

# 15 Winning is not everything or is it?

## INCON

### How to stay competitive when bidding



**Conference bidding today pitches destinations against one other in competition that might be described as an economic battle, a contest of competitive strategy to outsmart one other with the aim of winning the conference prize.**

The robust growth of the MICE industry has been a colourful contrast against the gloom of global economic woe and is producing a shift in the epicentre of key MICE players on the global map. Singapore, South Korea, China, Japan and India are leading the field in vying for meetings business closely followed by Brazil and Mexico. With the appeal of Latin America's exotic tourist attractions and natural resources and the fascination of Asia's exceptional pool of human resources, technological advances, rapidly expanding state-of-the-art facilities, promising economic development and outstanding quality of service, these Asian and Latin American countries are steadily increasing their percentage of international conference wins.

So how does a destination remain competitive in the midst of a challenging and changing conference bidding market?

The first step in the bidding process is to confirm that the interest and drive exists among the stakeholders who have most to gain from an international association conference win. Apart from qualifying a particular conference as an event of interest, a great deal of attention must be paid to the action plan that will draw endorsement from the interested parties.

A task force team comprising convention bureau, local government, organising committee and the Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) works in partnership to develop the strategy to win the event and manage all elements of the competitive bid process.

After the go-ahead to target a particular event is received, adequate support must be secured from central/ local governments and private sector.

Governmental support and sponsorship provide the credibility to leverage the right quality assurance, budgeting rationale and content development.

It is the PCO network that can bring the bidding proposal to life. Living in this informative age, a PCO uses the tools of the trade to facilitate communication and cooperation with partners including the INCON Group for information gathering and seamless bid preparation. The PCO brings experience of the bidding process, an understanding of the association and the means of delivering the event. Keen commitment, practical budget forecasting and experienced capability culminate in the detailed bid proposal.

So a PCO is like a duck swimming in an open stream, appearing peaceful and serene on the surface but paddling skilfully and energetically underwater. The final stage of the process is the bid presentation where it is vital to know the structure of the association and who the decision makers are. Estimate a model of voting pattern and focus on reassuring lucrative affiliation with associated parties.

Working with the UIA 2017 Seoul Bid Committee, comprising the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Federation of Institutes of Korean Architects (FIKA), MECI won the bid to host the 26th International Union Architects (UIA) World Congress of Architecture. This win is a good example of highlighting the importance of promotions at the bidding scene. Turning the game around on-site at the bid location is challenging but rewarding. Hosting a reception and other forms of proactive promotions may sway the sentiment of the decision makers but such activities have to be thoroughly researched.

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Named Best Convention Hosting PCO by the Seoul Metropolitan Government in 2012, MECI is a total management company highly experienced in the areas of conference, association, exhibition, destination and meetings and event management. Bannie is a lifetime member of the Global Directory Who's Who as a Professional Congress Organiser and Vice President of the Korea Association of Professional Conference Organisers.

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