

Globalisation and Intercultural Work of a Professional Congress Organiser:

What should be considered?

Globalisation has greatly changed the event and congress industry by facilitating access to international markets, but it has also created new challenges in the area of intercultural communication and cooperation. It is crucial for professional congress organisers (PCOs) to understand and adapt to cultural differences. We at CPO HANSER SERVICE have gained a lot of experience over the last forty years and have seen and experienced a lot! Here are some tips for intercultural work and dealing with globalisation in event planning:

Develop cultural sensitivity

- Acquire background knowledge: Find out in advance about the cultural background of the congress destination and also of the international participants (e.g. behaviour, rules of politeness, understanding of time). This shows respect and helps to avoid misunderstandings.

- Consider communication styles: Cultures differ in their communication style – in some countries direct communication is favoured (e.g. USA), in others, communication is more indirect (e.g. Japan). Adapt your communication accordingly.

Improve intercultural communication

- Language: If you are planning a congress in another country and have international participants, make sure that language barriers are minimised. English is often the lingua franca, but it can be helpful to offer translation services.

- Non-verbal communication: Pay attention to non-verbal signals, which can be interpreted differently in different cultures. For example, gestures, eye contact or body distance can vary.

- Take public holidays and religious customs into account: When scheduling, it is important to be aware of national or religious holidays that may be significant to certain participants.

Show flexibility and adaptability

- Understand different expectations: International participants may have different expectations in terms of event format, food choices, break times, hospitality, courtesy and protocol rules or dress code. It is important to respond flexibly to these expectations.

- Time management: Time is valued differently in different

cultures – in some cultures punctuality is strictly adhered to (e.g. Germany), while others have a more flexible attitude (e.g. southern Europe). PCOs should take this into account when planning.

Build partnerships and networks

- Use local expertise: Work with local agencies and service providers to better adapt the event to the cultural conditions of the host country. Local partners understand the country-specific requirements and can help to make the event run more smoothly.

- Maintain a network: Building an international network of contacts and partners is crucial. This facilitates the organisation of international congresses and events and opens doors to new markets.

Use technological tools

- Virtual events and hybrid formats: In a globalised world, not all participants can always be physically present. The use of video conferencing technologies and hybrid events makes it possible to reach a wider international audience.

- Translation and interpreting technologies: Technologies such as real-time translation apps or portable interpreting devices can help to overcome language barriers. Considering sustainability and ethics

- Sustainability: Globalisation also brings with it a responsibility to act sustainably. Make sure to include ecological aspects in the planning, especially for international events that cause high CO2 emissions through travelling.

- Ethical considerations: Respect human rights, labour laws and cultural traditions of the countries where the event takes place. Also pay attention to fair and ethical practices when selecting suppliers and partners.

Flexibility in the event of unexpected events

- Political or economic instability: Be prepared for unforeseen events that could be triggered by political or economic crises in certain regions. Careful risk planning and flexibility in planning are crucial.

- Pandemics and health regulations: COVID-19 has shown how important it is to be prepared for global health risks. Keep up to date with health and safety regulations and ensure that you can react flexibly to changes.

Ongoing training

- Intercultural training: Invest in intercultural training programmes for yourself and your team to develop a better understanding of other cultures and to be able to work more successfully in international contexts.
- Participation in international congresses: Attend international congresses regularly to keep up to date with global trends in the congress and event industry.

Organising in other countries is not always easy, but it is exciting and eventful. It requires a high degree of cultural competence, flexibility and adaptability. By consciously dealing with cultural differences and using modern technologies, PCOs can organise successful and smooth international events.

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