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MAGAZINE

#86 BUILDING BRIDGES
DEC IN THE MEETINGS
2018 INDUSTRY

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Inclusivity for a Higher
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Membership Engagement:
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Eventful Cities:
The Festival of Failures!

Special Feature: Hangzhou

*Going
Global*



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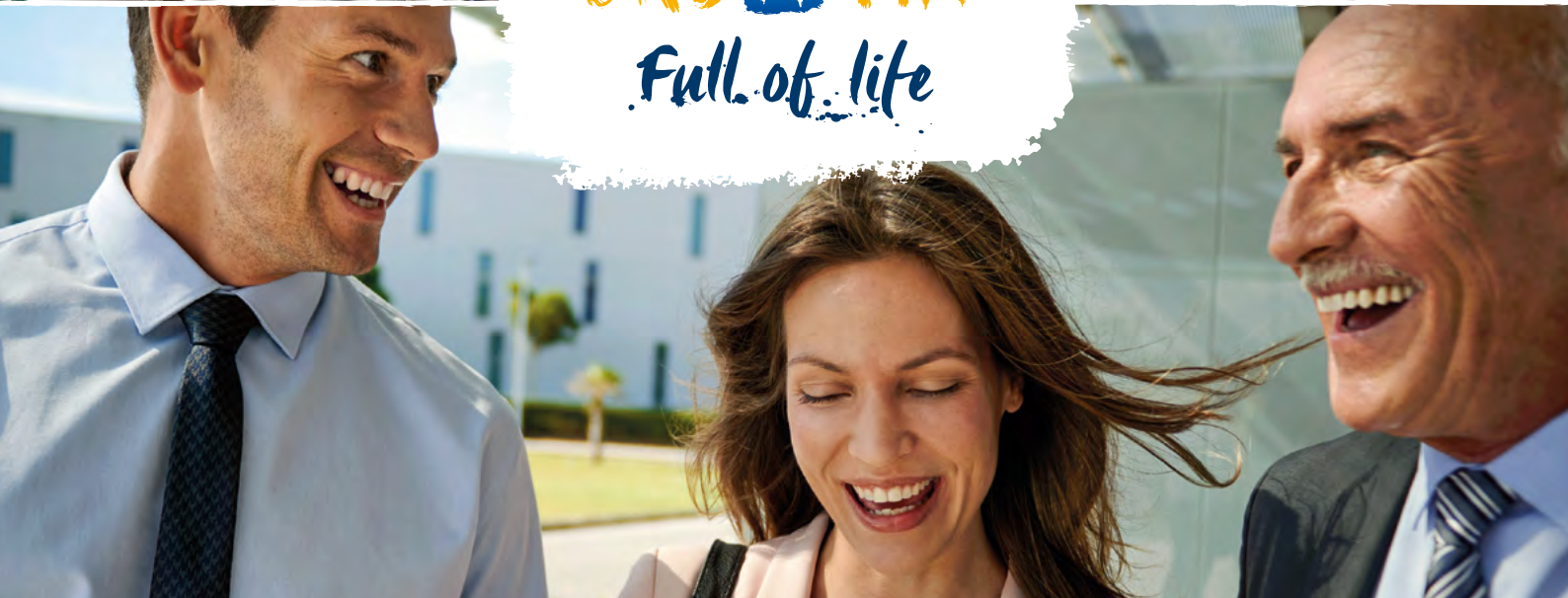
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Explore the Amazing MICE Possibilities **Croatia** Has to Offer

The MICE industry continues to thrive, and within corporations, organisational meetings are now considered a crucial element to sustainable growth, attracting talent, stimulating innovation, and enhancing results. While countries throughout Europe have benefited from this consensus and its robust demand, perhaps none have matched Croatia's growth. Placing 6th in Global DMC Partners' 2019 Meeting & Incentive Destination Hot List of the most popular MICE destinations around the world. Considering that both the necktie and fountain pen were first seen here, this seems to be inevitable.

Google, Mercedes-Benz and Dell (*to name just a few*), have recently chosen Croatia as their destination for meetings focused on Sales and Marketing Training, Senior Leadership Conferences, Think Tanks, and Incentives. If your organisation is seeking a suitable destination for such meetings in 2019, consider beautiful Croatia – the new star of Europe's MICE industry.

With its ten magnificent UNESCO sites, modern and historical cities, eight national parks, eleven nature parks, and awe-inspiring natural beauty (*Croatia is blessed by over one thousand miles of Adriatic Sea coastline*), Croatia is widely recognised as the most attractive destinations in Europe. In addition to these natural endowments, business travel survey respondents visiting Croatia have cited safety considerations, ease of travel and the wide availability of hotels offering Electronic Sourcing (*E-Sourcing refers to internet-enabled applications and meeting support tools*).

With its eclectic combination of nature, culture and history, and amazing gastronomy, Croatia is ideally situated to host the increasing number of association meetings visiting here for annual gatherings. According to the ICCA (*International Congress and Convention Association*), association meetings have doubled every decade since the 1960s, approaching 70,000 in 2017, and expected to continue their exponential growth.

Where exactly? Whichever region you choose, Croatia will not disappoint.

In addition to the capital city of Zagreb with its unique atmosphere; there is Dubrovnik, among one of the most popular cities in the world; Opatija, once a trendy Austro-Hungarian epicentre of hospitality and health resort; the Istrian cities of Rovinj, Poreč, Umag and Pula; the Dalmatian cities of Zadar, Šibenik, Vodice, Split, and Makarska; and in the continental portion of the country, Osijek and many others that are making rapid strides in the market for conferences. Then there are the thousand plus islands dotting Croatia's breathtaking Adriatic coast, which offer spectacular meeting and incentive destinations, such as Hvar, Bol, Korčula and Mali Lošinj.

All of these areas have enjoyed investments in infrastructure, a commitment that's evident in the number of new or newly-renovated hotels, which include well-equipped conference halls for large, plenary sessions and for smaller meetings.

Croatia offers a fine mix of business and leisure: an optimal meetings and event location with a great atmosphere for socialising and networking. Together with its regional offices, its facilities (*potential hosts*), the Croatian Convention Bureau continues to be available to you for any additional information you may require.



▼ Zagreb, by Davor Rostuhar



▼ Opatija, by Aleksandar Gospic

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THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES
IN THE MEETINGS
INDUSTRY

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The Role of Customs
in our Globalised World



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Las Vegas, Truly a **Convention Paradise**



Immersive Experiences The Taiwanese Way



What's happening in **Hangzhou** (China) post-G20? Rotate this magazine to find out in HO86's exclusive back-bound destination supplement.



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The Enigmatic Beauty of Languages

Dutch is my mother tongue. It is not a common language in our linguistic universe, and certainly not in the diverse and multicultural meetings industry. However, on a positive note, Dutch ranks at the 40th place as the most widely spoken language in the world of 6,000 languages (*well it is not enough as an argument to consider it as an international language, and I had almost forgotten to defend languages because I am so used to communicating in English — naturally*).

The recent ICCA Congress in Dubai was a significant and iconic one where votes were cast to also give Mandarin and Arabic a place alongside the official English language. Spanish is also now the Language Champion with its own Spanish ICCA website with all the documents translated (*for more info, flip to page 43 for a coverage from our Latin-American partner Eventos LatinoAmericanos.*)

Expanding on the diversity of ICCA's official language(s) paves the way for our industry colleagues to take a moment and look at language learning as a cognitive and cultural enrichment. What a wonderful idea, and that is only the least of the possibilities that will birth from this new change. A translator once told me: *"In your native language you say what you want; In a foreign language you say what you can."* That is just human nature. In the EU, many people are able to speak their own languages (*thanks to interpreters*), though they tend to be able to speak English anyway. The same goes for the UN, where many non-anglophones communicate in English during meetings.

If you can think about the chances of 'lost-in-translation' cases; expressions that are unique to the language of speaker; speakers' personalities, arguments, messages etc. you can imagine a slither of an interpreter's nightmare. One must be able to speak a common language with a comfortable degree of command, in order to convey the right idea, thoughts and emotions right. Without this first step, we do not need to talk about delivering the right content; the right words to convey the right feelings.

Based on my knowledge, the combination of English-French-Spanish is most common as official languages for international institutes and associations. We also cannot underestimate our German speaking friends. While some will say that translators are a bite in the budget, others will say that understanding better is more important than an invoice. I consider this a positive step as more working languages will be used in our global meetings industry, starting with ICCA!



MARCEL A.M. VISSERS
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REPLY LETTER

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It's Time for Taiwan

Taiwan has remained somewhat of an enigma within Asia — with its daring modern architecture interspersed with ancient pagodas, cosmopolitan cities, indigenous cultures, a pioneering new-dining scene and traditional comfort food. So far, mostly dedicated travellers have made their way to this island oasis on the Tropic of Cancer. Capitalising on its reputation as a global leader in the fields of science, medicine and information technology, Taiwan has become an unsung hero in the Asian MICE sector.

TRANSPORT HUB

It's a meticulously planned heist of the international MICE industry with the aim of global domination. Making inroads, quite literally, are the metropolitan rapid transit systems which exist in two of Taiwan's largest cities, Taipei and Kaohsiung. For longer distances, travel time from north to south takes only 96 minutes by Taiwan high-speed rail, making business and incentive travel more time efficient.

