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Welcome to Congrex!



More than ever, Congrex is committed to building the future together with our clients, partners and the industry at large. The future is here and it is up to us – working together – to seize it and respond appropriately and dynamically.

Part of this involves Congrex's many plans to develop new products and services. These include new online platforms, a new registration system for your conferences, and the introduction of new visual media products into the industry that will take many forms. We, at Congrex, truly believe that these new services will start to make the difference for many of our clients! Look out for more news on this in the coming months.

I am delighted to introduce our latest edition of Meet! Magazine – this edition covers many topics that we are passionate about, and that I am certain you will find informative, valuable and interesting. Items that I particularly hope you will enjoy are the articles on the release of a Congrex 'short film' about the Congrex Experience, and the articles on Hybrid Events and Google+ - all highlight our developments and give you a glimpse of what lays ahead in the future.

These are exciting times for Congrex and we want to be at the forefront with you in developing the future together. Excellence in everything we deliver is not just an initiative; it is a way of life - a lifelong promise!

Watch this space!

Very Best Wishes,

David Wade-Smith CEO Congrex



The real value of a Hybrid Event

Every two years ESOT (European Society for Organ Transplantation) will hold its congress in a European city. Many professionals in the field of transplantation convene to share the latest results of various aspects of transplantation research, and the congress attracts the top people in this area. Congrex as a group have embraced the development of technology and its increasingly important role in the delivery of successful meetings and events. So it was only fitting that when ESOT awarded Congrex UK its bi-yearly business, by mandating that it create a differentiated event the UK team was able to rise to the occasion with a client who was eager to see what is possible in raising the bar on their congresses.

Photo:
ECTRIMS congress,
Amsterdam, Holland,
2011/ Photographer
Erik Kottier,
Organised by
Congrex Switzerland

The new approach paid off and proved to be a winner. ESOT reported high levels of satisfaction from participants, sponsors, and exhibitors alike for the congress event held 4th to 7th September, 2011 in Glasgow. How it came to be and what was delivered proves that Hybrid events are taking off and that they have a future in delivering top value. Here's why.

One size does not fit all

From the start ESOT asked Congrex to design a "meeting with a difference". For Congrex, this meant creating an experience that was a departure from past ESOT congresses - and this meant more interactivity. The London team thought it was a very exciting opportunity and set out to bring forth ideas on how they could integrate some of the technology that's available to achieve ESOT's desired results.

From the onset, Congrex were clear that the ESOT congress was an optimal candidate for a "hybrid event". Together in close consultation with their client, they laid out a plan for an event that would utilise a selection of various social media, and other technologies in order to execute on the idea. What was also evident was that ESOT as an organisation was primed and ready for this step.

Assessing the most relevant

The inventory of deliverables for the congress was quite an interesting assortment of overall presentations, sessions and social events. ESOT, with the support of Congrex, decided that they would live stream some of the sessions, and focus on the most "hot" topics for live streaming - the plenary sessions.

A selection of criteria was established for this process which included content that was new or controversial, most topical, and of the highest profile. Out of these criteria a total of 10 sessions were to be live streamed.

Additionally the team focused on the exhibition area and created three main "hybrid" areas which became "the hub" of the congress.

1. The creation of a Hybrid Poster Area

Based on the traditional poster area, it was updated and made highly interactive. The result was a very popular area with its plasma screen and high tech feel. Abstracts were divided into four levels rather than the more usual two. Traditional poster, Traditional Oral, Rapid Oral and Mini Oral. The format bridged the gap between the oral presentations and the Traditional Poster by giving more presenters the opportunity to present orally.

ESOT 2011 Congress

- 20 Oral Sessions
- 9 Mini Oral Sessions and 34 Rapid Oral Sessions
- 9 state-of-the-art sessions
- 7 (postgraduate courses) – Speciality Update Symposia
- More than 20 society meetings
- 10 corporate plenary/parallel sessions and 3 social events
- Additionally the congress also incorporated the 22nd Annual BSHI (British Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics) and the ETCO/EDC Joint Meeting

Putting it all together

Congrex teamed up with a technical supplier that was facile in different webcasting technologies. The best solutions for our client's needs were chosen based on the parameters of the event. Features included the capacity for live questions by viewers and various content integration during the live event. The system also allowed for last-minute changes during the webcast - and a high degree of flexibility.

In the evening of each event the presentations were uploaded and made available for on-demand viewing from the ESOT members' area, and a delayed webcast was made available for US viewers on the AST (US sister association) website. A total of 89 hours and 36 minutes were watched.

Good design, creating an edge, great outcomes

The definition of "Hybrid Events" will vary, but for ESOT, the hybrid element was provided especially by technology and the design of its usage in the three different successful hybrid hubs in the Exhibitions section of the conference area, as well as the integration of the event's live streaming. Not only did this benefit the actual participants of the congress, but it provided a great advantage for those not able to attend from within Europe and also from the United States!

In the end ESOT achieved its desired results when participants derived great satisfaction, and sponsors and exhibitors were rewarded with high levels of participant engagement and interactivity. The added advantage of live streaming to both ESOT members and delayed streaming to its sister association in the United States - all contributed to a real "hybrid event" experience. For ESOT participants, members, sponsors and exhibitors this added not just great value and benefits, but it extended the reach of the event and created an edge that made a difference for a successful outcome of all involved.



Photo:
ESOT congress,
Glasgow, United
Kingdom, Organised
by Congrex United
Kingdom

Do you really know what Congrex do?

The new series of Congrex movies want to make sure you do!

"A picture is worth a thousand words," so the saying goes. Congrex believe in this adage and have set out to tell its story in moving pictures.

