

project planning: «Never underestimate event technology»



Used correctly, technology can make all the difference to an event. Michel Dubler, Head of Business Development and Venue Service, explains what events managers need to bear in mind when requesting and planning events technology.

Michel, at Winkler, you are the central contact for all new customer enquiries. Where do the enquiries originate from and how detailed is the customers' knowledge of our service?

Customers find us through the industry network, word-of-mouth recommendations, the Internet or social media. The enquiries take various forms. Some people, for example, have already managed a number of events and have some experience of the different components of our service. Others are managing their very first major event and are therefore encountering us for the first time. When responding to these enquiries in particular, it is extremely important to ensure you have all the salient details and to advise the customer of the scale of the respective decision. Another form

of enquiry are publicly tendered projects, which have very clear specifications about what is expected of the quotation. Similarly detailed are the requests from events agencies, which, as insiders, already have a good understanding of the process.

There are many ways of staging an event. Given the considerable scope, how do you even begin to put a quote together?

First of all, it is important to build a clear picture of the customer's requirements. It is my job as the consultant to ask the right questions. For example, it is essential to enquire about the start and end time of the event. This directly affects personnel costs and can therefore greatly influence the price quoted.

project planning: «Never underestimate event technology»

If the event starts early in the morning, for example, the rigging will have to be set up the day before.

For me, it is also essential to find out the event's significance for the customer. It makes a big difference whether the event is a simple info event just for employees or a major event involving key stakeholders.

It is best if you agree a face-to-face discussion with the adviser and hold it at the event location for example. This allows you to clarify some important aspects relating to the event technology in advance and prepare a bespoke quotation.

As a visitor at an event, would you notice differences in the quality of the technology used or could you, in theory, just go for the cheaper option?

You definitely notice differences in quality. Thanks to a daily diet of big budget TV and show productions, customers nowadays always expect technical perfection. Productions of this nature, however, are often simply unaffordable for private or SME events.

In such cases, you have to explain to the customers what compromises are required and how these will affect the quality. In general, the technology is often planned at too late a stage and is insufficiently budgeted.

What exactly should someone thinking of using your services bear in mind?

To put it simply, the more we know about an event, the better. This includes information about the event location, the form the presentations will take (PowerPoint, flip chart, multimedia show) and the size of the audience, for example. It is also useful to know how many speakers there will be and the programme schedule or timing. For a panel discussion, for example, it is essential to book additional trained personnel to provide assistance in view of the number of people interacting at the same time. If the audience includes speakers of different languages, it is worth considering incorporating multiple projections and giving the presentations in two languages. Performers can also vary greatly in their requirements. A soloist, for example, will require very different technology to a cover band.

As you can see, there are lots of small details to take into account when planning event technology. As experienced consultants, however, we have successfully managed a great many events and can provide a solution for almost any occasion. If few details about the event are known at the start of planning, we can of course provide an initial quotation for budgeting purposes on the basis of our extensive experience.

project planning: «Never underestimate event technology»

As mentioned, it is best to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the consultant. We can then proactively discuss the most important details and ensure that our quotation caters precisely to the customer's requirements.