



JOINT MEETINGS INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Meetings for Success IMEX 2009

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Delegate List

Ray	Bloom	Chairman	IMEX
Terri	Breining	President	Concepts Worldwide Inc.
Rod	Cameron	Director, Programming and International Development	International Association of Congress Centres
David Ian	Campbell	Director	Banks Sadler Ltd
Phil	Cavanagh	Senior Director - Global Events	Monster Worldwide
Hans	Den Dekker	Managing Director	Philips Electronics Nederland B.V.
Caroline	Elwen	Assistant Vice President	Barclays Capital
Luca	Favetta	Senior Director Global Events EMEA	SAP
Larry	Head	Director, Events, Global Corporate Relations	Diageo
Alain	Kachami	President	Motif
Polo	Looser	Vice President	MCI Central Region
Bruna	Migliazza	Marketing Manager	Hay Group
Mieko	Peltret	Business Operations Manager	Booz & Company
Alan	Pini	CEO	Teknocongress ICS
Birgit	Roeterdink	Global Strategic Sourcing	Schering Plough
Eric	Rozenberg	President	Swantegy
Didier	Scaillet	Chief Development Officer	Meeting Professionals International
Dev	Sharma	Head of Global Accounts	MCI Group
Martin	Sirk	CEO	International Congress & Convention Association and Joint Meetings Industry Council
Klaus	Span	Senior Manager of Marketing	IBM Deutschland
Brian	Stevens	President & CEO	Conference Direct
Rhea	Wessel	Writer	The Conference Publishers

Executive Summary

Panelists and participants gathered for the May 27 Meetings for Success Workshop at a time of significant threat and unprecedented opportunity for the global meetings industry. The discussion revealed a series of cross-cutting themes for the meetings profession, and for the client-side stakeholders who derive value from an effective strategic meetings management function.

Audiences

Understanding of the value and importance of face-to-face gatherings must extend to the highest levels of corporate and political decision-making. "We want to move the awareness of meetings to boardrooms, where they're not necessarily understood," said **Martin Sirk**, CEO of the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA).

"We have to make it easier for politicians who engage with the industry to communicate our story, [in order] to justify their involvement and increase their support," added **Rod Cameron**, director of programming and international development for the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC). "We need to help them get the information and tools they need to show that meetings are not just about revenue but about the whole concept of economic development."

Participants said the ability to convince senior executives of the value of meetings comes down to the ability to demonstrate and measure results. Critical success factors include an overall approach that is strategic, rather than operational; credible messengers to tell the industry's story; and effective measurement.

"We must measure the hard facts and better assess the soft side," said one participant. "Then, we need better communication of the results."

"We need to use different language to appeal to those people who need to be persuaded," agreed another participant. "We need to step up to the plate to be the industry we want to be."

Defining Strategic Value

The crisis in the meetings industry has resulted in the right stakeholders talking together, to enable meetings to shed some of the inaccurate labels and perceptions acquired over the years. "We're resetting, but we can take the industry in the direction we need to go," a participant said. "Yes, we look like travel, we smell like travel, but we're not travel. We're a lot more."

Didier Scaillet, chief development officer for Meeting Professionals International (MPI), said the industry can assert its strategic value by:

- Moving away from the affiliation with hospitality and talking "the language of business"
- Conducting economic impact studies
- Re-skilling the meetings industry workforce by hiring people trained in marketing and communications, rather than hospitality
- Designing measurement and management tools, and understanding how to provide comprehensive solutions to industry clients

To demonstrate strategic relevance and fit, participants said the industry should:

- Use appropriate metrics
- Help companies realize that poorly organized meetings will cost them more than well-organized meetings
- Create industry-wide standards for what constitutes a successful meeting
- Develop standards such as a strategic meeting management plan

Measuring Results

The workshop revealed wide agreement on the need to measure the results that companies generate by investing in face-to-face meetings.

Scaillet said companies that measure the impact of their events are three times more likely to expect increases in their events marketing budgets than those that do not measure. "It's all about measuring market results," he said. "Some 6% of budgets for meetings are going into measurement tools."

In one Western European study, 66% of respondents said event marketing provides the greatest ROI of all types of advertising, thanks to the opportunities it creates to interact face to face and to deepen relationships.

