

Communications Business Solutions

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Tips for Running an Incentive Travel Program

From my experience organizing international events, I have identified a number of program components that are often overlooked and can have a significant impact on a program's bottom line. Fluctuating exchange rates may have a significant financial impact on program budgets. I have been involved with international programs that have experienced significant losses when the value of the Canadian dollar dropped relative to the US dollar and the Euro.

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Meeting the Needs of Event Participants

Companies and associations place high value in events and other conferences. They use them regularly.

The time has come for the industry's professionals to understand the workings of this idyll and to determine the wishes and needs of participants, to be able to create an overall positive experience for participants.

A study was therefore conducted. Several shocking truths first... It turns out that participants experience events and conferences as an unparalleled way to learn and improve professionally.

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The result of a survey about meetings, conducted a few years ago, is quite pointed. A relatively simple choice was proposed: attend a meeting or engage in other tasks generally considered to be boring.

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How to Lose Money by Flying

Businessmen fly regularly. So they often know the tips and tricks that need to be used to avoid the biggest inconveniences.

But not everyone is in the same boat, however, and some “business” travelers are not used to the exercise. Millennials are also beginning to frequent the airports. For them, there are a handful of financial mistakes that can easily be made!

Parking and shopping

Parking the car is expensive, especially if you are going to be away for a week or two. We often give in to “ease” and park in the car park attached to the airport, which is very expensive. But it is quite possible to reduce these parking costs. Just think about it before traveling. For example, instead of parking “as close as possible” to the runways and having to bear costs which are often exorbitant, you can park in car parks that are outside the airport that carry much lower rates.

A very comfortable solution, when flying on an early morning flight, is to choose a hotel near the airport, arrive there the evening before, spend a restful night and leave the car there while taking advantage of the hotel shuttle to get to the terminal. The room will allow you to relax and have a good night’s sleep, while its cost will largely be covered by the savings in parking fees.

Now lets talk about “impulse buys”. When you walk into the airport, you are inevitably tempted by “duty free” purchases. Everything is pushing you to buy, but you still need to know if you are (or are not) getting a bargain. All the purchases that you can make in the “duty free” areas are not necessarily bargains. If you already know the value of the devices or products you plan to buy, it’s an easy comparison. But products that are local to the country are often less expensive outside the airport area. In any case, if



you are not sure, a quick search on your smartphone will let you know in a few minutes!

Eating and sleeping

Also, be careful not to succumb to the temptation of having copious meals in airports. ALL

the food (from simple sandwiches to cooked meals) are much more expensive than outside. Often it is too easy and sometimes... there is no choice. But if possible, go to a restaurant elsewhere.

Find out before you leave if you want to rent a car. Often (not always, however), picking up a car some distance from the airport can save a lot of money, even if you have to take a taxi to get there.

As well, when going to a city, you often take a first flight to a major “hub”, where it is necessary to board a second, larger aircraft. This practice is understandable: the airline collects, in its major hub, as many people as possible arriving from various cities that have the same final destination and can therefore fill a large airplane. But the traveler therefore sees his route extend from 3 to 5 hours and it requires two boardings and two disembarkings. If there is one, a direct flight may be more expensive, but a lot more comfortable! Think about it!

Travel times and jet lag can be stressful to the body, and it is tempting to drift off and snooze while waiting for a flight. But be doubly careful about your luggage and personal effects (there are not only honest people in airports), and the time to wake up to avoid missing the plane! It’s better to sleep IN the aircraft!

When Boring Tasks Are Preferable to Attending a Meeting

The result of a survey about meetings, conducted a few years ago, is quite pointed.

A relatively simple choice was proposed: attend a meeting or engage in other tasks generally considered to be boring.

The organizer has a smile!

About half of the people interviewed would prefer boring tasks. Almost always, these kinds of examples are taken to harshly criticize meetings.

However, according to the researchers, the person who organizes and leads the meeting has a completely different image of the meeting, this time very positive. Most of the time he believes that the meeting was “highly productive”.

So there is a real chasm between the meeting initiator’s perception of the meeting and that of the participants.

The people who arrange the meetings and find them productive do not generally have this opinion when asked to assess meetings arranged by other people.

By further analyzing this type of data, the researchers found that a participant’s satisfaction for a meeting was closely correlated with the speaking time of that participant.

What is even more clear is that the more a person speaks at a meeting, the more useful and

productive they find it to be.

When “company culture” undermines meetings

All the foregoing encourages modesty and helps avoid self-satisfaction. But it is not necessary to be too hard on yourself. Meetings arise from “company culture” and that really hurts the meetings.

For example, meetings are planned at the times when the most people will be available and do not take into account scientific data that highlight different times of day when people are most likely to be creative.

Another pitfall: upon becoming a manager, one is supposed to lead meetings, while no training about this aspect has been received.

The routine is also a great hindrance: the meetings often become forced and inevitable rituals. It is enough - among others - to consider the length of a meeting (often one hour) while no necessity requires this timing.

We modestly said... “analyses of disinterest indices” can be added. It’s easy to be detected during a meeting, that said.

It’s easy, for example, to measure individual speaking times, to see if there are any asides between certain participants during the meeting, to note whether or not there are contradictory opinions, to analyze if each participant was really necessary within the meeting group...

Any self-criticism must be based on an assessment of these simple parameters that is as honest as possible.



New Challenges for Offices!

A sign of the times, the office is also undergoing a revolution and turning its back on its constantly recurring theme, which was solely the focus on its function.

Today, it's "spotlight on users"! Their needs were identified in a recent survey conducted in six European countries.

Green and smart offices!

