





Héctor A. Venegas, Ingrid Rip and Karin Krogh among the attendees of the Meetovation Education

Meeting Design

Change your participants into committed ambassadors

Because the congress and event participants are becoming more and more critical and also able to acquire their information elsewhere, it is necessary to always take a critical look at the added value of a business meeting. Fortunately the relatively young MICE industry is not standing still. One of the developments is Meeting Design, which can help to make a meeting more effective and change your participants into committed ambassadors.

Meeting Design is a development from the past ten years that is growing in importance. "People more and more realize the importance of a professional approach. This is also intrinsic to the relatively young MICE trade that is constantly evolving", says Ingrid Rip, owner of training agency RREM and consultant for international (academic) association congresses. "As a certain subject gains more importance, this process functions as a flywheel and is accepted by more and more parties. A year ago, for instance, the focus was more on ROI. By now this is a given element. Meeting Design is a next step in the continuously advancing professionalization of the sector. Various parties have worked out and shaped the principles of Meeting Design, like EventCanvas, MindMeeting and Meetovation."

CREATIVE INTERPRETATION

Meeting Design focuses on the interpretation of the participant journey of a business meeting in order to let the stakeholders achieve their objectives, for instance realizing ROI, PR, networking or the gaining of knowledge and inspiration. Rip: "Ten years ago a congress was the only means of communication for the exchange of information.

But with the ever increasing digitization, a meeting with its only purpose the exchange of information, no longer constitutes an added value. It is much more about the mutual exchange of knowledge, the networking, the creating of interaction within the peer groups and not to be forgotten: the providing of an experience." A congress is therefore more than a room with a stage. By means of Meeting Design you can provide your meeting with a creative interpretation by, for instance, applying other forms of communication transfer. "Instead of the professor who speaks for one hour, you can also divide the participants into small groups, set them at round tables and let them exchange knowledge. It is more and more about the 'wisdom of crowds', the jointly elaborating on the present knowledge of the speaker as well as the participants. I also apply this principle during my training sessions. Together you know more, and you can help each other to come to new views."

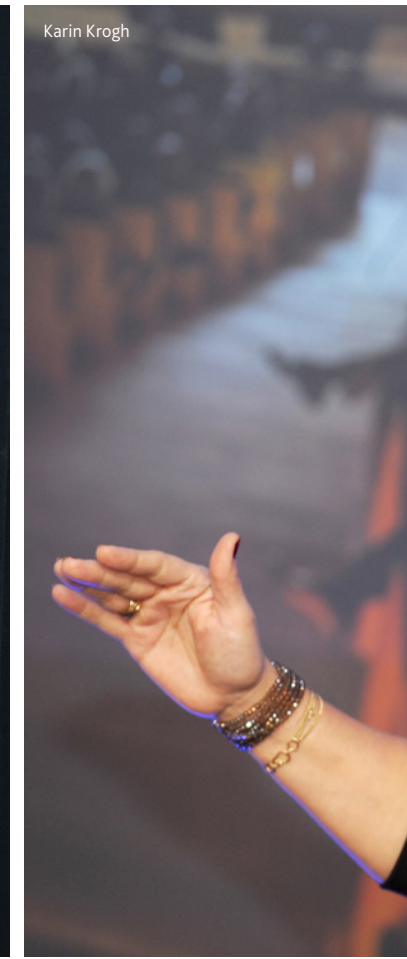
SCOUTING OUT POSSIBILITIES

According to Rip especially the corporate market has already gone far in scouting out and applying the possibilities of Meeting Design. "Nowadays, events have a fixed



Karin Krogh

Ingrid Rip has completed the
Extended Meetovation Education



position within the marketing and communication strategy of companies. The business community has set itself a clear goal and adapts the marketing and communication to that goal. They realize that when the objectives of your client and the other stakeholders and the desired experience for the participants is the main objective, you organize a better event. The longer your event is remembered, the more successful it is in the longer term. And that means a better return on investment for the organizer as well as the participants. With national association congresses you see that Meeting Design is also making a slow but steady entry. By applying Meeting Design they can convince the new generation of trade professionals to participate in their congresses and events. In contrast with the generation that graduates in ten years' time and finds it necessary to be a member of a trade association, the new class of students is more and more critical about the added value of a membership. Just like the acceptance of ROI at the time, I expect that the positive experiences acquired with Meeting Design will ensure that eventually, it will become an element of the organization process."

