

Wow – I really feel like I was there!

Creating a Richer Record of Conferences and Seminars

Conferences and other large events provide an excellent way for people across an industry or area of interest to come together and learn from each other. Many participants meet lots of new people, hear great new ideas and come away totally inspired to do things differently in their organization or in their lives.

BUT. The trouble is, that when they get back to their office, all they've got is a bundle of paper Powerpoint printouts and, if they're lucky, a promise of a CD or DVD in a few weeks time containing recordings of the conference sessions.



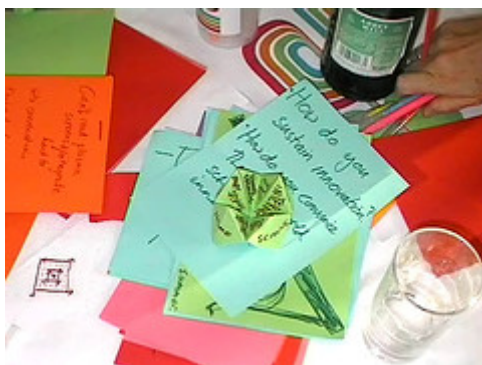
Perfect Path currently uses a variety of media to collect, collate and record what happens before, during and after an event, all of which can make a great difference both to those who are able to attend and those who couldn't make it. And now blogging and other social media technology allows us to share the material that we produce almost immediately. So you're back in your office, you can tell your colleagues what a fantastic time you had, and you can access video, audio and written-word accounts of what actually happened.

What We Do

We tailor activities to the needs of individual events, but as an example for a simple one-day event, any or all of the following activities could be appropriate.

Two weeks before: Starting the conversation – We can create or contribute to a blog or other form of community site. This site is ideally open to contributions from all participants whether delegates, speakers or organisers. Depending on the nature of the conference and those participating, this can give a flavour of what the event will be like and conversations can start that may be continued or followed up during the event. This activity builds a sense of community before things "really start" and provides a place for the record of the event to live.

At registration/opening: We start taking video and still images showing participants signing in and chatting before any of the sessions. We welcome them, recording on audio or video what they're hoping to get from the day or what they're expecting to contribute. This activity encourages reflection and sharing from the very start and establishes the idea of recording as we go.



During sessions: Depending on the format of the event, video and still images can be taken throughout. If small scale conversations take place (for example at an open space or world cafe style event) these can be recorded unobtrusively. Keynotes and panel speakers can also be recorded, preferably with a mix of audio, video and live-blogging (ie contemporaneous note-taking, published instantly) though video of keynote presentations tends not to add a great deal of value over audio.. This activity provides the core, rich record of the content of the event, whether that content is information delivery or knowledge sharing.

Lunchtime or other breaks: Speakers or participants who have been prominent during the sessions can be interviewed to pick up on particular points of interest or contention, exploring the detail of what they think but were perhaps unable to expand on in session. This activity allows for some reflection on the content of the sessions. This can be particularly useful where an issue wasn't fully resolved in a session or where there are background details that need to be understood.



Immediately afterwards: If there is a networking session at the end of the day this is a good time for another round of interviews, mirroring the work in the opening session, letting people reflect on who they've met, what they've learned and whether anything could have been better for them. This activity is important for recording immediate reflections, preferably in an informal setting, and further enhances the record by showing what people really thought about what was being said earlier while it's still fresh for them.

Next day: It is important that material is available electronically for participants to access as soon as possible after the event. Still images are most straightforward (in a full-day event, pictures from the morning can be made available at lunchtime), but if time is dedicated to processing, audio and video can be published very quickly too. Details of where to find the record can be included in a thank-you e-mail and posted to the event blog.



No matter what activities are used, the overriding principle is that we should add unobtrusively to the usefulness of the day for the majority of participants and that we should create a record that enhances their experience and ability to benefit from the event, while also providing interesting content for those who were unable to attend, rather than the traditional dog-eared and heavily annotated Powerpoint pack.

Talk to **Lloyd Davis** on 079191 82825

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to see how we can create a richer record of your event

perfect path

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