



ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

How to measure success and what to do with the results

To survive in today's competitive MICE environment, you need to excel. To excel, a company needs to focus on all parts of the organisation, optimizing the use and effectiveness of all of its resources.

After many years of exploring various approaches to improve performance in the meetings sector and bring about organisational excellence, I have come to realise that there are 6 key elements that need to be managed to excel and all 6 must be managed simultaneously to keep them all moving forward at the same time.

1. Process
2. Project Management
3. Culture
4. Change
5. Knowledge
6. People

By effectively managing these 6 key elements and leveraging their interdependencies and reactions, a company can bring

about tremendous positive change and to the outputs of the meeting. On the softer side of organisational excellence, there must be desire, drive and passion to be the very best you can be. An ability to look inward and carry out self-assessment and continuous improvement and implementation creates the base for organisational excellence, sustainability and future success.

PROCESS

To manage a process, we must define and agree upon:

1. The meeting objectives and an output requirement statement between the process owner and the client. We must define expectations, determine what results the client wants from their

meeting and how will it be achieved over a specific time period.

2. An input requirement statement between the process owner and suppliers.
3. A process that is capable of transforming the delivery of the meeting that meets the clients' quality requirements.
4. Feedback measurement systems between process and the client and between the process and the suppliers.

Process must be managed at both the micro-level, within a team or departments and at the macro-level, directed at managing process that flows across departments within the company. Refining the process is an ongoing activity to ensure the core objectives of the company and the client are consistently being met.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Processes define how the company functions and projects are the means by which companies improve their process. Therefore, we must consistently assess and measure the results of our meetings, assess the people who manage them, and ensure we retain intellectual capital and knowledge transfer.

Project managers require skill, training and effective leadership specifically related to their type of meeting. In today's busy MICE environment, companies have numerous event projects running at the same time. Many of these projects are interlinked and interdependent. Their requirements and schedules are continuously changing, causing a chain reaction through the company. As a result the company may not manage each project individually. It has to manage its portfolio of projects, making the proper trade-off of personnel and priorities.

CULTURE

There is a need for an appropriate culture to support achieving organisational excellence. Client focus, systems approach, teamwork, creativity, involved management and continuous improvement are the aspects that facilitate improved organisational excellence, growth, and competitiveness. It's important to complement process and project management with innovation – it will result in the successful exploitation of new ideas. A clear synergy appears between the two corporate success factors as they are often integrated under an appropriate corporate culture. The results can lead to substantial improvements within the company together with improved creativity in how you deliver your clients' meeting.

CHANGE

We must embrace change if we are to be successful in our challenging world of meetings. Change management systems are made up of three distinct elements:

- Defining what will be changed
- Defining how to change
- Making change happen

An effective change management system requires us to step back and define what will be changed. Which of the key business

drivers needs to be changed. This applies to the overall company and to each meeting/project it takes on to ensure that we are meeting the demands of our clients and their client – the delegate.

KNOWLEDGE

In today's world of technology, more than ever, knowledge is key to organisational excellence. However, we are overwhelmed with so much information that we don't have time to absorb it all. The critical element to knowledge management is the documentation of its knowledge.

TO SUCCEED IN THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT OF THE MEETINGS MARKET PLACE, WE NEED TO EXCEL IN ALL PARTS OF THE BUSINESS

Given the endless information that clogs up our computers, desks and minds, a knowledge management system needs to be designed around the company's key capabilities and competencies. Documentation of knowledge leads to improved efficiencies in achieving the desired ROI of the meeting and optimizing the effectiveness of all of its resources. The true standard of success for knowledge management is the number of people who access and implement ideas from the company knowledge network. The biggest challenge is changing the company culture from knowledge-hoarding to knowledge-sharing. To achieve this, time is needed not just to documenting knowledge, a lot of time needs to be dedicated to sharing knowledge and ensuring knowledge that rests in the minds of individuals is shared amongst all individuals in the company.

I achieve the softer side of knowledge sharing through creativity forums every two weeks. Each individual must come to the table with a new idea or experience that is worth sharing. This may relate to the format and design of the meeting, the meeting content, the marketing of the meeting, new technology and so on. All shared knowledge must be consistently transformed into a format that can be easily shared amongst everyone in the company.

PEOPLE

The business of meetings is very much about people. People are at the heart of everything we do. When we talk about people in the meetings sector, we are talking about it in the broadest sense. It is all the resources that are available to the company. This includes employees, management, suppliers, alliances and partnerships, clients and knowledge. The interconnection and relationship building between all resources is critical to achieving organisation excellence. It takes communication, training, teamwork, empowerment, respect, honesty, leadership, quality and fairness to get the

best from your most valuable asset in a service industry – your talent, your people, your knowledge bank.

In conclusion, clients won't accept second best. To succeed in the competitive environment of the meetings market place, we need to excel in all parts of the business. The internet allows our clients to shop globally, so it's easy for them to get the best quality, reliability and value. Clients are concerned about service and quality, but they are also about dealing with companies who care, are quick to respond, will listen, will bring innovative ideas and processes to their meeting, and react to their unique requirements.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Nicola McGrane, IAPCO Council, and Managing Director of Conference Partners Ltd., Dublin, Ireland. IAPCO represents today 120 professional organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 41 countries. info@iacpo.org / www.iapco.org

