

*Why did you decide to become a conference producer?
(Applies to becoming a Conference Committee Chair or committee member as well)*

Busy professionals understand the importance of meeting and staying current with the exponential advances in their industry. Conferences are an excellent format for presentation of a variety of topics; networking permits idea exchange, sharing best practices and contextualization of knowledge. However, there is often so much information presented it can be difficult to assimilate and for experienced practitioners or relative newcomers to the field, it can be challenging to select appropriate sessions or even to identify colleagues in similar practice settings with whom to network.

My decision to produce conferences developed from my discontent with typical conference structure: a series of experts, presenting slide after slide of facts and figures, leaving no time to reflect or an explanation about what it may mean. I left conferences exhausted, with too much information, most of which was forgotten a month later. Plus, the food and beverages served were not of the caliber that our budgets allowed. Choosing Menu A, B, or C really didn't do it for me. I actually stopped attending conferences for these reasons.

"If you don't like something, try to change it" was the philosophy at the heart of my decision to start producing conferences and meetings. As a past Chair of many meetings and conferences, I learned how to shape the content to better direct the educational presentations, identify themes and levels of complexity to make it easier to select sessions, facilitate networking, and improve the overall quality of the meeting experience for both participants and sponsors.

As a conference producer I make sure the needs of the learners at all levels were addressed so they could take back tangible and meaningful information they would remember. I want to give the attendees the tools to act as change agents to improve their own practices and their industry. By incorporating principles of adult education, it is my mandate to make the conference relevant, interesting, enjoyable, and educational.

As a conference producer, with a culinary background, I empowered the chefs to be creative, to use local if possible, to change up the standard coffee and muffin breakfast, chicken dinner, and high sugar snacks at breaks. We created menus that energized people – with protein in the morning, chefs stations strategically placed throughout the tradeshow for lunches, dessert from lunch served as an afternoon break, and dinners that gave the chef complete authority to showcase their talents, while pairing with appropriate wines and beers. Food became an important part of the event, which assisted people in learning and retaining information. By serving great food, we found attendance at the conference increased, all meals were well attended, and people were eager to attend the next year's conference

Why hire a professional?

Hiring a professional conference producer to look after the details allows the chair and the committee to focus on superb programming and make sure the right people were in place to provide high quality educational sessions and meet the objectives. Well executed meetings and conferences come from the expertise of having professionals manage the details; volunteer committee members are not tasked to administer the event, as well as try to manage their own fulltime jobs.

The key to coping is organization and teamwork. Divide up the labour based on strengths, keep in regular contact, and make sure committee members are chosen wisely. Volunteer core committee members accept delegation of tasks, are accountable, responsible, and must deliver on time. A professional conference planner will gently step in when committees are getting overwhelmed. They will help facilitate communication. It is essential to have a vision, to have great people on the organizing committee, and a solid "command" structure, but by far, the most important element for coping with conference planning and working full time is the integration of a skilled meeting management company.

Go Golf Events Conference & Management Inc. will help you develop your conference from start to finish – ensuring you educate: learn, play, and teach.