

Creative thinking

Creative Innovation Asia Pacific 2013, presented by Creative Universe, was recently named Corporate Event of the Year at the global Eventex Awards. *CIM* asked Creative Universe founder Tanya de Jong about the event.

Q: What's your background and how did it lead you to come up with the idea for the Creative Innovation conference?

A: My work in the MICE industry began 27 years ago with my singing group Pot-Pourri. I am the founder of charities Creativity Australia and The Song Room, and developed Creative Universe and Inspiring Minds to help unleash potential and improve wellbeing, engagement, innovation and productivity in organisations through creative thinking, team building and leadership programs. To me the Creative Innovation Global conferences were the next logical step to encourage a culture of innovation and creative leadership on a global scale.

Q: Can you tell us a little about Creative Innovation Asia-Pacific 2013 and its goals?

A: Creative Innovation Asia Pacific 2013 (Ci2013) brought together over 40 world class innovators, thinkers and business leaders who presented on cutting edge innovation, future scenarios and global trends, threats and opportunities. We aim to create "positive human collisions" between people across all sectors to co-create cross-disciplinary solutions that will make a difference in organisations and the community. The event includes an innovative program of keynotes, master classes, deep conversations and artistic elements to facilitate new strategies and techniques for improved leadership and creative innovation.

Q: Why did you zero in on the "six Es" (environment, energy, economy, education, entrepreneurship and ethical leadership)?

A: I think the rate of change is really astonishing; we are racing into the future. The theme of Ci2013 and more specifically the six Es really represent the key topics and issues we have to address in order to be ready for the race to the future. These six Es are also interconnected so if we want to overcome our biggest challenges and find truly innovative and sustainable solutions we need to see them as part of one ecosystem. We have so much to learn from other sectors and Creative Innovation (Ci) aims to break down silos to create an environment where collaboration and co-creation is possible both during and following on from the event.

Q: How were you able to measure the success of the conference?

A: Creative Innovation Global Asia Pacific is now regarded as the leading event of its kind in Australasia, attracting major media coverage, over 80,000 annual visits to our website, and trending number one on Twitter in Australia. Ci2013 attracted over 700 attendees, over 40 world class international and Australian speakers, and a large number of high profile partners such as

Mondelez international, Fairfax Media, PwC, Sofitel, State and Federal Government. Thanks to the innovative format of Ci events we have defined a new model of conference, and impacted disadvantaged individuals and communities by supporting Creativity Australia, our charity partner. The proceeds from the Ci2013 gala dinner were donated to Creativity Australia's innovative and inspirational With One Voice program.

Q: What were some of the challenges involved in organising the conference?

A: The main challenge we had to overcome was the last minute cancellation of particular speakers. When this occurred we had to quickly come up with a solution in order to find a high profile replacement. We were able to do so thanks to the large pool of speakers in the master classes and also by using our network of significant international and national leaders.

Another challenge was when a major partner announced publicly their partnership with Ci2013 then decided to pull out a few months later. This matter was solved by meeting with the partner concerned and working on how we could maximise the partnership.

Q: Are there any ideas/initiatives that you put in place for the event that you're particularly proud of?

A: During the event, inspirational and educational keynotes, breakthrough insights and creative leadership "hot spots" occurred alongside visual arts, opera singers, graphic artists, live musicians, improvisation comedy and projection mapping. Using the arts during Ci2013 stimulated the right side of the brain of the attendees and fostered creativity and greater connections between all delegates. We are also very proud of our partnership with Sofitel Melbourne On Collins. The creative innovation of the entire event including theming of food, beverage and décor to suit each year's conference theme is a highlight for everyone involved. Another special initiative is our Ci Innovation Leader Scholarships which enable 10 innovators annually to pitch their ideas to the audience, attend the event, learn and network. We receive hundreds of applications each year.

Q: What does it mean to you as a company to be recognised by the event industry?

A: Its a huge honour and testament to the enormous army of creative innovators and partners we have collaborated with over the past four years to create and develop this awesome event. It shows we are on the right track, that we are making a difference... And it makes all those very late nights worthwhile. **CIM**