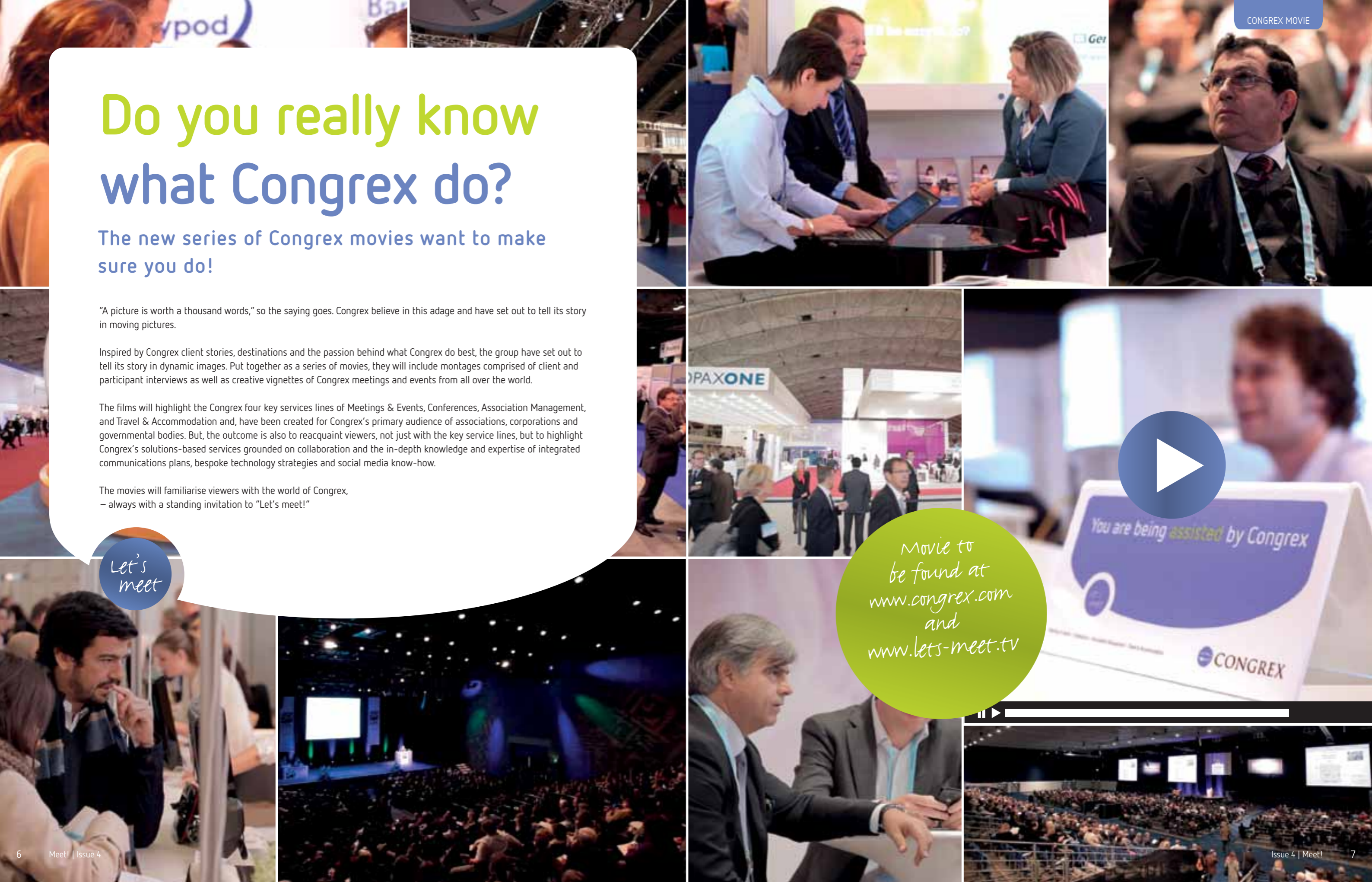
Inspired by Congrex client stories, destinations and the passion behind what Congrex do best, the group have set out to tell its story in dynamic images. Put together as a series of movies, they will include montages comprised of client and participant interviews as well as creative vignettes of Congrex meetings and events from all over the world.

The films will highlight the Congrex four key services lines of Meetings & Events, Conferences, Association Management, and Travel & Accommodation and, have been created for Congrex's primary audience of associations, corporations and governmental bodies. But, the outcome is also to reacquaint viewers, not just with the key service lines, but to highlight Congrex's solutions-based services grounded on collaboration and the in-depth knowledge and expertise of integrated communications plans, bespoke technology strategies and social media know-how.

The movies will familiarise viewers with the world of Congrex, – always with a standing invitation to "Let's meet!"

Let's meet

Movie to be found at www.congrex.com and www.lets-meet.tv



Active Steps towards EU engagement for associations



Michiel Gen
Association Manager
Congrex Belgium

Most trade and professional associations have amongst their key objective to influence policy or represent the interests of their industry/ profession vis-à-vis public bodies and governments. Yet many associations have not been able to move this goal from mission statement into action plan. Budget concerns or lack of knowledge regarding the strategy are often the reason.

Still many European trade and professional associations have EU engagement as an objective but don't know how and where to start. Congrex Belgium's Michiel Gen (Association Manager) explains to Meet! that EU engagement doesn't have to mean expensive lobbying. He asserts that the first steps towards exerting influence, in an effective yet affordable way, is by tapping into the expertise of the membership base and volunteer leadership of an association. Additionally, these actions are, he maintains, an excellent way to add to an Association's member value proposition. The following are points he advises to keep in mind when considering EU engagement.

Brussels decides

It is estimated that between 60% and 80% of the legislation that currently affects professionals and businesses throughout Europe is decided in Brussels: industry standards, pharmaceuticals, competition, trade,

funding of scientific research, environment, professional qualifications, health & safety rules, consumer protection and food safety regulations, etc. For this reason, almost every business sector and many professions are represented in Brussels through a trade or professional association, including hundreds of non-EU interest groups.

