

Wisdom of the crowds: Evaluation of a crowdsourced logo contest for an international HIV conference

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Background

The International AIDS Conference is the largest HIV conference in the world, with a particular focus on community engagement. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of crowdsourcing methods (20th International AIDS Conference - AIDS 2014) compared to conventional methods for developing a conference logo (AIDS 2012).

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with contest organizers, contest contributors, and conference attendees who were familiar with both the crowdsourced logo and previous International AIDS Conference logos. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using a content analysis approach.

Results

- 22 interviews were conducted with three contest organizers, 7 contest contributors, and 12 conference attendees.
- All individuals reported that the crowdsourced logo provided benefits beyond branding the conference, including creating a shared sense of purpose among diverse conference participants and explicitly demonstrating the strong community orientation of the conference.
- Conference organizers and attendees all reported deeper engagement in AIDS 2014 because of the story of the Tanzanian artist who won the contest.

- Most conference attendees (11/12) preferred the 2014 crowdsourced logo compared to the previous AIDS 2012 logo, and all (22/22) supported the logo contest continuing.
- Implementing a logo contest was simple and relatively inexpensive.
- Stakeholders identified several ways to enhance crowdsourcing logo encourage broader participation, greater transparency in the selection process, and a different prize structure which acknowledges the contribution of more contestants.



Conclusion

The International AIDS Conference logo contest was a powerful way to engage local and global communities. Organizing such a crowdsourcing contest is feasible and provides significant benefits for the organizers, contributors, and conference attendees.

This contest brings about a lot of ideas, a lot of opinions to choose from so it benefits the organizers, it benefits the person who won, it benefits the community as a whole, it benefits the work being done on HIV/AIDS (male, age 28, contest contributor).

Resonates with wide variety of audiences

Ideally you want something that resonates with the maximum number of people I think personally and not necessarily what a marketing company thinks is going to be the next greatest thing (Conference attendee, male, age 47).

Community participation

It adds a further level of narrative to the conference that's conveyed in a different way when it comes from community rather than an organization or a business (Conference attendee, male, age 45, male).

If we're not medical experts or nurses or researchers or academics having a logo contest can open up the venue for other people who are not health – who do not come from HIV background to actually participate and have a voice (Contest contributor, female, age 33).

Effect on the winner

...not only gives that person to be acknowledged for the work that they've done to create the logo, but it serves an opportunity that they may not otherwise have about full participation and access to all areas at the conference (Conference attendee, male, age 45).

Interest in HIV

It's going to help people develop their interest more in the HIV/AIDS culture (Contest contributor, male, age 27).