What was learned...

The ecology is a growing concern among all the groups studied. They feel that offices have to respond to this new challenge and become as "green" as possible.

This will be achieved by using sustainable construction materials, using solar panels and "organic roofs", and by equipping work spaces with sensors that intelligently manage lighting, climate control and heating.

Of course (!), this is not enough, and it will be necessary to sensitize staff to the ecological policy (zero waste, local food, "clean" transport).



Intelligence – in the broadest sense – must be injected at all levels and must be present everywhere: the furniture must be smart and there must also be data management software that simplifies administrative tasks. Decision-making tools also need to be improved, through the use of artificial intelligence, for which there are great expectations.

Huddle rooms en dedicated areas

Flexibility is widely acclaimed.

The need for meetings is increasing considerably. Companies have to take this into account by creating "huddle rooms" that



staff can occupy without prior reservation.

These small meeting rooms can accommodate between two and six people and are usually equipped with a screen and a videoconferencing or teleconferencing kit.

In general, spaces have to become multifunctional and evolve according to the needs of the moment of staff. There is also a demand to make these spaces accessible 24/7.

The goal is no longer just to work, but to do it in a pleasant environment, where the employee can at any point find the space that matches his state of mind and the task that he wants to accomplish.

Premises must therefore be considered as real "living spaces" where, just like at home, there are different "areas" that are occupied according to the need.

This also leads to an important consideration: unlike what was known in the past, there is no longer a wall between "working life" and "non-working life".

This is the end of compartmentalization – workers want a "seamless" transition, with no abrupt dissociation between the two lives.

The demand is then going so far as to be able to find, in the "work" place, extended services such as shower rooms, daycare centers, gymnasiums, etc.



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Reducing Nuisance Noise

There is no point in reeling out the evils of noise at work. Today, especially since the appearance of “open spaces”, it disturbs concentration and reduce creativity - a lot!

It's also impossible to ignore it just by force of will! The brain is literally assaulted and makes efforts to “defend” itself, and this energy is not available for work. All the more reason to take a closer look.

The layout

In fact, it is possible to reduce nuisance noise. Before choosing a site to locate, it is wise to inspect the surroundings and avoid highways, airports, unless, of course, your business demands it.

That said, special glazing is a big help to reduce noise coming from outside. Triple glazing with panes of different thicknesses will dampen the noise.

As regards layout, care should be taken to separate different spaces and to isolate noise-making machinery (printers, photocopiers) and areas that are noisy by nature (cafeteria, kitchens, toilets and huddle rooms).

For unprompted phone calls, a good solution is to create small telephone booths that you can slip into and be soundproofed.

More generally, there are soundproof booths of various sizes where meetings can be held in offices, hotels and airports.

Their purpose is both to protect from noise outside the booth AND to provide calm and silence inside them to favor discussions.

It is often essential to create “silent” areas where you can work in peace and quiet.

Everything is possible in this respect – it can be decreed that this area must remain silent (with, if necessary, a warning light signal) or you can go to accommodation spaces in a neighboring hotel!

Furniture

Furniture also plays an important role. There is furniture constructed with sound absorbing materials. Soft upholstery fabrics also help to absorb noise.

Special attention should be paid to the ceiling. Concrete (energy efficient for temperature control) makes echoes, bounces sound waves and destroys acoustic comfort.

There is no single solution. Predrilled hardwood and perforated metal can be used, as well as soundproofing fabric on the back.

After the ceilings are the floors. Carpets are perfect for controlling impact noises such as footsteps.

Under the carpets, if it is not installed on concrete (which is perfect if this is the case) mass

ing headphones. These use active noise-reduction technology which, as we reported in an article in a previous issue, “listens” to the ambient noise and diffuses the antidote, which is the same noise but with inverted waveform, so that the two sound waves cancel each other.

Employees who use this technique will want to choose a headset that is well suited to their ear lobes, to avoid painful pressure if they are worn for a long time.

It should be noted that this technique is especially effective for “continuous” noise (such as the purring of motors or turbines) and much less for “unpredictable” noises, because there is a reaction time involved for the computers.



Orgatec

can be added to absorb sound, such as shredded rubber mats, hard foam panels or a cork subfloor.

Think green! Plants can help absorb a lot of unwanted sound, as well as improving the ambient air quality and provide an “atmosphere of calm and relaxation”. Large office plants prevent sound waves from propagating in open spaces.

Technology

Technology also comes to the rescue. Random and natural sounds can be introduced into the workplace which mask the sound of annoying conversations. The sound of falling water is much appreciated.

For its part, “white noise” (random static noise) is widely used. It should be noted that it is also used to help insomniacs sleep.

Imitate the Millennials and use noise-reduc-



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Integrators Must Be Able to Provide Management Services

It is a long time since corporate audiovisual facilities have been cluttered with troublesome cables.

This satisfactory development has been magnified by demands for conferences and collaboration, omnipresent in companies.

Computers have enabled the different elements to be managed in an increasingly transparent and user-friendly manner. That is, as long as you can invest in human resources in terms of AV specialists.

Increased overall complexity...

And indeed the situation is not idyllic everywhere. On the one hand, few companies can afford to have dedicated AV specialists, and on the other hand, since audiovisual equipment is found just about everywhere, it is necessary to take on more equipment, and this involves a lot of work, since many existing installations are still based on proprietary technologies.

Today, videoconferencing has become the daily bread of almost every room (even little rooms or huddle rooms) and this excellent development underlines the fact that our way of communicating has radically changed.

It has become customary (and therefore necessary) to connect wirelessly to share content and it is no longer necessary to be back at the company to do so – smartphones and tablets allow it while at home or on the move.