Monitoring

Engaging the EU starts by staying abreast of what is going on. The EU frequently adopts new and amended existing legislation. It is therefore important for an organisation to maintain awareness of legislative and



policy developments by monitoring relevant EU websites and specialised EU media, as well as gathering information from relevant contacts and through meetings.

Many European associations today are looking to increase their member value proposition. Monitoring and reporting on EU legislation and policy initiatives can add such value, and European associations are best placed to deliver this as opposed to national associations. Information gathered can be fed to members through the association's regular website newsletters or policy briefs.

Open to expert input

The European Commission is actually a relatively small organisation. With only 25,000 civil servants - fewer than the city of Rotterdam - it drafts legislation that affects 500 million European citizens. Because of its relative small size, it lacks the necessary expert knowledge on every single regulatory or technical issue. This knowledge gap is filled by associations.

The participation of civil society organisations in the European policy-making process helps address the perceived democratic deficit that still prevails in European integration and adds to the legitimacy of EU legislation and policy. For this reason, EU institutions are extremely open to expert input provided by associations and regularly reach out in so-called stakeholder consultations ►

5 Steps to EU Engagement

- 1 Be aware of what's going on by monitoring specialised EU publications but filter out irrelevant information.
- 2 Identify the key people in the institutions working on issues affecting your members.
- 3 Meet them at an opportune moment.
- 4 Let your members do most of the talking. They are the experts.
- 5 Make good and timely use of opportunities to give input such as stakeholder consultations and expert groups.

Photo:
EU Flag,
Photographer
Jean-Etienne
Minh-Duy Poirrier,
Flickr

'The European commission frequently calls on external specialists.'

or green papers. Responding to these opportunities is an easy and inexpensive way to give input from the perspective of an association.

EU officials are broadly familiar with the policy positions of established stakeholders and are constantly seeking input from those involved in niche fields of interest that are not yet being heard. This also opens opportunities for smaller associations.

Let your members do the talking

Engagement is most effective when members and volunteer leaders are directly involved. EU officials are very keen to hear from actual practitioners what impact their policies and legislation have in practice. In fact, they prefer to hear this directly from the practitioner rather than through the filter of a lobbyist or association executive. With the right guidance, nobody is better equipped to deliver this practical, technical or academic view than an association's members.

When a piece of legislation or policy that has an impact on the association's field is being discussed, associations' volunteer leaders should be taken along to the meeting to share their experience. The desired tailor-made message should be left behind (one page document!) containing the key points which should be communicated to the EU counterpart. An added benefit of involving members directly is that the membership or volunteer leadership is engaged in a concrete project, building new bonds and loyalties.

European projects and expert groups

The European commission frequently calls on external specialists to sit on expert groups or advise as external consultants. The type of expertise may be scientific knowledge and/or knowledge derived from practical experience. This opens up another opportunity for associations. By positioning an Association's people in these roles, they can exert influence through the expertise of its members. The cost of this is negligible for the association as experts generally receive a per diem for their services and expenses. Similar opportunities exist with EU funded projects and thematic networks.

Greater engagement means greater value proposition

Expert input is crucial for sound policies and an Association's members can deliver this expertise. Considering these points and taking action based on these conditions can pave the way towards genuine and effective EU engagement - without having to hire a lobbyist. The step towards engagement can also drive an association forward, differentiating its services from those of national associations. Furthermore, providing members with timely and accurate information on changes in EU legislation (or policies), and the impact these may have on the business or profession of members, will add significantly to member value proposition. Associations can monitor publications in-house or outsource to an AMC or consultancy with a representation in Brussels. They can, in turn, also advise on the opportune moment to meet with the correct people, providing guidance through the labyrinth in Brussels and Strasbourg - without the considerable investment of an expensive lobbyist. ●



Photo: DGN: Präsidentensymposium Kongress, Germany, 2011, Sven Bratulic. Organised by Congrex Germany



'EU engagement doesn't have to mean expensive lobbying.'

Our Industry Insider - Michiel Gen

Michiel joined Congrex in 2006 where he specialises in EU public affairs consulting, marketing and communications for a wide variety of non-for-profit organisations. He is responsible for the management of association secretariats, helping define strategy, maintaining the master planning of projects, scheduling, communications and reporting as well as acting as the main point of contact to clients.

Prior to joining Congrex, Michiel worked for a top Brussels-based lobbying firm, where he was involved in issues ranging from food safety and bio-technology to energy and telecommunications.

Michiel holds a Bachelors degree in European Studies from The Institute of Higher European Studies, The Hague University. His curriculum included a semester studying Chinese politics and history at the University of Hong Kong and an internship at the Netherlands Embassy in Warsaw, Poland. He is a native of the Netherlands. He speaks English and Dutch fluently and has a good understanding of German and French.

Photo: ECTRIMS congress, Amsterdam, Holland, 2011/ Photographer Erik Kottier, Organised by Congrex Switzerland

A Flash Mob coming to a meeting or conference near you...

Spotted for you

Participants enjoy an unexpected experience while attending the opening day of E3 Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Over 100 fans came together and danced to music and choreography inspired by the game of Toy Story 3.

Going about the seemingly expected routine of a normal day at a convention or a meeting, a flash mob suddenly appears... Flash Mob America (www.flashmobamerica.com) wants people to know that attending a conference can bring far more of an experience than the expected visits to exhibitors and plenary meeting sessions. The creators, Conroe Brooks and Staci Lawrence, founded the organisation with the purpose of creating "joy thru surprise." They believe that flash mobs have the capacity to inspire, celebrate, honour and provide hope – that in turn will promote causes and messages. But Flash Mobs are not just a US phenomenon.

To date some of the most historic have taken place in Europe, including the remix of

"Do re mi" by Maria and the children (Sound of Music) in the Antwerp train station for Belgian VTM, and the January 2009 Liverpool Street Station T-Mobil "Life's for Sharing" campaign.

