



ORGANIZING A CORPORATE EVENT IN ITALY

Case Study & Tips



By Italian Special Occasions

www.italianspecialoccasions.com

Preface



Our team at **Italian Special Occasions** DMC (ISO DMC) worked on one of our most exciting and challenging corporate events of 2016: LS Retail's *conneXion* Rome. Four hundred attendees from more than 45 countries descended on the Eternal City to swap and share tricks, tips, and key insights on sales processes, new technologies and best practices.

Participants were inspired by industry experts like Microsoft's Marko Perisic and Luis Cabrera, David Butler of The Coca-Cola Company and Facebook marketing expert Mari Smith. There was music, merriment, fabulous food, dancing - and a private concert by the unforgettable Dire Straits Legacy band. Attendees spent two glamorous evenings in two iconic Roman villas: the Villa Piccolomini and the Villa Aurelia.

The event was a huge success, and **the point of this case study is to help make your corporate event in Italy a grand slam.**

Corporate events come in all shapes and sizes. Planning a successful **conference, expo or fair** often has very different requirements than internal company **meetings, teambuilding** activities, **customer seminars** or **incentive and rewards trips**. While each and every event is unique, read on to learn key points to keep in mind during the initial planning stages of your corporate event in Italy.

Some quotes, during & after the event

*"Our most heartfelt thanks to all the participants, speakers, sponsors & exhibitors that made *conneXion* a huge success" – LS Retail*

"What a spectacular tour we had yesterday. [...] Thank you LS Retail for your gracious hospitality and a truly wonderful experience this week!" – Mari Smith

"LS Retail is taking good care of our boys and Tuula at #cxrome! They had some "basic" dinner at this "basic" Villa Aurelia. LS Retail is making their quests feel like royalty!" – Solteq

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Introduction & Background



About the client

LS Retail is a world-leading provider of all-in-one business management software solutions for retail and hospitality companies of all sizes. For over two decades, LS Retail has been developing market leading software solutions that are currently used by retailers and restaurateurs across 120 countries, with support that exceeds 200 certified Microsoft and LS Retail partners in over 70 countries.

The client's request

The client asked for the organization of *connexion Rome*, its own international **conference and expo** dedicated to retail and hospitality businesses, reuniting LS Retail's partners from all over the world. ISO DMC was asked to **plan, coordinate and supervise** the logistics of the conference/expo, of the awards dinner and corporate party, of the catering, and of the leisure activities of participants.



The mission

We at Italian Special Occasions set for ourselves the goal of designing, planning and executing an event that would be powerful, memorable and impeccable in the details, in line with our philosophy of Creative Events & Seasonality.



About the event planning company

Italian Special Occasions specializes in designing authentic, creative events that respect local culture, heritage and seasonality.

There are no packages or itineraries, only custom-made journeys.

Tip n. 1: Listening to the Client

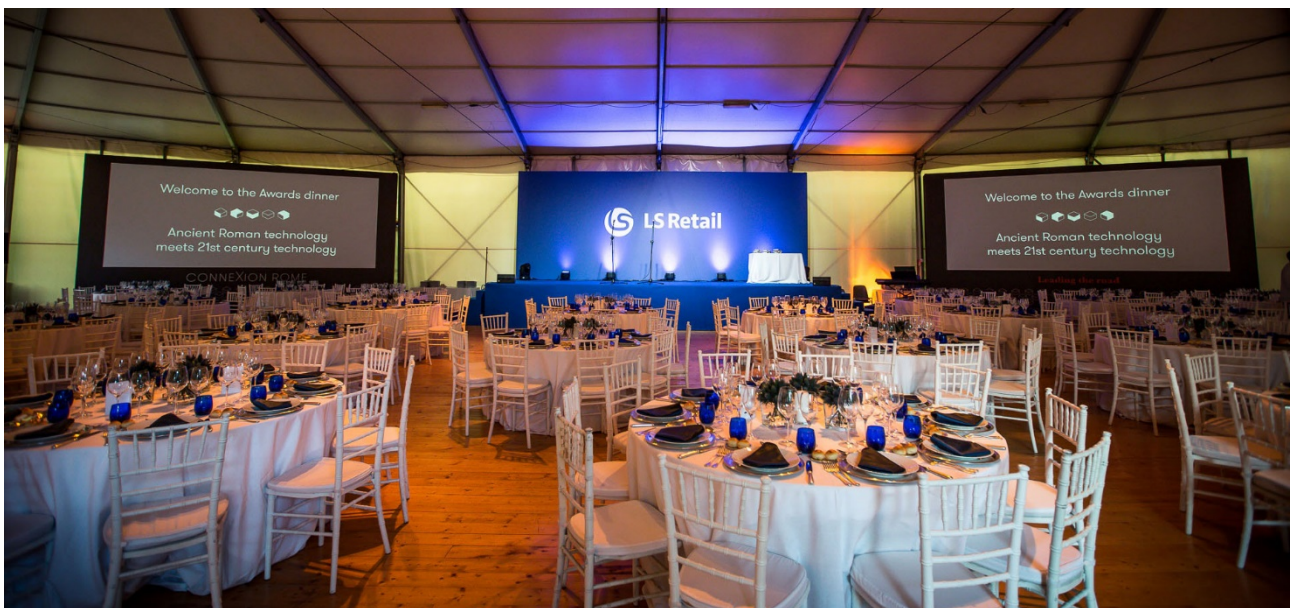
A fundamental part in the process of event planning is listening to the client, applying a **personal approach** even in the **corporate world**. We met with and listened carefully to the client, organizing a **FAM trip** in Rome to get to know the client better, and vice versa.

