

Business Insights January/February 2021

The following insights and market feedback has been collated from conversations we have had with our buyers on a National level over the past six weeks.

Some organisers are hesitant to use 'Covid' hotels moving forward. They think guests may not feel safe in such venues. However this is proving tricky in Auckland city with limited supply of non COVID properties.

Some buyers have been frustrated that during Covid they were not contacted by hotels they had used in the past to advise them of their current status and/or talk to them about future business, they have felt somewhat neglected.

Some past frustration with venues not providing good service, having to ask for equipment that had already been requested, rooms set up badly (no room in between seats and poor view of screen as an example), poor service of their needs generally. Moving forward service will be critical to maintain clients as they will potentially have more choice of venues. It was also noted that venues were selling their space but unable to deliver, i.e. the space did not provide clear site lines to speakers/stage. It is important we deliver on the promise and if possible exceed guest expectations in this climate.

After a large number of virtual events, the need for face to face seems to be coming to the fore - but obviously not appropriate for international events currently.

There is a feeling that it will be 2022 before international conferencing comes back - and it will come back with a vengeance after the 2 year break!

One client very happy to receive "Cold Call" - feels that this is an art that is dying - bring it back!!!

In January - many PCOs/Event companies were not in office until later in January & even February, with no business on the books. Many corporates were working from home however we managed to connect with a good number of them in their new environment,

Some corporates are moving ahead cautiously this year with some face to face events planned. However still a degree of uncertainty so they need to be careful booking events. Some are choosing to hold events as a hybrid from their own offices so no need for outside facilities for these.

One client investigated the satellite approach for their conference (with smaller events held concurrently in 4 locations), however they found that this was much more expensive and required too much extra work so they have decided on one face to face conference but with a virtual element available for Australian delegates or anyone else who cannot get there in person. They also have a 100% virtual back up plan in place if a lockdown occurs.

Corporates are governed by their owning companies if US owned most have a directive not to travel or hold any type of events. They are also governed by the challenges around large group gatherings. A common response is 'we do not have any planned events in the near future however by all means will touch base again should that change'.

One association client moving forward is considering holding all their conferences in Auckland (not travelling regionally) and holding every second year online. In the past they have moved regions every year.