The term Flash Mob or Smart mobs describes a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an act for a brief time and then disperse just as it suddenly appeared. There is often a performance related to song and music, or some means of artistic expression.

It seems the common link to all flash mobs is the delivery of an unforgettable experience that links the participants with a strong emotional positive response to the event – Flash Mob anyone?

Photo:
Photographer Kat
Tuohy, Flash Mob
America, LLC

q.media and Congrex join forces in joint venture agreement for the Gulf region

q.media (Qatar Media Services), the Middle East's leading media agency and Congrex have formed a major joint venture. The new partnership calls for Congrex to develop and deliver conference services together with q.media. A joint Congrex and q.media team have already been appointed the Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) for the 8th World Chambers Congress, hosted by Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI) and World Chambers Federation (WCF).

q.media is a perfect partner for Congrex – a company that is at the forefront of providing a wide range of global clients services in production, media sales, print, outdoor media as well as events. Founded in 2004, q.media has offices throughout the Middle East, Europe, South East Asia and Australia. In Qatar, q.media is the sole media representative of Al Jazeera Network, Qatar TV and Qatar Radio.

Congrex France new addition to the Congrex Group

Congrex has announced that it has incorporated Congrex France to its group of companies – a move that was a natural progression in Congrex's expansion strategy. The newly formed entity will be based in Paris.

Speaking about this latest development, Donald M. Hellstedt, Director Congrex Holding BV, remarked: "France is a very important market for Congrex, and it represents a great future potential for us. We are extremely pleased with this latest development, which is a logical step within our continuing growth strategy. We are looking forward to fully engage the French market, where over the years Congrex has conducted a large number of international conferences."



Boyle appointed to ABPCO Executive Committee

The Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO) has appointed Martin Boyle, Sales Director for Congrex UK onto its new executive committee.



Martin Boyle

ABPCO has established itself as the leading organisation in the UK for professional conference organisers, as well as engaging corporate organisations and academia who are involved with the meeting and event industry in the UK within its membership. "I am delighted to be joining the ABPCO Executive Committee" said Martin, "ABPCO have been instrumental in raising the profile of the meeting and event industry profession within the UK for many years."



Go to www.congrex.com for an up-to-date news overview.

Congrex Sweden take initiative on environmental and safety issues

A first for Congrex, the Swedish team organised a seminar on the importance of investing in environmental and safety issues this past November in Stockholm. Specifically, the meeting focused on what organisers and suppliers need to know when it comes to booking and organising meetings and events, and the process of standards certification acquisition for these.

Congrex Sweden took the initiative to host the seminar on the themes for venue managers and other stakeholders, together with participating companies, including The Green Key, Safehotels, and Svanen. Together, they provided advice on the advantages of getting certification in the Safety & Environmental areas. Additionally attending venue partners will be entitled, through Congrex, to a discounted licensee fee for selected brands (in these areas) after having gone through certification at a future date. For more information please contact johan.almeby@congrex.com

INFORMING YOUR DECISIONS

Key Steps When Planning a Conference

Tips for Local Chairs and Organising Committees



Photo:
DGN (Deutsche
Gesellschaft für
Neurologie),
Wiesbaden, Germany,
2011, Organised by
Congrex Germany

When Local Chairs and Organising Committees first consider the responsibility of hosting association conferences, it is often the case that this task is taken on by an individual or group from the professional community on behalf of the umbrella organisation. This function entails a time consuming and considerable detailed orientated undertaking that is required for the extensive planning needed to execute the event. Additionally the professionals who take on this role are doing so above-and-beyond their normal day-to-day commitments.

For those willing to take on this important task, Meet! has highlighted some ideas and suggestions for these "willing volunteers" that, we hope, will be helpful in evaluating process, planning, timelines, and managing risks for the organisation of a conference.

Process and planning

There are many factors that will impact timelines and initial steps to be taken when planning an event and they are likely to be:

- The timeline for bidding and being awarded the hosting of the conference
- The frequency of the conference – annual events might be limited in what can be done in terms of marketing, promotion, developing content etc. ahead of the preceding year's event
- Any existing "norms" for deadlines or "usual practice" for the event

Equally, it is important to consider that it may be difficult to specify exact norms for conference timelines as some events may require special lead times of up to four years due to their size, complexity or frequency. In other cases the opposite may be true and lead times may be just a

matter of months. Ultimately what is important to remember is that specific timelines or milestones will determine the planning and organisation of the event.

Factors impacting organisation

From the onset it is essential to gather as much information from the umbrella society or association about what their expectations, objectives, division of roles and responsibilities are. Historical information from previous events is also very useful because this will provide a more complete picture, at an early stage that will enable more informed decision making for the organisation of the event.

Things to consider at the earliest stages:

- Locations of past conferences and the types of venues and facilities used
- What is the next open year?
- Is there an official tender document (guideline for bidding)?
- What are the specific conference requirements (meeting rooms, exhibition space, accommodation, social events...)
- How has the conference evolved and progressed over past years? Are numbers increasing, or decreasing? This information can be a plus for educated estimations for the planned event
- What are the financial responsibilities? Who controls the budget? Are there budgetary obligations? Who assumes the financial and legal risk?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the various parties? For example, parent organisation, any international or national committees, the local hosts, the local supporters such as the City, Region, Academic establishments etc? ▶

'There are many factors that will impact time lines.'

Two top tips:

- Once event scope is defined, **draft a budget**. **Drafting a detailed budget**, based on criteria defined for your location, is the only means by which likely expenditures can be accurately assessed and determined. This will point to necessary income generation for event support.
- **Avoid signing any contracts** until there is a formalised relationship with the entity that will be managing the event (such as a PCO or other organising partner). If you sign contracts in your own name that are not supported by your professional organisation you might face personal exposure to unacceptable levels of risk.

