



# ROI Handbook

Evaluate your personal Return on Investment from attending an international association meeting



### **ICCA – the International Congress and Convention Association – is the global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry.**

Throughout its 50-year history, ICCA, the International Congress and Convention Association, has been dedicated to building one single area of expertise: **international association meetings**. ICCA aims to shape the future and value of international association meetings.

ICCA was founded in 1963 by a group of travel agents. Their first and foremost aim was to evaluate practical ways to get the travel industry involved in the rapidly expanding market of international meetings and to exchange actual information related to their operations in this market. This initiative soon proved to have been taken at the right moment: the meeting industry expanded even more rapidly than foreseen. As a result of which representatives from all the various sectors of the meetings industry from all over the world applied for ICCA membership, and the most experienced specialist suppliers.

These original principles of **sharing knowledge** and **building trust** between suppliers and international associations continue to be the corner stone of ICCA today.

ICCA now represents over 1000 companies and organisations in over 90 countries worldwide, representing all services within the meetings industry. We are headquartered in Amsterdam and operate 5 Regional Offices in Africa, Asia Pacific, Middle East, North and Latin America & Caribbean.

International association executives can rely on the ICCA network to find solutions for all their event objectives: venue selection; technical advice; assistance with delegate transportation; full convention planning or ad hoc services. ICCA members represent the top destinations worldwide, and the most experienced specialist suppliers.

### **Become an ICCA Verified Association through the ICCA Association Portal**

Meetings whose details we collect must rotate between at least 3 countries, occur regularly and attract a minimum of 50 participants. If your meeting matches these criteria then you can become one of the ICCA Verified Associations and gain access to ICCA's customised product for Associations - the ICCA Association Portal - a unique online platform providing a safe environment where Association Executives can get in touch with peers and get advice on how to organise efficient meetings.

#### **How can you gain access to the ICCA Association Portal?**

Go to the ICCA website [www.associations.iccaworld.org](http://www.associations.iccaworld.org) and complete the Association Portal registration form. Please note that this Portal is only open to association executives who meet specific criteria.

This guide is part of a series of publications specifically designed for the international association community to assist them running efficient and effective meetings. If you have any suggestions, would like to see a special topic covered or would like to learn more about the ICCA Association Portal and benefits for association executives please contact Ksenija Polla, CMP at: [ksenija.p@iccaworld.org](mailto:ksenija.p@iccaworld.org).



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## Introduction

This publication was originally designed exclusively for ICCA members attending ICCA events: it has significantly boosted our delegates' effectiveness in planning and evaluating their attendance, and continues to play a major role in increasing the overall quality of our meetings.

Inspired by our members we would like to encourage all Association Executives to use and customise this Return on Investment Handbook so that it can serve their own ROI objectives at their events.

### **Prove the value of your event through personalisation**

Most Return on Investment methodology aims to calculate the total value of an event as seen from the organiser's perspective. ICCA's radical alternative is to give each delegate the tools and insights to calculate their own personal ROI. This approach was taken for the following reasons:

- Each delegate experiences the programme in a personally unique way.
- Each delegate has a unique set of objectives for themselves and for their company or organisation.
- Each delegate will need to make sense of a unique, complex mix of new ideas and concepts, new useful contacts, business leads, and urgent action points.
- Each delegate needs to personally justify the time and money spent in attending educational events, to bosses, boards, stakeholders, and most importantly, to themselves.
- Each delegate has their own idea of what constitutes a 'good' speaker or an 'excellent' networking event – each person's perception is different.
- There is enormous potential value in becoming aware of other delegates' objectives and perceptions.

Rather than the programme being viewed as a single event for many delegates, we prefer to think of it as an opportunity for many separate events to take place inside the heads of our delegates simultaneously!

This online PDF document provides a detailed explanation of how each delegate can maximise their personal ROI, setting out key concepts but also providing practical advice and check-lists.

