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# THE VALUE OF EVENT MANAGEMENT IN ASSOCIATION MARKETING

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As an established events business of nearly two decades, MICE Concierge has been, and continues to be, event partners to a wide range of Associations. Through our experience I have gained an understanding of the important role that events play as part of an associations wider marketing mix - specifically in terms of attracting new members, retaining and engaging existing members, and in delivering perceived meaningful value for membership fees. Congresses and Annual Conferences are flagship events where associations must be best dressed and ready for action. Impressive branding, clear messaging, accessible, relevant and relatable content - these events should not only demonstrate an association's vision and values, and the benefits of membership, they should show how it is actively connected, engaged and influencing its industry.

Events (Face2Face or Virtual), have a role to play in membership recruitment, education & training, showcasing new strategies, sharing the latest content, presenting services and solutions to problems. In addition, event delivery should also incorporate an element of dynamic, multi-directional interaction, allowing associations to harvest data and insights, through a collation of 'sonar' communications. The information that is drawn from this activity, can provide the association with real time snapshots on the 'state of the nation', the issues and challenges that their membership is facing. This in turn allows the association to circle back and create relevant, valuable and engaging event content which delivers real value to the membership. Information is power, and sharing it exclusively with your membership is currency, which will ratify the value of membership and belonging to the association; thus creating an attractive value proposition for new and existing members.

So how does an event management company support all of this? Well firstly we see ourselves as custodians of the delegate journey; and we believe that it's our job to deliver an optimum experience. This should replicate the best relationship your association would like to have with its members.

Although we are performing a function (event registration, website creation, onsite check-in and badging, accommodation management etc), we see ourselves as another marketing channel for your event, in exactly the same way that social media and e-marketing is. From the outset we carry the responsibility of activating the brand profile of your association, your key messages, your vision and values in action, and the unique proposition of your event. These things must be confidently conveyed in every interaction we have, with every single delegate; and in co-operation with other partners - who also work to deliver their own part of a flawless event solution. We must reach out to potential delegates in a timely manner, look impressive and sound relevant, use 'en pointe' branding, appropriate language and accessible and relevant channels of communication for your audience. We must listen and respond with consideration so that every delegate feels like they have enjoyed a personalised VIP service from their association.

In addition, we must create opportunities for interactive engagement and contributions, so that delegates are able to participate and contribute to polls, voting, surveys, soft feedback, submission of white-papers, video uploads etc - before they get to your event. These nuggets of gold will inform and guide the crafting of your event content.

We are custodians of the first part of the delegate journey, and we know that every easy, comfortable small interaction, comes together to create a bigger impression. How your association is represented on this journey, could be the difference between a new member joining or an existing member engaging (or leaving).

We believe in enhanced service, and although we may not be at the very shiny end of event delivery, we know that the part we play is incredibly important. Getting your delegates to your event in the right frame of mind, with a positive outlook, is like bringing a ship safely into port, after a comfortable journey - and no stormy seas. We are fully aware that we are part of wider team, and we know that our role is to deliver the first 'leg' of the journey to the highest level of performance.

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