

## CASE STUDY

No. 8

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.*

## Velo-city Global 2016

February 27 – March 1 2016, Taipei, Taiwan

Department of Transportation, Taipei City Government

Organised by IAPCO Member: GIS Group



## The challenge

**To tailor an international event to local interests** 集思會展事業群

Velo-city series, the world's premium cycling forum aiming to promote cycling as a way of daily transportation, was initiated and guided by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) since 1980. Identified with the vision of the organization, Taipei sought to further promote cycling as a sustainable way for its citizens to "get around" and to highlight its achievements in the promotion of cycling through the event. However, as the first Asian city to host the event, Taipei was facing an audience base to whom cycling is not yet a natural part of local culture. The event and the trend it upholds must appear relevant to the citizens to attract a satisfying number of local participants.



In addition, traditionally, most attendees of Velo-city series are from Europe. Taipei would need to pitch a uniqueness that is attractive enough for people from another continent to take the trouble to fly to Taiwan.

Therefore, designing a programme that appeals to the citizen's interests and that stresses Taipei's

characteristics which make the event uniquely attractive is the biggest challenge for GIS Group, the organizer. The key to success was also for the organizer to make the event appealing to both local interests and foreign visitors.



## The solution

The organizer got involved in the design of the agenda at an early stage to fully grasp its content. Together with Taipei City Government (TCG) and ECF, GIS Group put forth a four-day program that highlighted the industry's presence, Taipei's existing strength, and combined it with the Taipei Cycle Show, the readily-established cycling trade show, to

attract people from that industry. It contributed to the choices of topics and speakers and organization of side events to ensure that they were tailored to local tastes and yet universally attractive. It also enhanced the event's value in the eye of potential exhibitors by proposing an innovative sponsoring approach. One sponsor, for example, built a cycling track open to the general public to make its brand more visible.

Assuming a content-designing instead of simply an idea-executing role, GIS Group distributed different tasks to various partners and monitored their progress based on a master plan. Weekly meetings with TCG kept the preparation on track and each party informed. Regular conference calls were arranged with overseas partners to synchronize progress. With tireless communication and timely execution, GIS Group formulated an agenda that incorporated Taipei's existing strengths and features so as to maximize the advocacy effect.



## The outcomes

The event was a huge success. More than 1000 delegates from 43 countries participated; the largest number among any Velo-city event outside of Europe. And the event attracted 100 media representatives, of which more than one-third came from outside of Taiwan. The cycling parade was swarmed by 6000 people, a mix of both delegates and local citizens. Participants spoke highly of the event's arrangements, especially how it gave the industry's perspective a fitting voice and encouraged public engagement. The ECF President called it "an outstanding conference, a real global cycling summit," while other participants spoke of the warm hospitality and how they were exposed to local cycling establishments through the event. Head of Taipei's Department of Transportation commented that it was "extremely successful," an opinion echoed by the Chairman of Giant and Mayors of other cities. ECF's series manager, in particular, highlighted the professionalism of the organizer, saying that "it was the smoothest organization I have ever seen in my whole career." This positive feedback confirms that GIS Group's assuming a designer role instead of simply an executor role is an effective strategy to ensure customer satisfaction.