

# *Translating the Survey Results into the Association Meeting Strategy: A Case Study of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged*

Xuehui Zeng

Event Management Department  
Shanghai Second Polytechnic University  
Shanghai, 201209, China  
xhzeng@sspu.edu.cn

Juan Wang

Marketing Department  
Shanghai YuanHui Health Technology Co., Ltd.  
Shanghai, 201209 China  
juanwang814@163.com

**Abstract**—The purpose of the present study is to help the association meeting planners better understand the needs and expectations of the attendees before developing the meeting concepts. We designed the survey questionnaire and delivered it to the potential attendees of the 2nd Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged. The results of the survey indicate that participants attend the meeting for the latest information of the health industry, the new product promotion and for the business opportunities. They rank keynote speakers, program design and concurrent events as the top 3 important elements for their attendance. Their considerations also include registration fee, the venue and the duration of the meeting. The results suggest that Associations should engage their members during the planning process so that meetings are planned with input from members. The findings will help the planners to translate the survey results into association meeting strategy. Limitations for further research are also discussed in the paper.

**Keywords**—Association meeting; Strategic planning; Survey; Case study

## I. INTRODUCTION

Association meetings dominate the convention and meeting market, accounting for 71 per cent of total meeting expenditures, 78 per cent of all attendees, and 80 per cent of all conventions and meetings. [7] [9] In spite of the fact, the association meeting market is becoming more competitive because of the economic difficulties and the increasing cost for organizing meetings. In such a competitive market environment, associations and their meeting planners must engage in a disciplined practice to ensure the success of the meetings and at the same time, support the organization strategies and produce a high return of investment. [1]

The study is based on the 2nd Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged. This association meeting is organized by Chinese Association of Geriatric Research and was hold on June 24-26 in Shanghai, China.

Since entering the new century, China has paced up into the aging society, facing the problems like older population health, slow disease, disability, “empty nest” etc. This is

realistic and has become the focus of the common concern to the whole society. Contradictions between the demand growth for elderly health care and the lack of systematic health services become increasingly prominent and severe. New requirements for the systematical management in terms of the elderly medical care, theory and technology, service mode, policy system, and so on are big challenges in China.

Chinese Association of Geriatric Research was founded in 1993 It is the national level society with the registration approval of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People’s Republic of China. Since 1993, the association has been committed to the gerontology research, academic exchange and major chronic diseases prevention and control work. It has played a positive role in the promotion and the development of geriatric medicine and health service. It is the inherent requirement of the Chinese government to promote the elderly health and encourage the whole society to pay close attention to elderly health care. In order to conduct in-depth study and cope with a series of problem rising from an aging population, improve health service, promote the development of elderly care in China, Chinese Association of Geriatric Research organized the 2nd Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged in Shanghai.

The theme of the conference is building up a new platform combined with medical treatment and longevity preservation, promoting the development of new health service. The meeting was hold in International Hotel, Shanghai Everbright Convention & Exhibition Center between June 25 to 26, 2016, and the duration of the meeting is two days. Government officials are invited, they are from the Aging Committee Office, Social Development Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People’s Republic of China. The organizer also invite domestic and foreign well-known geriatric medicine expert, economics, research and management professionals and scholars, industry practitioners, the elderly health services companies and agencies as well as the representatives of the news media. Other delegates are mainly

from the medical institutions including elderly medical treatment, nursing, rehabilitation, scientific research institutions, health management institutions, the elderly health insurance and health services, community health service institutions, technical and management personnel from cadre's sanitarium as well as the executives related to health service industry, etc., The total number of attendees is about 500 people. The co-organizer of the meeting is The Chinese Association on Health and Service for the Aged. Plenary session, keynote speech, panel discussion and workshop were scheduled in the meeting program agenda.

version of a survey design was developed, which comprised 10 questions in ten major aspects. Q1 is about the frequency to attend the association meetings. Q2 is about the working field in the industry. Q3 asks about the purposes to attend the meeting. Q4 asks about the interests to attend the meeting. Q5 is about the expectation of the keynote speaker. Q6 inquires about the interesting programs of the meeting. Q7 is about the preferred venue. Q8 is about the acceptable registration fee. Q9 is about the preferred duration of the meeting. Q10 is about the expectation of the concurrent event during the meeting. Table 1 shows the questionnaire items about the survey.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Questionnaire Development

On the basis of previous experience, the market research and panel discussion of the organization committee, a final

TABLE I. THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Item NO.	Questions
1	Is this your first time to attend the association meeting?
2	What industry field are you from?
3	What is your purpose to attend the meeting?
4	What is your interest and concern about the meeting?
5	What is your expectation about the speaker?
6	What is your concern about the program?
7	What type of venue do you prefer?
8	What do you think of the range of acceptable registration fee?
9	What is your preferred duration of the meeting?
10	What is your expectation about the concurrent events during the meeting?

