Addendum A.2 – Recommendations for Future Global Speakers Summit

Recommendations for future Global Speakers Summit by Sid Ridgley, CSP, GSS 2013 Chair

The GSS Strategy and Governance Project

A critical step for ensuring success of the Global Speakers Summit is to make sure that the Global Speakers Summit Executive Committee (comprising the GSS Chair, GSF and local association Presidents and President-Elects, plus the GSF Executive Director) and staff are all supporting the key strategies and goals. Speedy decision-making is also vital.

Budgeting and Financial Control

Review and re-state the GSS budget/financial plan 6-9 months after an association is awarded the hosting responsibilities of a Summit.

Project Planning

Given that the GSS is over 2+ years in the planning and execution processes, it is imperative that a project plan with defined activities should be in place.

Opinions vs Accountability

The GSF and local association Presidents and President-Elects must continue to support the decisions of the GSS Chair.

The GSS Audience: Who Is Being Served?

If the primary audience is the true global speaker then run it as an intimate Summit, much like a think tank and strategic planning session – not as a convention. If the primary audience is both local and global, then the GSS Vancouver program is a good starting guide.

Global Speakers Network Session

- Provide GSN members with a nominal discount or 1 free pick to a pre-convention workshop if providing GSN members more value is a true requirement.
- Assuming that the GSS is the GSN session, then consider including a one-year membership in

the GSS fee. That is, attending a GSS (full registration) also gives you 1-year membership in the GSN. While it may not generate income because the membership was given away, it will in subsequent renewal years. Existing GSN members would get a nominal discount or 1 free pick to a pre-convention workshop.

Extensive Marketing

Marketing and communications requires strategy and planning, plus the resources to support it. Any GSS is an opportunity to market the association to local businesses, local prospective members, etc.

Website: A Critical Success Factor

The GSS 2013 website (www.gss2013.com) was critical in its success. We must capitalize on what was learned and continue to push the technology further. It is imperative that a future GSS has its website up and running immediately upon announcement.

Running the Global Speakers Summit 2018 by Mike Handcock, CSP, Global Speaking Fellow

Between February 23 - 26 2018, the Global Speakers Summit (GSS2018) was run in Auckland New Zealand. It included 72 speakers on stage over 4 days and 185 participants from 25 different countries. On Day one another 65 local CEO’s and senior corporates joined us for Corporate Day.

The overall event ran at a profit for the first time in a number of years.

The purpose of this report is not to ramble in detail but simply to point out what did and did not work and why, so future organisers of this or any other conference may learn from this event.

Over 2/3rd’s of the attendees rated this convention as excellent in the feedback system that followed.

Why the GSS2018 succeeded

The success of the summit came from 5 distinct areas only.

1. Keeping the core team small

The core team was only 6 people including:

- Myself - Chair - Responsible for Program, Speaker Selection, Profit, Ticket Sales, Overall Strategy and Partner Strategy
- Landi Jac - Co Chair - Consultant, Venue Negotiations, Program Advice, System & Procedure from an experience view
- Shari Bricks - Administration, Venue Management, Liaison, Stage Manager and Speaker Management

- Michael Smith - Websites, Technology and AV Management
- Elias Kanaris - Local Ambassador, Partners, Ticket Sales
- Bill James - Partnerships

This small team kept things tight. The incumbent NSANZ President during GSS2018 was inexperienced and unengaged, as were the majority of the NSANZ Board and Members until the last few weeks prior to the start of GSS2018. Having this tight team meant 'no groupthink'. We could move and respond quickly and led to a better event overall, regardless of the input of a greater workload.

In particular, the availability of Shari and Michael and their negotiating skills with the venue and their experience at managing the run-in to and during the event was exceptional. Special recognition of the Bond Exec team has to be noted.

2. The Program

Most events of this nature create a theme and call for speakers to fill that theme. This - in my opinion - leads the event to have a thrown together feel with more keynote styles. The purpose of these conventions are not to listen to a bunch of keynotes; they are to educate, connect and improve people.

We created every step of the 4-day program before we did anything else. Expertise is needed here. We choreographed every session, to follow other sessions that made sense, to not call for big name speakers but to call for the right speakers in the right subjects. This meant a lot more work but gave a much stronger program, which was commented on by many attendees. We often heard that we have raised the bar on these events and we put those comments down to this.

Featured were keynote length plenary sessions of 40 minutes stage time; one 3 hour workshop (which people rated the highest of all sessions); breakouts of 35 minutes; and TED-style talks of 18 minutes. We covered the areas of:

- **Social** - including connection, social media, sales and marketing;
- **Technology** - including data, webinars, apps, LinkedIn etc; and
- **Mechanics** - including stage, building presentations, selling from stage, productisation and more.

We also added important current issues such as diversity, environment, legacy and social contribution. In 72 talks, we made sure there was something for everyone.

