

If you thought the crisis is over ... we invite you to think again 2 more presidents and their views on the crisis

Sam van de Kerckhof – President BAPCO

If 2009 was without any doubt the year of the crisis felt by all members of BAPCO sometimes indirectly because of the difficulties encountered by their clients to find sponsoring and with lower budgets, 2010 is without doubt the 'sustainable' year.

The word is used in all its forms and permutations... A conference has got to be sustainable, and so does the PCO! You would hope that the clients have also followed the trend, unfortunately old habits die hard.

The future Belgian Presidency of the EU is actually being organized and is showing great confusion as to the selection of the operators.

In order to give the meeting industry certain sustainability, it is today more than ever absolutely essential that we define clearly our different roles and responsibilities and adhere even more to our quality labels. In today's global world many companies, when they are not a single person, pretend to be event organizers & creators, have communication and advisory roles, organize PR and logistics, are DMC 's and even interim agents ... This situation is not 'sustainable' and puts the client in every difficult situation when the moment of choice has come.

Prudence is of the essence and let us be respectful of the ethics!

BAPCO

Belgian Association of Professional Conference Organisers

www.bapco.be

Raymond Desmet – President Initiative

Last year saw a reduced business income for our members due to several reasons on which I will elaborate further on. This year most of our members expect to stabilize the figures which still means a step backwards in comparison to 2008 of course. History has taught us that unfortunately we do not always get what we expect so caution is needed and let's have a reality check on a regular basis.

The reason for the move backwards in 2009 can be filed under two categories:

- First: the economical crisis and the savings that are the immediate result, but also the rather pejorative image of incentives. The term 'incentives' was so under fire that at a certain period companies asked us to find another term to indicate the same content. In times of great crisis it is apparently difficult to understand that a number of companies are still doing great and even more that some companies will actively work at getting out of a crisis situation and are therefore looking for tools to give extra motivation to people, especially in difficult times.
- The second category of reasons is that, certainly in more difficult times, a number of external players try to get a foothold in the incentive market. By players I mean PR & communication agencies, event organizers, etc... In most cases these people are under very heavy competition pressure in their own field and that is the reason they try to pick some extra business on the incentive market. In general we can state however that they usually miss the experience and know how to organize incentives, they are aiming for very short term results and work without the government imposed official licenses and guarantees. The situation is clear: some clients follow this short term way of thinking but come back from this thinking process later,; unfortunately they are then replaced by others and the merry-go-round continues without hardly any reaction or sanction from the authorities.

It is therefore the task of Initiative to highlight the values and advantages of its members offered to their clients: certainty – focus on the client- experience – empathy - specialization.

Initiative screens all its members on a continuous basis of 15 points enabling the members to display a totally client oriented image.

There is one thing Initiative members cannot guarantee: to always be the cheapest. But experience shows us that the client looking for a real incentive that will be a true motivation and leaves a continued lasting positive impression, is a price conscious client but not a price hopper. Somebody once said: "If you have an important case to defend, you do not take the cheapest lawyer, but a specialist". The same goes for incentives: if you want to organize a real incentive and also take advantage of all guarantees put in place by the authorities, you nearly automatically find yourself talking to an Initiative member.

What we are convinced of is that the future will show us that the player who comes up with innovative ideas, takes initiatives (what's in a name...), and also offers optimal certainty and security to his clients will survive the crisis. As Initiative we will do our utmost to bring this message to our clients in a positive way.

See you soon.... and thank you for your confidence.

**Initiative
Qualified Incentive Professionals**

www.initiative-group.be