"The Line Between Leadership and Lunacy is often a very Bleak one, and the matter of it always dwells in the retrospect"

Benjamin Franklin

Introduction

The Editorial hopes to be a brief narrative of about the planning and execution of "WIROC - Grande 2015". That it may reverberate the thoughts and deeds of organizers of other conferences may not be incidental.

WIROC - Grande 2015 - Almost Didn't Happen

The Bombay Orthopaedic Society (BOS) is one of the oldest and most prestigious academic associations of India. Founded in 1965 with the late Dr R.J.Katrak as its first President, the BOS has established itself as one of the highest institutions of Orthopaedic Education. The Executive Council of the BOS, chosen by the constitutional process of “Voting by Secret Ballot”, are elected office bearers who work in an established structure of hierarchy.

2015, being the Golden Jubilee year of the BOS, a resolution was passed by the Executive Council of the BOS for the year 2013, later ratified by the General Body to bid for IOACON 2015. This bid was intended to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee year of the Indian Orthopaedic Association. The bid was to be made at IOACON 2013, which was conducted at Agra. The Executive Council drafted and presented their Vision for IOACON 2015 at the Agra meeting. Despite best efforts of the Maharashtra Orthopaedic Association & BOS, the Diamond Jubilee IOACON went to Jaipur under the leadership of Prof. R.C. Meena. He went on to conduct a very successful IOACON.

WIROC - Grande 2015

The Logistics: Any conference organizer would agree that the "Logistical Planning" of a conference is by far a matter of putting conviction into a guesstimate mode. The Conference was conceived to be one of the biggest regional conferences in the country with the highest level of "Peer Recognized Academic Content". Hence the conference was planned to be a 3-day event, rather than a 2 and a half day conference which has been the convention of previous WIROCs.

A decision was also made to conduct a conference over the Christmas weekend. We were aware that a Christmas weekend would mean the absence of Overseas Faculty, supposedly a huge set back to most conferences in India. There is a general notion that a foreigner of repute brings a lot of academic acumen to the scientific content of a conference. We the organizers had a slightly different perspective on the matter. This perspective was reiterated by our belief in merit of the Indian faculty who were a part of the conference and also by the fact that solutions to our own problems need to be agreed upon by peer participation and academic deliberation amongst our own members, who have far more clinical experience in issues concerning our population.

A major conference also means a large participating audience. The city of Mumbai at that point in time didn’t offer too many choices for a “Convention Centre”. After contemplating between a stand alone Auditorium and a Convention Centre annexed to a Hotel, we chose to go with the latter for the sheer ease of Hospitality Management and the convenience and comfort of the attending delegates.

The J.W. Marriott Hotel, Sahar was chosen to be the Venue of the conference for its ambience, logistical capabilities, strategic location and state of the art hospitality.

In an attempt to cater to large trade participation, without interfering with the functioning of the academic program, a de novo additional trade area with facilities for catering food and beverages to the delegates and an academic hall capable of hosting non-plenary sessions was planned. Proficiency in Audio Visual Arrangements is the heart of the scientific program of any conference and hence we chose the most proficient AV provider and his team of technicians for the conference.

It was also decided to use the ARS (Audience Response System) for the conference. It was the first time that this technology was planned for use on a large scale. We believe that even though the technology is expensive, it is futuristic in nature and provides a large platform for audience interaction.
The conference planning also saw a few other technological innovations. Most Conference Apps are HTML based documents, which can neither be edited nor updated. We chose a live and interactive app, for the conference. The app not only could be updated minute by minute, but also had the ability to have live interaction between the audience and the faculty of a session, during and after the program. The app also had other useful information like 'plan my day', information about the Menus for the day and updates on various parallel sessions.

Getting the Academics Right
With the high level of academic expectation that goes with the Spirit of WIROC, three simultaneous non-plenary sessions were planned during the post lunch period of the conference. The Scientific committee of WIROC - Grande 2015 had significant deliberations and long discussions as regards the content, timing and academic value of each session.

By mutual agreement we established an algorithm that all the 6 sub specialties of Orthopaedics were to get weightage as regards time allocated, by the level of interest of the participating delegates and also the by the relevance of various subspecialty topics in the current Orthopaedic scenario.

Hence the conference, though being 'trauma centric' gave a substantial weightage to Arthroplasty, Arthroscopy, Spine, Pediatric Orthopaedics, Musculoskeletal Oncology and Hand Surgery

Sticking to a Timeline
Every conference organizer will tell you that the only part of a conference that seems beyond their control is time management.

It is indeed surprising that in this day and age when conferences all over the world commence and end on time, there is still a subset amongst us who believe that conferences should be held as per the conveniences of time, space and person. Yet, this same subset of people will be the first ones to arrive and hold their seats in a paid CME for an international conference.

The Scientific Committee believed that if we had to establish our credibility as a scientifically progressive nation, we had to imbibe a few traits from our overseas counterparts, most important of which was the fruitful utilization of academic time.

It was decided to start the conference at 8.00 am with 'Hard Hitting' Symposia where our senior most and best faculty would conduct a session on the most pertinent issues involving day to day Orthopaedic practice. This belief paid rich dividends because the plenary halls during the first sessions were jam packed, fifteen minutes into the session. What surprised us even more was that at least fifty percent of the audiences in the halls during the first sessions on all three days were Senior Orthopaedic surgeons, many of who were non-residential delegates who had taken time out of their busy schedule to attend these high-octane sessions. Such happenings reiterate the fact that a good scientific program and senior experienced faculty are the two most important attributes of any successful conference.