It can therefore be easily understood that this multiplicity of systems, devices and applica-

tions increases overall complexity and requires more skill by the staff responsible for deploying everything.

This is especially true since this work has to stay out of sight and must not interfere with the ease of handling or the users.

...and an increased need for management

Given the complexity involved in managing it, it is inevitably very rare to find people internally who are responsible for proper functioning and maintenance of the systems. Large and very large companies can afford it, given their size and resources.

In all other cases it is highly preferable to rely on competent external integrators. Under these conditions, everything from installation of the equipment to troubleshooting has to be able to be managed remotely.

It is clear that artificial intelligence will soon make a beneficial appearance in this field. Already today, with the growing use of sensors, it



is possible to implement automated solutions to AV management. Environmental, proximity or presence sensors can be very useful for audiovisual management, if they can be integrated into the control systems.

The 2019 IC State of Business report stresses that the audiovisual integration sector is growing, but that its profits are at risk.

This type of management service can be an opportunity, as long as integrators are ready to add VALUE beyond installation and deployment of the equipment.

The world is constantly changing. What about business?

We are living in a world that changes at a hectic pace. At the same time, companies also have to constantly adapt and change, or else they will collapse.

But humans cannot be manipulated the way numbers can, and frequently the forces of change confront the opposition of staff.

Resistance to change

This resistance to change is spontaneous in humans. Change in itself creates a lot of uncertainty, especially when it is radical and rapid. Change destabilizes and upsets habits. We are aware that they structure and reassure people. Routines provide a sense of comfort. We do not only focus on people and the environment, but also on routines. Consequently, letting go of these routines gives a sense of loss and sorrow.

Resistance takes two forms, active and passive. The most insidious is passive resistance. Here, there is “foot-dragging”, falsely playing the game while opposing with a great deal of inertia, hoping to demonstrate that the change demanded is of no use and that it will involve a lot of complications.

The reasons are often not understood that would “push” to change things: “Why fix what isn’t broken? We’ve always done it this way successfully, so why change it?”

Today, we are seeing this kind of brake (mis-

understanding) in many fields where we are having to switch from the analog to the digital. For example, the world of photography has seen it as well, and this brake has destroyed companies that were slow to make the essential change and which, as a result, quickly fell behind their more reactive competitors.

And to understand the need for change, it has to be explained. And to explain it, there has to be sound arguments, fully communicated.

This is the condition for people not to be opposed to change. The questions are in this order: Why is the change necessary? What will the

consequences of this change be to carrying out the work? Is there a need to change quickly?

And the emotions get involved!

But the rational is not everything, the emotional aspect must also be taken into account.

The uncertainty created by change raises fear in the individual of losing his job and having to deal with something new (role, culture, people, etc.) that he may not know. There is a

feeling of helplessness, because you feel unable to control the situation and the results.

It has been said that the greatest fear for people, with respect of change, is that of losing their job. The most recent research in neuroscience highlights the extreme emotional damage that the fear of “loss” causes in itself.

This question of employment must be addressed head on, by communicating the measures taken and insisting on the training that will allow tasks to change. It is essential to ensure that all decisions relating to retention and potential layoffs will be made on the basis of

clear, fair and objective criteria (giving people a sense of fairness), and in a participatory manner (giving people a sense of control).

With all this communication about change, its ritual and self-centeredness, someone must be found to “carry” it, someone who is the “face of the change”, who will be a communicator and in whom staff spontaneously trust. This trust means that staff think that this communicator will make decisions that will be in the collective interest.



Are You Going to Work at the Hotel?

Offices often have architecture that allows “flexible work” to adapt better to a workforce that is more mobile than ever.

In the process, some hotels want to get on the bandwagon of flexibility and thereby offer “co-working” spaces.

The movement has recently been amplified and improved, but the basic method is known to many businessmen who use hotel hallways to work and even to meet customers.

Make slow periods profitable.

Today everyone goes further afield. Certain hotels are creating spaces available to workers who are not necessarily traveling businessmen. They are also open to self-employed people as well as to itinerant agents who seek to carry out their work in a social setting with all the desired facilities.

So it is not unusual to find drinks, small private meeting rooms (like “huddle rooms”), a Wi-Fi internet connection and printers.

Hotel hallways are also a preferred space. By providing comfortable seats, electrical outlets and an internet connection, hotels aim to make the most of their traditionally slow periods in the morning by offering light refreshments. Sometimes these hallways are “revisited”, renovated by equipping them with a “productivity table” that includes electrical outlets, USB ports and



secure drawers that can be rented.

This type of offering reflects on the chain’s global reputation: a local person who works in the hallway of a Hotel X and has a good user experience will be more likely to reserve a stay in the same chain when traveling in a different city.

Monetization possible, additional revenue

Other establishments opt for monetization of work spaces, following the more traditional

model of co-working. They generally offer “subscriptions” of a few days or monthly passes.

Other times it’s the proposed “add-ons” that pay off, such as the use of the gym, the swimming pool or the “coffee at will” formula.

To be successful, the establishments need to be picky about the quality of the technology offered. For example, Wi-Fi connections must be flawless!

It is also good for the available spaces to include quiet areas where you can carry out work that requires reflection or private conversations.

Here, there are technical solutions to create personal spaces and small soundproof booths can be used, among others.

Of course, this “co-working at the hotel” orientation should not interfere with the normal operation of the hotel which always has to carry out its room management operations.

Here, like in many areas, imagination is needed to adapt to new demands. Nothing to do, times are changing and you have to evolve...