The program was also choreographed to the minute, including every song choice:

- Day one was local NZ music;
- Day 2 was Rock standards;
- Day 3 was Icons; and
- Day 4 was Dance Music.

Every song was especially chosen as was every song for when a speaker came or left stage. In addition, a variety of videos showcasing NZ, messages around the theme and entertainment were included. This extended to the live entertainment that was organised, including the 13-year-old (signed by Lorde's management), who closed the event singing 'We are the World' acapella.

3. Partners

We did not have sponsors we had ***partners***. The investments for our partners ranged from $24,000 to $2,000. I am pleased to report that we raised over $70,000 in partnership funds.

This was a very difficult area and we suffered from not having a partnership team. In fact, the responsibility fell to one person, Bill James, supported by Elias, Landi and myself. NSANZ really dropped the ball here, yet regardless of us hitting only 50% of our budget, we perceived that we gained more in real partnership dollars than other conferences. Given the size of GSS2018 (it was approximately six times smaller than NSA US in size), it could be argued that overall what was raised was indeed a huge success.

We featured partners, gave them stage time in the breakouts, had the booths right in the flow of traffic and gave them killer deals in terms of what they received for their partnership dollars.

If we had a team on ground, we could have nailed this target and got very profitable.

4. Corporate Day

In the lead up to proposing New Zealand as the location for GSS2018, the NSANZ Board worked in conjunction with local bodies such as Tourism New Zealand and the Auckland Convention Burau (part of Auckland City Council). It was a strong requirement that GSS2018 be used as a vehicle to expose international Speakers to the New Zealand business community.

This translated itself into the Corporate Day, which extended to allowing us to invite non-Speakers to attend GSS2018. To attract these delegates to the event, we invited clients off our own lists, ran preview events (such as the ‘Tight 5’) and pitched at networks such as BNI, TNG etc. This resulted with 65 leaders of business joining us for the first day. A few bought tickets for the whole event and some chose to come to other sessions outside Day 1. Corporate Day gave a different buzz in the room, showed international delegates that NZ could get business leaders in the room to listen to them and some even got speakers booked.

Our idea of international speakers connecting with their embassies also brought further work and talks for the Dutch and French speakers who took up the idea.

5. Non-Reliance on Social media and Reliance on Pro-Active Marketing

We decided early that traditional marketing such as Facebook and expecting the GSF Ambassadors and Presidents of Associations to support the event would leave us too exposed to others’ whims and fancies. We decided the only way to sell tickets was to get right on the front foot and go head to head with the market. What worked was:

- The online lunch party and webinar which sold about 60 tickets;
- Visits and talks at various Associations around the world;
- Walking table to table at NSA US in Orlando at lunch and personally inviting people;
- Making phone calls to key people and asking them to come and recommend it to their list;
- Pitching GSS2018 to NSANZ meetings at least 4 times. The result was an over 50% of attendees were from New Zealand, and >75% of NSANZ members purchased tickets;
- Other webinars and online workshops; and
- Asking those chosen to speak to personally invite people they know who should be there.

What didn’t work

Very little! However, there were areas where I would suggest we wasted valuable time and resources, such as:

- Expectations on Associations and Ambassadors to assist. Very few did anything at all.
- Allowing non-screened 'talent' to do 5-minute slots. This was a last-minute thing to add colour to the event and allow attendees to shine in some unique skills they have. They didn't. We had two poor singers on stage and one very disrespectful comedian at the charity event.
- Having NON-professional Partnership Salespeople. Bill James did a wonderful job, but from the start I was out voted on paying up to 50% commission to professional outfit who would close sales on partnerships. I would suggest any future chair hires professionals and pays a percentage very early on to secure well-paying partners.
- Not having an appointed accountant that could produce timely financial reports hindered our ability to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the profitability of this event. It is recommended that this position be considered a priority for future GSS events.

Disappointments

The following are stated as disappointments and warnings/considerations for other conferences going forward:

- There was limited assistance from the NSANZ President and Board (excepting Bill James and Elias Kanaris). Poor leadership led to us really carrying all the weight of the organising toward the latter stages when we required assistance to finalise volunteers, ticket sales and partnerships.
- There was limited assistance from other Associations, Presidents or Ambassadors. It appeared that most Ambassadors did not engage, regardless of promises to do so.
- Last minute cancellations of Speakers and other Speaker issues. Overall, I found the professionalism lacking in numerous Speakers who were involved in presenting. It was evident that overall the global community has a scarcity mentality, regardless of an air of it being a positive place to be involved. I see this as a major task for GSF to address and the reason why overall our standards for CSP are so low globally. It was also evident that very few Speakers can actually market and sell their services. This again is affecting the industry globally in terms of competing with savvy subject matter experts.
- There was one notable issue of service from within the venue and the service that they offered – the bar was not well manned causing some people a poor experience in this area.
- The Charity Auction missed the mark and the comedian that we used set up the room poorly.

