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PCOs asked to deliver more to non-profit sector

A study of Australian associations has found that professional conference organisers need to deliver more than just quality meetings to the non-profit sector, particularly in the realm of sponsorship.

The study conducted by the *World's Leading Conference Organisers (WLCO)* reveals that the strong partnership between PCOs and associations is set to grow further with PCOs being increasingly looked upon to contribute strategic ideas and deliver sponsorship dollars.

While issues such as governance and increasing membership still dominate the agenda, developing new revenue streams beyond membership dues ranks a close third as a priority for the non-profit sector.

Profitability and cutting-edge relevance now drive the strategic direction of associations in the business of conferences.

It's therefore no longer unusual to find topics like *Commercial Ventures for Charities* and *Risk Management* in educational forums today.

Founding member of the WLCO and managing director of ICMS Australasia, Bryan Holliday, says "The survey of 38 of Australia's major associations confirms anecdotal evidence that professional conference organisers are now major drivers of not only effective meetings but profitable events."

"The days where conference committees are happy just to break even are becoming a thing of the past," Mr Holliday said. "Non-profits now expect their PCO to be more than an organiser but a strategic partner as well."

Mr Holliday said communication and the relevance to Gen Y are also two major emerging issues which will likely impact on the delivery of programs via social media and the educational content of conference programs.

WLCO is a global alliance of PCOs established in 2008 as a strategic referral service for managing congresses. The philosophy of *Global Partners. Local Delivery* is one of close international collaboration with each member company.

ICMS Australasia is the founding member with other members from Argentina, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain and the United Kingdom.

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