Strategically located along the coast of the Asian Continent and right in the centre of the East-Asian island arc, Taiwan holds a key position for transport and trade in the Asia-Pacific region. There are international airports in northern, central, and southern Taiwan, where 59 major airlines provide services. Taiwan enjoys a convenient connection to the world with a total of 5,000 flights to 115 different cities weekly.

SAFETY FIRST

Not only is getting around Taiwan easy, it is also very safe; almost as safe as it can get! Thanks to a seamless confluence of beliefs that co-exist stemming from the island's progressive, forward-thinking attitude that remains steeped in ancient history and culture, Taiwan is one of the safest places in the world. Taipei is ranked as the globe's third safest city according to Crime Index 2017 statistics compiled by Numbeo.com, only trailing slightly behind Abu Dhabi and Munich. No wonder, in a 2018 survey from InterNations, the largest global network



▼ Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 2

site for expats, Taiwan is just behind Portugal as the friendliest country in the world to live!

INTERNATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

With such a solid foundation upon which to build the pillars of MICE success, Taiwan has invested heavily in fortifying its professional MICE talent and infrastructure. Since 2009, the Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) has been dedicated to improving Taiwan's MICE industry. To continue investment, the Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program (MEET TAIWAN) was launched to steer Taiwan's MICE industry to shine on the global stage.

Backed by its highly-developed 3C industry, it is no surprise that the integration of social media and technologies have been successfully applied to MICE activities, offering advanced, convenient, and real-time services to MICE visitors. Currently serving northern Taiwan are the Taipei World Trade Center Exhibition Hall and the Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center

Hall 1. For the southern part of the island, the Kaohsiung Exhibition Center commenced operations in 2014, while the Tainan Exhibition Center will open in 2021.

NEW MICE PLATFORM

Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 2 (TNEC2) will open on March 4, 2019, the inaugurating exhibition will be Taipei International Machine Tool Show 2019 (TIMTOS). TNEC2 will offer 156,700m² of floor space to accommodate 32,000 visitors for exhibitions, conferences, business meetings and events. Combined with the space already available in Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 1, total Nangang capacity will encompass more than 5,000 booths and 38 meeting rooms, plus feature a 6,100m² outdoor sky garden space on the top floor. In addition, the convention hall on the seventh floor will have seating capacity for 3,600, along with a beautiful view, while remaining multifunctional. Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center is expected to become the core venue of Taiwan's MICE industry, as well as a major convention and exhibition centre in all of Asia.



Immersive Experiences

— The Taiwanese Way

In the 16th century when the Portuguese first arrived in Taiwan, they called it Ilha Formosa (*Beautiful Island*). The name might not have stuck however the wonderment they experienced continues with travelers that first step foot on this verdant isle. With its unspoiled nature, vibrant cultural scene and robust cuisine, Taiwan's abundance of MICE team building activities offers a myriad of planning options.

BIG ON TASTE

In Taiwan, friendships can be made over a hearty bowl of braised meat with rice, a night market favorite served by many vendors. An obsession worth indulging in, the traditional open-air night ritual can be found in almost every town and in many districts. The Bib Gourmand distinction was awarded to 10 such eateries and even listed in the inaugural Michelin Guide Taipei 2018. Recognising the city's reputation as an innovative dining scene, the Michelin Guide Taipei features a total of 110 establishments that span 33 cuisines! From a three-star exceptional Cantonese experience at the Le Palais to a modern French fanfare at the Orchid, there is no end to teasing your palate and gathering for a top-rated meal worthy of a ceremony.

HANDS-ON!

Making the Taiwan experience more alive are opportunities to delve deeper into the local culture of handicrafts and artisanal heritage with old-school activities. Offering a true blast-from-the-past is the Ri Xing Type Foundry, home to the last remaining collection of traditional Chinese character printing tiles in the world. Plying its trade for more than four decades with techniques that have been recognised since the Song Dynasty in the 1040s, this is the perfect place to indulge in personalised gifts and is espe-

cially popular for printing invitations and business cards. The Foundry has been transformed into an interactive craft museum that offers tours recounting the art form in its heyday. There is also an integrated audio guide enabling visitors to learn about printing technologies and traditional type casting.

TOP-NOTCH EXPERIENCES

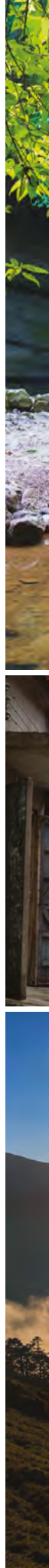
Taiwan is much more than a clandestine affair of mighty volcanic rocks and part-rebellious and part-serene waters. It is an ethereal locale where one can rejuvenate inside-out with medicinal foods and organic cuisine, Zen meditation, Tai Chi and Qigong. Stealing the thunder though is Taiwan's ranking amongst the world's top 15 hot spring sites including hot springs, cold springs, mud springs and seabed hot springs! Known for medicinal properties, a hot spring is ideal for meeting participants to relax after a long day. While Beitou's hot springs are notably the most frequented by tourists in Taiwan, hot springs in Jiaoxi and Jihben also offer top-notch experiences ranging from public pools to private 5-star experiences!

MINDFUL SUSTAINABILITY

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities enable meeting travellers to become more positively involved with a destination, and especially in a responsi-

ble way. To take part in supporting local needs of countries visited with respect and aid, CSR activities can generate a unique experience that combines understanding new cultures with making a difference.

Music is a key of the aboriginal culture, through musical interaction with aboriginal elementary school students in Pingtung, the travelers are able to bath in different cultures and have a wider vision toward the world. Engaging with aboriginal tribes can also result in diversified team building activities. The Cidal Hunter School also gives visitors first-hand, CSR-minded experience in living like the Amis tribe. The school educates groups in fishing, archery, constructing shelters from natural materials, and even starting fire from scratch. An alternative could include inviting such a troupe to perform at corporate meetings, resulting in a positive and long-lasting impression on both sides.





▲ Handmade Sky Lantern
▲ Wanggu Waterfall



▲ Christmas (limited edition), Ri Xing Type Foundry
▲ Ten Drum Culture Village



Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program is aimed at turning Taiwan into a leader for outstanding MICE services with the long-term objective to enhance the quality and efficiency of services, strengthen Taiwan's brand and sharpen the competitive edge in the global market and make Taiwan one of the top destinations for MICE business.

MEET TAIWAN team offers site inspection assistance to international organisation representatives and provides financial assistance to promote international conferences to be held in Taiwan, the assistance may be up to NT\$500,000 (€14,265) on bidding and promoting stage; up to NT\$2,800,000 (€79,878) for holding.

▼ Sunrise at Taiwan



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TAIWAN HERE
MEETTAIWAN.COM

▼ Dadaocheng Wharf

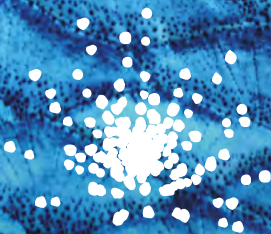


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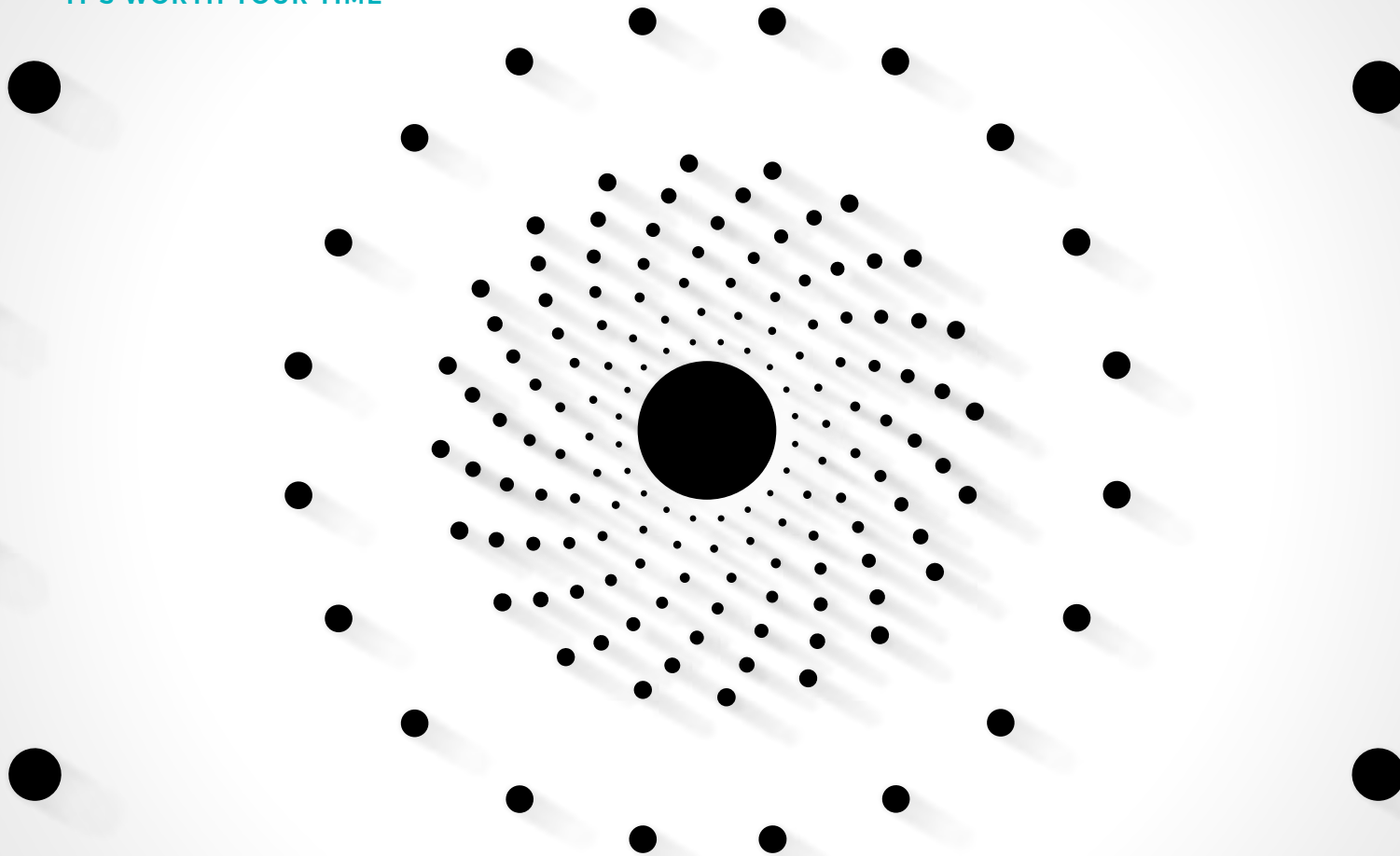
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ICCA Congress Fuels International Meetings Industry in **Dubai**

