

In search of excellence, really?

A guest article by Hugo Slimbrouck

Is striving for excellence a good idea or is being obsessed by it an obstacle to progress and development? Is too much left brain thinking and over striving bad for finding creative solutions and our ability to innovate as event organisers? Ovation Global DMC's Hugo Slimbrouck will tell you all about it.

**More articles on
www.bbtonline.eu**

The schools are out and many students have strived for excellence, not necessarily perfection. We have all been there, trying our best, often pushing beyond our limits to prepare ourselves for the life ahead. But is that a good idea? Is not seeking perfection what we should be doing in our work? I have often found that being obsessed with perfection can be an obstacle to progress and development. Eating away time which can be spent on creative thinking?

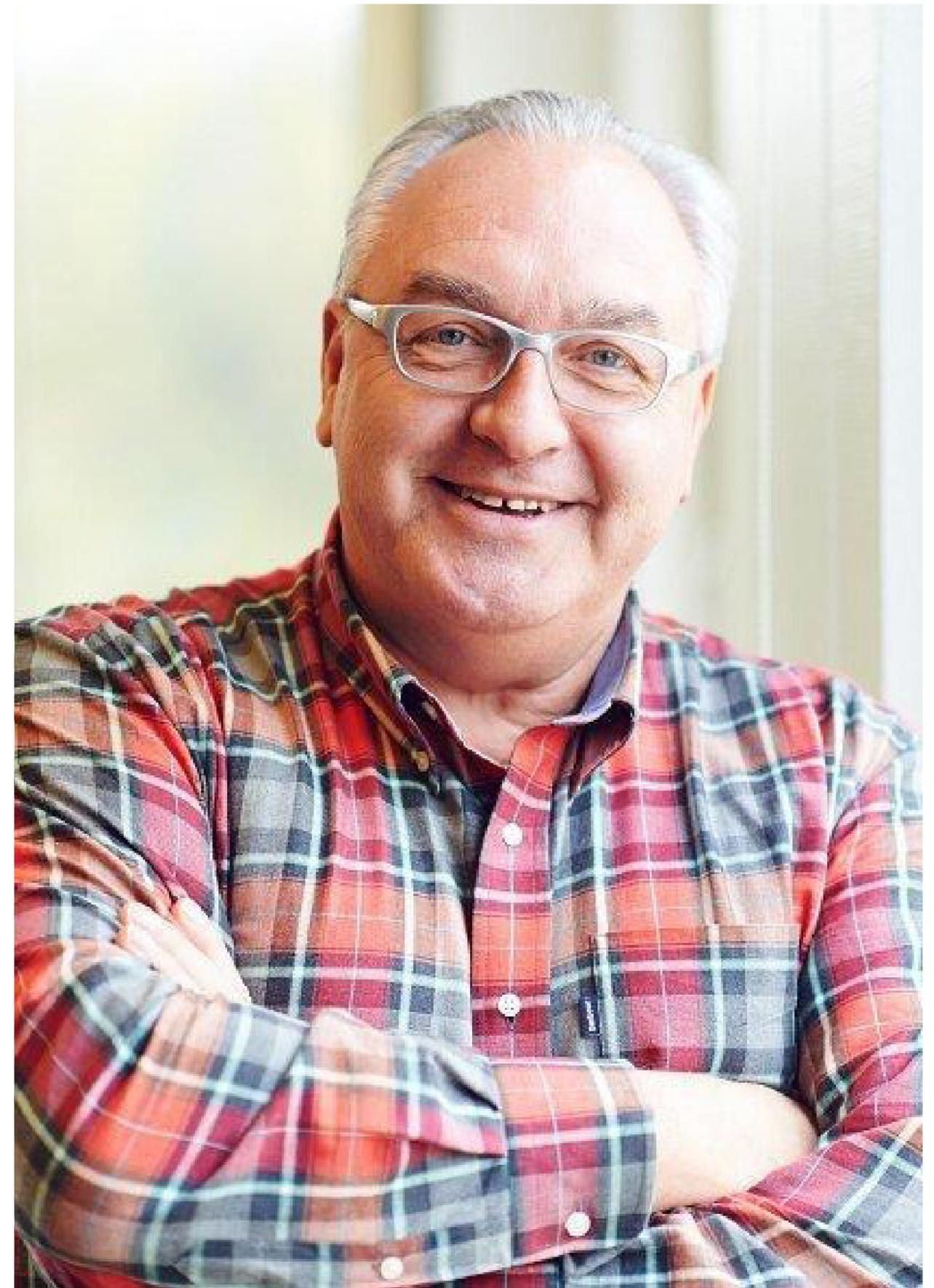
Thinking back to a problem solving course (Kepner-Tregoe PSDM) that I attended many years ago, I believe that thinking and over striving takes away the road to finding creative solutions and ultimately the ability to innovate. Too much left brain thinking is not good for the creative soul. Especially when, in our event business, we look for new ways to dream, inspire and excel. Too much process thinking slows down the creative momentum.

