Europython Partner Programme

Post Mortem of the Birmingham Experience

These thoughts are presented to the Italian Europython team in case they are considering running a Partner Programme alongside the Europython 2011 Conference. Neither Sheila nor I profess to be experts in entertaining partners accompanying delegates on an international conference, but we did enjoy meeting the Partners over the two years the Programme was run.

Tips - The following tips are not presented in any particular order of priority.

1. Get the Partner Programme (PP) mentioned on the Europython website – and perhaps at the bottom of all emails sent out by the organisers. It is said you have to repeat a message seven times before it is fully understood.

2. Provide a mobile phone number for those Partners who are not able to attend the Meet and Greet.

3. If possible, try and capture the Partner's email address before the Conference. At booking stage perhaps. We used this to send an introductory email direct to the Partner from the Partner team.

4. Set up an outline programme – perhaps one event per day – but be prepared to change it to meet the requests of the Partners.

5. First day set a specific time and place for everyone to meet up (the Meet and Greet). This is probably the best time to firm up the programme for the rest of the week.

6. Get everyone's mobile number. It is useful for contacting Partners if you think they are running late/have forgotten the meeting place. Suggest bring a pad and pencil to the Meet and Greet so everyone can write down their mobile number.

7. Select events and places that are fairly easy to travel to either by walking or public transport.

8. Be prepared to explain the vagaries of the public transport system **before** you get to the bus/tram stop. (Birmingham buses demand exact fare and you cannot buy a return ticket – but you can buy a day ticket!)

9. Try and get the outline programme published **alongside** the main schedule to remind delegates that there may be something of interest for their partners.

10. Small budget to pay for tea/coffee of Partners at first Meet and Greet, if not being held at Conference venue. In Birmingham we walked across Victoria Square to the Edwardian Tea Rooms. It was a pleasant relief from laptops, wifi, passwords and listening to discussions about objects, arguments and goodie bags.

11. Partner Programme crew shirts different colour to main crew.

12. Partner Programme was organised by volunteers with no budget. We included mainly free events but we also suggested paid for events. Make sure Partners know they will have to fund these themselves.

Sheila and Mary
Europython Partners Programme 2009/2010