



Corporate Australia speaks

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There have been some interesting trends emerge in the area of in-house meeting management. Following from a forum we held with corporate planners we take a closer look at these trends.

WHILST CORPORATE AUSTRALIA IS SO LARGE AND diverse, overall trends emerged which have perhaps set the stage for a more definitive study. We specifically focussed on -

- Meetings management - outsourcing versus keeping in house
- Internal structures - centralised teams versus individual business units
- Qualifications - tertiary versus experience

Meetings Management - Outsourcing Vs In House

To date, many organisations have chosen to outsource the management of their conferences and events. This decision has been based on time, cost, capabilities, resources, core business focus and results. Taking all these factors into account, outsourcing has been seen as a cost effective and viable option.

Generally, specialist components of events such as AV and theming are likely to continue to be outsourced due primarily to the need for expensive equipment. Some larger events continue to be outsourced due to sheer scale.

However, increasingly, organisations have started to recognise the benefits of keeping conference and event management in house. They are rapidly realising that there is some serious revenue to be generated from room night commissions (that PCO's claim if they are managing the event) and that by centralising their events they have substantially increased buying power, resulting in reduced costs and substantial savings. There is general concern about the lack of transparency (invoices) from some external suppliers and corporates are aware that some take undisclosed commissions.

Internal Structures - Centralised Teams Vs Individual Business Units

There has always been a need by corporates to hold meetings, conferences, AGM's, product launches and other events. These functions have often been the role of the PA within a particular department or business unit. Whilst this is still the case for some

(particularly those with a strong focus on business units being accountable for their costs and profitability), others are moving towards a more centralised system where the events team sits within the marketing and communication departments who recognise event management as a key marketing medium.

Qualifications - Tertiary Vs Experience

The movement from event management being the role of a personal assistant to the role of a qualified event manager has seen an increase in demand for tertiary qualifications. Certainly at entry level, event management is considered a "glamorous" occupation and therefore the demand for these positions is high.

The movement towards a centralised events team and the recognition that event management is a key marketing medium, has directly impacted on the people that corporates are now seeking for these positions. The need for qualifications in marketing or event management, coupled with operational and hands on experience is becoming somewhat imperative. These qualifications assist in providing the event managers with the skills to compliment the marketing team and stay consistent with the overall brand, look, feel and culture of the corporation.

Corporates usually have the ability and are prepared to pay better wages than smaller specialist PCO's and event management companies. Wages are equivalent with those of their marketing counterparts and just as a marketing specialist would require tertiary qualifications, so to would an in house event manager.

The Corporate Meeting Planners Forum

Special thanks to everyone who shared information with us in order for this to be written. Interestingly enough, almost everyone who participated felt that there was no platform or opportunity for them to network with people in similar positions outside their organisation. As a result, many felt isolated with no benchmarks. We have decided to take the initiative and organise a brainstorming and sharing of information session in mid August. If you would like to be involved in this, please contact us - lisa@eventrecruitment.com.au or 02 9223 6277