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Organisational Development Depends on Knowledge Sharing

Because of the range of legacies interviewees reported had occurred, we recommended that other local host committees initiate and document similar legacy outcomes where possible, in order to inspire delegates to make the most possible of their participation. Those in the public and private sector who are involved in organising or hosting business events should be more than willing to support such initiatives because it will add a broader societal purpose to their function apart from the marketing of meeting facilities.

André Petzold, Former Business Development Manager, Destination Jönköping, Sweden

The direct economic impacts of conferences have been a focus of scholarly interest for decades due to the benefits associated with tourism, trade and investment to the host city (Braun, 1992; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994; Grado *et al.*, 1997; Foley *et al.*, 2016). However, less tangible benefits, such as the return on personal investment for attendees (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000), have received far less attention (Mair & Jago, 2010; Foley *et al.*, 2013; Mair, 2013; Mair & Frew, 2018; Edelheim *et al.*, 2018).

In fact, it is becoming increasingly apparent that benefits (both short and long term) beyond direct economic outcomes make up a significant proportion of the overall value-creation potential of conferences across all scales: individual, organisational and community (Edwards *et al.*, 2017). These benefits include knowledge gains, professional development, recognition and reputation, friendship, networking and collaboration (Jago & Deery, 2005; Severt *et al.*, 2007; Mair & Thompson, 2009; Foley *et al.*, 2010; Foley *et al.*, 2014; Mair & Frew, 2018; Hansen *et al.*, 2020). Exploring these less tangible benefits contributes to a broader understanding of the potential that business events hold for creating scalable and significant positive outcomes based on the exchange of knowledge and experiences between participants. The challenge for the business events industry, therefore,

is to ensure skilled professionals have the information, skills and resources they need to enable them to create an event environment that maximises the likelihood that such exchanges, opportunities and, hence, benefits occur.

The following case study is an example of what Cohen and Levinthal (1990) refer to as the absorptive capacity of individuals and organisations to maximise the process of knowledge sharing and gaining during and after conferences via knowledge spill-overs. These spill-overs then lead to what are termed 'spirals of knowledge' (Nonaka, 1991; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), where shared knowledge transcends the short-lived experience of the event to impact wider communities. The case study demonstrates how effectively planned, organised and managed conferences can provide a setting deliberately designed to ensure these important knowledge expansion activities take place.

Case study: Knowledge sharing and organisational development through the conference EuroHeartCare 2017

Business event(s)	EuroHeartCare (EHC) 2017 conference
Location(s)	Jönköping, Sweden
Type of event(s)	Major healthcare conference
Event purpose	To present and share the latest findings on cardiovascular heart care
Primary audience	More than 360 delegates made up of PhD students, nurses, university professors and researchers involved in cardiovascular heart care
Primary event legacy	Knowledge gains for delegates attending the conference and subsequent knowledge sharing with peers at their workplaces, resulting in better patient outcomes
Additional legacies (beyond tourism)	Multiplier impacts of knowledge gain via knowledge sharing with non-attending peers and sponsoring institutions (i.e. hospitals) which further improves patient outcomes, development of professional networks and collaborations, and student learning opportunities
Summary quote	"(Euro) is one of the most important platforms for driving research publications, exchanging ideas and forming deepening collaborations. Attendees can take knowledge back to their institutions (hospitals or universities), to develop practices and share ideas."

This case study was adapted from: Gambina, A., Hagström, J. and Petzold, A. (2018)

Introduction

The following case study looks at the 2017 EuroHeartCare (EHC) conference, which is widely regarded as one of the major drivers of research, ideas and collaboration in cardiac health care. Delegates who attend the conference come from a wide range of backgrounds, which creates opportunities for interactions across a range of health-care industry sectors.

Organisers actively encourage delegates to network and share their experiences in order to maximise collaboration and learning opportunities. In addition, delegates sent to the conference by the institutions in which they are employed (community health centres, hospitals, research institutes etc.) are strongly encouraged to share what they have learned with their peers upon returning to their workplace. In this way, the knowledge generated, shared and accumulated at the conference can be seen to stimulate a multiplier effect, where knowledge is shared and put into practice in multiple ways in order to achieve multiple legacies. This is not dissimilar to the way tourism spend, as a result of conferences, is said to create multiple economic benefits for host destinations (in simple terms, how many times the money spent by a tourist circulates through a country's economy).

The case study also highlights how the event provides professional development and recognition for practitioners, and offers researchers and post-graduate students opportunities to interact with those working in the field (including academic journal editors), in order to inform, focus or redirect their research and publications.



Photo 5.1: 2017 EuroHeartCare

About EuroHeartCare 2017

EuroHeartCare is the annual meeting of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Council of Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professions (CCNAP). It aims to support healthcare professionals in delivering the best care possible to patients with cardiovascular disease. People from more than 40 countries around the globe were present at the 2017 conference, with most attendees coming from Europe. The event was hosted by Jönköping University and took place 18-20 May at the Culture Hall Spira in Jönköping. The EuroHeartCare Conference is one of the most important platforms for driving research publications, exchanging ideas, and forming or deepening collaborations within the field of cardiovascular nursing in Europe.