A Prospect Who Has “Stood You Up” Is Still Interesting and Interested

A scheduled appointment with a customer... who stands you up when the time comes... the “no show” phenomena are particularly frustrating for sales services.

It’s frustrating, because you have prepared as well as possible and... these absences come across very badly, especially emotionally.

“No show” does not mean rejection

We then reason and deduce that by his absence the prospect is demonstrating his disinterest for the products and services proposed and... we move on.

However, a recent study has shown that the “no show” does not always mean a rejection. It can be the result of scheduling conflicts, illness, or even internal disorganization at the prospect.

By questioning prospects about the reasons for their absences, it was discovered that the main reason was that they were overwhelmed by their work. Ten per cent were called to another meeting, 6% had an emergency and about 5% had a technical problem about the invitation to the meeting (while another 5% had to move unexpectedly and 5% more were off sick).

Analyzing these facts reveals that scheduling problems greatly disrupt the lives of prospects. What solution would be appropriate to implement to deal with this situation? First of all, don’t expect great punctuality from prospects (especially high value prospects or senior executives), then propose broader time slots, so

they are not discouraged from coming if they are late. And be ready for last minute changes.

Imagine leading a hectic life

In fact, you have to assume that their time is more valuable than yours!

The good side of the story is the fact that almost 20% of absences are caused by emergencies, illness

or travel problems. This means that many of your potential customers still want to talk to you. In the end, the position to be adopted is... to put yourself in the prospect’s shoes, quite simply. Suppose that you also lead a “hectic” life and stay in touch without being too intrusive, thereby saving their time and their personal life. In this context it is preferable to send SMSs rather than making calls, for example.

You have to be adaptable and understand their reactions.

And above all you have to react positively to



any “no show” episode by putting it in context, assuming that the contact should simply be re-scheduled, and proposing other possibilities of appointments to the prospect with a wider range of times.

Staying in touch will prove successful, because the prospect will feel that he is important to you and that you understand him.

It is sure to reflect positively on the continuation of your relationship.

Meeting the Needs of Event Participants

Companies and associations place high value in events and other conferences. They use them regularly.

The time has come for the industry's professionals to understand the workings of this idyll and to determine the wishes and needs of participants, to be able to create an overall positive experience for participants.



peers and the contacts they can forge with prospects.

For its part, technology is progressing and favors unprecedented engagement of participants before, during and after the event. It has a very favorable impact on the overall experience of the event and also manages to stimulate loyalty for future participations.

In particular, prior recordings of solutions on the internet reduce the burden of long queues in advance



"An unparalleled way to learn and improve"

A study was therefore conducted. Several shocking truths first... It turns out that participants experience events and conferences as an unparalleled way to learn and improve professionally.

These events have a very significant impact on the progress of their careers.

70% believe that with each participation new things will be learned that simplify their life at work...

90% of respondents say that their last participation was an excellent return on the time spent.

and mobile applications enable easy navigation in the event by providing the information participants need throughout the event.

Managing "post-event" stress

Millennials are the fastest growing group, but it should be noted that they may require more advice to make their overall experience more cool and less stressful.



Even stronger: 50% of participants are interested, before the event, in the content to be discussed and 40% look further into the subject after the event.

Of course, all this can be explained...

"Face to face" events are extremely valuable for professional development of participants, who are offered the opportunity to progress in their career by attending training sessions.

They also appreciate networking with their

interest in making sure that the various sources of stress are reduced as much as possible. Stress always arises from gaps in the information dispensed.

The more detailed the information, the more the participant will have the impression of "mastering" things and therefore the



better will be his experience.

Creating a mobile application for the event has more and more meaning. When it exists, it turns out that three participants out of four download it.

This is normal after all because they are beginning and the circumstances are new to them (being away from home, not knowing anyone, learning to network under conditions where they have to speak with "strangers").

A significant source of stress for participants, according to the study, is in justifying, after the fact and once back at the office, having attended the event, especially considering the costs associated with participation.

So they need to benefit from personalized recommendations based on their needs. In any case, and for all age groups, organizers have a vested

To reduce this, it would help to share the experiences with colleagues at the office. To do this will require post-event material that they can share, including detailed information on the speakers as well as the key points that were addressed.





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The Connected Customer Improves His Hotel Experience

Hotels are being frequented by a new generation of customers. They are connected and expect technology to help improve their hotel experience.

The availability of services during the otherwise “slow” times (for example late evening) is an example.

Everything revolves around the customer’s smartphone

According to studies, 65% of American hotel customers believe it is “very important” for institutions to invest in technology to improve their experience. At the same time, more than 90% of business travelers want to be able to use their smartphone to order services.

This situation is ultimately in line with the life of consumers, who are turning to their smartphones for a multitude of different operations. The smartphone is a part of people’s lives and it seems obvious that hotels are impacted by this tsunami.

Customers prefer text messages, because they prefer telephone communications. This is also normal, since SMSs are less intrusive (they arrive and are read when there is time), and phone calls often arrive when the line is already



busy or at times when no one is available, with a great loss of time.

A true “win-win” operation!

Hotels are the winners of this development. They can send alerts and notifications, contact just one person or groups, or even all custom-

ers.

Since this type of conversation stays in memory, the technique can lead to staff training, in view of interventions being more efficient, based on the reality of messages exchanged.

Of course, hotels can engage on social media and also create their own apps from which it becomes easy for the traveler to make a reservation and find out the latest information wherever he is and even before he leaves for the establishment.

This is the time to invest in this kind of service, with no fear of exaggeration. Because the customer always has the opportunity to do things “the old way” and

phone the reception desk or even go there in person to solve any problems he may have encountered.

