



# Association trends to watch

ICS director of associations **Christoph Raudonat** says flexible, authentic leadership will drive business success and engage members.

“Build your network on respect and positive values.”

**T**his year is set to be an incredible year for associations as global markets will offer fantastic opportunities to get involved. Asia is *the* global growth market and associations seeking to establish themselves in Asia will be in a pole position to ride the wave. Keep nimble and utilise your network to remain at the forefront of your sector's business development trends.

The top three management trends to implement in your organisation in 2019:

### 1. Keep changing

As association professionals, we lead the industry with new trends and our duty is to equip our members, clients and stakeholders with must-know innovations and insights. In Mark Twain's words: "The best way to get ahead is by getting started". The best way to do this is through leading by example. Walking the talk and doing so with integrity will enable you to lead the next business trends in no time.

### 2. Focus on your members

This is age-old wisdom by now, but it deserves repeating. Put the 'what' second and redefine your membership focus by asking 'why' first. Why are we doing what we are doing and who benefits from it? Collect data and build information.

### 3. Move out of your comfort zone

A wise man once said: "You will never become who you want to be if you remain who you are". Association target groups will become even more individualised in 2019. We need to ensure our organisations remain relevant

to their needs. Look out for trends that may not appear to be within your immediate organisational focus. A diversified, holistic approach to (business) life will be necessary to respond to your stakeholders' needs.

The top three social media trends to take to heart in 2019:

### 1. Pick a platform

If you're not yet fully harnessing the power of social media, 2019 is the year to get started. Pick a platform you are comfortable with and stick with it. Online services and shopping continue to increase and the trend is growing. If your association doesn't have a strong online presence, how will your target groups find you?

### 2. Less is more

If you keep on bragging about why your organisation is the best, you are likely losing interest rather than building it. Tell me what hurts before selling me the solution. In other words, tell a story, something that is relatable, and your followers will grow.

### 3. Focus on the positive

Algorithms work in funny ways, but one thing is true. The more you interact with a post (positive or negative), the more your feed will display similar content. Thus, share what you like. Credit the authors, maybe even contact them, and congratulate those who share positive content with you. Build your network on respect and positive values and you will see respect growing in your direction as well. ■

*This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers. Author Christoph Raudonat is business development & associations director at International Conference Services (ICS).*