### B. Data Collection

The target subjects in this study are members of the 2nd Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged in Shanghai. 200 survey questionnaires were delivered to the members through three different channels. On-site survey was conducted via an organized salon to part of the members from the industry. Invitation emails, which contained an introduction to the research and a link to the online survey was sent to the members through the Survey System. Besides, the questionnaire was sent to the members via WeChat groups. To ensure a high response rate, two reminder emails were also sent to the members. Of the sample of 200 prospective respondents, 192 completed the survey, 190 are returned and valid, resulting in a usable response rate of 95 per cent.

## III. FINDINGS

Of the 200 respondents, 140 had no previous experience of participating in the meeting. They are the potential customers and the planners need to meet their requirements and attract them accordingly. The top three reasons to attend the meeting are for information, product promotion and for the business opportunities. This indicates that the program design should take these elements into consideration. Other important factors to a successful meeting are the keynote speakers, meeting agenda, concurrent events as well as the registration fee and the duration of the meeting. Table 2 shows the important questionnaire survey results.

**TABLE II. THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS.**

Survey items	Results (190 valid respondents)	Percentage
About the frequency to the meeting	140 had no previous experience	73%
About the purposes to attend the meeting (Top 3)	To obtain the latest industry information To promote the products To seek business opportunities	34% 29% 28%
Factors to attend the meeting (Top 3)	Quality of the speakers Program and agenda International learning experience	22% 21% 20%
Preferred speakers to invite (Top 3)	Leading industry professionals Industry professionals from abroad Academic researchers	47% 25% 16%
About the range of registration fee	500-1000 RMB	63%
About the preferred duration	2 days	79%
About the preferred concurrent events (Top 3)	Field trip to the leading enterprises Banquet for networking Awarding ceremony	58% 24% 16%

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide evidence supporting the association meeting planning strategy. Needs analysis is the most important task before the meeting planning. To achieve the goal the meeting, factors influencing the attendance of the member should be investigated in order to attract their attention and for the meeting marketing. [2] Learning is the most important to the members. Therefore speakers' invitation should be very careful and the program and agenda should be focused to maximize their meeting experience. [3] Besides learning, networking among the attendees should be well-organized to help them achieve their objectives. Concurrent events, like field trips, rewarding ceremony and banquet should be designed in the program and the agenda. Planner should have precise budget and cost in mind and consider the acceptable registration fee and the preferred duration of the meeting. [4]

#### V. CONCLUSION

Associations and meeting attendees are the two major players in the association meeting market. Associations offer their members opportunities to better their professional development by organizing conferences, seminars or workshops. Associations and their meeting planners must develop the best-value packages on the market, which can be done by strategic planning. [8]. Association meeting planners should develop worthwhile program based on the market research. The combined focus will result in events that are beneficial to both the members and the association. Meetings are about connections and are serious business. Meeting manager can help ensure that more valuable and relevant connections occur by approaching their work with the mindset of a designer [5]. They often are critical to organizational success, both in terms of the value delivered to members and stakeholders and the revenue generated for the bottom-line. [6] In planning an event which participation is not mandatory, it is critical to establish compelling reasons for participation.

Practically, in order to maximize the meeting attendance, the first step for the strategic planning is to do some research and to determine what factors will draw participation. After that, the overall goals of the meeting and the specific measurable objectives can be developed as the basis for program design. Therefore, planners should integrate goals and objectives in the planning process and share them with the stakeholders involved in the meeting, such as speakers, participants and service providers. Finally, associations should keep in mind that needs analysis leads to the design of positive learning experience and an ultimate learning environment is conducive to achieve the goals and objectives.

#### VI. LIMITATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although the research provides valuable implications and positive guidance for the association meeting planners, the study population was limited to one association meeting that is the 2nd Chinese Promotion Conference on Health Services for the Aged in Shanghai. Therefore the findings of the study maybe limited and the sample may not represent the result of other association organization. Besides, the study is based only on quantitative findings from the attendees. Further research should be considered to include stakeholders including planning staff, sponsors, committees, site staff, service supplier, vendors and exhibitors, etc. By undertaking the needs and expectations of both sides, the planning strategy can be developed, evaluated and the success and return on investment of the association meeting can be clearly measured.

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