Support and resources available to you

For many who take on the role of ambassador and local Conference host, it is often done in addition to other professional and personal commitments. Therefore it is important to try and involve others that can help “share the load” and add value by bringing knowledge and expertise as well as sharing some of the tasks involved.

This outline would address content that is topical and current in terms of subject matter in order to attract the right audience and provide target and active participation levels. The following should be considered when developing the event outline.

- Support and involvement of the related national industry/association, local academic or professional bodies as well as the as Local Authorities (if applicable)?
- Suitability of venue options in your locale?
- Accessibility for those who commonly attend the conference to the preferred location – as well as general infrastructure conditions for logistics at the selected destination?
- Have the scheduled or preferred dates for the conference taken into account other events or conferences occurring at the destination at the same time – including seasonal/monthly considerations such as high/low seasonal periods, public or religious holidays etc. impacting infrastructure or accessibility to the city in question?
- What is the availability of conference facilities and hotels for the proposed dates?
- When will the event be awarded and the process and decision making steps for bidding?
- Obtain written offers from key suppliers (primarily the venue) including details of the space available, quote for facilities and what is included and excluded in the overall price.
- Ensure a written confirmation for a **provisional booking** is put in place, from the start, to guarantee the venue will be available.

Managing the Risk

Before taking on the responsibility of managing a conference, it is strongly recommended that careful

consideration is given to the full commitment and risk involved. Taking on this commitment can be fulfilling and rewarding in many ways, **and** proper effective governance and fiscal planning should be put in place before this can be undertaken. Large events can bring significant contractual as well as financial responsibility, so to minimise the risks, there are a number of items that should be considered:

- Who is assuming the financial risk of the event?
- Who is entering into contracts with suppliers and service providers?
- What insurance coverage do you have in place to protect you, the stakeholders and the participants at this event?

Although some aspects may sound quite daunting they are very much manageable. If such expertise is not available within the host’s organisation then it can be brought in by professionals who have this knowledge.

Hosting the Conference – key steps revisited!

Depending on lead times and norms for the given event, the specific timelines may vary from conference to conference. Certain conferences involve subject matter where research and development are in a constant state of change and flux. In these cases certain conference timelines may be dictated by the need to ensure content is current. In many circumstances the contractual terms of key suppliers such as the venue will determine the necessary timetable to follow.

Part of the bidding process warrants the identification and specification of objectives, as well as venue selection for the event. Because an outline is required for the bid, all the steps necessary should be practically in place to host the event. If the key steps have been followed towards organising a conference, the host has gone a long way in securing what is necessary to be in place for the success of a well organised and engaging event. ●

Photo:
ECTRIMS congress,
Amsterdam, Holland,
2011/ Photographer
Erik Kottier,
Organised by
Congrex Switzerland

From the onset it is essential to gather as much information as possible.

Having a realistic assessment of the requirements involved in hosting a Conference, including time allotments required by the host and his/her colleagues, will go a long way in facilitating delivery of the conference. Evaluation of existing skill sets within the host’s department and organisation and who/what can be available and committed to the planning process is paramount.

Early preparation in terms of understanding available resources allows for identification of potential gaps. The good news is that there are many sources of support locally that can provide help such as the experts at the Convention Bureau or City Council.

These individuals can advise on venues, infrastructure, and suppliers and they have the experience from previous events held in the city. There also are professional companies (PCO’s or Professional Conference Organisers) whose main expertise is managing conferences. It may be the most viable and efficient option to have such professionals manage some or all of the aspects of a host or organiser.

Building the event outline and timeline

After gathering information, and bringing together the right team, the host will then be ready to construct the outline and picture of the event in order to fulfil the objectives and expectations of the parent association.



DESTINATION FOCUS

Vienna

A NUMBER ONE CITY TO LIVE IN — A NUMBER ONE CHOICE TO MEET IN!

Beautiful and majestic Vienna is one of the “grandes dames” of the imperial age of Europe. Its broad, sweeping boulevards are some of the most grandiose in the world conjuring up images of music, culture, enjoyment and quality of life!

Today, the city is as handsome and elegant as it was in the time of the Hapburgs, but it feels fresh and dynamic as it remakes itself in the 21st century – owning its contemporary place just as much of a draw as its favourite son, Wolfgang Amadeus. With its 2009/2010 minted number one world ranking in the yearly “Mercer Quality of Life Survey” it is not a wonder that Vienna also is a favourite destination in which to meet.

Vienna is also one of the four UN headquarters cities and over the years has developed as the seat of numerous international organisations. The Vienna region has evolved into one of the most affluent in the EU, with many international companies having their headquarters, major subsidiaries or Eastern European operations based out of the city.

Vienna's back to the future

Vienna is the capital of Austria and has always been a central meeting point of culture, knowledge and living in Europe. In keeping with its cultural megawatt history (think Freud and Wittgenstein, Mozart, Schubert, Strauss, the Boys' Choir, and the Lipizzaner stallions of the Spanish Riding School), the city is in a constant state of hyper drive towards the future. Grounded in its glorious past, Vienna has developed into a thoroughly modern city equipped to be a most gracious host to visitors from all over the world.

In keeping with the ethos of this destination, Vienna Convention Bureau's Director Christian Mutschlechner adds “Vienna as a meeting destination is permanently

developing its infrastructure – some of the highlights in the future will be the opening of the new University of Economy, which will be an architectural landmark of the city and will be situated next to Reed Messe Wien. The Opening of the new Central train station in 2012 will make accessibility for delegates easier and the ongoing growth of the hotel infrastructure will further help to offer our participants hotels for every taste.”

Let's Meet!

For six years in a row, Vienna has ranked number one in the ICCA cities worldwide statistics as the top destination in which to hold a conference. Its infrastructure boasts an international airport, up-to-date venue facilities, large amounts of quality accommodation, a culinary landscape second to none and an incomparable array of cultural attractions.

