

CASE STUDY

Continuing the series of case studies from leading PCOs around the world

Beyond Congress Management

Associations are more than their congress, and IAPCO PCOs are more than congress organisers. Delivering innumerable quality congresses has given IAPCO members invaluable insights into the business needs of their clients and has allowed them to become trusted advisors who can contribute to the success of an organisation beyond their congress. IAPCO's philosophy is entirely based on quality, and its members actively share best-practice and develop educational programmes and guidelines which enable them to perform at the highest levels in any area of expertise related to organisational excellence. To illustrate this, IAPCO regularly publishes success stories of members who have helped their clients to be successful not just by organising their congress, but by achieving overarching business objectives.

World Conference on Abdominal Wall Hernia Surgery 25–29 April 2015, Milan, Italy

Organised by AIM Group: Case Study by AIM Group International Milan Office

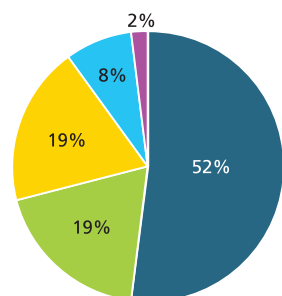
The challenge

Creating something for the first time is never easy – especially when it involves the interests of five different leading associations in one field. AIM Group International had the challenge of placing the 1st World Conference on Abdominal Wall Hernia Surgery on the map. The main objectives of the event were to achieve a high level of scientific content and present unique experiences and networking opportunities. In addition, the five associations involved were challenged to provide full support and invested in building the groundwork of this first congress in order to become a lasting platform for collaboration. If proven successful this would be the first of many such congresses and a first step in bringing the world to the fight against hernia together.

The solutions

AIM Group placed an experienced team at the core of the organisation of the event. From the very beginning, the team worked closely with the organising committee to address the goals and objectives. Building a second tier network to encompass all involved associations proved to be a winning strategy to ensuring the success of the event. In order to highlight their support, each association announced their annual events at the same dates as the World Congress in

1st World Conference on Abdominal Wall Hernia Surgery

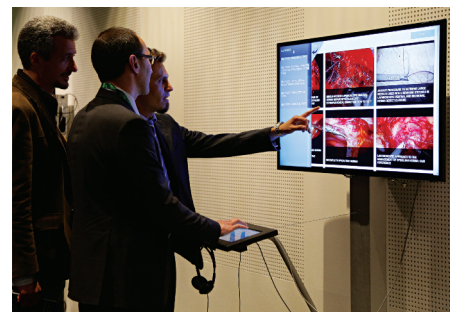


- European Hernia Society
- Americas Hernia Society
- Asia Pacific Hernia Society
- Afro Middle East Hernia Society
- Australasian Hernia Society

order to not only raise awareness of this new initiative, but to contribute to building a strong network and ties between their members. Each association in the network were, in addition, given the opportunity to present its best scientific resources to the delegates through its contribution to the scientific programme, by careful selection of speakers and thoughtful arrangement of sessions.

The outcomes

With the stage set and the support network in place, the base from which to communicate internationally to the right audience was laid. The conference attracted 2708 delegates from 96 countries plus 44 sponsors, and featured 324 posters selected from 800 submitted abstracts, as well as more than 4000m² of exhibition space. Participants were attracted by a scientific programme offering a number of excep-



tional features, including three live surgery sessions that broadcast 17 operations, plus 70 special surgery video sessions (which had been produced and selected by each of the associations specifically for the event) that were projected on six LCD screens throughout, as well as breakout sessions and networking opportunities.

However, the highlight of the conference for many was perhaps the 1st World Hernia Soccer Challenge, which took place at the Stadio San Siro before the gala dinner. This was the first time that this iconic stadium, which was built in 1926 and is a top footballing venue that regularly plays host to Champions League matches, had opened its doors to non-professional footballers. Not only did the soccer challenge provide delegates with a unique experience, it served as a way of literally building teams and further tightening the bonds between colleagues in the newly created World Hernia Network. The vast success of the event allows the conference to go on and its second edition is now in the planning.

“If I have been able to realize the 1st World Conference on Abdominal Wall Hernia Surgery it was thanks to the co-operation of the five international societies and the sponsors that honoured this event with their active participation and scientific involvement”, said Giampiero Campanelli, Congress Chairman,



A delighted Congress Chairman, Giampiero Campanelli.

1st World Conference on Abdominal Wall Hernia Surgery, “I would also like to extend my gratitude to the organising secretariat, AIM Group International, who supported and sustained me in the organisation of this unique event from the very beginning, showing not only competence and serious professionalism, but also a smooth and very pleasant attitude and human touch.”