An exceptional host for the recent 57th ICCA (*International Congress & Convention Association*) Congress, Dubai raised the bar with an attendance of 1,156 meetings industry professionals and experts from 79 countries, a record for any ICCA Congress held outside of Europe – *evidence of the increasing drawing power of Dubai.*

The four-day programme (11 – 14 November) was a fruitful collaboration between ICCA and Dubai Business Events, the city's official convention bureau. Organised with the support of key local partners including Dubai World Trade Centre, Congress Solutions International, and Emirates, this was the first time for the annual congress had set foot in the Middle East – *an important growth area in the business events industry that ICCA has dedicated a seat for on their board as well as a regional office.*

Extending his warm welcome to the congress delegates, His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai Tourism said: *“Business events are a crucial part of not only our tourism strategy, but our wider economic development. Whether through the year-round calendar of home-grown trade shows or major congresses like ICCA Congress that we successfully bid for, we understand and use the power of meetings and conferences to facilitate the rapid transition to a knowledge economy, and to grow scientific advancement and key industry sectors in Dubai and the UAE.”*

EXPERIENCING THE BEST OF DUBAI

Dubai recognises the business events industry as a crucial driver in Dubai's economic shift and positioning as a global business centre. As a global

knowledge hub with a strong reputation for innovation, hosting the ICCA Congress presented an exclusive opportunity to showcase Dubai's extensive meetings infrastructure to business events heavyweights from across the globe. The Congress featured rich forward-thinking education sessions, networking opportunities, curated tours and site visits to Dubai's most innovative enterprises.

Beyond the core educational programme at the event, the “Outside the Box Sessions” presented a different side of Dubai by familiarising delegates with the city's rich culture, talent development, innovation, as well as insights into playing host to one of the world's largest events – *Expo 2020 Dubai*. Delegates were immersed through experiences such as a city tour and various activities at the Dubai Opera, Dubai Future Foundation, Expo 2020 Dubai site, as well as Emirates Airlines Crew Training Academy where the importance of aviation to the city's development was highlighted and delegates had a first-hand look at the Emirates Airline's Safety and Emergency Evacuation Simulators, Service Training Simulators, as well as the A380 Cabin Service simulator.

Dubai's focus on innovation and the close collaborations between the public and private sectors were also on display through the tour of Dubai Future Foundation, where delegates were offered the opportunity to see

AREA2071, an experimentation cluster for governments, multinationals and startups to design the future. Besides a tour of the world's first and most advanced 3D printed office, delegates also learned about the “Dubai Future Accelerators”, a 9-week program that brings together international/local companies and startups with Dubai Government to deploy futuristic prototypes across Dubai.

Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said: *“We hope these experiences, which involve some of our key stakeholders and partners across the city, will inspire delegates and allow them to consider future opportunities in Dubai.”*

ENSURING MEANINGFUL CSR & LEGACY

The exciting social programme at the Congress allowed delegates to experience Emirati cultural delights and local hospitality, and some of Dubai's most iconic landmarks. Highlights included the “Welcome Reception” at the Armani Pavilion, with al fresco dining and entertainment at the foot of Burj Khalifa (*the world's tallest building*), CAT Night at Jumeirah Beach Hotel, as well as an Arabian desert camp night and the 11th annual “Dress to Impress” gala dinner hosted by Headquarters Magazine.





Dubai promised a robust CSR (*Corporate Social Responsibility*) element when bidding for the ICCA Congress, and the Local Host Committee selected an organisation that has an international reach and can make a direct impact on people’s lives – the Noor Dubai Foundation, which focuses on the prevention of blindness and visual impairment globally.



The ICCA Charity Run’N’Walk took place along the Arabian Gulf coastline at La Mer, Dubai’s newest beachfront entertainment, retail and dining district and a popular attraction for both residents and tourists. With the choice of a 3km run or a 1.5km walk, participants were encouraged to donate to Noor Dubai Foundation. Throughout the congress, delegates had the opportunity to donate pairs of glasses, including prescription glasses and sunglasses to the charity who will re-lens and distribute these to those in need through its mobile eye clinic campaigns. With ICCA also making a donation in lieu of speaker fees and gifts, a total of €5,555 was raised for Noor Dubai Foundation, while 591 pairs of glasses were collected.



EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE

This year’s ICCA flagship congress featured an impressive inclusion of inspiring local speakers, such as Alia Mansoori (pictured above). At the age of 15, Alia Mansoori became known in the science world after winning the “Genes in Space” UAE competition, a contest run by the Boeing Company, the UAE Space Agency, and newspaper “The National”. Watching her winning experiment blast off to the International Space Station was an exemplification of how young Emirati women can play a critical role in the development and progress of the UAE’s science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sector. Delegates learned about how her dreams of travelling to space are on the way to being achieved, and got a detailed explanation of her scientific project, with footage shown of an astronaut on the International Space Station carrying out the experiment.

Among the other speakers was Dr. Noah Raford who is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Futurist-in-Chief of the Dubai Future Foundation. Dr. Noah helped establish the UAE’s first national foresight unit, the Dubai Future Foundation and the Museum of the Future, and is part of a team that identifies emerging opportunities, strategic partnerships, and future initiatives for the Government of Dubai.

Marjan Faraidooni, Senior Vice President of Legacy Impact and Development for Expo 2020 Dubai, also addressed delegates in a session at the congress. Tasked with making sure Dubai’s Expo 2020 delivers an enduring economic and social impact Marjan Faraidooni was able to explain the all-important investments in infrastructure and the redevelopment of the Expo site after the six-month event is over, with the business events community set to be a prime beneficiary of the new venues and event spaces created at the main Expo site.



Dubai Business Events, the city’s official convention bureau, works with planners and event organisers to ensure they are able to incorporate sustainability and corporate social responsibility into their events.

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The Role of Customs in our Globalised World

In this regular Association Profile segment, HQ speaks with **Ludovic Thanay** from **World Customs Organisation (WCO)** on the impact of international events for their associations and more.



HQ: Can you share with us your professional experience and expertise?

LT: I am the head of Communications, Events and Strategic Planning Unit at WCO, an inter-governmental organisation based in Brussels, focusing on providing capacity building to member countries, and also developing tools and instruments to assist customs to enhance their performance.

I have a long-standing experience in communication, event organisation, strategic planning and external relations. As the head of communication, I am in charge of public relations, website content, intranet, social media communication and publications of the WCO. I am actually developing a Communication Handbook that will act as a compendium of best practices among members of the WCO as well as a Communication Brandbook to provide brand guidelines to the organisation.

In my capacity as Head of Events, I organise international events such as

the WCO Information Technology (IT) Conference and Exhibition, the Global AEO Conference, the WCO Technology and Innovation (TI) Forum, the Global Cross-border E-Commerce Conference, among other major events. I handle the selection of the venue, the logistics as well as the funding/ sponsorship of the events that fall under my responsibility. I am actually working on an Event protocol handbook for the organisation to standardise the way events are organised within the organisation.

My responsibility in strategic planning is to ensure that we capture the strategic priorities of members through a three-year strategic plan, translate them into strategic activities and develop measurable deliverables and KPIs for all activities that are then assessed through a yearly operational plan. We are actually in the process of preparing a new strategic plan that will better reflect the needs and expectations of customs administrations worldwide.

In the context of globalisation, what role does the World Customs Organisation play?

The WCO advocates the use of technology to transform globalisation into a positive force. Every year, the Secretary General of the WCO, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya dedicates a theme to promote actions that facilitate trade and promote economic growth. In 2019 the theme will be “SMART borders for seamless Trade, Travel and Transport”, thus promoting security along border lines, measurability of performance, automation of processes, risk-management based approach for control of goods and people, and a technology-driven mindset.