For that reason I suggest we should look beyond the briefs which land on our desks every day. They rarely describe the main business or organizational purpose the client is pursuing. What is their ultimate business goal, where do they want to take them in their strategic plan and especially why do they want to do this? The need to organize an event cannot be the purpose. But the ultimate goal they want to pursue is often not told. Striving for perfection in event delivery takes us away from the ultimate goal of organizations and by only

focusing on perfect delivery, we take away the opportunity to let them pursue a DREAM. We are not helping them in this process of their audacious goals if we do not offer to partner with them to find the solution together. So it should be our purpose as event planners to facilitate this beyond traditional event management design.

How can we help? First of all by not doing it on our own. An event planner may not have knowledge about the purpose and goals of the marketing director or the C-suite. They may not be knowledgeable about long term plans within the corporation. In order for us to be successful, we should not only focus on delivering the perfect event according to clearly elaborated briefs but bring those different stakeholders to the table. We must involve others in the conversation, both from the client and event management side; putting smart minds together so that an event can be approached both from a strategic and economic perspective. It is our responsibility to help elevate our client to this higher ground, rather than purely delivering on an event brief.

But how do we 'sell' this idea? We need to put the process in the client mind. First of all by bringing decision makers together and secondly by letting them 'dream' the solution to their challenge. For that we must make it visual. A picture tells a thousand words. Or as a friend of mine who is on the board of WWF once said, "Cute

