

## INTBAU Guide Document 5

### Recommendations for marketing conferences

#### **1. Funding, or an underwriter, must be found to ensure no loss to INTBAU**

Conferences cannot always be funded by sale of tickets alone, particularly those held in expensive cities. Consideration should be given to the market expectations for ticket prices to similar conferences. A realistic assessment of the number of tickets to be sold should be adopted, bearing in mind that INTBAU's largest conference (in India) had 210 attendees. In order to avoid future losses, all conferences should be funded, or have an underwriter, to cover any losses.

#### **2. Funding should include a sufficient amount for international paid-for advertising**

Publicity through free academic sources only may be insufficient. Experience shows that we can expect a response of less than 1% to advertisements and flyers, with rare exceptions. Opportunities to reach a wider market cost more, but this should be allowed in future conference budgets. The INTBAU membership alone is not a large enough market to ensure a good turn-out at events. Refer to the most recent INTBAU publicity tracking sheet for options.

#### **3. Events partnered with established academic or professional organisations are more likely to be successful**

Events partnered with other organisations, particularly established academic organisations, are likely to be successful due to the large number of ready-made delegates from the established organisation. The meeting of two bodies with differing memberships can also produce a lively synergy. INTBAU cannot yet rely on a readymade audience of members for its own events.

#### **4. A strong partner in the event city, with good connections to the local community, is essential**

Strong local connections are essential in holding all conferences may have helped to find cheaper catering, accommodation and translation. Sourcing catering, venue and other items at open market rates attracts a considerable premium. INTBAU staff working in their home cities will probably be able to source many of the items, including the venue, at bargain prices.

#### **5. Ticket prices should be simply structured, with opening rather than closing discounts**

It is essential that ticket prices are set at a realistic level by comparison with other events of a similar nature in the same city. Inducements to book early should be offered by means of "early booking" discounts. Discounting close to the event sets up the expectation that INTBAU will discount closer to other event dates, and may make attendees more likely to wait until the last-minute to buy tickets.

## **6. Publicity for ticket sales should be different from that used in the call for papers**

Most conferences will receive a good number of paper proposals, by including a provocative but well-referenced essay as part of the Call for Papers. However, it is essential that a different approach be used to market the event. The conference page should be re-written to make the event sound more attractive to potential delegates, who are a different market from the academics contributing papers.

## **7. Ticket sales should open at least 3 months before the event**

It is difficult to market events quickly. All events should have tickets on sale 3 months before the event, to maximise the opportunity for secondary distribution (through non-INTBAU mailing lists and event listings) to reach a large number of people. Extra time should be allowed if annual festivals occur during the ticket sale period.

## **8. Venue seating should be arranged to match a the number of people attending**

Very large venues should be avoided. It is better to have to find a few extra chairs, than have a room half empty. If ticket sales are not up to expectations, sections of the seating should be roped off at the rear to force the audience to sit near the front. Opportunities should be taken to ensure that the number of seats matches the final audience numbers.

**Matthew Hardy**  
Secretary, INTBAU  
December 2007 v.2