DANISH DEVELOPMENT

Meetovation is an early development that incorporates Meeting Design. Years ago, Meetovation was developed by Visit Denmark to promote Denmark as a congress destination. The Danish MPI Chapter Leader Karin Krogh decided to further develop the principles and together with MPI Chapter Leader Héctor A. Venegas from Germany, they established the consulting and planning company engaging meetings. Besides consulting on Meeting Design and planning meetings and events, this company offers MICE professionals the opportunity to train themselves according to the principles of Meetovation. "The focus lies on the stakeholders, the organizing committee and the various target groups", Krogh explains. "When these aspects have been clearly identified and you have set a completely clear objective, then you can focus on the Meetovation principles. The meeting design concentrates on how a meeting can best be set up to create engaged participants. That creates success and ensures to achieve the objectives."

"The principles of Meetovation are Return on Investment, Local Inspiration,

Responsible Thinking, Creative Set-up and Active Involvement", Venegas adds. "Local Inspiration is about the benefits of the region which you can use, to support the objectives. But also the knowledge presented and the natural network which can enhance a business meeting. In the Netherlands, many destinations duly consider the present knowledge development and how this can enhance a congress. Responsible Thinking is about sustainability, and not only green alternatives are considered for the location and the catering, but also the provision of tools to realize an impact on a social level on the region. Active Involvement has to do with collaboration and interaction between the participants. Exchanging knowledge, ideas, creating experience and sharing it together. Too often people just sit down and listen to the presentation, passively." Krogh: "It is no longer a one-way process. If you have a congress attended by 300 doctors, and there is only one doctor or professor speaking, then that is a waste of 300 qualified brains. If they all have the opportunity to share their personal knowledge or experiences with each other, the end result of a meeting is far more successful. Then you



Héctor A. Venegas

have a good Return on Investment, learning-wise and motivation-wise. That is the idea behind Meetovation: when you involve them, engage them in the action, this is definitely an added value for the congress. They become happy and loyal participants who will become an ambassador for your organization, product or service.”

PRACTICAL MODELS

When you work with the five Meetovation principles with your meetings, conferences and events, then the participants become more engaged. This is an essential part of the Extended Meetovation Education.

Krogh: “We start with a webinar, two weeks before the workshop, to get to know each other before we actually start. Before the webinar, during the workshop days and after the education everyone has to do a survey, to find out on what level of knowledge they have. In addition to this they also have to fill out an online Everything DiSC® profile. DiSC behavior profiles is an analytical tool that is used to assess behavior like personality traits, behavioral traits or energy factors that characterizes our personality. It helps to recognize human diver-

sity, to understand our colleagues and how to communicate with them. This improves the relations – and on top of that, the sales.” Venegas adds: “Two weeks after the webinar we have a three-day training which is very intense, it goes on even during the evenings, because we have a lot of ground to cover. The training of course is also set up according to the Meetovation principles, so you learn while doing. During sessions we provide advice on your events that you are planning or supplying to and you will meetovate them. Then you can get your certificate.”

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rip followed the Extended Meetovation Education and this year became the first certified Meetovator in the Netherlands. “The training goes beyond Meeting Design as such. For instance, the DiSC evaluation is an incredibly useful tool. How to get the right message across is quite often forgotten when talking to people and assessing. Because of its practicability, Meetovation is a good choice for my industry. Many MICE professionals have a hands-on mentality. But that can also be a problem. Many start

organizing, but forget the first rules about target groups and goals to be achieved. Also, the importance of personal development is underestimated. Our industry is still quite young, so there are a lot of innovations and new insights developing. We are changing to improve our profession, and these changes are happening very fast. You have to keep on innovating and adapting to new trends. But also realize that there is always more to learn and to develop.”

As committee chair of the MPI Academy, Rip likes to get the members (and non-members) to get acquainted with Meetovation. “I am responsible for the MPI training courses in the Netherlands, and I am discussing the possibility of getting the Meetovation Education over to the Netherlands. We see that the industry is working very hard to become more professional. Meetovation is one example of the innovative ideas that are being developed to increase this professionalism.” Krogh: “It would be wonderful if we could establish a way of working together, bringing Meetovation to the MPI education as well. We hope to become a part of their Academy.”