But Cameron said the industry's failure to put forward consistent data on the business impact of meetings has hurt its cause with elected officials. "We are not measuring outcomes of meetings and putting that into the argument."

Attack . . . and Response

The group noted the shifting response to political attacks the meetings industry has sustained in recent months, many of them related to the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) and other economic bailout or stimulus measures in the United States.

When insurance giant AIG was criticized for holding incentive meetings after receiving significant financial support from the U.S. government, it failed to respond, Scaillet said. When General Motors was criticized for a meeting it held in a five-star hotel, the company's press representative responded that GM was convening a group of fleet directors who bring the company US\$1.5 billion a year.

Referring to this rebuttal as the "positive GM effect," Scaillet noted that "there are senior executives in companies who are starting to understand that this is a business tool."

Meetings for Success: Welcome

SPEAKER

Ray Bloom
Chair
IMEX

Ray Bloom welcomed the delegates and said he supports efforts to help company executives better understand the value that meetings and events bring to their businesses.

"We want to take our message to the boardrooms. That's why we're here. We couldn't do it without your support, and it can't be done alone."

Introduction to the Joint JMIC / IMEX Initiative

SPEAKER

Martin Sirk
CEO
International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA)

Martin Sirk introduced the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC), which represents 10 of the largest and most influential international associations in the meetings industry. JMIC's mission is to advocate for the industry, explain the industry to politicians, drive membership at the local and national levels, and serve as a clearing house for good ideas. JMIC is launching this initiative to bring the meetings industry's message to the world's corporate boardrooms.

Sirk said he hoped delegates would generate ideas for raising the meetings industry's profile and helping executives at the board level understand the contribution that meetings make to their companies.

"We want to move the awareness of meetings to boardrooms, where they're not necessarily understood," he said. "Meetings are so complex, there are so many meetings going on now, and there's so much value that can be squeezed out of them. Some people still think they're like a clunky old telephone that can be slung over the shoulder, when today's meetings are actually as modern as iPhones."

Sirk said he would disseminate the ideas generated in the session to others in the industry around the world.

Key Findings from the IMEX Politicians' Forum

SPEAKER

Rod Cameron
Director, Programming and International Development
International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC)

Rod Cameron, who participated in the IMEX Politicians' Forum on May 26, said the forum was a rare chance to bring industry leaders together with elected officials. Forum participants acknowledged that the meetings industry has failed to broaden the understanding of the industry among a wider audience.

"We have to make it easier for politicians who engage with the industry to communicate our story to justify their involvement and increase their support," Cameron said. "We need to help them get the information and tools they need to show that meetings are not just about revenue but about the whole concept of economic development."

Cameron noted the importance of interfacing with politicians and understanding the workings behind this interaction.

"We are not measuring outcomes of meetings and putting that into the argument, but next year we want to go back to the politicians and show them what we achieved."

Lessons from the Current Crisis and Future Outlook

SPEAKER

Didier Scaillet
Chief Development Officer
Meetings Professionals International (MPI)

Didier Scaillet said the current recession is causing long-term uncertainty, accelerating societal and technological shifts, and creating changes in the meetings industry. He listed several changes that have resulted from the current crisis, including:

- The U.S. Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) is causing more companies to focus on their Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Objectives (ROO).
- Economic pressure is causing new scrutiny of the meetings industry and driving consolidation.
- Some of the main sectors that drive the meetings industry are facing hardship, including financial services, the automotive sector, IT, and the pharmaceuticals industry. While the latter is holding up well, new regulations could drastically affect sponsorship for meetings.

Changes are occurring in the way people network, learn, and do business, Scaillet said. These developments leave the meetings industry asking itself where it fits in the new world.

The endangered newspaper industry is another example of drastic change, with print publications consolidating while online companies such as Google, Facebook, and YouTube are booming, Scaillet said. He referred to a study that found that social networking is now more popular than email.

But the value proposition for meetings is still strong. In one Western European study, 66% of respondents said event marketing provides the greatest ROI of all types of advertising, because it includes opportunities for face-to-face contact and the chance to deepen relationships.

Companies that measure the impact of their events are three times more likely to expect increases in their events marketing budgets than those that do not measure, Scaillet said. "It's all about measuring market results. Some 6% of budgets for meetings are going into measurement tools."