Tip n. 2: Contextualizing the event

Want to make your event unique? Consider a theme – if you're hosting your corporate event in Italy, why not connect your sales or strategic messaging to an aspect of Italian culture: food, wine, history or fashion?

Conceiving and applying a theme that relates to the client's request and event's mission is one of our favorite ways to achieve this task. Why? **Storytelling** has been one of man's most fundamental communication methods for almost 30,000 years, since the first cave paintings were discovered.

In the case of connexion Rome, LS Retail provides innovative software solutions to retailers across the globe; its cutting-edge technology connects millions of international customers and merchants. Who used to do that several millennia ago? Ancient Rome and its vast, highly complex network of ancient roads.



This **comparison** worked well, and we used it to not only reinforce LS Retail's messaging but also to play up the **setting of the event**: Rome, the Eternal City. This is just one example of how we like to weave interesting bits of Italian culture into your event to make it unique.

Tip n. 3: Choosing the destination

When choosing the destination, our top tip is **for you to know your attendees**. Is your corporate event in Italy an internal company meeting meant for top executives to plan annual sales strategies and forecasts? Will it entail 8 hours of sitting in a meeting room for 3 days of intense discussions? Perhaps your event in Italy is a 2-day seminar created for customers coming from across the globe - or as in the case of LS Retail's 3-day *conneXion Rome* event, maybe your company intends to host a widely attended conference for international partners, sponsors and customers. In any of the scenarios mentioned above, **convenient airport connections** are essential. In Italy the obvious choices are Rome and Milan. Florence, Venice and Catania (Sicily) are also good options.

While Italy is home to amazing **off-the-beaten-path venues** that would wow any colleague or customer, know whether your target attendee will want to travel more than one hour from his or her arrival airport, and consider that in large cities with multiple airports like Rome and Milan, attendees can generally make their own way to and from the airport and hotel. If your event will take place in a countryside setting, it's a must to pre-organize all transportation needs. We aren't in any way trying to steer you away from Italy's off-the-beaten-path venues; in fact, we prefer them when it's feasible. Meetings lasting more than 3 days can easily be located in spectacular areas like the Cinque Terre, the Lake District or the Amalfi Coast. For incentive or rewards trips, hosting your event in a Sicilian palace, Tuscan wine estate or Umbrian castle can be just the ticket!

Tip n. 4: Selecting the perfect venue

Finding the right venue for a special occasion is of huge importance. We carefully selected locations full of **charm and history**, places that represent the heritage of Rome. After visiting them during the FAM trip, the client chose *Villa Piccolomini* for its Awards Night and *Villa Aurelia* for the Corporate Party.



Tips n. 5: Finding the best Hotel

It goes without saying that accommodations should have sufficient **capacity** for all attendees, well designed **meeting rooms**, topnotch installations, good Wi-Fi access and a good audiovisual team for presentations.

Other considerations: most likely you will want the hotel to have a **restaurant** and a bar. During meetings, conferences and seminars, a buffet lunch (followed later by a coffee break) is the way forward. People, especially those coming from different countries, lunch at different speeds. Most attendees will not want to sit down to a 3-course lunch. No matter how delicious the food is, if it's midday it might be seen as a waste of valuable time. Our advice: provide quick, tasty buffet options for lunch and save the magic for the evenings.

Tip n. 6: Creating memorable evenings

Due to flight schedules, welcome or farewell dinners often take place in the hotel's restaurant if that proves to be most convenient. However, the 2nd and 3rd evenings should be out – and somewhere memorable. After spending all day in a meeting room, people want to get fresh air and have a change of scenery. Beyond that, going out is an opportunity for your colleagues or customers to enjoy the **local culture of the destination**. A memorable evening could take place in an elegant villa, historic palace - or a lively, family-run *osteria*. Depending on which setting you choose, be clear about the dress code; when it's unspecified, people get confused.

When envisioning your event's soirées, do think about possible **entertainment**. The first evening at conneXion's Rome featured a private DJ for the alfresco aperitivo as well as ballet and operatic performances later in the evening. The next evening had a more festive, celebratory ambience – with a private concert by the *Dire Straits Legacy* band inside the beautiful Villa Aurelia.