As the world has embarked into an era marked by the fourth industrial revolution, the demarcation line between physical, digital and biological components that are imported and exported, has faded away. Customs has a bigger responsibility to act as a central coordinator to ensure that all the actors along the



18 supply chain are well equipped to face up the challenges posed by disruptive technologies. The WCO provides Customs administrations with adequate instruments to ensure that legitimate trade is facilitated and that there is a seamless flow of passengers and conveyances but at the same time, customs need to protect the frontiers against a plethora of safety, security and biosecurity threats including terrorism financing, improvised explosive devices, dual goods and firearms.

The growth in e-commerce triggered a high volume of low-value and small shipments, customs have to improve border management to respond to the challenge. The WCO has developed a Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards to assist its members in this process. At the same time, the Customs community is exploring the use of other ICT solutions such as smart devices, blockchain technology, cloud computing, robotics, the Internet of Things, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, smart track and trace technologies for cargo, containers and conveyances, a world-wide standard for X-ray images, advanced chemical analysis, and the use of geospatial technologies coupled with drones for monitoring fragile or inaccessible terrains.

Customs is no longer seen as a revenue collector but rather as a trade facilitator, a major player that has the ability to strengthen the global value chain. In this regard, the WCO assists its members to implement the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement through the Mercator Programme which brings together all relevant WCO instruments and tools such as the Revised Kyoto Convention on the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures, globally acknowledged as a reference instrument for the TFA implementation.

The WCO also manages the Harmonised Commodity Description & Coding System, generally referred to as “Harmonised System (HS)” which is a system used by more than 200 countries and economies as a basis for their customs tar-

iffs and for the collection of international trade statistics. Over 98% of the merchandise in international trade is classified in terms of the HS. The maintenance of the HS is a priority for the WCO, and it includes measures to secure the uniform interpretation of the HS and its periodic updating in light of developments in technology and changes in trade patterns.

What is the impact of international events in your opinion?

As a technical organisation that develops tools and instruments for its members and provides capacity building, it is of prime importance for us to provide a platform for the customs community to meet and network among themselves but also to open up to the private sector in order to discover new trends, new opportunities and share common concerns.

International events are beneficial not only for the participants but also to the host country. We have organised the IT Conference in cities such as Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Istanbul, Bangalore, Veracruz, Seoul, Marrakesh, Dublin, Seattle, Tallinn, Dubai, Brisbane, Freeport, Dakar, Tbilisi and Lima, and we always receive the support of the customs administrations in the selected country. These events attract around 700 participants who often extend their stay in the country and contribute to the economy. However, over and above the financial impact of these events, the selected country has a unique opportunity to showcase advancements in terms of technology and at the same time attracting investors and suppliers who want to do business with the selected countries.

Furthermore, the participants get to meet with counterparts from around the world, share best practices and discuss challenges while discovering new technologies, equipment, solutions that can contribute to assist them in enhancing their performance and meet new solution providers.

For the business community, it is a

unique opportunity to meet decision makers from customs administrations who are eager to discover and learn new solutions.

The hosts of these events also have the opportunity of making the participants discover the culture, tradition and culinary experiences of their country, which may convince them to come back to the country for holidays.

How are the traveling barriers (e.g. visa) changing?


As representatives of customs administrations, we work in close collaboration with other partner government agencies, namely Immigration and Police among others in order to ensure the smooth and safe travel of passengers.

Physical inspection of a traveller and a travel document is only a small part of border controls on passengers arriving by air. The rest of the border control relies on secure electronic data, some being provided at the same time the passenger buys a ticket and some at the time the passenger boards an aircraft. The flow of passenger-related information from carriers to border control authorities can be divided into two main streams: Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR). API Data is generated during check-in and PNR during the booking or buying of an air ticket.

We are actually looking forward to working jointly with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to maintain a high level of standardisation and ensure effective passenger profiling and facilitation while ensuring data security and protection of passengers.

As part of our security programme, we promote the use of API/PNR data to deter the threat of terrorism and organised crime, while at the same time facilitating international travel. To this effect, we have developed API Guidelines and PNR reporting standards for our Members/partners.





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The Athenian Revival Story

Organised by the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) in conjunction with the European Association of Tour Operators (ETOA), the 6th Travel Trade Athens (TTA 2018) was yet another successful event aimed at promoting the Greek travel trade and MICE markets. Over the 2-day event, 100 cherry-picked fully-hosted buyers from 25 countries participated in more than 3,000 pre-scheduled meetings with over 100 local suppliers, getting acquainted with the alluring city-break destination through well-curated FAM trips designed to showcase recent developments and experiences Athens (and the wider Attica region) offers as a MICE destination.

Ken TJX reports

The Mayor of Athens, Mr. Georgios Kaminis launched the event with the traditional welcome speech, and then went on to host the TTA 2018's Press Conference where he highlighted that since the inception of the TTA event six years ago, Athens doubled its number of visitors to a record-breaking 5 million in 2017, *(expected to exceed 5.5 million in 2018)*. Athens also experienced a 59% increase in international inbound flights since 2013, and according to AEGEAN Sales Manager (Greece) Stephanos Sadopoulos, AEGEAN has added 13 new international destinations to its network this year, connecting Athens to 81 destinations.

Alexis Galinos, Managing Director of Athens Development and Destination Management Agency *(which heads the ACVB)* shared that about a third of the meetings conducted during the annually held TTA converts into business deals, while ninety percent of the participants expressed interest to attend again. The event inverted the typical trade show format, so buyers don't have to navigate around the jungle of suppliers' booths. This time-efficient way to conduct B2B meetings was well-received from the buyers who have come from strategic markets like Europe and USA.

Athens's unique combination of culture and the arts, history and heritage makes it intriguing, and the curated FAM trips presented various attractive aspects of the rich Athenian experience. The **"Nautical Tourism in Attica"** tour took the participants on a yacht along the coastline of the Attica Riviera during a dreamy sunset; **"Presentation of Eleusis - European Capital of Culture 2021"** showcased the fascinating archaeological site of Elefsina, and the team behind the winning bid shared the significant long-term cultural, economic and social benefits of Eleusis 2121 – a program with a mission to cultivate the fertile land of Eleusis with the seed of creativity, innovation and knowledge.

The **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC)** is Athens's new iconic venue which houses the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera, as well as the 210,000m² Stavros Niarchos Park. Opened in 2016, it is the largest public-private partnership Greece has seen and is projected to draw 6 million visitors by the end of 2018. Nicholas Yatromanolakis, Chief Marketing & Communication Officer of SNFCC, shared that this expensive venue is an investment in education, broadening of the horizons and cultural advancement of



Greeks. SNFCC is certainly not afraid of hosting big events, a recent concert drew a crowd of 12,000 on the big lawn, and last year's New Year's Eve celebration brought 20,000 people together.

TTA 2018 was held in the luxurious and opulent 5-star **Hotel Grande Bretagne** *(which opened in 1874)*, providing a postcard worthy view of the Acropolis. Athens is a desirable destination that sells itself, and it's easy to see why. I was instantly charmed by the vibrant *(and mythical)* atmosphere, and warmth of the event organisers and locals alike. The farewell dinner was a night to remember, held in the stately **Zappeion Megaron** – a neoclassical building made for the first modern Olympic games in 1896.

The grim reality of the recent economic recession appears to be far behind. The City of Athens today is a contemporary hub that has recently won this year's European Capital of Innovation Awards. With an existing wealth of natural and cultural resources, big infrastructure investments and urban regeneration projects *(to further expand its MICE possibilities)*, this city with never ending stories to tell will keep visitors coming back for more.



▲ (Clockwise from top) The generally well-received Buyer-Supplier speed-dating; farewell dinner at Zappeion; and interactive experiences: Presentation of Eleusis, A Dive into Greek Gastronomy, and Nautical Tourism in Attica.



HQ magazine's conversation with **Alexis Galinos** at Hotel Grande Bretagne's famous Alexander's Bar (voted as the Best Hotel Bar in the world by Forbes magazine)

HQ: How is Athens doing today?

AG: The economy is now stable and we are witnessing GDP growth, Capital controls are being lifted and unemployment is decreasing, giving a significant psychological boost. Athens suffered a real low in 2012, but with hard work we managed to double our visitors in the last five years, breaking the record five million mark. The meeting industry took a real hit back in 2011-2013 with social unrest causing concern to congress organisers, but we are seeing a strong comeback for incentives and corporate travel today. The big picture is that Europe is

not doing so well these days while Asia is on the rise. I would say that Athens is doing rather well in this conjuncture. We are back on track, things are better but there is still work to be done and we are focusing on new developments.

What are some of the new strategic developments of Athens?

Athens has been enjoying a boom as a destination in the past five years, and we constantly have new interesting developments. Connectivity is steadily improving as Athens International Airport makes new deals with a number of airlines





2017 at the Leading Culture Destinations (LCD) Awards. Athens is currently UNESCO's World Book Capital 2018 with many events across the city.