**Each delegate should take the time to study and think about these concepts before travelling to an event, and apply ROI processes to measure and justify his or her investment of time and money in attending any event.**

Accompanying the ROI Handbook is a set of charts which can be used to keep a record of business objectives, ideas, future action, and successes. These charts are meant to serve as a physical record of a delegate's ROI.

ICCA continuously evaluates and tries to improve its events and publications, so if you do have any ideas and suggestions arising from this publication please email ICCA CEO Martin Sirk at [martin.s@iccaworld.org](mailto:martin.s@iccaworld.org).

## 1. Before the event starts: practical preparation ideas

Time at an event is extremely valuable and it will fly swiftly by. Many delegates arrive having made no preparations and lose a lot of time because of this, potentially missing valuable business opportunities.

### 1.1 Objectives

- Delegates should make a written note of personal objectives.
- Delegates should make a written note of objectives for their company/organisation.
- Delegates should decide how they are going to report back on whether objectives were met.

### 1.2 Contacts/networking

- Delegates should identify which individuals they already know / want to meet? And then check if they will be attending; arrange to meet up in advance; use the online delegate list if available.
- Delegates should identify what types of individuals they want to meet for the first time during the event? They should check who has registered and send introductory messages.
- Delegates should use LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to connect with other delegates and start and join the online conversation around the event:
  1. Delegates should use the official event hashtag on Twitter to engage with the organiser and other participants before, during and after the event.
  2. Delegates should start a discussion on your association's LinkedIn Group about to the programme.
  3. Delegates should join the Facebook Page and the Facebook Event Page of the organiser to stay up to date with the latest information.

### 1.3 Business Opportunities

Attending a conference should not be considered as time lost, but as time saved. Rather than spending hours and days in trying to find solutions and making contacts via email or phone, at a conference delegates have the opportunity to make face-to-face contacts and find solutions within a much shorter time-frame.

### 1.4 Education

- Delegates should think about the most important business and intellectual challenges they are currently facing, and identify which education sessions are related to these issues.
- Delegates should read the session descriptions online in advance or at the latest do this straight after they have registered onsite. Delegates should preferably decide in advance which sessions to attend. You as the event organiser should ensure that each session has been described in a straightforward way to help your delegates identify how relevant it is to their personal needs.

- The delegates should keep in mind that they don't have to attend every education session – large numbers of one- to-one business discussions take place whilst sessions are running. They should try and pre-schedule meetings to suit their priorities, but they should not miss topics which are of the greatest interest!
- Provide your delegates with a list of recommended papers, books, etc.: the event is the ideal platform to discuss the very latest scientific or business concepts and predictions with colleagues who share the same interests.

### 1.5 Mental preparedness

Ensure your delegates are mentally prepared for your event, encourage them to ask themselves the following questions as they prepare to attend, and at the beginning of each Congress day:

- Are you mentally ready to seriously consider new ideas? Note these down whenever you hear them, whether you initially agree with them or not.
- Are you mentally ready to challenge your existing beliefs? The world is changing fast, what worked yesterday, probably won't work tomorrow.
- Are you mentally ready to share your own ideas, successes and problems?
- Are you mentally ready to talk to new contacts? Aim to add at least five new nationalities to your circle of trust; proactively invite new people onto your table and search them out at coffee breaks.
- Are you mentally ready to accept that other delegates' beliefs and perspectives are true (at least, true for them!)?

## 2. Building exceptional relationships: 8 ways to interact more effectively

This section of the ROI Handbook has been produced by the **Meetology® Lab**, whose team of behavioural psychologists train, coach, and present on the fascinating science behind exceptional interpersonal communication. Their CEO, Jonathan Bradshaw, had been a regular speaker at the ICCA Congress for many years and the company is proud to have worked with ICCA on the design and delivery of the previous Congresses' First Timers Sessions. To learn more, please visit [www.meetology.com](http://www.meetology.com).

### Introduction

Have you ever stopped to question why we can be exceptionally productive at some of the conferences we attend and then not at others? At some we network with ease, connect with those we meet more effectively and end up with new colleagues, contacts and even customers. However, at others we find it more difficult, wish we were somewhere else and don't seem to connect so well with those we meet.