Vienna has a well deserved reputation for its “green lungs”, status (because of the large amount of green spaces in the city), and it stands out for its cleanliness, as well as record of being one of the safest large cities in the world. Organisers and participants alike choose Vienna because it is:

- one of the best cities to meet in the world
- located in the heart of Europe
- a gateway to Eastern Europe
- a major university city
- the Science city
- quality of life city
- clean, green and safe ▶

Vienna fast facts:

Area: 414 sq. Km

Population: 1.7 million

Language: German

Currency: Euro (€)
Austria is a member of the European Union

Taxation

Value-added tax (VAT) is a rate of 20% in Austria. There is a reduced V.A.T. rate of 10% and this is applicable to tourism services, food and agriculture.

Companies travelling to Austria on business may be entitled to reclaim VAT on certain goods and services, and business expenses.

On 1st January 2010, changes to EU VAT processes were introduced governing the rules for place of supply for goods and services, and VAT refunds. Further information is available at ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/index_en.htm

Time Zone

Vienna is in what is known as Central European Time or CET (Greenwich Mean Time + 1 hour)

Photo:
Vienna Convention
Bureau photo
database

Impressive venues for an imperial city

Vienna has one of the most compact and easily accessible conference and conventions centers in the world – and is considered one of the greenest. The city houses three convention centres, 88 conference hotels, 39 historical venues, and 17 contemporary locations. Most noteworthy of these are:

Austria Center Vienna

- 17 halls for 100–4,320 persons
- 180 additional rooms, including eight lounges and five suites
- Nine foyer restaurants
- 22,000 sqm of gross exhibition space, including 12,200 sqm across four halls
- Three hotels/670 rooms within walking distance

Hofburg Vienna

- The former Habsburg winter palace
- 35 halls/rooms
- 17,000 sqm of gross space
- Events for 50 to 4,900 persons
- 4,000 hotel rooms within walking distance

Reed Messe Wien Exhibition & Convention Center

- Conference centre (7,000 sqm) with 18 meeting spaces for 70 to 1,500 persons

- Conventions/events for up to 30,000 persons
- 55,000 sqm of exhibition ground in 4 halls including a multifunctional hall of 9,000 sqm
- 2 hotels/494 rooms within walking distance

Getting there and getting around

Vienna International Airport is located 16 km east of Vienna city centre and has been recognised by international organisations as one of the safest.

The Wiener Linien (Vienna Transport Authority) network is one of the most modern and efficient in the world – a system that ensures the participant can effortlessly reach almost any destination in Vienna.

Accommodation

Conference and event participants will find any category of accommodation they desire in Vienna. The choice ranges from luxury hotels in former city palaces, international and Austrian hotel chains, to family-run establishments as well as small, quaint pensions or youth hostels.

By last official count in 2009, Vienna houses 390 hotels with a total capacity of 25,033 rooms and 48,008 beds. Up to present day another 15 hotels and more than 3,000 rooms or 6,000 beds are being added to this inventory.

Wining, dining and entertainment

Viennese Cuisine is the only cuisine in the world to be named after a city. The place that has given the world the Wiener Schnitzel and Sacher-Torte has its culinary origins in countries from all over Europe. Today, this delicious tradition, with its excellent dishes is available in restaurants and eateries throughout the city.

To this gastronomic spectrum is added a significant wine growing industry, as Vienna is also the only major capital that cultivates wine (mostly white wines) on such a large scale – some 700 hectares – within the city limits.

As a former imperial seat, the city is a provider of a vast cultural heritage, and it is a paradise for music and art lovers alike. Vienna today still holds its place as the world's capital of music, and attracts some of the most important events in music from classical to rock. Its museums are renowned and house some of the most important collections in the world.

A long-standing relationship equals the highest standards

Vienna Convention Bureau has enjoyed a long-standing collaboration with Congrex that spans over 20 years. And it is this relationship with the destination that has been a key factor in producing many success stories for clients and suppliers over time.

As Vienna Convention Bureau's Director, Christian Mutschlechner puts it, "The partnership between Congrex and Vienna dates back to the late seventies and as a Convention Bureau we experienced an excellent relationship with Congrex over the last two decades, and we have enjoyed together a lot of successful meetings and congresses in our city."

Congrex Group, Director of Business Development, Caroline Mackenzie adds, "Vienna is a very appealing European capital with its rich culture combined with modern infrastructure. The fact that it is located within the heart of Europe makes it an ideal destination choice for many association and corporate groups. It is not surprising to Congrex that Vienna has been topping the ICCA destination listings in recent years. Congrex has organised many events in the city and regularly recommend it as a congress city. Vienna offers the "full package" of facilities large events require, and this, combined with a professional and experienced team within the Convention Bureau, and its full services support make it a great city to do business."

For more information on Vienna, please contact Christian Mutschlechner, Director at christian.mutschlechner@vienna.info or visit www.vienna.convention.at ●



Photo: Vienna Convention Bureau photo database

Congrex supports your choice in destinations

As a result of its special relationship with Vienna and other destinations, Congrex has rolled out a strategic initiative that aims at harnessing the value of long-standing collaborations enjoyed by Congrex and its destination partners.

The initiative's basic principle is to ensure that associations, companies and other clients derive the most benefits from working with their chosen Congrex Destinations partners.

By rolling out this Destinations programme, Congrex hope to put into practice what it knows best – that meetings and events owners and organisers are able and should get the highest level of products and services at the best price.

Some key benefits clients can expect from this programme include:

- Possible financial city subvention
- Possible civic hospitality
- Site inspections and bid support
- Subsidised travel passes and preferential airline agreements
- Provision of participant materials
- Potential assistance from the City with public engagement initiatives
- Competitive rates and terms with two main conference centres
- Attractive Accommodation booking terms and conditions

Contact details:

For any query, please contact Caroline Mackenzie via +44 141 331 0123 or caroline.mackenzie@congrex.com



Photo: Vienna Convention Bureau photo database

TECH TIME

Is Google+ set to shake things up for associations?