Except this time staff will be much more time available since they will be released from the task of having to disseminate “repetitive” information, thanks to the techniques we have just discussed. A true “win-win” operation!

Digital Concierge Solutions for Venues and Hotels

1 Wimpole Street is well known for innovation when it comes to event technology and they are always looking out for tech and services that can

1 Wimpole Street is one of London’s leading conference and events venues.

It is the home of the Royal Society of Medicine since 1912 and this landmark Edwardian building has evolved to meet the demands of changing times by becoming an award winning tech-friendly venue.

“The beauty of the Giant iTab is its flexibility due to its android operating system and wi-fi connectivity. It can be used for wayfinding, digital signage, app demonstrations, a sales aid, DIY visitor registration and so much more.

Because it looks & works just like a giant smartphone it is intuitive and easy to use - even for our visitors who are technophobes.”

Several 27” Giant iTab Smartphones have been purchased by 1 Wimpole Street, London including positioning units in their venue reception areas for guests and visitors to use as wayfinders, book meetings and even find out the latest weather & travel information for their journey home.

Their internal marketing teams also went into overdrive thinking about ways their marketing teams can offer this event technology as an added-value resource for increasing their venue hires by offering interactive presentations for their clients events.



Giant iTab

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https://m.youtube.com/results?search_query=giant+itab

Tips for Running an Incentive Travel Program

BY LIZ HOLTBY

From my experience organizing international events, I have identified a number of program components that are often overlooked and can have a significant impact on a program's bottom line.

1. CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS

Fluctuating exchange rates may have a significant financial impact on program budgets. I have been involved with international programs that have experienced significant losses when the value of the Canadian dollar dropped relative to the US dollar and the Euro.

Helping your client manage international vendor payments is as important as managing the logistical details. Have you considered hedging the funds at the beginning by opening up a foreign currency trust account so that supplier payments can be made from that account.

2. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Disruption is the new normal and travel throughout the world is now more uncertain than ever. Being prepared to manage the "what ifs" is crucial.

I recently took an emergency preparedness course. One of my key takeaways was instituting role-playing at internal company meetings. This requires that you have a number of crisis situations ready to present and action at meetings.

Finally, always reserve money in your budget for emergencies and the unexpected. A contingency fee of approximately 5 to 10 percent should be included for categories such as emergency preparedness, currency fluctuations, f&b increases or costs that aren't guaranteed at time of budgeting.

3. VENDOR CONTRACT OPPORTUNITIES

Read all clauses in your supplier contracts. Hopefully, you will not have to refer to them, but if the unexpected happens, you will be thankful that you made it a priority. Here are some suggestions:

Negotiate with your desired supplier before the contract is signed.

Look at the potential risks to your event's location. Update your force majeure clause.

Have a contract checklist so that you can make sure nothing is overlooked. It is not just concessions that are important but also clauses that help both parties should something catastrophic happen.

Think about concession opportunities that cost the hotel very little but serve as added value.

Include a condition that the business is contingent upon a site inspection of the hotel and that the program can be cancelled in its entirety without penalty of any kind pending the site inspection.

4. SAFEGUARDING ATTENDEE DATA

Data security has gone beyond the "clean desk policy" or locks on filing cabinets. The topic of securing data is much more complex and has a significant impact on meetings and events. Whether it's collecting passport numbers, birthdates, or home addresses, it's crucial to ensure that information remains safe and is appropriately destroyed following your event.

I recently attended a cyber security event hosted by The Globe & Mail newspaper in Toronto. I learned is that at a bare minimum, you must ensure that all sensitive information shared with hotels and other suppliers is sent using password encryption.

Secondly, all event professionals should have



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standard language in their RFPs and service-level agreements with service providers outlining the requirements on how attendee data will be protected. This must include asking if the third-party supplier's data privacy protection standards are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR].

5. VAT TAX RECLAIM

Many planners are unaware that Value Added Tax (VAT) paid on hotels, DMC services and other meeting and event components in foreign destinations are often refundable to your organization. VAT reclaims can often be in the thousands of dollars.

6. EVENT INSURANCE

Unpredictability with respect to travel to other countries is a reality, making event insurance—specifically event cancellation





insurance—a must. This has become extremely important especially with the US administration potentially imposing travel bans and/or re-voking visas. It's essential to read the fine print and be aware of the inclusions and exclusions.

7. CASH ON-SITE

Have you ever had to travel with substantial amounts of cash to pay for vendor tips and other cash expenses such as participant cash al-

lowance for lunches or dine-arounds? What if your hotel will not advance you the funds on-site? Take the time to wire the amount you need on-site (from a trust account) to your hotel so that they receive the funds in advance of your arrival and have time to get the required denominations.

8. SAFEGUARDING VENDOR DEPOSITS

Advance deposits that you pay for meetings and events are, in fact, unsecured, interest-free loans from your organization to vendors to se-

cure future services. With a few exceptions worldwide, vendors are free to use your deposits for operational cash flow. This represents a financial risk.

Consider keeping the funds in a trust account and coordinating the release of the funds to the vendor at the start of the event with the delivery of services. This avoids financial risk because of business failure, business interruption and other catastrophic events.

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The Maximum Impact of a Conference Depends on Respect for Mother Tongues

Conferences and meetings that bring together an audience from different parts of the world are obviously like a tower of Babel. Here are English speakers, there Spanish, over there French – it is a blend that is rich in culture and idioms.

And yet, this beautiful world has to “vibrate in unison” at the plenary sessions and, when the speakers take the floor, they need to be understood.

