

# Fast track, with no time off work

PCO Association member Jazz Tyrnil-Smart has been awarded the Advanced Diploma of Event Management by the association in partnership with registered training organisation One Step Further.

The national marketing, events and professional development manager for the Australian Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine Association took advantage of the PCO Association's Recognition of Prior Learning program that takes into account conference management experience.

## Tell us something about yourself.

Tyrnil-Smart: I co-founded event management company Event This in 2006. One of the most cherished events I organised was Plant the Park Pink, a charity event for Breast Cancer Network Australia. Eventually I'd like to build up this business to be my full time role.

## What do you consider your career highlight?

Tyrnil-Smart: The World Federation



of Acupuncture & Moxibustion Societies' sixth world conference in 2004 was one of my great achievements. There were numerous concurrent sessions with simultaneous translation in Chinese. The conference was the

largest gathering of the traditional Chinese medicine profession in its history, with 822 participants, including more than 765 delegates, and more than 150 oral/workshop/poster presentations. It was not only the first time in its 17-year history it had been held in Australia, but also the first time the World Health Organisation had co-sponsored a conference on traditional medicine here.

## Why did you decide to obtain your Advanced Diploma in Event Management?

Tyrnil-Smart: I found the RPL program an ideal option as I already had a portfolio of events I had managed in my career. As a result, I was able to prove competency in most units, leaving gap training and assessment for two units of competency only. This not only allowed me to fast track my qualification, but I could complete all requirements in my own time, which meant no time off work.

● PCO Association, [www.pco.asn.au](http://www.pco.asn.au)

## EYE ON EXHIBITIONS



## Key steps for success

By focusing on a few key areas, companies can come out of exhibitions satisfied with their performance and return on investment.

### Communicate

One of the most important steps to success is to set up achievable, specific and measurable goals. Determine what the company hopes to achieve and focus on goals that are important to overall sales and the marketing plan.

Pre-event communications are vital. Contacting customers by email and direct mail marketing ensures they are thinking about the exhibition and guarantees traffic to your stand. Be sure to emphasise the benefits of visiting. Keep the message simple.

### Maximise PR

At the time of an exhibition, industry trade magazines will be looking to write about exhibiting companies. If your company has an interesting story angle, such as a new product, service or company milestone, send the information to trade magazines.

### Brief staff

Stand personnel can make or break exhibition success. Keep exhibition goals in mind when choosing staff members for the stand. A highly motivated, well-informed team will differentiate your stand.

Brief your representatives at the start of each show day to ensure the goals of the exhibition are being met and prioritised.

### Follow up

Without follow-up, there is little point in exhibiting. Chase all leads in a timely manner. The degree of follow-up will depend on the classification of the contact, ranging from a simple thank-you letter to a sales visit, phone call or information pack.

Remember to check on leads a few months after the event.



**MATTHEW PEARCE**  
President,  
Exhibition & Event  
Association of  
Australasia.  
[www.eeaa.com.au](http://www.eeaa.com.au)  
[www.gotapassion-com.au](http://www.gotapassion-com.au)

## CENTRE POINTS

# It's time to polish our image

By AIPC director of programming and international development Rod Cameron.

**As we look back over a challenging year, many in the meetings industry are sifting through the ashes for lessons that can be profitably applied to a future that will inevitably include similar downturns.**

One of the most important of those lessons was the impact we saw on our image – an unprecedented questioning of the value that meetings and conventions deliver.

Surveys last year showed concern about industry image, not only among planners but also corporations.

Governments were not our friends in this process. Not only did many question legitimate meetings and incentive-related business activity, but they cancelled their own meetings as cost-saving measures, which only served to re-enforce the lack of value they attached to these activities.

That was the biggest eye-opener for most of us: that governments really have no idea what meetings do in terms of driving economic

and professional development. At a time when we should have been recognised as a key element in stimulating the economy, we were instead being seen in many quarters as a part of the problem.

For a long time, we took it for granted that everyone saw meetings and conventions as beneficial, advancing business and research and generating revenue. But with this complacency, we neglected to prepare the arguments and develop the data that could respond to even the most superficial challenge.

This begs the question: where do we go from here? Is it time to recognise that we need an active and ongoing program to promote a better understanding of the meetings industry and the value it delivers?

We need to emphasise the role meetings play in economic, professional and educational development and downplay the leisure aspect. We need to be

taken more seriously.

We need to enhance both the content and perceived value of meetings in order to give planners and delegates the arguments they need to justify their investment of time and resources. We need to create arguments to balance concerns around sustainability, and we need to deliver all these messages at a local level, where they have a greater impact and reality.

At the same time, we need to move beyond hospitality metrics and start figuring out how to attach demonstrable value to meetings outcomes. The fact is, nobody holds a meeting just to fill hotel rooms (that's simply a by-product). Yet most of our industry measures relate to what delegates spend, not what they actually accomplish which trivialises meetings in the eyes of those who need to see them as engines for business and professional progress.

● AIPC, [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org)