Photo:
ECTRIMS congress,
Amsterdam, Holland,
2011/ Photographer
Erik Kottier,
Organised by
Congrex Switzerland

Keeping up with social media tools can be at once really interesting and daunting. In our industry, keeping up however is not a question of “nice to” but of “have to”. That’s why when Google recently launched its Social Network ‘Google+’ we, at Meet!, looked into some of the implications for associations and if, this potential new way of communicating is a tool that could present challenges or opportunities for associations.



Freely available information has been a challenge for associations ever since the Internet became mainstream. The niche information that associations have traditionally provided is now easily available to all on the net. But ‘the problem’ has been that this information, up until now, has not been qualified, and this is exactly what Google+ intends to resolve. Why? because with Google+ a new dimension to already freely available information is added - the rating of that very information, by your own network. Next to a lot of interesting features, already found on existing networks, Google+ introduces the ‘social search’. In other words, search results based on recommendations within your network rather than only on Google’s algorithms. Social search will make online information even more readily available and possibly also more valuable in the future. And this is where it can get interesting for associations.

What associations do best

What can be defined as the core business of an association? As we know associations are organisations that bring people together to share knowledge, who share common business interests and who want to build networks. These organisations are built on a common ideology, activity or knowhow of its members. Often associations cover very specific fields of expertise, which allows the organisation to be valuable for professionals in niche professions or fields around the world. In addition to the role of associations in exchanging knowledge/ information, associations have traditionally also played a

major role in facilitating networking.

The members of an association often have to pay for membership, and this means a return on investment for the member or a value proposition. Often the main goal for members is sharing knowledge and building networks since the combined knowledge of all members can be very valuable for them as individuals.

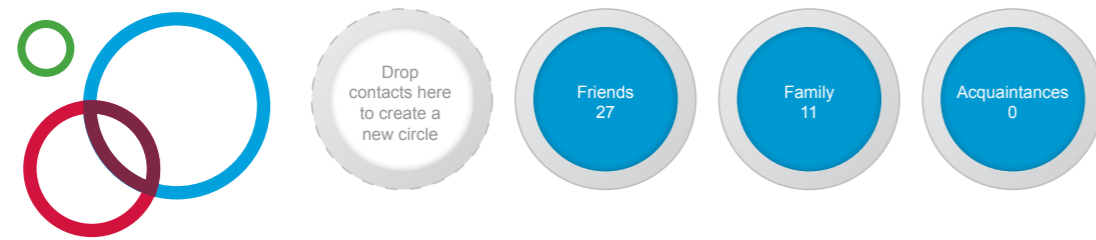
An association has several ways to facilitate this ‘sharing of knowledge’ and ‘building of networks’. Often this is done through conferences and meetings. However, what if software could be the new facilitator? Allowing us to share knowledge and build a network? A lot has been written on the future of associations with regards to emerging social networks, and by now, we can still say that most of them can not touch the power of these organisations. However, with the launch of Google+ it might be time to reconsider. How can associations best take advantage of the new ways we are connecting – and how can they best leverage this new power of connectivity to enhance their value proposition to pack even more punch to what is on offer?

What Google+ is programmed to do better

As the latest addition to the market of Social Networks, Google+ created a lot of buzz. Google+ promised to be more than the current networks, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. This is because of two extra features:

1. **Share with the parts of your network you choose,** rather than with everybody, all the time.
2. **Add rating information** to the spectrum. ▶

The visual displays of 'Circles'



Feature 1: Share with the parts of your network you choose

Google knows that content is king. Over the past years Google has acquired and developed a lot of internet-based services. Google owns YouTube (video) and Picasa (photographs). Gmail, Google Docs and Google Calendar are in-house developed services. Google have linked all of these services to Google+. This means that when you open a Google+ account all of your videos, photos, appointments and mails are automatically incorporated into your account (if you have them). This gives Google a huge advantage over other networks which are starting from scratch without social content like videos and photos. However this content, unlike in Facebook, is not shared with everybody. Google+ lets you share your content with the parts of your network as you choose. This is done by managing your network by grouping them in 'circles'.

Thus Google+ allows you to choose what messages you want to share with which parts of your network. If you have a message for your family, you only send it to your family. But if you have a work related message to share with your colleagues,

or with Industry professionals this is also possible. This is done by how you set up your circles. This makes Google+ a 'one-stop-shop' in which you can share with family, colleagues, the world, your professional network, friends or all of these groups together with just a few clicks. There is no need for a LinkedIn profile for professional use, a Facebook profile for personal use, and a twitter profile to follow the market.

Feature 2: Rating information and the social search – the power of +1

The other distinguishing feature of Google+ is the way you can use your network. With Google+ and the introduction of social search, whenever logged in to Google+ you will get a little "+1" icon next to all of the search results in Google. If you like a search result you can click the "+1" button. This will make the article or page appear higher in the search results of your network. This means when you conduct a search on a specific topic, you not only spot the interests of your network, but also what your network likes.

Photo:
MipTec conference,
Basel, Switzerland,
2011/ Photographer
Erik Kottier,
Organised by
Congrex Switzerland



This is where the power of Google+ compared to other networks really kicks in! Because everything you rate with a "+1" will cause higher rankings for this page in the search results of the people in your 'circles'.

This means that if you and your contacts all use this feature to rank articles and share information, search will become a social activity. Not only search results are made social, but also blog posts on the blog itself can obtain a "+1" from Google+ users. This way, you can follow interesting people in your field and see what blogs, news articles, scientific articles or, in the future, even abstracts they "+1". Not just content, but also context and relevance become factors for information on the Internet.

So, now what?

