

Association Expert Seminar 2007

CLOSING THE DEAL: MARKETING TO ASSOCIATIONS

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Which “deals”?

European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM):
annual congress approx. 4.100

United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF):
UEGW = annual congress approx. 9.000

European Crohn’s and Colitis Organization (ECCO):
annual congress approx. 1.000

- the AMC takes care of the association – understand what we are trying to accomplish for the association
- the congress is the “income generator” for the association – with the profit the association can sponsor other activities
- the congress has to have the highest scientific value for the participant – then there will be good attendance
- venue has to be functional, not necessarily of highest touristic attractiveness

Criteria for venue selection:

1. convention center (dates, specs, technicalities)
2. access (air, train, road): participants and industry
3. hotel situation in the city
4. off site venues for social events
5. transportation within the city (convention tickets)
6. expected support – in kind or in money – from government, city, other authorities
7. attractiveness of city to participants
8. political & economic situation / safety / healthcare for attendees
9. track record of hosted conventions

- look at our RFP (on website) – evaluate whether we would fit into your venue
- stay in touch: find out about bidding procedure; timelines; build a relationship; show us that your city works for the congress (convention bureau and convention center)
- trend towards less local involvement = bring our own suppliers; do not need local scientific involvement
- mutually we determine dates for follow up - stick to them

- more venue possibilities – so how do we select?
- same functional requirements as for larger congresses
- value for money becomes more relevant for smaller congresses – 2nd tier cities are ok
- “one stop shop”: convention bureau with convention center or convention center “that goes the extra mile”
- build a relationship (understand my needs, listen, be honest, build trust, be reliable, follow-up
- feeling of “stay with me, at my side”

- Europe is building hotel force with congress facilities
- relationship of hotel chain with association directly
- “deals” for many years – off seasons, other advantages for both sides
- prohibitive: individual hotels still think as own properties and not as network (yield management)
- European headquarters of hotel chains should take the lead
- “smaller associations” are starting to professionalize, need congress as “profit maker” too; are in need of long term “deals” with properties

- example: annual congress with 500 attendees
- using the same hotel since 15 years
- reoccurring aggravations
- no continuity, changing personnel, no handing over of file, lacking professionalism, yield management
- what is the problem? why is this happening? waste of energy

- **most important:** “hardware” (convention center, hotels)
- **next:** how is city catering to congresses? (airport, convention tickets, restaurants ...) – has city understood the needs of the congress organizer? professionalism of the city? (“kompakt” für mich als Organisator)
- **then:** human component – common sense and manners, trust, heart, relationship

- look at yourself – where do you feel comfortable? (in a restaurant that doesn't take note of you? in a shop where they don't realize you're a regular customer after the 10th time that you've been there?)
- in a hectic and unpersonal world we need these “oases of comfort” – if we can do business this way, that would be great
- take time – do less – but with your heart and soul