



Media Release

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Convention bureaux and Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs) need to work more closely and at earlier stages of bidding so that results can be optimised for associations.

This was highlighted in a recent survey of the *World's Leading Conference Organisers (WLCO)* members, where they called for closer collaboration with the respective convention bureaux around the world.

PCOs with specialised industry experience can add enormous value when they get involved early in the bid preparation stage. PCOs can contribute towards a more coherent strategy and provide bureaux with market intelligence, especially where there has been a prior professional relationship with a prospective host.

The interests of associations are also better served when PCOs' expertise is leveraged early in the process. An example is in conference venue selection, which is often a significant item on the budget.

PCOs seek more mileage out of their memberships with bureaux, citing the need for more regular marketing intelligence sharing sessions and networking opportunities with prospective clients.

The survey highlighted the differences in the operating models of WLCO members and global PCOs. All WLCO members are independent and owner-managed companies and enjoy long-standing professional relationships with their respective association clients. Global PCOs, on the other hand, operate on a model similar to a multinational franchise.

Facing a challenging landscape where global PCOs are underwriting conferences, thereby guaranteeing a very small profit position for conferences that they manage, WLCO members reiterate that their emphasis is on providing a high level of service and promoting the interests of associations. WLCO member companies thus use their expertise to run successful conferences while helping associations maintain control of their core objectives, both academic and financial.

Managing Director of ICMS Australasia, Bryan Holliday says, "The real economies of scale are evident at the end of the day. WLCO members have the experience for successful global marketing and we often have an established relationship with the host association, which allows for smooth operation because we know their requirements."

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