So, it is fair to say that apart from our breathtaking heritage, we nurture a very rich cultural agenda throughout the year, events and gigs taking place in great venues like the SNFCC and the Onassis Cultural Centre. The Athens and Epidaurus Festival is packed with cultural events for every taste. And we remain committed to working with event organisers and city stakeholders to further develop a vibrant city events agenda.

At the same time, we are currently overseeing a number of urban interventions across the city engaging local residents and professionals. We have underway a number of projects for urban equipment and green building across various neighborhoods. Tapping into local creativity makes it all that more important. For example, we have launched two new hubs of contemporary creativity in the centre, spots that were abandoned during the crisis. We have moved and called in local professionals to open closed shops to boost local trade. We have been inviting artists and members of the creative industry to take up shops, work and produce in these spaces, livening them up and mapping out new and interesting routes in the city centre. And of course, the ancient town of Elefsis, only a short drive from Athens, is preparing for its stint as 2021 European Capital of Culture.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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creating new flight routes. The international hotel industry is also investing in Athens, with Four Seasons, Hyatt, Marriott, and small boutique hotels joining the ranks. Investors are sending a strong signal that Athens is rising as a destination.

And we on our side are focusing on the meaningful alliances we formed over the last few years. In fact, we are taking this a step further launching This is Athens & Partners, a unique public-private partnership bringing together the City of Athens, the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE), AEGEAN, Athens International Airport and other major enterprises. A partnership dedicated in establishing Athens as an attractive place to live, work and visit. Our plan includes a number of projects for the development, management and marketing of the city as a destination.

For a destination to be able to successfully host big and significant events, a number of stakeholders have to collaborate and work very closely. Being united makes us stronger and sends out an important message of willingness to work together to support the growth of our destination.

How can business events benefit from the Athens experience?

Apart from the obvious benefits of having all the major city stakeholders working together to enhance the visitor economy of the city, business events can also benefit from our knowledge

economy (*and overall strategy of economic development*). We have numerous sectors which are of interest to the international community, like our strong medical and scientific community, artists and creative industry professionals, a small yet vibrant start-up industry, to name but a few.

Athens is of course well known for its vibrant atmosphere, the climate and the fact it's the only European capital boasting a marvellous Riviera, 20 minutes' drive from the centre. The real Athenian experience lies at the centre, Athens is still an authentic city where real Athenians live and enjoy themselves which adds to the value of the destination and keeps it vibrant and interesting.

Are there new opportunities in Cultural tourism for Athens?

Contemporary urban culture is one of the strong cards of our city. Athens has been gaining momentum and rising as a cultural hotspot over the last few years. In 2017, the city co-hosted Documenta 14, the world-famous contemporary arts fair. This was the first time it was ever co-hosted outside Germany, chosen for its unique sense of urban creativity. Athens was subsequently named as the Emerging Cultural City of the Year for





Value-Add to the **Member-Experience** and **Long-Term Sustainability** of Your Association By Moving Towards **Outcome-Orientated Events**



In this final chapter of ESAE's regular segment, **Chloe Menhinick** shares with HQ about event legacy planning, differentiated stakeholder engagement & converging the offline & online experiences, and embracing the green generation.

Introduction

As the landscape of associations continues to change, we are experiencing a transformation in the way we do business and the way we engage with our stakeholders. The traditional motivators for members to join associations are for learning opportunities and the formation of community connections. Association meetings and events – where professionals from different sectors, disciplines and geographies can converge around a focussed topic to accelerate the exchange of knowledge, learning and professional development, is where these primary motivators can be realised.

Although increasingly challenged by competition from for-profit companies, technological offerings that facilitate people to connect online, and national policies that may affect international travel for conferences, association meetings and events continue to deliver the face-to-face networking and learning experiences that members value and thus will continue to be a, if not the key, forum in which member value is reinforced.

However, attendee preferences and expectations are evolving, and rapidly. As millennials increasingly dominate the workforce, these challenges to the status quo will only intensify. Decisions to join an Association will be determined not just by the face-to-face networking and learning opportunities available but also by values such as inclusivity, innovation, authenticity, legacy and impact. The event experience will similarly be determined by these values.

Keeping abreast of changing member expectations and what they mean for how Association meetings & events are designed, will help ensure that Associations are able to continue to deliver member value through the execution of exceptional, memorable and legacy-affirming event experiences.



Deliver tangible results with a positive impact through event legacy planning and differentiated stakeholder engagement

The increasing demand for more benefits for the host destination and overall positive impacts for all stakeholders requires changing the ways events are planned and implemented. By designing a long-term structure for the event with future goals, legacy planning will become a vital tool to survive in this more demanding environment.

As part of this process the building of long-term partnerships and transparent relationships to ensure both knowledge transfer and economic impact for associations will become a critical component of work for Associations. In this light, sponsors will increasingly be engaged as key partners. Sponsorship relationships and programmes will need to be designed to help demonstrate the authenticity of your Association's brand by engaging with your sponsors as long-term stakeholders actively contributing to delivering on your Associations mission and vision.

Likewise, where events have in the past often failed to engage or draw people in, designing your event sessions towards a specific outcome will help ensure that sessions become thoughtful spaces for dialogue and professional learning and that the event become just one

point on a longer journey contributing to your Association's mission.

As event experiences will increasingly be judged on their legacy, understanding how to create value and just as importantly capture and communicate that value and the legacy that the event is leaving behind will become increasingly necessary. For this, measuring the success of your event will require the introduction of metrics which go beyond the traditional event KPIs to also reflect your key legacy objectives.

Lead your association towards the transition to Circular Economy: Embrace the new green generation

The narrative in sustainability is increasingly focusing on the concept of the circular economy which has the potential to solve the world's mounting waste problem by doing away with the very concept of waste altogether. Indeed, the transition towards a circular economy is much more than just another buzzword in the world of corporate sustainability - *start-ups and big companies alike already are experimenting with the concept to forge new business models and buttress existing ones.*

Millennials will be heavily involved in the way the world achieves its circular economy aspirations, and as millennials' influence in Association life grows, they will in turn become increasingly influ-

ential in how Associations shape their sustainability frameworks in the future. Their habits and expectations as socially conscious consumers will mean that organisations with better sustainability credentials will gain a greater competitive advantage over those with less sustainable practices.

As major consumers in the events industry, Associations have an important role to play in the transition to a circular economy. Associations have no option but to jump onto the circular economy train that has already taken off and start considering their event design strategies within the circular economy framework. This will require a step-change in how they engage with host city event bureaus and the key suppliers across the entire breadth of the event-design and management supplier chain - *from the food choices, waste management, exhibition construction companies to branding and signage.*

Deliver on learning objectives through quality content delivered in exceptional ways

Innovations in how content is distributed and how it contributes to knowledge sharing and learning is also driving a paradigm shift in event design. In our digital, networked society, people share content more freely and are pushing increasingly for open access; the Freemium model has created



opportunities for quality content to be accessed at no cost, forcing business to move away from the traditional content-for-cash approach to optimise alternative revenue streams. Content has become available through a myriad of channels, virtual platforms and social media. Alongside these changes, paradigm shifts are taking place in the education experience. Learning is increasingly occurring through a mix of formal, informal and experiential learning.

What does this mean for the event experience? Content remains king however it is no longer just a question of what professionals are learning, but also how they are learning. Association events must provide for the coexistence of a plurality of approaches, which consider the event delegate as an active subject and not simply a passive subject.

Association events will need to ensure a blended learning approach forms a central component of its content and learning strategy – *using new technologies, social interaction and the sharing of experiences to bringing an effective knowledge sharing culture to life before, during and after an event.*

Use technology to empower your delegates and extend your influence

Obviously incorporating technology into events is not new, but how delegates expect to interact with it is. Instead of occupying their attention, delegates will expect technology to enhance their experience by solving their problems, smoothly connecting them to your content and deepening their engagement with the network. Embracing technological opportunities such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and Chatbots to name just some of the key emerging technological trends in events, offers the potential to con-

nect your attendees with your event more quickly and efficiently than ever before. Where financial resources and technical know-how is limited, form partnerships with expert companies occupying this space to ensure your resources are spent most effectively towards delivering on unique member engagement opportunities.



Converge the Offline and Online Experiences

Technological developments also offer Associations the opportunity to use events to engage non-attendees through online activities. The live streaming of sessions, live reporting and soliciting questions from the online community, can break the barriers of not just time and distance, but also the cost on a member's ability to engage.

And so, Associations can embrace technology to create virtual meeting places and let virtual attendees actively participate in discussions and the event

journey. Digital hangouts can add a new dimension to networking and interaction. These hangouts can be accessed at any time during the event to engage other participants, speakers, and virtual audiences. Importantly, this increases accessibility for those who find it difficult to travel and extends the reach of your Association to new audiences in regions or demographics previously under represented at your events and in your membership.

Conclusion

Events are a pivotal opportunity to showcase new global trends – in society and in technology. As such, events have the power to play a crucial role in showcasing how Associations are still relevant in today's world. Associations need to rise to the challenge of differentiating themselves by delivering exceptional events which include opportunities for extended experiences both offline in local communities and online in the digital space.

They need to be able to demonstrate the impact made on their bottom line not just in monetary terms but also in terms of the depth of their stakeholder engagement and sustainability strategy.