He said the meetings industry has the opportunity to raise awareness of its own strategic value. But that will mean telling the industry's story, despite some of the skepticism that has circulated in recent months.

Scaillet cited a recent situation in which General Motors (GM) was criticized for a meeting it held in a five-star hotel. The company's press office responded that the company was holding the meeting for fleet directors who bring the company US\$1.5 billion a year.

He referred to this rebuttal as the "positive GM effect," and compared it to insurance giant AIG's failure to respond to similar negative reports criticizing them for holding a meeting after receiving bailout funds from the U.S. government.

"There are senior executives in companies who are starting to understand that this is a business tool," said Scaillet. He listed other means of raising awareness of the strategic value of meetings and events, including:

- Moving away from the affiliation with hospitality and talking "the language of business"
- Conducting economic impact studies
- Re-skilling the meetings industry workforce by hiring people trained in marketing and communications, rather than hospitality
- Measuring and managing the industry's total footprint

Breakout Session

MODERATOR

Eric Rozenberg
President
Swantegy

Eric Rozenberg asked the delegates to divide into three groups to discuss the following questions:

- How can we promote the power of meetings and events to corporate executives?
- Who should be our primary targets, through which channels, and with which key messages?
- How can we enhance the strategic value of meetings and events, especially from participants' point of view?
- How can we practice better measurement of meeting outcomes in order to document and demonstrate their value?
- What can we do to help corporate meeting planners during the crisis?

Group One

Delegates from the first group said the meetings industry should:

- Promote the power of meetings and focus on quality
- Recruit more experienced people to work in the industry, rather than those who come directly from university programs with degrees and passion but no experience

- Realize that managers at a global level understand the importance of meetings, but those at the local level might not
- Adapt its strategy to serve the need for smaller meetings on a local level and for fewer global meetings
- Use proper metrics to demonstrate the value of meetings
- Ensure that senior meeting professionals who have the necessary communications skills convey the value of meetings to board members
- Realize that meeting participants have become more critical and have high expectations

Regarding the last point, one delegate said “When people take off two days of work to go to a proprietary meeting, they want a proprietary message.”

Group Two

Delegates from the second group said the meetings industry should:

- Help companies realize that poorly organized meetings will cost them more than well-organized meetings
- Create industry-wide standards for what constitutes a successful meeting
- Move from being an industry that is operational to one that is strategic by encouraging corporations to increase their collaboration with agencies
- Develop standard practices, such as a strategic meeting management plan
- Prepare for fewer meetings with higher expectations
- Find a way to capture the value of face-to-face meetings over the long term, while integrating social networking technology
- Ensure that corporations take ownership of a meeting's success

Group Three

Delegates from the third group said the industry should:

- Capture the trend toward social networking as a component of the meetings industry
- Listen to what the customer wants from a meeting rather than building it from the top down—ask: “What is hot in the market? What problems do you face?”
- Develop different options for interaction during meetings
- Ensure meetings allow for open and good discussion
- Set aside reflection time during meetings
- Collect feedback about the value of discussion between executives and employees

Regarding options for interaction during meetings, one delegate said: “It’s our responsibility to know everything there is to know about the different formats, such as open space and graffiti walls and all those things that promote open discussion. We can’t just say, ‘Go ahead and talk.’ We all need a framework. We have to create the framework and the structure, and within that allow for good, rich discussion.”

Reports Back

MODERATOR

Eric Rozenberg
President
Swantegy

Rozenberg asked a representative from each smaller discussion to present the group's findings.

Group One

The representative from the first group said convincing senior executives of the value of meetings comes down to the ability to demonstrate and actually measure results. Even with great concepts, success is ultimately about tangible outcomes. The group identified several critical elements of this process, including:

- The overall approach must be strategic rather than operational.
- The credibility of those who carry the message to the boardroom is critical:
"This goes back to the quality of people working in the sector. We can't get the proper credibility without high quality members of the industry. A meeting should be a piece of an overall strategy."
- Whether measuring soft or hard factors, good assessment tools are essential:
"We must measure the hard facts and better assess the soft side. Then, we need better communication of the results."

