

# QUEENSTOWN CONFERENCE 2013

The following case study illustrates how Greg Ellis Creative can add value to conference by supporting both the business and fun sessions in a unique and memorable way.

## WHAT OUR CLIENT NEEDED

PMI had a group of around 80 of its Australian employees and their partners in Queenstown for a combined end of year function and conference. Their programme included a day and a half of conferencing plus three social functions.

They were looking for a solution to provide both entertainment and conference facilitation that made their employees feel special and valued whilst at the same time making sure that the conferencing section of the programme offered real value to both staff and company.

## WHAT WE DID

Here's a timeline of our involvement in the event:

Clients arrive throughout day in Queenstown

For the opening function at the top of the Gondola we provided a single character, a German mountaineer. He welcomed the guests at the top of the gondola, mingled with them pre-dinner, helped with the formalities and provided 15 minutes of icebreaking entertainment before leaving them for the night. As far as the guests knew this was the last time they would see us.



Day 1

## THE CHALLENGE

There were two distinct modes for the conference. The first were the business sessions where PMI needed to keep a packed programme dynamic, energising and running to time.

Then there were the social functions where partners joined in. Because not everyone knew each other we had to provide opportunities to break the ice as well as keeping everyone entertained and the formalities moving along.



We hosted the full conference day at the Crowne Plaza as Cobber and Macca, the hotel maintenance crew. They were stepping in because PMI's "special celebrity guest MC" had locked themselves in their

room and was refusing to come out. We were not only able to provide moments of comic relief after long sessions but also to offer the occasional outside reflection. We were also able to keep the many short, sharp sessions on time.

For that evening we became celebrity chefs Rick Stains and Heston Bloomingheck. We welcomed the guests to the restaurant and then performed a short improvised comedy bracket that was wine and food themed. This was the first time any performance had been attempted at Trade Kitchen improvisation worked nicely because we were able to adapt to the space easily.



Day 2

## OUR THINKING

Many of these people had been to a large number of similar conferences each year in both Australia and New Zealand, internally and as conferences and incentives for their own clients.

So we wanted to take things up a notch – many conferences and incentives have an MC or host but what if this conference had a pair of hosts? And those hosts would change character to fit with each different event within the trip. This allows for a sense of continuity throughout, allows us to create characters that supported the theme or venue of each event and gives the guests a topic of conversation as they would start to wonder what guise we would appear in and where.



Cobber and Macca returned for the final half day of sessions and finished with their own wrap up of what they had seen and heard.

Finally we provided a couple of sailors on the cruise. They were useful to help move the guests onboard, settle them and then to fill time until the commentary kicked in. By this time we had achieved a level of anticipation and when the Captain and his first mate appeared as the guests came along the dock we received spontaneous applause.



Day 3