to a local charity in the fringe of the main event.

Flair and creativity will differentiate your event. In some cases, this is an opportunity

for conference and event organisers to demonstrate just how their specialist talent adds value to the sector's bottom line.

Major industry conferences like IMEX and EIBTM, worldwide organisations like MPI and ICCA, and umbrella groups like ESAE and ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership offer a range of resources that help industry professionals to find out about the latest trends, to compare experiences, to gain credentials and to meet top-line professionals. In today's tough climate, we all need to leverage the resources at our disposal to make sure each event promotes a strong, unique message that attracts delegates and brings in revenue.

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