The wrong idea of English for everyone

We know that current trend is to consider that everyone speaks and understands English. From this premise it can be thought that the language problem is resolved. This is an incorrect good idea, a mistake that sometimes has disastrous consequences. Because there is a world between “basic”, “elementary” English and the subtle nuances that are often necessary to apply to words, or else they become distorted.

All the studies indicate that a person only penetrates deeply into the ideas expressed when they are expressed in their mother tongue. In the end it is logical, when one thinks about it seriously: a foreign language has to go through pre-processing in the brain, which is more or less strained according to the person’s language ability.



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It even happens sometimes that there are somewhat paradoxical situations where the person translates the words expressed more or less perfectly, but... they don’t understand them (because the brain is busy with translation and doesn’t have time for comprehension).

Think carefully before taking the plunge

We then understand the importance of simultaneous translation. We know the principle – in-

terpreters take their place in ad hoc cabins and translate what they hear on the fly, in the target language. Participants have a headset and select their mother tongue.

In order to make the right choice of interpreters, it is a question of relying on a specialist who will be given a preliminary presentation of the event and the list of different languages that will be used, to allow him to concoct the most effective “cocktail”.

In any case, you will receive a quotation and you will be able to discuss it ahead of time.

The same goes for the technical equipment used where the use of a specialist subcontractor is strongly advised.

It will be necessary, to prepare your specifications, to determine the essential points in detail: “who must understand what and with what degree of accuracy”, and also “what languages will be represented”.

Sensible tips will also increase the effectiveness of the event: providing all the documents to the interpreters, recruiting local interpreters when possible and feasible (to avoid the cost of travel and accommodation).

'The power of the shared experience' – innovation, education and business opportunities combine to ignite the imagination at IMEX in Frankfurt 2019

On sait l'importance, dans les relations d'affaires, de faire appel à des interprètes lors de réunions où les participants parlent des langues différentes. Nous avons publié à cet égard des articles éloquentes.

With 3,500 exhibitors from over 150 countries, IMEX in Frankfurt brings together all the elements that planners need to ignite their imagination – and their business success. Boston, Airport Authority Hong Kong, China Top View Holiday Travel & Tours and Kyiv Tourism Association are just some of the exciting new exhibitors that planners can meet at IMEX in Frankfurt, taking place from 21 – 23 May.

These organisations are set for three busy days of business with several thousand hosted buyers arriving from all over the world including new groups from across Europe, the US and Asia.

Imagination – the time to ask 'what if...?'

Imagination is IMEX's Talking Point for this year and informs content throughout the show with education and experiences challenging planners and exhibitors alike to question the conventional and explore new approaches. This includes a new Discovery Zone – a entire hall showcasing the latest in technology and experiential, plus a few surprises along the way.

Learning, as always, remains one of the core offerings at IMEX, with a packaged programme of free show floor workshops as well as a dedicated day of learning - EduMonday taking place on Monday 20 May. EduMonday begins with the keynote at She Means Business, created in partnership with *tw tagungswirtschaft*. After this, attendees can stay and be part of She Means Business, celebrating the role of women in the events industry, or mix and match from a programme of 20 general sessions designed around professional or personal developments.

Tailor-made learning for association planners

Event professionals from all sectors and all levels can explore topics and trends via a number of dedicated events within EduMonday, all specifically curated for various audiences. Association professionals from around the world are invited to Association Day & Evening, to share best practice and connect with peers. This top class event is split into three streams – all aimed at senior association professionals and chaired by key organisations in the sector. ASAE, ICCA and MCI have

all collaborated with IMEX to create a topical and interactive programme, delivering three Learning Labs covering Leadership, Imagination and Knowledge.

Carina Bauer, CEO of the IMEX Group, explains: "The power of the shared experience helps to deliver brilliant business opportunities as well as a welcome blast of excitement and

surprise. We capture what's new, what's inspiring, what's brewing across our industry and in the world around us and put it in the melting pot to ensure our show remains fresh and hot." IMEX in Frankfurt takes place 21 -23 May 2019. Registration for the show is free of charge and open to all who work in the meetings, events and incentive travel industry.

www.imex-frankfurt.com



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Plan B for a Speech When Technology Breaks Down

Sometimes the nightmare becomes reality... The technology, on which your presentation is built, can break down and... then it's disaster!

All speakers have experienced, one day or another, the anguish of the "blue screen". Nothing happens, the cursor doesn't respond, slides cannot be projected, everything is in disarray!

A presentation without technical support

Imagine the scene... Standing, facing the audience, you're at risk of freezing, because everything depends on the sequence of your visuals.

Then you just have to try to save the day. You can announce that you will send your visuals by email or on your company's website, but the speech you had planned made constant reference to what appears on the screen.

And, since technology is everywhere these days, glitches can occur in many ways... Including a weak Wi-Fi connection (there you can always fall back on a connection through your smartphone, because sometimes the cellular networks are more consistent).

In any case, you cannot be prepared for everything that might arise, since there are so many possibilities.

The best solution is to prepare a "Plan B". You will have to force yourself to make an "old-fashioned" presentation, with no technological assistance. To do this, a lot of work is required ahead of time. Intellectual work first, as well as scenario repetition work.

The idea is therefore to be prepared for this risk of having to make the presentation WITHOUT any technical support. A great deal of creativity needs to be implemented to achieve this.

You are the one who will be making the "great speeches"!

Base yourself on a simple and unstoppable



premise: the participants have come to hear you, to enjoy your speech. They are not expecting elaborate graphics or "polished" videos, they need your opinion, regardless of how it will be given.

