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DO'S & DON'TS IN CONFERENCING...

About videoconferencing

Advanced preparation and testing is important for the success of a videoconference.

Andrea Guido and Annalisa Trovò, World Mediation Forum, in collaboration with Università di Padova and Pràgmata Politika SRL Mediation Organism

Not everyone will be familiar with the videoconferencing system you use. Send information about the system to your speakers/ presenters and consider making a simple 'how to' document on key tasks (accessing the system and your specific conference etc.). Use screen shots to illustrate the necessary steps.

Well in advance of your conference date: schedule a test session so that presenters can test their local computer, camera & speakers and internet connection. This will give them time to identify any issues which might cause problems for their participation.

A MANAGED VIDEOCONFERENCE IS A SUCCESSFUL VIDEOCONFERENCE

A videoconferencing platform that allows a coordinator to handle the organizational tasks is important. Such a system leaves the speakers to concentrate on their presentations without having to be concerned with technical issues.

The meeting coordinator will be responsible for designing the session; uploading powerpoint or other documents from presenters; working with presenters to

insure their comfort in using the system; insuring that presenters are connected and online 30 minutes before their scheduled presentation; etc.

HAVE A BACK UP PLAN

Plan for possible problems that can occur. For example, a speaker might come online and experience problems with their camera or microphone on the conferencing system. Use Skype, for example, to allow them to complete their presentation. This is only a backup plan if you have tested Skype with them and they know how to use it.

Always have local copies of all documents used in the presentations / sessions – powerpoints, slides, handouts. Documents loaded online might not always be available for one reason or another. A USB stick with these files is an inexpensive way to save the day.

Where possible, use the same computer for managing all conferencing sessions. Test in advance that it is in good working order and ing tasks. Have a laptop designated as a backup computer in case there is a problem with the primary computer.

GENERAL POINTS ABOUT MANAGING FOR SUCCESS

All presenters should receive the criteria and formatting requirements for their presentations. These should be strict guidelines on allotted time, number of slides, font style and size, etc. Distributing a template or preformatted document is a good way to insure uniform presentations. Guidelines on presentation structure should also be given to presenters to assist them in meeting their goals in the time allotted and facilitating the attention of the audience.

Use speakers or students as chairpersons during group sessions which feature presentations. The chairperson will guide the group and strictly adhere to the time limits and scheduling agreed in advance with the presenters. Such guidance insures that the group sessions are able to function smoothly while completing their aims and benefiting from the skills of the assembled speakers and participants.

Meetings are about meeting people: make some time and dedicated space for participants to meet informally with speakers. This could be a breakout room during a coffee break, for example.

www.worldmediationforum.org



FROM THREE ANGLES

Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO)

The view of Ellen Van Ree,
Project Manager

As an association your strongest assets are your members and the good relationship with industry partners and media. Involve these groups in developing your event, creating brand awareness, composing the conference programme etc.

The objectives of professional event organisers are different than from associations. A huge benefit of associations is that they can drive their event on content; professional event organisers are driving their event on revenues.

Make sure you receive all your payments in advance, even though your delegates might have been member for years and are well known to you.

Depending on the size of your event, consider hiring a professional registration organisation. This can save a lot of time.

Brief photographers in detail on which pictures you would like to have; the important moments/persons for them to capture, envision for which purpose you need the pictures (brochures, website, articles etc.).

Do not assume that prices of suppliers will only increase 5% for the next year. Sometimes there are significant changes. Check the prices for the next year well in advance.

Keep visitors on-site up to date via a mobile application. Inform your delegates about the app in advance and to download it before going to the venue.

How much catering should be you ordered?
 * For paid events: 10-15% less than the number of registrations
 * For free entrance events: 30-40% less than the number of registrations (if on-site registrations is possible than the number will be slightly compensated and you can order 30% less).

www.canso.org

International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH)

The view of
Tim Briercliffe,
Secretary General

The programme must be confirmed well in advance and for promotion the content must be described as much as the speakers. Be concise but clear. Use bullet points.

For small industries like ours making a surplus on an event will depend on strong sponsorship, not on delegate income. Focus on a strong sponsor proposition and then deliver it and they will stick with you.

Create a detailed event schedule with nothing missed out. On the day this is your lifeline.

Make sure you give the organisers a treat afterwards and tell them how amazing they are. This is what motivates them to do a job which has such pressure over an intense period!

www.aiph.org