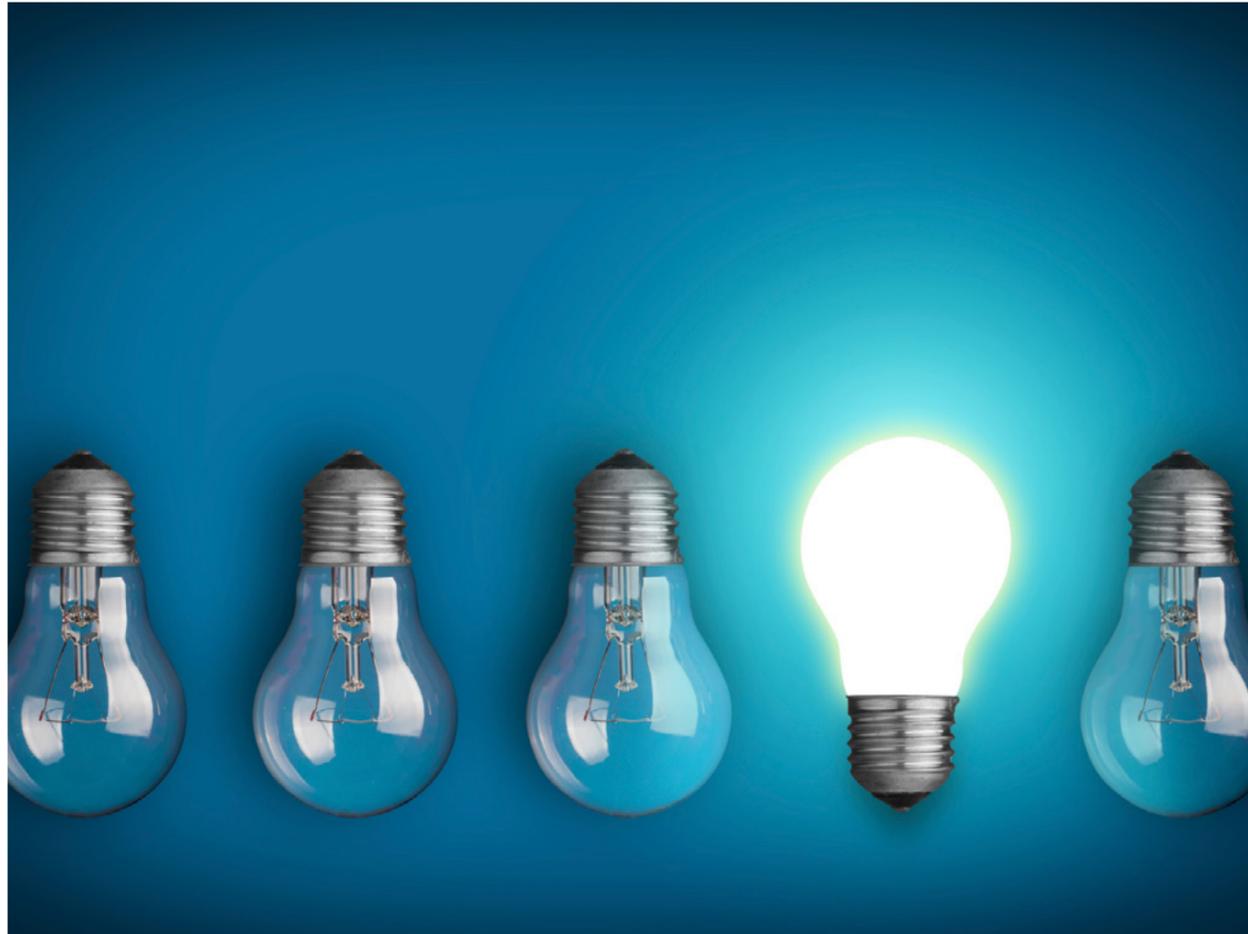


teddy bears sell better than statistics". One needs to draw out the solution for our clients. Paint a picture of how you see the outcome of the event. In this day and age, this takes us to technology which plays an increasingly important role in event production. Pre, during and post event, but to start with, as a sales tool in the design process. But do not focus on drawing the sketch; use the sketch to draw out the underlying idea and thoughts. Visualization will help to work towards the client's purpose more than perfect execution of logistics and operations and event and process delivery.

The use of data is critical to set the standards of an event but its ultimate success will depend on the creative input you bring to the table. Working towards creative solutions will require stepping away from your desk to seek alternative environments that will facilitate the process more beyond standard operating procedures and delivery. Whilst these are important to

create a framework and set standards, being drowned in details takes away precious time to focus on creativity, e.g. redesign meeting room set ups, break up large audiences, and limiting one directional communication dissemination, to involve the participants from the event creation stage onwards and get feedback after the event on how breaking up traditional set ups has facilitated the creative process.

Mess things up! Apply mixology to event planning. Walk on the edge. Look at things from a different perspective. The minute that you take away traditional processes or force the client to break away from their assumed 'perception' of what an event can achieve, is when you help them the most. Disruption as a basis of re-creation, will expose them to see the many sides of a problem and alternative options and solutions. This way creativity becomes effortless. It is our task to facilitate thought provoking dialogue and 'big picture' thinking to produce meaningful creative solutions.



By pushing yourself and your client in new and creative ways rather than relying on the common misconception of total quality delivery, you will be able to break out of the inclination of trying too hard to achieve. By striving forward and upward, by remodeling your view of the world and ultimately your client's view and by developing new patterns of strategic foresight, you can achieve excellence, without breaking a sweat.

Using our business tools of meetings and events and bringing people together to a level where magic happens is the ultimate purpose in the events industry. The standing ovation that you will get at the end of the event will be your measurement tool!

Hugo Slimbrouck is Director of Strategic Partnerships of Ovation Global DMC, the destination services brand of the MCI Group. As a Past Global President of SITE, the Society of Incentive Travel Excellence, Hugo continues to support this association for business development within the EMEA region.

**Published on www.bbtonline.eu in May 2017.
Like our reports? Like our [Facebook page](#) as well!**