

Great technology and fluid formats 7,000 air traffic control professionals

A satisfied World ATM Congress confirms it stays in Madrid and IFEMA until 2022



Association	CANSO (Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation) in collaboration with ATCA (Air Traffic Control Association)
PCO	Conference Studio
Dates	7-9 March 2017
Size	7.000 delegados
Ifema spaces	North Convention Centre + halls 7 and 9

From 7th to 9th of March 2017, the World ATM congress was held in IFEMA, organized as in its previous editions by Conference Studio. A 5th edition which stands out for its technical improvements as well as a constant mix of training, exhibition and networking, a key combination to maximise engagement. The result: a resounding success and an obvious satisfaction of the association, which has decided to extend its annual contract in Madrid and with Conference Studio until 2022. Here are the keys to this success.

Figures looking up! The figures speak for themselves: The congress arrived in Madrid in 2013 with 5,000 people, and by 2017 has already reached the figure of 7,600 people, a considerable increase to be the fifth year, compared to 7,000 of the last edition. According to Smara Iglesia, head of Conference Studio, “when you know a congress from its birth, you are better able to improve in each edition”, and she adds “this is a networking conference, with a very lively atmosphere, and you have to offer a very good service so that everyone is happy.”

Essential wifi. From this edition, IFEMA decided a change of organization to ensure top wifi coverage and an impeccable technical service: during the ATM Congress, they created a team specialized in wifi at the service of the client. “We had five technicians from IFEMA during the congress, which offered an incredible service, and every time a booth had a problem, they were there, even setting up a temporary office next to our technical office so they could be easily located at any time”, Smara details.

"WE HAD FIVE TECHNICIANS DURING THE CONGEES, WITH INCREDIBLE SERVICE: EVERY TIME A STAND HAD A PROBLEMA, THEY WERE THERE" (CONFERENCE STUDIO)

Reinforcement of electrical equipment. Beyond wifi, the electricity is another point of risk or urgencies in congresses. IFEMA also tripled electrical equipment service during the congress, ensuring that there was no problem and reinforced the system of incidents, supervised all certifications were there, and reinforced the qualified staff. “It is a congress with many screens and technology, and if you fail on wifi or electricity, you have a serious problem. Don’t forget in this congress very large deals are signed”, says Smara.

Madrid, key element to win the congress. According to Smara, Madrid is a destination that “engages the visitor”, an advantage to get a congress of such great prestige. The support of the convention bureau and the quality of the IFEMA facilities and service were other winning arguments.

"WE CHANGED THE TRADITIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CONGRESSES, UNIFYING THE CONGRESS WITH THE EXHIBITION", SAYS SMARA

Impacting the delegate. How to offer a complete experience and foster networking? One key was to unify the education and the exhibition, traditionally separated, so as to give life and maximize traffic in the expositor area. To this end, they designed open theaters in the very exhibition area. It was so important to facilitate training and communication sessions that they even improvised a ‘popup theater’, after seeing one day that there was demand for more sessions for the day after: “in a place destined for lunch, we improvised a small theatre; we reorganized the furniture, assembled the signage”, Smara comments. One aspect that justifies this importance is the technical character of this industry, and the interest for exhibitors to demonstrate their knowledge and added value. In fact, in addition to the mini theaters that the organization sets up in the exhibition area, many exhibitors set up their own training spaces. Content is king!

To meet the sound challenges of this abundance of education options, the main theater (Delegate Theater) had a system with hung soundproof curtains, while the spaces on the show floor used a sound system that concentrated the sound towards the public, to limit the noise pollution of the rest of the event. "It is fundamental to create an interactive congress, with many options for delegates and making it easy to have high attendance in theaters; this motivates exhibitors to have improve the aesthetics of their stands and improves the image of the hall, essential to capture the attention of attendees", Smara comments.

HOSPITALITY: DELEGATES WERE RECEIVED IN THE MORNING WITH A COFFEE, THE DAILY PUBLICATION AND A SMILE

Show Daily to inform the congress. Paper is not dead: attendees prefer to read news about the congress on a printed daily. "We prepare it every night and include everything that happened during the day, and distribute it when delegates arrive in the morning. If we see lack of assistance in some part of the exhibition area, we mention it to redirect traffic," says Smara.

Local authenticity. Do business, have fun and maximise networking through local experiences. The challenge was to break the barrier of formalism and humanize a very technological congress, transferring Spanish gastronomy and local activities. "We brought giant puppets and big heads disguised as chirimías, drums, it was a big success! This was a way of impacting and surprising in a technological and scientific congress.



Being personal. Conference Studio wanted to change the traditional concept of hostesses, to a staff that beyond smiling and directing, welcomes the attendee in a warm way, interacting with them, engaging them from their arrival with a proactive attitude. "We even changed the traditional stewardess uniform for a more corporate and informal outfit. We made delegates feel welcome, explaining the congress app or the session schedules in their language". Another novelty was to welcome attendees at the entrance with a coffee, the daily publication of the congress and a smile, a different way to start the day with a positive attitude.

A success, and a client undoubtedly happy: they have confirmed they stay in Madrid until 2022.