We may be inclined to think that these situations occur randomly and are totally outside of our control. However, here at the Meetology® Group we train, coach and present on the fascinating psychology behind improving your interpersonal skills and are delighted to share some fun, interesting and light-hearted insights from our behavioural research archive designed to help you connect more effectively next time you interact with others.

#### 1. The power of food

It seems that there is indeed no such thing as a free lunch! Psychologists have discovered that we develop a special fondness for other people, objects and statements if we are introduced to them whilst eating a meal. (The effect is likely due to the fact that eating puts people in a happy mood and can cause them to make faster, more impulsive decisions).

#### 2. Keep your language simple

When communicating, especially to contacts from other countries, it can be a temptation to use long words in an attempt to look more intelligent or impress. Don't! Studies show that when writing or speaking, the use of needlessly long words can have a negative impact on the way you are viewed.

#### 3. If you make a mistake, don't panic

Research suggests that the empathy we feel for people who make a mistake leads us to liking them more and feeling more connected to them. So, if it happens to you, accept it, acknowledge it, and move on.

#### 4. Sit on curvy furniture

Research has shown that the emotional reaction of humans to curvilinear (rounded) furniture is far more positive than to rectilinear (straight-edged) designs. A calming feeling was noted in those exposed to the furniture with softer, rounded edges exposing again the potential impact of the environment in which we interact.



#### 5. The power of physical contact

The huge amount of research on the subject all points to the same findings: touching another person can have a positive impact on their feelings and behaviour towards you. Research has shown a 20% increase in level of persuasion when a request is accompanied by a brief touch on their upper arm.

#### 6. Do someone a favour

Did you know that behavioural psychology research suggests that when you do a favour for someone, you are instilling in them a social obligation to return it to you at some point? Such is the power of 'reciprocation' that it works even when the person isn't particularly liked. Small, thoughtful and inexpensive favours to those you meet can lead to improved connectivity between you.

#### 7. Don't speak too fast

There is a scientifically proven perfect speed to speak at when trying to persuade. Psychologists found that a moderately fast speed of 3.5 words a second was the perfect speed to speak at when trying to persuade others but that frequent pauses were also crucial.

#### 8. Copy those you meet

As well as highlighting actual similarities, mirroring those we meet verbally and physically has also been shown to have a positive impact on feelings of connectivity. Practice mirroring your colleagues' language (speed, tone) and physical stance before you try it on someone you don't know as it can take a while to master.

### 3. Personal objectives checklist: knowledge & skills

**What useful things can you, in theory, learn at the event? And what did you actually learn?**

- ✓ Personal - fill gaps in basic knowledge
- ✓ Personal - move a subject status from basic knowledge to expertise
- ✓ Personal - further improve existing areas of expertise
- ✓ Personal - identify how different fields of study could influence your own field
- ✓ Personal - improve awareness/skills in using tools provided by the association
- ✓ Organisational - identify and implement new management techniques
- ✓ Organisational - find solutions to specific business challenges
- ✓ Organisational - identify valuable educational information to pass on to non-attending colleagues
- ✓ Organisational - identify how to improve company-wide use of the tools provided by the association

Action ideas — turn your new knowledge into business advantages

**Short term:**

- ✓ Note down the key points you have learnt: identify which subject areas are sufficient in themselves, and which will need additional training/study.
- ✓ Plan personal action points to take on return to office.
- ✓ Communicate relevant information to other team members.

**Longer term:**

- ✓ Evaluate if the changes made at personal and organisational levels had an impact on competitiveness of your organisation, your future career development, the creation of new research opportunities, and/or sales performance/bottom line results.

### 4. Personal objectives checklist: strategic thinking

**How has the event opened your mind to new concepts/ideas?**

- ✓ Greater awareness of global economic and social issues and trends.
- ✓ Greater awareness of customer/patient/partner motivations, objectives, and trends (by specific sector).
- ✓ Greater awareness of competitor activities and initiatives.
- ✓ Obtain valuable feedback on your own ideas and initiatives from peers/partners/competitors.
- ✓ Generate new creative, stimulating ideas - large-scale format brainstorming.