Swearing by the Buzzer
The speakers overshooting their allotted time at a conference is still a common occurrence in this country. A person who overshoots time is not only disrespecting his esteemed colleagues whose time is equally important, but is also putting the scientific sessions of the Conference in great jeopardy. It was decided that a uniform policy would be devised and strictly implemented for WIROC - Grande 2015. A policy “discontinuing the presentation abruptly” devised by the Audio-visual team was adhered to. The usual outliers & time challenged speakers besides all speakers were informed of the policy well in advance. Thankfully, never once did it have to be implemented during WIROC - Grande 2015.

Out of the Blocks
A Jubilee conference is different from an annual conference in more ways than one. Apart from the high level of scientific deliberations, traditions and heritage of the society also needs to be revisited, cherised and celebrated. 'Legends & Legacies', the coffee table book about the Past-Presidents of the Bombay Orthopaedic Society aimed to give posterity to the rich legacy of this 50 year-old society. The planning and execution of this book began almost a year before it was released. Compiling this book meant an exhaustive search of authenticated data, an in depth review of the life and times of the Presidents who were no more and interviewing all the living Past Presidents of the BOS.

A team of young and dynamic volunteers took up this Herculean task and fulfilled it to perfection. It took 8 months for the team to put up the final edited version of Legends & Legacies.

The Sessions that Defined 'WIROC - Grande 2015'
The Conference Inauguration - We chose to defy convention by avoiding ceremonies like lamp lighting, and handing over bouquets. The Conference was inaugurated by all the living Past-Presidents of the Bombay Orthopaedic Society and the Executive Council for the year 2015-16. The Coffee table Book, 'Legends & Legacies and a DVD of the 'Master Cut' was released during this function. The Session also witnessed a group picture of all the living Past-Presidents of the BOS on the same Dias, aptly named ‘Photograph of the Century’.
**The Master’s Cut**

An Edited Surgical Video Session of the ‘Contemporary Master Surgeons’ of the Bombay Orthopaedic Society gave a detailed narrated description of an Orthopaedic Procedure in the Best of Hands. These sessions, which were 12 in number had to be planned meticulously, way before the conference. The surgeries had to be taped, the videos had to be edited, the voice over had to be done and the entire CD had to be released on the day of the inauguration. Each and every Master Surgeon exhibited exemplary patience and work ethics to help us to formulate these sessions with the assistance of our exuberant Video Editing Team.

**Mind over Matter**

Planned as an impromptu session between the ‘Greatest Minds’ in the field of Musculoskeletal Radiology and ‘the Men that Mattered’ in the field of Orthopaedics, this informal session on the first day of the conference, was one of the most appreciated and attended sessions of the conference.

**Prudence & Jurisprudence**

A session with two practicing medico legal experts had the plenary hall, chock o blocked with members. The two young practitioners fervently discussed and shared their experience about documentation of Orthopaedic data from the medico legal perspective and the implications of a medico legal consent. This session was tuned to interactivity by adding a few hypothetical scenarios and taking ARS polls from the members.

**Rise & Shine**

Very often one has to take the path less travelled, and that in the end, makes all the difference. Rise and Shine, the brilliant idea of a senior member of the BOS and executed and convened by the President himself, was a reflection of the important, yet ignored aspects of Orthopaedic practice, namely grooming, physical fitness and the art of communication. This session had the got the most rave reviews at the conference.

**Art, Science & Commerce of a successful surgical practice**

Nothing succeeds like success. The speakers of this session presented their perspective on the Key to Success in Personal and Professional Life. This 45 minutes session had Key opinion makers who were leaders in their own respective field. They spoke of Self Marketing, Managing clinical practice and establishing their legacy. The session ended with a standing ovation for all the three speakers.

**The Invited Presidential Guest Lecture**

There comes a time in everyone’s life, when a moment, an episode or a happening elevates ones earthly experience to that of a spiritual being. The Presidential Guest Lecture was indeed such a moment in time for those who were present in the hall. Open to interpretation, the experience of being mesmerized during that brief period in time is a very personal journey. Yet a Hall of 1200 people listened in Pin Drop Silence as the spiritual master connected with each one in the audience in the most simple, yet celestial manner.

**Insights**

Conferences can only be planned. To make them successful is in itself an endeavor and sometimes a labor of love. It’s also a team effort, where each member of the team has to perform a particular role and that role is linked to the role of another team member. We were indeed fortunate to have the Best Organizational team to execute this event. Each team member rose to the occasion and put his or her best foot forward to set up a ‘Chain Reaction’. This chain reaction was channelized by the blessing and guidance of senior and experienced members to make the conference what it eventually became.

Saying that the conference was a successful event, would indeed be a biased statement, considering that the authors were at the helm of affairs. But the feed back, accolades and criticisms we received during and after the meeting, make us believe that we managed to get most things right.

Thinking in retrospect one cannot define why some conferences fail while others succeed. But those that succeed usually have 3 common attributes.

a) A young workforce willing to learn the ropes  
b) Seasoned work horses who have been there and done that before  
c) Experienced Mentors whose thoughts, words and deeds become the defining principles for generations to follow.

WIROC - Grande 2015, was our tribute to the Men who nurtured a society with their sweat, blood and toil into an Epitome of Academic Excellence.

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**Conflict of Interest: NIL**

**Source of Support: NIL**