

The show must go on

THE Y&Z GENERATION IS SETTING A NEW TREND IN ORGANISING CONFERENCES, ACCORDING TO SVETLANA KULIKOVA CEO, LUMIÈRE DU SOLEIL

With Y&Z generations having an increasing influence over our events in terms of audience and programme, understanding their demands is ever more critical for marketing success.

What are the key aspects to consider when catering for this audience, and how should we use this knowledge to plan for success in the business in conference sector?

Build around the concept of mosaic thinking

A short attention span, accompanied by low criticality of the received information means that from the point of attracting a target audience, to conducting and following-up on an event, organisers will do better if they use appealing and relatively short stories. Materials should be presented in Twitter-style with infographics and pictures – even if this does mean some subject matter appear as Shakespeare or Dickens in a comic format.

Engaging visual content

The good news here is that this is a method that works very well. YouTube channels, viral videos using messenger apps, video invitations from key speakers on the landing page of an event (this is really effective) and subscribing for video translations of a conference – there are a huge variety of opportunities available.

Embracing multiculturalism

Decreasing the level of cross-cultural



Above: Svetlana Kulikova, CEO, Lumière du Soleil: “Integrate game mechanics in an existing system to motivate participation, engagement, and loyalty”

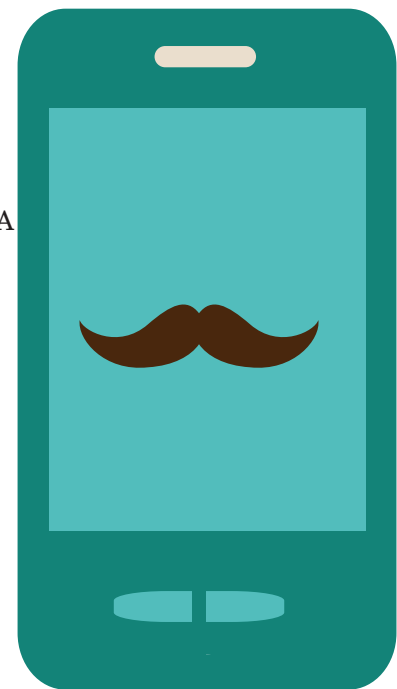
barriers helps when it comes to organising international events. High-level knowledge of other cultures, coupled with tolerance and a range of modern tools makes mutual understanding simple. Tools and opportunities for fluent communication should be provided to increase the effectiveness of discourse. In order to avoid critical mistakes, I would also recommend attracting experts with experience of cross-cultural communications.

For example, the organiser of one conference in Dubai prepared personal organisers as souvenirs for their VIPs. The sticking point was in the material – pignskin – which is not the best solution for this target audience. It's better to double-check to be sure of a good result.

Do things digitally

Digital technologies are an integral part of the world we live in, and the same should apply to our conferences and incentives. Use gamification in your conferences and events, and integrate game mechanics in an existing system to motivate participation, engagement, and loyalty.

For example, visitors could vote to adjust or enhance the focus in a presentation while it is taking place on stage. This helps to ensure the audience gets what it came for as well as feeling more involved. We do this with our events and we see many other examples at the largest business forums. Social chains, video channels, blogs, messengers and chat-bots are quite



effective today. An important point; it's better to create an event information chain that is as short as possible.

Create an event website in a 'single sheet of A4' format. Provide one-click access to all the necessary information including topic, speakers, programme, registration and payment.

Beware the ad-block

The consumer mindset has finally found a solution against attempts to sell to us whenever possible. In psychology it's called contra-suggestion, in advertisements – banner blindness or ad-block. We would say that now it's better to stop foisting adverts onto a client and start building relationships by providing attractive content and mutually productive relationships.

Even for small companies Google's or Facebook's AI promo technologies are readily available. It may help discover your true target audience by analysing preferences and similar characteristics.

Understanding these trends will help you to sidestep rivals – forewarned is forearmed. ■