Action ideas — apply your new ways of thinking to your current business challenges

**Short term:**

- ✓ Re-evaluate current strategic plans and activity programmes - are they in line with business/competitive environment.
- ✓ Incorporate new strategic thinking into future planning processes.
- ✓ Communicate relevant information to other team members.
- ✓ Test out and evaluate new creative ideas on team/clients.
- ✓ Review feedback on your ideas and initiatives; implement changes.

**Longer term:**

- ✓ Compare written plans and annual reports to see if new perspectives gained from attending the programme make a demonstrable impact on your research programmes and/or company/organisation's strategy and/or bottom line results.
- ✓ Evaluate if the meeting led to changes in government policy in your association's field of interest.
- ✓ Evaluate if the meeting led to government or venture capital investment in new major research initiatives.



## 5. Personal objectives checklist: sales & marketing

### Identify new business you win as a result of attending the event

- ✓ Obtain new sales leads.
- ✓ Obtain additional detailed information on existing sales leads/bids.
- ✓ Identify delegates who could be future partners.
- ✓ Identify delegates who could in future provide valuable information on prospective partners/events.

Action ideas — convert business opportunities into bottom-line impact

#### Short term:

- ✓ Follow up sales leads personally.
- ✓ Pass on sales leads to colleagues with responsibility for following up.
- ✓ Report sales leads to superiors as part of evaluation of time at programme.

#### Longer term:

- ✓ Monitor if future business was influenced by the information and contacts you gained at the event - add a \$\$ value to this.

## 6. Personal objectives checklist: intellectual or business relationships

### Are you making full use of the high level networking at the event?

- ✓ Identify potential future partners/collaborators/representatives.
- ✓ Agree future plans and activity programmes with partners.
- ✓ Obtain high-level feedback from past collaborative activity.
- ✓ Create User-groups or Partner-groups.
- ✓ Join or set up Common Interest Groups.
- ✓ Overcome problems or challenges by proactively improving personal relationships with the individuals with whom you have poor current relationships.

Action ideas — turn relationships created at the event into new business or research opportunities

#### Short term:

- ✓ Write up plans and proposals to collaborate.
- ✓ Finalise/sign agreements; move negotiations forward.
- ✓ Instigate changes to existing relationships based on feedback.
- ✓ Connect via LinkedIn or other social networking sites.
- ✓ Schedule follow up meetings at future events / tradeshows.

#### Longer term:

- ✓ Identify if relationships created/built at the event increased your competitiveness and/or bottom line results for your organisation.
- ✓ Identify if new research projects achieve their stated objectives.

## 7. Personal objectives checklist: Association-specific objectives

### How can you maximise the ROI from your membership?

- ✓ Become a volunteer leader (e.g.+++ stand for elections; join taskforce; host event).
- ✓ Identify and take advantage of business opportunities
- ✓ Identify sponsorship opportunities.
- ✓ Get to know/build relationships with staff members of the association.
- ✓ Get to know/build relationships with other members of your association.
- ✓ Consider bidding for future events of your association and other major events; discuss with other members from your country.
- ✓ Inform your association about your ideas for improvements to association business opportunities, or new potential initiatives you would like to see introduced.

Action ideas — use your associations' community as intensively as possible

#### Short term:

- ✓ Follow up/confirm interest in volunteer leader activity with existing leaders and Secretariat.
- ✓ Add your associations' intellectual and business opportunities and sponsorship to future budget plans and activity schedule.
- ✓ Schedule visit to your association secretariat tied to other activities.
- ✓ Obtain full information on Congress/other events bidding processes and decision-making criteria from Secretariat.
- ✓ Ensure you send feedback on your personal programme experience, and your ideas for future/improved business opportunities.
- ✓ Make sure you are identifying yourself as a member of your association

#### Longer term:

- ✓ Regularly evaluate the overall value of your association membership to you personally and to your organisation, taking into account all of the above factors.