More so than entertainment, **catering** is often the most complicated aspect of any event. We can all be particular about our food. Some attendees find dishes too spicy, too bland, too sophisticated, or too simple – and with portion sizes that are too large or too small. Throw allergies into the mix, and creating the perfect menu is no easy feat. Offering **fresh ingredients, infinite regional specialties** and plenty of vegetarian options, we are happy to report that Italian cuisine generally seems to delight almost everyone!

Tip n. 7: Practicalities

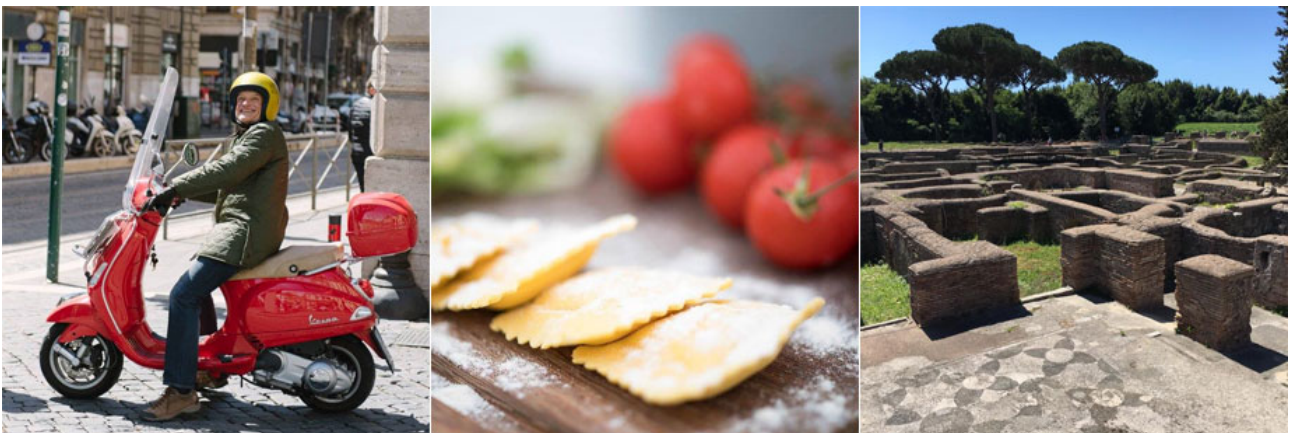
As you invite attendees or colleagues to register for your event in Italy, be prepared and have **useful information on hand** about flight connections and transportation options and if relevant – requirements on passports, visas and letters of invitation.

Tip n. 8: Go Local

When planning a corporate event in Italy, **relying on an Italian events company with local knowledge is invaluable**. We help you find dazzling but often off-the-beaten-path venues. We work with you to create a theme that will personalize your event. We help you navigate the waters of local contracts, permits and regulations. We ensure you get the very **best quality for your budget**, and we help you inject **authenticity, culture and seasonality** into your special occasion.

Tip n. 9: Free time

People appreciate free time, so **avoid scheduling every second of every day during your event** in Italy. Free time can serve many purposes. It can be an opportunity for colleagues who don't see each other often to reconnect in small groups. It can be extremely valuable for customers and suppliers to network. It can give attendees time to catch up on emails, go for a walk, visit a museum or rest.



Tip n. 10: Think about the little extras

If it's an incentive or rewards trip or teambuilding activity – *local activities* can (and should in our opinion) be included. In Italy wine tastings, cooking demonstrations, spa treatments, rounds of golf, vintage car drives, and cheese, olive oil and balsamic vinegar tastings all work well. For the conneXion Rome conference, LS Retail had us send conference participants on private sightseeing tours of Rome's best cultural attractions like the Colosseum, the Vatican Museums, the ancient Roman harbor of Ostia Antica, the World Heritage villas in Tivoli, and Rome's charming medieval foodie neighborhood: Trastevere. It was **a chance for folks to unwind, continue to network and leisurely take in Rome's fantastic sights**.

Conclusions

Analyzing this case study, the ingredients behind the perfect corporate event in Italy are:

- the event planning company must follow a personal approach by carefully listening to and communicating with the client; if possible, this includes organizing a FAM trip to achieve the highest level of transparency and dedication;
- storytelling is a powerful tool that has been around since the beginning of time: conceiving and applying a theme to the event and tying it to the corporate mission of the occasion can impress participants with strong emotions and vivid memories about a brand and its values;
- selecting the right destination, venues, catering and synergic partners is crucial for organizing an event that is smooth and perfect to the smallest detail;
- allow you attendees to have some free time and the chance to explore the culture and local characteristics of the destination where your event takes place;
- relying on an Italian events company with local knowledge is invaluable as it can help you navigate the waters of local contracts, permits and regulations, and ensure you get the very best quality for your budget.

Watch the videos of the event:

["Memories" by Italian Special Occasions](#)

["ConneXion Conference & Expo" highlights by LS Retail](#)

Italian Special Occasions

+39 329 769 2116 | +39 0564 813 473
info@italianspecialoccasions.com

www.italianspecialoccasions.com