They need to embrace technology as a core component of their strategy to empower delegates, enrich their learning experiences and extend their influence to an online audience that has the potential to reach far beyond conventional audiences.

And finally, to meet the challenges many Associations are facing in terms of defining a unique member value proposition, moving towards outcome-orientated events will ensure that your Association's events continue to add value to the member-experience and long-term sustainability of your Association.



Membership Engagement Leading Through Crisis

Jeffer London speaks with **Dr. Patrick Sweet** about engagement and risk in the missions of the Geneva Leadership Alliance. See Jeffer's blog about stimulating conversation at JEFFER-LONDON.COM.



Risk-taking and risk exposure impacts engagement in peculiar ways. Patrick Sweet sees this first hand, when he runs the workshops of The Geneva Leadership Alliance. Participants often come from higher-risk environments. Places where VUCA is very real and not a catch-all metaphor for 'today's business environment'. Many lead in situations of crisis, come from situations of crisis, or could be going back to the same. Leading in trauma and stress is real. Yet people in these risky environments must take risks themselves, to lead crisis effectively – *which requires keeping others engaged; and often taking risks themselves.*

JL: What is effective, rational risk-taking? Does it encourage people to take risks?

PS: In crisis situations (*wildfires, floods, mass refugee movements, hostage incidents, armed attacks, peace-building efforts, and the surfacing of human rights violations in your organisation*), one is forced to lead risk. Risk is 'having to take an action of considerable consequence, on limited information'. The key elements here are: having to and of considerable consequence with limited information. Otherwise it's not 'forced' or even risk-taking at all. Effective risk-taking is also far more than having the courage to take risks (*though that is a part*).

JL: What makes some people more comfortable with risk?

PS: We each have different 'risk-taking profiles'. Do you take risks? Would your risks look risky from my point-of-view? Is confrontation risky? What about recovery plans? Risk-taking is all very

relative. When leading in volatile situations, things quickly become clear and amplified by the fact that you must take action of consequence on limited information, often and fast. Learn to lead risk in crisis and you can lead well in many simpler circumstances, so long as you discern between what has slipped into crisis and what is simply a tough set of choices.

JL: How does individual risk-taking fit into organisations?

PS: Let's add a layer of complexity to this crisis and volatile context. You must not only take risk, but you must have your team engage with you. Even teams of teams. Risky decisions of varying consequence must be made in both distributed and centralised manners in crisis teams (*or teams of teams*). This lifts your leadership and engagement challenge to understanding and leading collective risk-taking behavior. Collective risk-taking behavior that engages rather than frightens teams and individuals is far more than merely the sum of indi-

vidual risk-taking profiles in a team or the so-called courage of a given leader. You need clear risk management AND risk leadership that works both collectively and individually.

JL: How can an association develop a better way to lead through risky situations?

PS: The Geneva Leadership Alliance has developed a series of simulations and training experiences to learn to lead in volatile/crisis contexts. One key element we can share is that there are specific behavioral drivers that guide group culture and behavior:

1. Decision-making styles impact shared direction.
2. Polarities (*situations where there is no right/wrong answer, just tension*) plague necessary ad hoc alignment.
3. Conflict styles impact commitment in the team's culture.

JL: Where does leadership fit in the scenario?

PS: Embedded here is a well-known but less ubiquitously practiced collective relational view of leading. This collective relational view of leading defines leadership by focusing on ‘outputs’ rather than ‘inputs’. The ‘outputs’ are the shared, team production of Direction, Alignment and Commitment. Alignment is often where leadership breaks-down in most all circumstance, but alignment is especially tested in crisis.

JL: So, leaders need to focus on the ensuring the outputs of Direction, Alignment & Commitment. What about the inputs?

PS: The input view of leading focuses on competencies, risk-profiles, and other individual characteristics. These are important, yet an over-focus on these inputs to the neglect of DAC outputs is like training a football team to perform as individuals. They may be the best, even stars individually, but a team focusing on shared outcomes and team practices will outlast and out maneuver a team of individuals.

JL: Can you give me an example?

PS: One exercise we do with teams dealing with crisis helps them collectively recognise the chronic tensions at play, and lead them as tensions and not as problems to solve. For example, imagine you work for a health ministry. You receive information of several people falling ill in what looks like a flu virus. You also have information that it may be related to a food-packing company. It will take probably 12 hours to sort-out if it is coincidence, or if it is indeed source-localised to the food-packing company, AND you receive social media news that it is an airborne, viral attack being claimed by a radical group. What/how much do you share with the public? Too much information, or the wrong information, and lives or the company’s existence, and even your ministries reputation are all in the balance.

IMPACT	Extreme / Catastrophic	5	10	15	20	25	30
	Major	4	8	12	16	20	24
	Moderate	3	6	9	12	15	18
	Minor	2	4	6	8	10	12
	Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6
			1 Remotely	2 Unlikely	3 Possible	4 Probable	5 Highly Probable
LIKELIHOOD							

People on your team have different views. Some say ‘the public must know all to protect itself’. Another view, ‘the public needs only know the truth...wait until you have it’. However, wait and people will fall ill and people will ask why they were not informed. If it is an ‘attack’, consequences could be even worse. Etc. Or maybe it is indeed ‘just’ a coincidence of an aggressive flu virus.

JL: How does an experience like that impact leadership?

PS: This kind of tension has no clear answer without full information. Based on real incidents, it is not unusual for the real truth to take days to determine, much less disseminate. Having

your team aligned and committed while taking the best decision, is less related to the ‘profiles in the room’ and more closely related to their collective ability to lead in tension. Recognising these tensions brings about wise decisions, and avoids rushing into to short-term fixes.

Thank you Patrick Sweet, for taking time to talk about how your work at the Geneva Leadership Alliance develops leader’s capacity for leading through crisis. You very well may be hearing from HQ readers curious about how you improve trust, communications and the ability to lead through risk.

The Geneva Leadership Alliance



Shaping the future of leading

The Geneva Leadership Alliance is a joint venture between the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL.ORG) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP.CH).



The Tough Job of “Walking the Talk” on **Diversity** When Going Global



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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When associations decide to expand their focus from national or regional to global, they have a long list of strategic decisions to make and organisational restructuring to carry out. When they think of recruitment, they usually focus on the logistics rather than the impact on the organisational culture.

Diversity is a buzz word and most association leaders will tell you they already cherish diversity in their teams. Only some, however, really walk the talk. Mainly because it is more difficult than it sounds. It becomes even harder, but also more important, when embarking on a change path towards a truly global organisation.

Why?

It is hard because contrary to the old saying that “opposite attracts”, we tend

to surround ourselves with people that are similar to us, often falling prey to unconscious bias. We all have biases, and they are not easy to counter but working on your self-awareness is a good place to start.

It is hard because when coming from a European melting pot for example, such as Brussels, we tend to believe to be very inclusive and international, already. Europe is indeed very diverse, but the world is even more so. When considering going global, try launching projects with sister associations from other parts of the world to challenge your assumptions and broaden your horizons.

Finally, review your in-house recruitment process or engage with external advisers to make sure you identify what “*diversity*” means for your organisation. Then, build your job descriptions accordingly to

attract diverse talent; and set your assessment criteria to avoid bias when choosing the successful candidates.

It is important because when your organisation is global, your audience is, too. And as a responsible organisation leader you want to ensure that your team and your work represent your stakeholders as broadly as possible. It will not only increase the team’s creativity, it will help you properly understand the needs and the pain points of your clients, and craft adequate solutions. Ultimately, it may just be the key to your global success.

Emergency/Crisis Management Plan



Events draw large crowds together within defined spaces and have the potential to have significant impacts. Occupational health and safety requirements, legal duty of care, and the capacity of organisations to deal with risks and crisis are important considerations for the sustainability of event organisations and events themselves. **Martin E. Bay**, (Senior Director, Meetings Operations & Procurement at Kellen) shares more with HQ magazine.



HQ: How does event management differ from other forms of management?

MEB: Event management requires strong organisational skills to manage logistics and personnel for different people coming together from different companies and different parts of the world. Communication, especially in an emergency situation, can be challenging, and requires proactive management of participant expectations as well as vendor expectations through a range of contacts – from facility sales to facility service providers, attendees, presenters, business owners (or association board members, to third party vendors. All have to come together quickly and work in tandem toward a stated goal and deadline. A missed deadline, a miscommunication, or a detail left unaddressed can have a detrimental ripple effect on the outcome of the event.

What are the vital components of an Emergency/Crisis Management Plan?

Risk comes in many forms, including financial risk, or risk of cancellation, or risk of not meeting goals. In regards

to emergency/crisis management, the vital elements of a good Risk Management Plan should include identification of potential risks, and well-organised, clearly-defined action steps to reduce or mitigate these potential risks. Key information required includes event facility contact information and emergency gathering locations, attendee contact information, local area contact information (such as hospitals, medical services, police, and fire/rescue services), a detailed communications plan and a clear chain of command.

What are some of the commonly overlooked problems and hazards?

Not having a well-communicated and rehearsed emergency evacuation plan, lack of awareness of current political climate in the event destination, ignoring or exceeding maximum space capacity guidelines, contracting with vendors who have not been vetted or who have not provided satisfactory references.

