

## Transparency, please

Quality of service and trust in the service provider are decisive for a bid. According to a recent survey from IMEX and CIM.

Purchasing. IMEX and CIM surveyed 1,000 corporate planners on the issue of bidding and received 49 usable questionnaires. They show that on average planners organise 48 events a year, with the range extending from three to 650. They give about 18 percent of events to agencies and put 17 percent out to tender. The number of tenders however does not increase in proportion to the volume of events. Some corporations organise their hundreds of conferences, events and incentives in-house, while some mid-sized firms outsource their dozen events. Three out of ten meeting managers put events out to tender larger than a certain number of participants, usually 200. Similarly, the same proportion do this above a budget level of 50,000 Euros. But four out of ten look for a specially clever and original concept instead. 40 percent of tenders concern marketing events, while conferences and incentives each make up 30 percent. For these planners collect an average of two to three bids and three to four for destinations.

51 percent of planners agreed with the statement, "We occasionally put an event out to tender. But this follows neither a rule nor a trend." With several answers possible 47 percent agreed that "bids take up too much time; we increasingly put less events out to tender and rely on framework contracts and preferred partners." The situation in 37 percent of firms was different: "Purchasing and controlling require transparency. Thus we increasingly ask for more bids and receiving more per event."

**In answer to the question**, "is purchasing involved in the decision?", only eight percent responded "Yes, as always," and 13 percent "Yes, increasingly." 34 percent ticked "no, not yet" and 40 percent "no, never." Interestingly, a pharmaceutical concern answered "We are purchasing."

The ranking of criteria for bids was unequivocal. At the top were quality of service (1.55), trust in the service provider (1.61) and price-quality relationship (1.71). Followed by creativity and originality (1.92). Less important were success measurements (3.18) and financing concepts (3.2).

Transparency is a sign of a good bid. First of all as regards costs in a realistic framework which will be adhered to — no go for hidden expenses and inappropriate additional offers. Second, concerning comprehensibility: exact answers to specific

enquiries with precise, complete and clear replies. No nebulous concepts with open questions. And this all in "faultless language", not "agency jargon".

Also rejected were exaggerated promises as well as standard bids not adjusted to the content of the tender. Or tourist offers without incentive ideas. How individualism can win was described by one organiser as "when the presentation draws me into this world and does not ignore the theme."

**Incidentally**, one fourth of event managers pay for presentations, three fourths do not. 16 percent are familiar with online bids — and rate them as good or very good. Yet with the restriction that E-bids are generally more suitable for standardised processes and dimensions. The majority (73 percent) find potential service providers at trade fairs or in trade journals (63 percent). 55 percent use fam trips and site inspections, 45 percent ask colleagues and 43 percent search the Internet. Only 12 percent enquire at trade associations and ten percent at tourist offices or conference bureaus each. 39 percent name hotels as preferred partners, 27 percent agencies.

The annual budget for the largest group (27 percent) ranged from 200,000 to 500,000 Euros, for 18 percent from 500,000 to a million Euros. Six percent manage a budget over five million Euros; 12 percent only between 100,000 and 200,000 Euros and eight percent less than 100,000 Euros. Nine percent did not specify their budget. The budget will probably remain the same for two thirds of those surveyed, while it will increase for a sixth and fall for another sixth.

## Grafiken

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Source: CIM/IMEX Survey 2006

**Ranking of decisive criteria for bids**

1. Quality of service (1,55)

2. Trust in the service provider (1,61)

3. Price-quality relationship (1,71)

4. Creativity and originality (1,92)

5. Success measurements (3,18)

6. Financing concepts (3,2)

Source: CIM/IMEX Survey 2006

**Search for potential service providers**

At trade fairs (73 percent)

In trade journals (63 percent)  
On fam trips and site inspections (55 percent)  
Ask colleagues (45 percent)  
On the Internet (43 percent)  
At trade associations(12 percent)  
At conference bureaus (10 percent).  
At tourist offices (10 percent)  
Source: CIM/IMEX Survey 2006