

Destination Marketing: Creating Events with Impact

“There is no point in average.” Wise words said by a colleague recently that have struck a chord. Some of the buzzwords that have been prevalent in our industry in the past year have included

Value Sustainability Creativity / Budget ROI, ROE, ROR (I for investment, E for engagement, R for relationships)



What we have are clients who still need to create events with impact, but who also must prove the value of the events to their internal clients. On incentive programs, we have definitely seen the numbers to decrease on programs as qualifying for incentive programs becomes more challenging when sales targets across all industries are harder to reach. For conference programming, numbers are slowly beginning to rise again as travel restrictions are lifted. The worldwide use of the internet and its many associated social media streams has made us globally closer and has exponentially increased our access to information.

As the access to information continues to grow, the need for service providers who are experts in their areas will become even more important. This will cut across all sectors as the need for life-long learning drives conference attendance for association members who must stay current with the rapid changes affecting all global industries.



Organizations at the agency level – incentive houses, PR firms and experiential marketing agencies will need to remain ahead of the curve to ensure success for their clients. Destination Management Companies who provide services to both end clients and agency clients representing others have an expertise that includes the “bread and butter” logistics of transportation, accommodation, activities and events and when this expertise is fully utilized there is much gain to be had for the clients.

First understanding your program objectives is critical. You must choose a destination that meets these objectives, whether these are reward, motivation, inspiration or transformation. Once the destination is chosen, a partner who not only has the knowledge of the destination, but an innate understanding of how to deliver relevant and impactful events that will drive to these objectives is critical. Seamless operations are the average, the norm, the basis for your program. Understanding how to weave elements that will inspire imaginations, drive innovation, embrace and encourage connection and communication... this is when the experience becomes elevated and meaningful. This requires strategic development of a program that at each touch-point, from the first announcement to the final good-bye is memorable. It requires a team that is passionate about continually raising the bar, and welcoming guests to their home with open hearts and smiles that engage, and who wants to make sure that at the end of the day, the client basks in the glow of having made a great choice, even as we know they are moving on to another program.



When seeking the services of any professional service organization, you do need to seek value, and to understand the value is not always the lowest price. Rather great value comes from a combination of choices. For a meeting or incentive program this may include the airlift, ground transportation and accommodation options, amenities, overall feeling of the destination and the activities and events, and potentially education and networking opportunities. Ultimately part of this becomes about choosing a team that will have synergy with your team and bring a vision to life. When you can find the combination that has the best fit, then you will be assured of a successful program where relationships are deepened and objectives are exceeded.

That is the future of what every event needs to be. Is it looking up? Yes, definitely, clients are looking to the future rather than reacting so much to immediate needs, and are able to see that with planning and structure, programs that will drive sales are back on the rise and that travel incentives remain an “ultimate” reward, one that is worth spending the time to earn.

Conferences as noted above are also on the upswing, and trade shows are seeing improved attendance. The outlook is not quite rosy, but it is certainly refreshing to see that the importance of face to face connections is recognized, and the opportunities will continue to grow.

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