What sort of actions and measures do you implement to eliminate or minimise the risks? Can you share with

our readers some insights to bring into their event planning process?

Identify the potential risks, and what could cause them; Work closely with the event venue and local authorities to set up the crisis/emergency action plan to address these identified risks. Make others who can help implement, manage or support the plan be aware of the plan.

What are the constraints faced by event managers' implementation of risk management planning? Can you share with our readers some valuable insights to bring into their event planning process?

Potential constraints against successful implementation of a risk management plan include lack of budget/funding, lack of staff/personnel, not having a contingency plan, not communicating the plan to event attendees or other stakeholders, not allowing other stakeholders to have input into the plan, not planning far enough in advance – there is a lot of data to gather, or not researching other past events or the targeted venue to access that knowledge base.

Exceptional Penang



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The story of the convention bureau of the State of Penang is quite interesting. Established just three years ago, it has already conquered a part of the world. This is largely due to the **BE @ Penang** event organised by the Bureau every year. The third iteration of this event, titled BE Exceptional, was held in early December 2018. And I am more than glad that I had the opportunity to attend this convention that has a good programme from start to finish.

Marcel A.M. Vissers reports

THE TWO PEARLS IN PENANG'S CROWN

Penang's first asset is the location of its 285km² island, in north-western Malaysia. Pulau Pinang is also sometimes called the Pearl of the Orient and one of Asia's best foodie capitals. For many years, I actually thought Penang was also a city but this is a misconception. Colonial George Town is the island's actual capital and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I would love to visit this city again because there is so much to see and do. The second pearl is the Setia Spice Convention Centre, mainly famous because it's the world's first hybrid solar powered convention centre. This is also where BE @ Penang was organised.

A PROGRAMME FOCUSING ON EXCELLENCE

The excellent speakers from different fields that were invited to this year's edition included a few media personalities to ensure a great ambience in the hall. Keynote speaker Nina Freysen-Pretorius, outgoing president of ICCA, set the tone on the first day with her speech titled *"Conquering the Mountain, my journey through business events as PCO in South Africa to the President of the ICCA Congress"*. Mike Cannon, the former



SEO of the Sarawak Convention Bureau, was praised for his presentation on *"Second Tier Destinations: To reinvent the wheel or to follow the proven way?"*. I was privileged to chair the panel discussion about two superpowers in the meetings industry, *"China and India - what makes them tick and how can I woo them?"*, sharing my insights on the two of the largest outgoing travel and business events markets in Asia. The conclusion to both questions: There still remains a lot to be done, but Penang is on the right track after only three years from the opening of the Bureau.

Yasmin Bathamanathan, Manager of Marketing & Communications at the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau was applauded during her welcome address to the Media Workshop. She started by saying: *"Editors receive hundreds of press releases every week. What is the right format for a Business Events press release, so it makes the news?"*. This workshop was not so much about talking as about putting the attendees to work and think about their relationship with media. Twenty groups were asked to draw up an attention-grabbing press release based on guidelines. The workshop was an overwhelming success and I think we will soon be receiving some real gems in the form of press releases and official communications. And of course BE @ Penang wouldn't be the amazing convention it is if it didn't end with a spectacular and special event, in the rooftop garden of the Setia Spice Convention Centre where attendees sampled Penang's many flavours until the wee morning hours...

BE @ Penang 2018 had just barely ended and Ashwin Gunasekeran, CEO of the Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau, was already hard at work to prepare the 4th iteration of this conference in 2019. Read on for my short talk with Ashwin, to find out how he pulled off Penang's amazing rise in such a short time.



HQ: How was it like to build PCEB from scratch?

AG: I've always worked in Penang but I was born in Kuala Lumpur. On 2 January 2016, the government tasked me with the establishment of the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau. I didn't hesitate for a second and immediately started to draw up a five-year plan. We had neither an office, nor furniture but worked in a small space that was made available to us by the tourist office. The early years were not exactly easy but now we have superb offices and a dedicated team of 15 employees who are working hard on the development of Penang's future.

How did the first year go?

I spent months visiting all the partners and requesting data from them about conventions. This wasn't always an easy job because hotels just don't like to share their data. Ultimately, we collected data about 1,250 meetings, accounting for 800,000 Ringgit (€168,000). The second measure I took was to set up an educational platform that culminated in

the 'BE.model' which has since become very well-known. The theme of our first convention was BE Engaged. I think the main thing I wanted to achieve was a synergy with all the stakeholders. The Penang team and Penang as a destination were my priority and the primary building blocks.

Did this strategy work?

Most certainly. The second year we set up BE Empowered, with the purpose of emphasising Learning. The theme of the conference you just attended was BE Exceptional, or the power of top-class service. I already know what's the theme of next year's convention but I can't divulge it yet.

Are you satisfied with the results after the first three years?

I am very happy with the team. I was able to submit excellent figures to the partners. Currently the figure stands at 2,511 meetings, or a total amount of 1.002 billion Ringgit (€211.8 million). But we won't stop here, we intend to persevere. On to BE.2019.

SETIA SPICE CONVENTION CENTRE

The World Class Integrated SETIA SPICE Convention Centre has a 4,500m² pillarless ballroom, with unobstructed views of the stage. It can accommodate 400 round banquet tables or 8,000 seats, in a theatre set-up, for any conference. The grand ballroom is a truly unique event space that offers a lot of flexibility, including a modern retractable partition system so the space can easily be divided into four smaller halls.

For bigger events, the grand ballroom is fronted by a capacious 2,000m². grand foyer, that can be extended to accommodate another 150 round banquet tables, or can be used as an overflow space for mingling and networking during events.

The elegant grand foyer enhances the transition, with its natural ambient lighting, creating a stunning and friendly space for interaction.

The Power of Live

Cvent CONNECT Europe 2018

After the sell-out success of the inaugural event in 2017, the second annual Cvent CONNECT Europe doubled its size, to more than 1,000 meetings, events, and hospitality professionals converging in London’s Business Design Centre for two days of in-depth product-training and knowledge transfer sessions led by Cvent experts and industry influencers.

Ken TJX reports

The power of digital is at Cvent’s core and the power of data is their strength – fused together to power efficient experiential events (*because the power of relationships goes beyond the screen, clicks and shares*). Themed “The Power of Live”, the event delivered and showcased the positive impact live events have in the MICE industry, and provided a brilliant opportunity to explore and experience Cvent’s market-leading event and hospitality management technology.

Held in a historical Crystal Palace-inspired building (*opened in 1862*), the venue provided a refreshing and light-filled setting for ‘The Innovation Pavilion’, a hands-on live-demonstration of Cvent’s latest product enhancements and innovations, such as the next-generation flagship event website and registration solution. The new experience “*Registration Reimagined*” empowers event professionals and marketers to have total design control, by enabling them to create completely customised, mobile-responsive event websites in a user-friendly, drag-and-drop site designer.

Cvent CONNECT 2018 was a well-branded holistic experience throughout the pre, during and post event’s digital touchpoints. I personally enjoyed using the mobile app, which received an incredible adoption rate of 98%. It adds interactivity and encouraged participation for the attendees, with functions like personalised event schedule, in-app messaging with other attendees, push notifications and live polls during presentations which kept the engagement going.

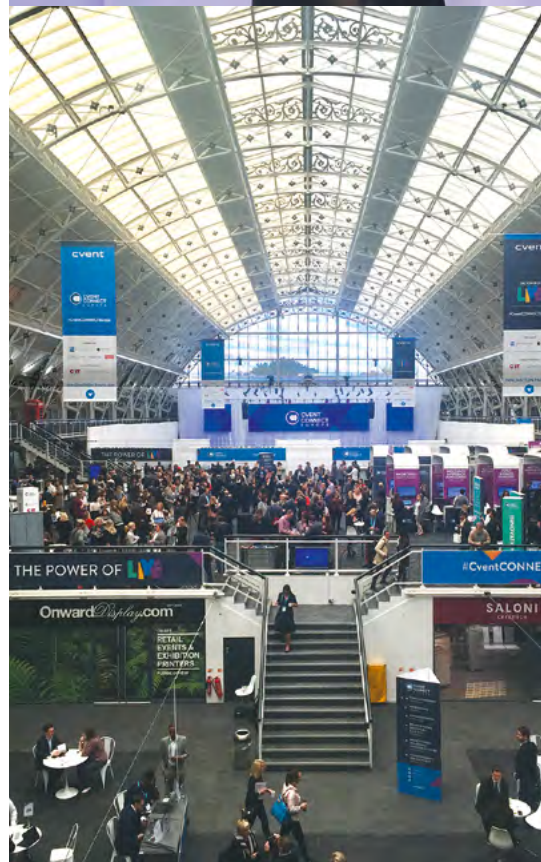
The event provided attendees with 60 educational sessions covering the best practices and latest industry trends. The Women Leader Panel found its spotlight in the technology event where two of three keynote speakers are women. Kate Ancketill, Founder and CEO of GDR Creative Intelligence, showcased some inspiring ideas from experiential brands and lessons to manage today’s rapidly changing expectations. The Former Director of White House Events, Laura Schwartz, shared six valuable points of her secrets to building powerful, effective partnerships through live events.



