

# 3 Programming:

**WE PUT YOU  
IN CONTROL**

“Creating high quality  
Social Programmes,”



## Planning a Social Programme

A high quality social programme is the result of much planning and input from the DMC / Events department of the PCO and the Organising Committee (OC). An understanding of both the conference destination and local culture combined with an insight into likely delegate preferences will play a seminal role in guaranteeing the success of this vital aspect of the overall conference. The OC provides a vital insight into the demographics and likes and dislikes of the delegates and often the history of the social program at previous conferences. The DMC / Special Events Manager brings the expertise and logistical management that provide the seamless organisation with particular attention to the hundreds of details that make it seem like an easy task.

### The DMC / Special Events Manager and the Organising Committee

It is the responsibility of the DMC / Special Events Manager to ensure that all relevant factors are considered in the design of the specific excursions and events. The concepts need to be developed and presented and a collaborative approach between the OC and the DMC / Event Manager adopted to ensure the best possible options are selected. These factors (along with the budget) inform the selection of the correct mix of venues, caterers, entertainers and audio-visual suppliers to ensure the success of the events. A successful social programme provides delegates and their guests with an insight into the culture and heritage of the destination as well as a comfortable atmosphere, quality catering and an opportunity to network, relax and unwind.

### Like and Dislikes

What is it that delegates don't like? Gen Y and Gen X delegates like to party and mingle and the opportunity to dance till late. Some nationalities like an early start and an early finish, others wouldn't dream of starting till the clock approaches 10pm! The more mature delegates want to talk... yes, talk in an environment where they are not competing

with loud music or overwhelming noise. Some nationalities like it formal and others like it very casual. Some like classical music and others like modern or jazz. Some like their own traditions that frankly bore others. So what makes a social program high quality? That which meets the approval of those experiencing it!

### Local Culture

Yes provide the local experience but get the balance right! Less is more! Understand the audience and design the inclusions to appeal to the majority or where possible take advantage of the venue layout to provide diversity and thereby please more than one group of participants. Smoking versus non smoking arrangements, noisy versus quieter areas, dancing versus talking, being entertained versus networking, finger foods or buffet versus table service, formal versus casual and so on. Enable those who wish to leave early to do so while those who wish to party may rage on.

### The Small Details

Events are made successful in the small details - a nicely produced conference branded dinner menu, a bathroom finished with candles, soaps and hand towels or a customised feature performance. Time after time we hear that an excursion or a special event was the highlight of a conference - with careful planning and a collaborative approach, these highlights become long-lasting memories and distinguish high quality from just another ordinary social event.

### Excursions and Tours

When designing tours and excursions for guests of delegates avoid the temptation to include locations of scenic or historical importance that require more than 2 hours transfer time – no matter how iconic the destination! Delegates and their guests should be offered such tours and excursions as pre or post conference experiences while shorter, more accessible locations should be offered during the conference days.

## About INCON

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- Creative and innovative solutions;
- Open partnership approach;
- Best practice and operational excellence;
- Delivery of a successful, world-class conference

## Bob Guy

Bob Guy serves as Regional Managing Director of Pacific World companies in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

His involvement in incentive travel activities began in 1972. Over the years he has served as a director of the Singapore Tourism Board, Sentosa Development Board, INCON, SITE and other associations related to the industry.



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