You will summarize the visuals that were planned. Simply. It's not impossible, you just have to practice beforehand and write a "bullet point" for each of them. The details will be lost but at the same time impact will be gained.

By preparing in this way for your speech and repeating it several times, you will be amazed to discover that you become more and more spontaneous and natural. Spice it up with a few

humorous lines and you will be fully in phase with the themes that you are developing. In the process you will gain confidence and it will be felt in your audience.

In reality, the design and preparation for this "Plan B" will allow you to realize that the best technology in the world can at most improve your presentation. You are the one who will be making the "great speeches", not the technology.

And it has to be said that quite often we prepare rather poorly and imagine that the technology will overcome the shortcomings. But this is of no earthly use!



Case study Azimut Hotel

Streamlined Visual Communication at AZIMUT HOTEL

The Azimut Hotel is a new 4-star business-class hotel at the heart of Moscow. Azimut chose SpinetiX technology for its versatility, ease of use and reliability track record.

The hotel design and equipment follow a concept that Azimut staff refer to as SMART (Simple, Multifunctional, Atmosphere-creating, in Rhythm with city life, and Trendy). Azimut's 475 rooms and 8 conference halls are all equipped with cutting-edge multimedia equipment.

Challenges

The hotel management was looking to streamline visual communication with visitors and guests. In particular, there was a need of a reliable and easy-to-use integrated system that allows to:

- Inform visitors about the services and offers of the hotel
- Greet groups and VIP guests
- Provide information on the schedule of conferences, excursions, local features, entertainment
- Stream live sports events
- Display messages related to safety in case of emergency
- Create and update content easily from a unified location
- Be operable 24/7 with low maintenance

Solution

To answer the challenge, Azimut chose Spin-

etiX HMP players for displaying screen content.

SpinetiX HMP players were chosen for their uninterrupted 24/7 operation capability, lack of moving parts, their ability to automatically restore in case of power loss, and no maintenance requirements. 23 SpinetiX HMP players work with 12 LG professional panels in both landscape and portrait configurations as well as with the hotel's internal television network comprising of 482 TVs.



vice information as well as active promotions.

Elevator

In-elevator screens with advertising entertain and inform guests on the go, without causing irritation.

Lobby

Two info-panels greet guests right at the door. The screen displays live weather and visitor information.

475 Hotel Rooms

One SpinetiX HMP 300 player is connected to the hotel TV system, allowing unmatched content-creation capabilities for special promotions and paid-ad broadcast over the hotel's internal TV channel.

Restaurant

HMP players and screens throughout the restaurant are used to support ongoing restaurant activities and to stream live TV.

Conference Hall Area

Eight screens installed next to each meeting



The union of reliable technologies provides the hotel with a high margin of safety in case of emergency situations – especially important for a building hosting thousands of visitors, guests, and staff daily.

Elementi software for content creation.

Three staff members work with the content creation system comprising of a post with SpinetiX Elementi digital signage software.

A single person administers the software and creates the content.

Two staff members act as operators updating content exclusively in the hotel's conference

room areas. etix technology including HMP hardware players together with Elementi digital signage software to streamline visual communication with visitors and guests. Azimut's internal IT specialists independently developed the project - from planning to installation to configuration.

room areas.

Reception Area

The screen at the reception desk shows a welcome video, hotel-ser-





hall. Each screen is individually controlled with branded event information: name, time, hall. Results

A new streamlined visual communication channel.

The easy preview, intuitive publication, and flexible update of on-screen content enable hotel teams to be agile in using both scheduled or on-demand content consistent with visitor and guest expectations.

A highly integrated system that is easy to manage.

The combination of powerful HMP hardware and intuitive Elementi software allows to quickly manage content remotely and simultaneously on all devices from a centralized location. The software interface is intuitive and user friendly.



Reduced maintenance costs.

HMP players are easy to install, don't take up space and are very robust, as they have no moving parts. This along with Azimut's positive assessment of their interaction with SpinetiX tech support ensures savings on maintenance costs.

Scalable future-facing solution.

There are more than 100 HMP play-



ers currently installed in Azimut Hotels chain in total. With 23 HMP players currently in operation, Azimut Smolenskaya will install 11 additional SpinetiX players in 2019.

"We had previous experience with SpinetiX equipment in another Azimut hotel. We knew the solution would fulfil all our expectations. And it delivered."
*Nikita Puzanov
 Information Technology Specialist*

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Website: spinetix.com
Videolink: youtube.com/spinetix
Internetlink: spinetix.com/references

Digital signage and Big Data

Let's assume that you are making the most of your digital signage installations. You have chosen the right equipment, you have thought of the best locations to set up your screens, you have refined the content of your messages...

Everything is working! And what are the results? Hey, you probably don't know... Good news, you are not alone. But you are missing a good opportunity to improve yourself by being ignorant of the results of your broadcasts.

Throwing "bottles in the sea"

In fact, you are "throwing bottles in the sea". Of course, you probably notice an increase in sales, but could it not be higher? And then, of course, are you sure that it comes from using digital signage? It could (for example) be related to certain particular times (sales boost before the holidays, the end-of-year celebrations, due to the weather, etc.).

The ideal thing would be to be able to measure the effectiveness of your digital signage system in a more "scientific" manner.

There are tools you can use for this purpose. A good method is to put systems in place to interact with your audience. The icing on the cake is that as soon as people interact with a message they are much more involved since they are less passive. Interaction can use screens that the target au-



dience will touch. You can also use tags, or QR codes that people scan with their smartphones. More sophisticated, facial analysis will let the sex and age group of spectators be determined. "Eye tracking" goes further by following the location where eyes are focused, which helps identify attention hot spots.