With a new Social Network at our disposal that allows for networking as well as sharing knowledge, new challenges can arise in the future because knowledge will become less exclusive and the definition of a network is likely to shift towards a less tangible one. The emergence of Google+ brings us centre stage to issues of relevance especially for associations. The message is this, how can associations stay relevant in a time that knowledge will become less exclusive. One of the ways to find this relevance is by enabling members to embrace the use of enhancing technology that will in turn facilitate even more connectivity to their existing networks. This while increasing the value and quality of their knowledge sharing during their face-to-face meetings.

New tools like Google+ can substantially support relevant content and real learning objectives in a "hybrid" future. The new features of choosing with whom information is shared; and social search can greatly enhance the efficiency and quality of the information exchanged. It can provide immediate access to different types of information to various sections of networks without the time consuming and hassle of logging-on to different platforms – while providing for far greater choice in the selectivity of the



audience. Additionally, for organisations that depend on how current information is, social search can provide a very handy tool to stay on top of the timeliest issues.

Associations can continue to fulfil a very essential need to learn, share, improve, teach, network and inspire. At the end of the day, we live in a real and not virtual world. Maybe the potential shake-up is more the "wake-up" for organisations like associations that their knowledge base and existing networks can be greatly improved and enhanced if the tools that are increasingly out there are sought and embraced. It is clear that tools like Google+, and others that will follow, are not here to replace human contact but to enhance it. ●

Congrex has a page on Google +,
feel free to add us to your circles.
Please check: www.congrex.com/googleplus

Photo:
Google Plus,
Photographer
west.m's, Flickr

New Projects for Congrex

Photo:
ECTRIMS congress,
Amsterdam, Holland,
2011/ Photographer
Erik Kottier,
Organised by
Congrex Switzerland

8th European Registrars Conference 2012 (ERC 2012), Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 600 participants, November 2011, Congrex UK will provide PCO services.

5th ASIS International Asia Pacific Security Conference & Exhibition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 300 participants, 5-7 December 2011, Congrex Belgium provides European Secretariat and will provide full PCO services.

1st Munich Carotid Conference (MCC), Munich, Germany, 120 participants, December 2011, Congrex Germany will provide Conference services.

International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA), Strategic Meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 5 participants, 17th January 2012, Congrex Belgium provides consultancy services.

European Association for Osseointegration (EAO), Board and Strategic Meeting, Paris, France, 10 participants, 28-29 January 2012, Congrex Belgium provides full association management services.

ExpoCasa y Decoración, San José, Costa Rica, 30,000 participants, January 2012 and June 2012, Congrex Costa Rica to provide Exhibition sales.

Gothia Forum, Gothenburg, Sweden, 350 participants, January 2012. Congrex Sweden will provide Meeting Planning Management, Sponsor & Exhibition Management, Registration and Accommodation services.

Vänsterpartiet 2012 (Left Party), Uppsala, Sweden, 600 participants, January 2012, Congrex Sweden will provide Sponsor & Exhibition handling, Registration & Accommodation, Meeting Planning Management services.

XVI Congreso Internacional Marítimo 2012 (International Maritime Congress), Panama, Panama, 500 participants, February 2012, Congrex Panama to provide Registration & Hotel reservations, Exhibition, Accommodation, Social Activities and Transportation Logistics services.

careArt 2012, Basel, Switzerland, 300 participants, March 2012, Congrex Switzerland will provide Registration services.

Conferencia Corporación Ziglar 2012 (Ziglar Corporation Conference 2012), Panama, Panama, 2,000 participants, March 2012, Congrex Panama to provide Logistics, Registration, Accommodation, Social Activities services.

Svenska Radio-Mikrovågsdagarna 2012 (Swedish Radio & Microwave Days), Stockholm, Sweden, 250 participants, March 2012, Congrex Sweden will provide Meeting Planning Management, Social Events, Sponsor and Exhibition Management, Registration & Accommodation.

World Educational Travel Market 2012 (WETM 2012), Budapest, Hungary, 250 participants, March 2012, Congrex Holland will provide full PCO services.

I Congreso Internacional de Ingeniería E Infraestructura 2012 (International Congress for Engineering and Infrastructure), Panama, Panama, 800 participants, April 2012, Congrex Panama to provide Registration & Hotel Reservations, Exhibition, Accommodation, Social Activities and Transportation Logistics services.

XVI Congreso de la Sociedad Latinoamericana de Nefrología e Hipertensión (SLANH 2012), Cartagena, Colombia, 1000 participants, April 2012, Congrex Venezuela to provide Registration & Hotel reservations, Exhibition, Accommodation, Social Activities and Transportation Logistics services.

Barnveckan, Gothenburg, Sweden, 600 participants, April 2012 Congrex Sweden will provide Meeting Planning Management, Social Events, Registration & Accommodation, VIP and Speakers Handling.

EBMT Annual Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 3500 participants, April 2012 Congrex Switzerland will provide PCO services and Congrex Travel will provide Accommodation & Travel services.

Årsmöte Riksföreningen för Ögonsjuksköterskor (Annual Meeting National Association of Nurses in Cancer Care), Gothenburg, Sweden, 350 participants, May 2012, Congrex Sweden will provide full PCO Services.

European Maritime Day, Gothenburg, Sweden, 1,500 participants, May 2012 Congrex Sweden will provide full PCO services.

ETCC 2012 (European Techn. Coating Conference), Lausanne, Switzerland, 500 participants, June 2012, Congrex Switzerland will provide PCO services and Congrex Travel will provide Accommodation & Travel services.

European Academy of Management 2012 (EURAM 2012), Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1,000 participants, June 2012, Congrex Holland will provide full PCO services.

AIDS 2012, Washington DC, United States, 25,000 participants, July 2012 Congrex Switzerland will provide Registration services and Congrex Travel provides Hotel Accommodation & Travel services.

Let's
meet

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Clients' success is what drives Congrex. We believe the best part of our work is the close relationship we establish with our clients, which allows us to address their challenges and deliver exciting projects. Let's meet, visit www.congrex.com

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