### More about ROI

ICCA's Personal ROI concept was developed as an offshoot from the standard meetings industry ROI model, which aims to calculate the overall achievement of a meeting's objectives against the cost and time invested, from the perspective of the event organiser or owner. Anyone interested in this constantly evolving field can find more information at: [www.eventroi.org](http://www.eventroi.org).

# ICCA Association Resource Publications:

## **Working with airlines and ground transport operators**

This publication is produced as a practical educational guide which gives ideas and advice to international association meeting planners and decision makers how to deal effectively with the airline and ground transport industry in the 21st century.

## **Negotiating with hotels**

Most guides on the subject of negotiating concern themselves with the corporate market. This is a simple guide to assist the international association buyer to speak the same "business language" as the hotel sales representative, and to obtain a fair deal that reflects the importance and value of their event.

## **Social Media for Meetings**

This publication will help you defining the social media landscape, identifying your target audience, giving practical tips for developing a social media strategy and giving you tips on how to use social media for your next upcoming event.

## **Contracting with Major Congress & Convention Venues**

This guide will be of value to a range of people and organisations working in or within the meetings industry, in particular:

- Clients dealing with major venues for the first
- New venues
- Students in industry-related courses

## **Working with Convention Bureaux**

The Convention Bureaux in ICCA membership represent the most internationally focused and experienced destinations worldwide. From providing strategic advice to the organisers of citywide conventions to finding that special historic venue for an exclusive Board of Directors dinner, you'll find their expertises hard to beat.

## **Bidding and Decision-making**

This publication holds a set of guidelines and check-lists that help evaluate and improve the methodology used to decide on future international meetings destinations.

## **Working with Meetings Management Companies**

The main purposes of this publication is to clearly elaborate the differences between AMCs, PCOs, DMCs, and other agencies dealing with association meetings.

## **Crisis Management**

This publication provides structured solutions to crisis and emergency situations by allocating and utilising effective resources to ensure minimal impact to people, reputation and assets.

## **ROI Handbook**

A very handy publication that helps you evaluate your personal Return on Investment from attending an international association meeting easily and collectively.

## **Hosted Buyer Programme**

This publication provides advice for international association executives to help them organise quality meetings and business opportunities at meetings industry tradeshows.

Available for download at:  
[associations.iccaworld.org](http://associations.iccaworld.org)

**Join a select group of international association executives!**



[www.associations.iccaworld.org](http://www.associations.iccaworld.org)

## **What is the ICCA Association Portal?**

**A unique online platform designed to assist association executives in organising quality meetings! Through the ICCA Association Portal you can:**

- Connect with peers
- Update your meeting information
- Access meetings resource publications and case studies
- Access top suppliers
- Apply to attend leading meetings industry events as a "Hosted Buyer"
- Receive advice on your bid document

[paper.iccaworld.org](http://paper.iccaworld.org)



**Not enough time to stay up to date on international meetings industry news?**

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# ROI Workbook

## Personal ROI Workbook

The following pages are a way through which delegates can create a personal record of the total value they have obtain from attending an event. The model can also be integrated or adapted into the attendees' own corporate reporting formats. They can be printed out prior to attending the event and used for writing structured notes and follow-up action points. Delegates can also create a totally different ROI reporting model to suit their individual business or intellectual requirements. The one thing we encourage every single delegate to do is to actually write down their objectives and to keep a record somehow, somewhere, of their action points and ROI, whether or not they make use of these resources and suggested structure.

Please refer back to the previous pages of this ROI Handbook to see the many possible objectives that fall under the following headings:

- Knowledge & skills
- Strategic thinking
- Sales & marketing
- Intellectual or business relationships w
- Association-specific objectives

Objectives/ Issues/Challenges	Session/Ideas/ Speakers/Notes	Action/Follow Up	Results/Success/ Value/Savings

<b>Objectives/ Issues/Challenges</b>	<b>Session/Ideas/ Speakers/Notes</b>	<b>Action/Follow Up</b>	<b>Results/Success/ Value/Savings</b>

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