Real ROI specialists for digital signage

Of course, after collecting this type of information, it is still possible to do something with it!

And the risk of drowning in it does exist. A more pragmatic way of approaching the matter is precisely to be interested in the audience's reactions. In fact, the more they react the more impact your messages are having.

Beginning with this simple postulate, you can observe differences that the various changes you make to your displays have. Of course, if you are using cameras that let you have an idea of the audience and the time they spend in front of your screens, you will obtain highly useful information about the relevance of your messages.

But in doing so you will always be confined to sketches and hypothesis that are not really valid.

This is why the best solution is to get the help of real digital signage return on investment specialists who will be able to define a coherent data collection and analysis structure, who will be able to model in software that will crunch the data automatically and provide you with truly usable and scientifically based information. In these times of Big Data, these advances, formerly impossible or overpriced, are more and more at your fingertips!

Transform Your (Right) Messages!

Whatever activity you conduct in your business, be aware that digital signage and the kiosk can literally transform your messages by making them more powerful and more attractive.

Remember... To learn, at school, you would write... On the other hand we know that nothing beats engagement, personal action, to remember something. Now for some statistics: we remember 10 % of what we read, 30 % of what we see and... 80 % of what we experience. These are the considerations that feed digital signage.

Increasing "unscheduled" purchases

In fact, interactive content attracts much more attention than static content (a picture or a slogan). Interactive marketing created by digital signage and kiosks is guaranteed to generate interest. The result is not long in coming, and you will differentiate yourself, boost your reputation and gather more sales and more information on your customers.

Studies conducted in the retail business demonstrate that the use of digital signage greatly increases the likelihood that a customer will make an impulse buy. And we know the interest in these "unscheduled purchases" that significantly increase the cash slip. The results obtained with digital signage are incomparably superior to what can be achieved through tradi-

tional posters and pictures.

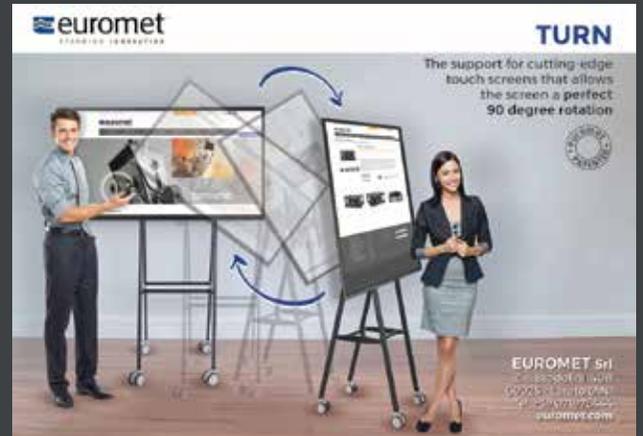
A message disseminated through digital signage is also remembered longer. This is obviously related to the "stimulus exposure time", because digital signage is able to capture attention for longer than other media. This phenomenon has been measured, of course, and it is estimated that recall increases by about 10%.

Getting out of the ambient "background noise"

Let us not forget that these days people are bombarded with advertising and various information, so much so that this information is not remembered and somehow disappears into the "ambient background noise".

We also know that engaging the consumer to react (using interactive techniques) acts in such a way that recall soars, because the person is involved in the process.

Of course, we have to find scenarios that lead people to want to get involved, and this is the



key to success. Here, as in many other areas, it is the content that counts, and that is what has, or doesn't have, the power to arouse interest and bring about participation.

We cannot overemphasize the attention to be paid to the design and production of the content disseminated. This parameter overtakes all the others. There is no point in having a high-performing digital signage system, placed at the right places, with vivid images, to disseminate boring and unengaging content.

Wayfinders and Digital Event Guides at Fira Barcelona 'Convention Centre'

20 x Giant Smartphones deployed at FIRA Barcelona as Digital Event Guides & Wayfinders for presenting Floorplans, Exhibitors, Events, Sponsors and Seminars for the GSMA's Mobile World Congress 2019, Barcelona event.

GSMA is one of the world's leading global event organisers. They host Mobile World Congress, the world's largest exhibition for the mobile industry.

Over 2400 companies exhibited and over 109,000 key decision makers attended this year's prestigious event.

Giant iTab were appointed by the GSMA as their 'recommended event tech supplier' for Mobile World Congress Barcelona '19, the biggest of their three main MWC events.

Here, 20 x 43" Giant Smartphones were located around the show floor for wayfinding and presenting the event App.

There were a further 2 smaller units on low level podiums suitable for wheelchair access (and DDA compliance) as well as several pieces on different exhibitor stands including the DiT pavillion and the GSMA members lounge.

The GSMA's use of Giant iTab's centred around 3 main objectives:

- To deliver an improved visitor experience
- To increase adoption of the event app/web-site



- To increase awareness of sponsors and exhibitors

Giant Smartphones were deployed as Digital Event Guides & Wayfinders presenting all the key information about the event such as floorplans, exhibitors, seminars and other activities to help attendees find and select the important areas of the show and make the most from their day.

At the end of the show, over 250,000 touches were recorded across the 20 units (on average 12,500 touches per unit) indicating a significant

level of interaction and engagement from show visitors to this award-winning event technology solution.

Our 'go-green solution' also allowed MWC Barcelona to continue as the world's largest carbon-neutral trade show. Exhibitors, speakers and sponsors also received additional exposure, thus increasing the value of their investment (ROI) in this world class event.

This selection, by one of the world's leading global event organisations, is a further endorsement of our status as a World Class Event Tech Solutions Provider.

Giant iTab

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