



HAAGA-HELIA

Meetings that deliver more – by design

The range of expertise at HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences covers a wide field, including business, services, communication and information management, ITC, teacher training, and wellness. Two recent projects have focused on brainstorming how hotels and meetings can be taken to the next level in terms of what they offer and what they deliver.



The goals set for conferences and meetings need to underpin the entire event, from the space itself to the tools and processes used in the lead-up to an event and on the day itself.

How can meetings and conferences be planned better, and how can the way they are held and the facilities they use be structured more effectively to ensure that everyone benefits, both participants and organisers? How can the premises and the tools and processes used at conferences and meetings be improved to give better results?

These were some of the key questions addressed as part of the 'Finnish Conference Hotel of Tomorrow' project coordinated by HAAGA-HELIA, one of Finland's largest educa-

tional institutions. The project was a follow-on from the earlier 'Finnish Hotel of Tomorrow' project and built on much of the knowledge this project amassed.

Launched towards the end of 2010, the 'Finnish Conference Hotel of Tomorrow' project ran until the end of April 2012. The project was funded by Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, and involved a total of 14 corporate partners; it was also part of World Design Capital Helsinki 2012, underlining the important role that design has to play in the

hotel and conference world. A dedicated conference room to test the concepts being studied was built at the Best Western Plus Hotel Haaga in Helsinki and has recently been joined by a hands-on test environment on one of HAAGA-HELIA's campuses.

MAKING THE MOST OF EVERYONE'S PARTICIPATION

By analysing and reviewing the physical, virtual, and social space needs of the organisers and participants of tomorrow's meetings, the



No one said a good meeting shouldn't be fun too.

project concluded that the number-one priorities are flexibility and the ability to adapt to the specific needs of each and every meeting. Simply upgrading conference premises or existing 'conference packages' cannot achieve this; professional meeting design is what is needed.

Meeting design is an all-inclusive concept and is based on making the underlying reason for holding a meeting or conference, together with the outcome that all those involved expect of it, the primary driver. The job of a meeting designer is to help those buying meeting services and/or organising events to plan the flow of their event and how everyone is involved and what is expected of them as effectively as possible – to generate the desired level of enthusiasm and inspiration and the right results. The goals set for confer-

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ences and meetings need to underpin the entire offering, from the space itself to the tools and processes used in the lead-up to an event and on the day. Cutting-edge interior design and the latest technology may look great in theory, but they do not necessarily serve organisers and participants in the best possible way. What is critical is how they are used and how they are tailored to specific needs.

A well-designed meeting needs to address all the senses and provide flexible, user-friendly solutions with just the right amount of technology to make the most of everyone's participation.

A NEW KIND OF SOLUTION

One of the spin-offs of the 'Finnish Conference Hotel of Tomorrow' project was Re:meet Ltd., which was created to help companies arrange better conferences and meetings with the help of a dedicated meeting design and implementation toolbox.

HAAGA-HELIA in a nutshell

Activities at HAAGA-HELIA are focused on providing students and partners – and the business world generally – with a strong foundation in areas such as customer service, sales, and entrepreneurial skills. Research and development activities concentrate on three focus areas, aimed at providing new solutions for service and sales, business, and learning. Students, lecturers, and corporate partners have the opportunity to take part in a variety of these projects.

The approx. 10,500 students and 700 staff at HAAGA-HELIA's six campuses in and around Helsinki have access to a wide range of the latest national and international expertise in business, hotel, restaurant and tourism management, information technology, journalism, management assistant training, sports management, and vocational teacher education.

HAAGA-HELIA has 200 partner universities globally, and its international degree programmes attract around 1,000 foreign students representing over 100 different nationalities, as well as 350 exchange students.

Re:meet and HAAGA-HELIA have also developed a unique meeting design training programme to further leverage what has been learnt to date and make it available to a wider audience.

Re:meet's business concept is based on providing one-stop solutions that draw on a holistic approach to making the most of premises, services, tools, processes, and people for delivering better meetings. Three service products are currently offered to customers: Re:view for analysing companies' needs; Re:place for planning and implementing space use; and Re:train for training meeting design specialists.

Re:meet has got off to a good start and held its first Re:train courses in collaboration with HAAGA-HELIA in spring 2013.

Lauri Tuomi
HAAGA-HELIA University
of Applied Sciences
www.haaga-helia.fi

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