Group Two

The representative from the second group reported several recommendations:

- The meetings industry needs a way to measure results.
- The meetings industry is a young industry that should professionalize:
"We need to step up to the plate to be the industry we want to be."
- The meetings industry should engage clients in strategic discussions and thereby change the perception of the industry:
"We need to use different language to appeal to those people who need to be persuaded."
- The meetings industry must be innovative and proactive.
- The meetings industry should work more closely with corporate clients.
- The meetings industry must repackage its approach:
"We have to come at it from a different angle."
"We have to re-invent ourselves as a participant."

The group discussed the possibility of a strategic meetings analysis program to identify potential improvements as quickly as possible. There was concern that such an initiative might take too long to create, and that knowledge gaps might emerge along the way.

Group Three

The representative from the third group said its report aligned closely with the first two.

The crisis in the meetings industry has resulted in the right stakeholders talking together, while opening up the possibility of dismissing those at the table who are distracting from the discussion. The

representative said the industry should remember that, "There's a shortcut to everything except experience."

Another delegate added that meetings are legitimized through positive results, but that the industry currently has a "broken chain." Positive results require a proper plan, and marketing management is shifting away from market execution. This shift requires a deep knowledge of the market and business, and if the industry lacks this, it must go back to market intelligence and analysis.

"An event is always one part of a bigger package. You have to know how long the results will last, and when they will fade away. We hold the responsibility for the entire life cycle."

Feedback from Today and Expectations for Next Year's IMEX Meetings for Success Forum

MODERATOR

Eric Rozenberg
President
Swantegy

Rozenberg asked the delegates for feedback on the session and suggestions for further discussion topics and assistance.

Rod Cameron noted that JMIC is planning to introduce a program to develop a single focus and message for the meetings industry and to build relationships with other groups. He said the corporate perspective was underrepresented in the discussion.

"We need to make sure this perspective is a part of the plan of action for the industry. It would be very valuable to get corporate input on the plan through a group like this," Cameron said. "It would be extremely valuable input and would make our work a great deal more useful and powerful."

Another delegate agreed, adding that the support of the entire community is necessary. He endorsed the creation of a platform for continuous and objective communication.

A delegate asked if JMIC's program would be a plan for action or a collection of ideas.

Cameron said the plan is a combination of content, message, and vehicles for delivering a message within the constraints of the organization. He said the effort goes beyond what JMIC has previously undertaken, seeking to consolidate key messages and relationships, such as those between the meetings industry and government representatives or corporations.

"We have agreed that we need action," he said. "The question is what that action is going to be."

A delegate said it is easy to lose sight of the industry as a whole. Noting the importance of engaging people, the delegate said this was a brilliant forum for doing so and expressed a desire to participate in the discussion again next year and keep in touch with other delegates.

One delegate said the discussion was valuable, but that a palpable outcome is needed—some proof to show that others are suffering, too, and have similar questions and concerns. The delegate asked for a continuous, active platform for communication within the industry.

Another delegate said it was comforting to hear that others have the same challenges, and expressed excitement about working together to move beyond the level of discussion. Another delegate also

expressed excitement about collaborative change, noting that this process could be truly transformative for the meetings industry.

A delegate said the current discussion had been open and honest. “With all the experienced people in the room, I can take a shortcut to experience even though I’m young.”

The meetings industry is at a turning point, another delegate noted. “We’re resetting, but we can take the industry in the direction we need to go.” The delegate observed that the current challenges could offer the industry the opportunity to remove some of its associated labels, such as tourism: “Yes, we look like travel, we smell like travel, but we’re not travel. We’re a lot more. . . . We need to do anything we can to help corporate strategists understand that the meetings industry is not a fruit with one stem.”

A delegate suggested that this conversation should continue through periodic follow-ups. Another said it would be beneficial to welcome more participants with global budgets from other industries, such as the healthcare sector.

This discussion was “food for the brain,” said a delegate, who expressed a desire to see concrete results from the meeting. Another delegate expressed appreciation for the openness and honesty of the discussion, and said the industry should prepare to be very flexible as it gears up to face the challenges in the months to come.

Delegates enthusiastically agreed on the need to follow up on the conversations at this meeting, and said they would like to reconvene to continue the work accomplished today.