WOW Moments

There were several wow moments in front of and behind the scenes:

- MC Ngahihi O Te Ra Bidois. Whilst he is no longer an NSANZ member he stepped up and was a brilliant Ambassador and highlight.
- The Sky City hotel was a premier destination. Our negotiation saved close to $100k in fees and AV costs. We negotiated hard. The food was excellent, and the AV was some of the best in the world. We worked hard on stage design and mood and it worked well.
- Suzy Lynch - local icon singing the National Anthem.
- 13-year-old singer closing with 'We are the World'.
- Speeches by Fredrik Haren, Ennette Pauze, Ilja Grwkowski, Paul Huschilt were rated very highly.
- Gala Dinner and singing by Karen Jacobsen.
- Seeing the theme 'From Leadership to Legacy' lived out by many speakers.
- Raising around $15,000 for our chosen charity 'The Global Dialogue Foundation'.
- The knock-on effect of hosting GSS2018 for NSANZ was that it attracted a further 15 Members to join the Association.

In summary, the program was excellent, venue the best fit for the convention of its type and delivered by a small and committed core team with a great overall result.

If I ran this again I would do three things differently.

1. Save money on a unique venue and gone away from the mainstream expectation. This could have saved $50K - $80K.
2. Put on a sales team for partnerships on a profit split from Day 1
3. Planned more previews to sell tickets locally and put a key sales person into each association conference to sell tickets internationally.

Mike Handcock
Co Chair GSS2018
14 April 2018

Running the Global Speakers Summit 2018 by Elias Kanaris

This document is written to supplement the report produced by Mike Handcock, Co-Chair GSS2018. It has been written to allow us to share additional experiences that would help other associations looking to run a Global Speakers Summit (GSS) in the future.

Learning lessons from GSS2018

There are 5 main learning lessons that I would like to share.

1. Pre-planning

Prior to applying to host the GSS, NSANZ worked closely with local agencies to help prepare a proposal which we submitted to the GSF. Here are a cross section of the agencies that we worked with:

- Tourism New Zealand
- Auckland Convention Bureau
- Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED)
- Event Dynamcis (a PCO)

These organisations helped us to provide information on the location, travel and economic outlooks, as well as address the safety of the region. Our PCO was also able to help us to produce initial budgets (including indicative quotes from the venues that were most likely able to host GSS) which were used to estimate break-even points.

And organisations like ATEED provided funding to bring Shari and Michael over to New Zealand to undertake site visits, which helped us to reduce costs.

2. Accounts and Payment Portals

It is essential that you start the project with a payment gateway that can accept payments from international locations. For example, when GSS2018 was launched, we tried to use PayPal to collect payments for the Super Early-Bird non-refundable deposits. Unfortunately, for many APSS Members,

PayPal did not work in Singapore and they were declined. This resulted in the loss of about a dozen potential ticket sales.

Select a gateway like Stripe, which can be configured from day one for the pre-launch.

Make sure that you have an accountant on hand and that you set up a specific bank account to allow you to track and audit ALL financial transactions. Ensure that you select ONE ticket registrations system (i.e. do everything through your website and not through Eventbrite as well).

Have a qualified accountant appointed that can guide you on local tax issues (such as GST) and that can produce weekly updates and reports.

3. Get Board Involvement Up-front

On reflection, NSANZ went through a massive change in Board members half-way through the year. This proved to be very disruptive as many of the new Board members were not aware of historic decisions. On-boarding of new Board members needs to be carefully considered and implemented. Additionally, it is important that the whole Board engages with the project and takes responsibility as they have to account for potential losses should they occur.

4. Partnerships and the Corporate Day

One of the requirements from our local agencies (with ATEED being the most vocal) was for GSS2018 to have a day where local businesses could attend. In conjunction with this happening, we launched a Partnership program, which helped to make GSS2018 profitable.

When looking at partnerships going forward, make sure that:

1. You have more than one person heading the partnership program
2. You offer a '3D Partnership Program'. In our case, we approached partners and said, "Instead of you paying a speaker to speak at your next conference, here's a list of speakers who are willing to divert their fee and allow you to pay that towards GSS2018." This was a $5K investment that helped to balance the books.

5. Non-Reliance on Social media and Reliance on Pro-Active Marketing

Use the speakers at GSS to record a short 90 – 120 second video to be used for promoting their session and the GSS in general. These need to be top and tailed to brand GSS and can be used effectively via social media.

Once produced, ask the speaker to share it via their social media channels and put it onto a dedicated GSS Page where you can mix them up with memes produced to entice speakers to attend. And consider getting a local celebrity to become the face and voice for short video messages that can attract a wider corporate audience.

I trust these simple ideas will help the next association looking to bid for GSS2020.

Elias Kanaris
President Elect, GSF
22 June 2018

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