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▼ Laura Schwartz



Inclusivity for a Higher 'Return on Experience'

As the former White House Director of Events, Laura Schwartz created a wealth of events that represented a nation. She arrived at the White House (without political connections) at just 19, as a volunteer to answer phones in the press office, and quickly climbed her way up the ranks as a Staff Assistant, the Midwest Press Secretary, the Director of Television, and ultimately the White House Director of Events. Here's HQ magazine's exclusive interview with Cvent CONNECT Europe 2018's keynote speaker Laura Schwartz.

HQ: What is the most important takeaway from your experience as the White House Director of Events for the Clinton Administration?

LS: To be inclusive – inclusivity in the guestlist to topics and overall event experience. My mantra is *'We don't host events, we host guests'*, and every element of an event should work for the guest experience, not fighting against it. If it's too loud to talk to one another when people are there to do good networking, you've lost the opportunity for them.

I really believe that as a host we can create events that are both enjoyable and productive, with a lot of opportunities for conversations to take the message of the event further. Guests want to turn relationships into partnerships, so always keeping the guests' perspective in mind is the number one thing I've learned in the White House.

In relation to planning and producing events, we are so used to measuring by R.O.I. even though we can't have a straight R.O.I. for events. A better way to measure is R.O.E., the *'Return on Experience'*, which is essentially what we are creating. Instead of just being a guest, make them a participant and let them experience the event. Creating that experience goes back to my number one thing of being inclusive – *knowing their needs and wants, and pay attention to what gets the highest rate of R.O.E.*

Can you share an event design tip with regards to navigating around cultural and political sensitivities, and conflicting stakeholder interests?

Don't be afraid to ask ahead of time. I think asking the delegation ahead really shows that you care about making it a great experience and you don't want to assume anything when it comes to cultural planning. There are a lot of cultural assumptions, like we automatically think what someone of a certain religion will or won't consume. Decrease your margin of error and leave as little to chance as possible, have a conversation about it and you'll know how defined you have to make certain aspects.

Your book *"Eat, Drink & Succeed: Climb Your Way to the Top Using the Networking Power of Social Events"* highlights the networking power of professional and personal social scenes, can you share with us some insights from the book?

The book is all about the fact that we can all be positive, productive and powerful networkers without being manipulative. Networking is not about what I can get from you, but what I can do for you (*it's really through helping others we can achieve ourselves*). You never know when the next conversation will be one to change your life or someone else's, so be prepared to have a conversation, and be open and welcoming to anyone.

Before you go somewhere, think of a great conversation starter that does not include the weather or time of year. Look up for the history of the building or something exciting that happened there. It's a small thing that you can do and have something to bring up to make a good impression. It's not about how many business cards you give out or collect, but about how many meaningful conversations you have.

In your opinion, what do you think can be improved in the meetings and events industry?

One element that can be challenging due to our "next" event that is always right around the corner - is time for an internal and external recap. As soon as an event is over you always chat about what happened, what almost went wrong and so on but I believe it is critical to carve out time post event to honestly talk about that event - it is the secret to making your next one even better. I always liked to go through small details as well as the large components from entrance to exit as to what worked and what could have been done better or maybe just differently with the staff/volunteers. And, it is important that the recap goes beyond your office walls as well. I encourage everyone in the industry to reach out to some of the guests you may be more familiar with to understand what they liked or didn't from their perspective which may line up with yours internally or give you a whole new view! It all goes back to planning for the guest and message at hand.



Event Design & Risk Management

**AUTHOR**

Sarah Markey-Hamm,
Chief Executive Officer,
ICMS Pty Ltd, Melbourne, Australia

Successful event design is based on critical elements of sound business practice. Effective and disciplined approaches to managing an event do not necessarily involve following trends blindly. Without understanding the core goals and objectives defined at the commencement of the event planning process, and agreed to, by all key event stakeholders, no matter how inviting a particular trend or fad is, the event success may not be realised. For successful event design, consider the following six elements critical for intelligent event architecture.

THE BUSINESS CASE OF EVENT DESIGN

Associations are traditionally conservative by nature. Trends or change and the possible increase in costs need to be accompanied by a clearly defined business case detailing the outcomes and benefits to delegates (*the association's members*). A balance between traditional and new delivery methods can cater to those people who are resistant to altering tried and true event delivery styles.

EVENT DESIGN & THE ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY

The adoption of hybrid or virtual elements to an event can certainly transform the more traditional event delivery mode. Digital presentations, video streaming, online group chat rooms

and importantly delegate work spaces with fast, free internet can ensure that your delegate will be able to function within two roles – as an attendee and as a person who has responsibilities to their own work. Accepting that delegates need to do their *'real job'* while at a conference and enabling them to be able to do both easily is critical. Work stations, broadcasting of sessions in a public space with headphones allows the delegate to *'multi-task'*. This use of technology within the event space has become not necessarily a trend, rather than an improvement with event design.

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

For an association whose event is outside its geographical location, finding the right partners to assist with the journey is essential for good

event design. Important considerations for this event objective may involve investigating whether there is a strong local market for the event, a willingness from the local association to host the event, and government support, which may also be aligned with a city convention bureau. Convention Bureaus that will assist with either manpower or financial assistance to build on the delegate base are looked upon favourably by associations.

EVENT DESIGN & ROI

Importantly, 30% of the delegate base should come from the local market. This aspect assists with the financial risk calculation of the event and forms the early event design planning stage. Convention bureaus have extensive knowledge and experience with such

factors of economic impact, delegate spend (*the delegate dollar multiplier*) and excellent networks with a range of local organisations, educational and scientific communities. Associations that leverage this relationship with convention bureaus can also gain access to important tools and strategies. This experience base with bureaus may boost the overall event design and combine with particular current and future trends that perhaps fit within the overall event objectives and goals. However, caution and careful analysis of these proposed strategies and activities is paramount. By combining links with government and city bureaus, associations can gain greater access to local communities, which in turn may result in increased interest and possible avenues for sponsorship.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Community awareness of non-mega events being hosted within a local city has, traditionally, been limited and generally invisible. For the majority of small, medium and large events, community engagement pre, during and post event is absent. For many associations the prime focus, energy and resources are directed at the delegate. Generally, associations get on with doing the job and they don't spend a lot of time communicating with their local community with what is on and the contribution it makes to the local community. Associations and PCOs are very good at talking 'to themselves' but need the expertise and access that convention bureaus, local governments and venues have to mainstream media to tell the community

what happens in their city and their venue. Associations and PCO's need to be the champion of getting this message out to the wider community. This element, however, comes with a time-resource-cost imperative, and therefore needs to be part of the event design goals and objectives.

EVENT DESIGN & RISK MANAGEMENT

Embedded within any effective event design is the adoption of critical risk management identification, analysis and mitigation strategies. Risk management policies, procedures and education/training should flow out of the identification of the need for the implementation of risk management as an element of the goals and objectives of event planning. Unfortunately, there is nothing 'trendy' or 'cool' about adopting risk management as a core element within event design – however it is vital. The success or failure of your event may be predicated on the risk platform supporting the event process. This risk platform developed for the event should form the basis of identification of 'pain points' or weaknesses that may impact on plans or trends to be implemented within the event.

Early detection of risks that may limit, impede or harm the event should reduce future issues relating to cost blowouts, non-compliance matters, legal action, or negative media scrutiny coverage. Realistic expectations need to be made within a risk management context. For example, all too often local associations involved with an international associa-

tion have to reconcile the demand for a percentage of the revenue for the international partner regardless if the event turns a profit or not. Many international associations will not share the risk even when their demands are made to the local organising committee. There needs to be a balance and an open and honest communication channel between all the stakeholders so that all the groups have an opportunity to make money.

Therefore, given that the reporting of risk events such as political, social, economic or environmental in nature have become a frequent source of interest to the media, government, communities and the business sector, it makes good event management sense and practice to not only ensure that risk management is both visible and practical. Whether it deals with venue selection and access, safety and security for the event, food handling and delivery, or event content conflict with opposing groups or communities, risk management is not an option, it is a non-negotiable requirement. Associations, bureaus and venues can't control or know of all risks for their event. Nor can they control risks that might happen outside of their event environment. However, sound event design ensures that all relevant stakeholders in the event understand and are aware of the potential possibilities for something to go wrong.

This risk management philosophy takes onboard the colloquial terms of dealing with the 'known knowns', the 'known unknowns' and the 'unknown and unknowns' – to paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld. Pre-warned is pre-armed.



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The article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Sarah Markey-Hamm, Chief Executive Officer, ICMS Pty Ltd, Melbourne, Australia. ICMS, established in 1969, is a boutique conference management company that specialises in forging long-term relationships with its clients culminating in outstanding successes for all stakeholders.

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What Do You Do When the Unexpected Happens?

You are sitting at your desk, preparing the final materials for your organisation's Annual Meeting that is just two weeks away, when your phone rings. You answer, and a very friendly voice says that he is the General Manager of the hotel at which you are going to hold your upcoming meeting.

(Note: If there is one thing that I have learned in my many years of association management and meeting planning, it is this: when it's two weeks before your Annual Meeting and you are getting a personal call from the General Manager of your meeting hotel, it is NOT going to be good news.)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Levin, CAE, CSP has more than 20 years of experience as an association executive and is also an internationally-known speaker and consultant to the nonprofit and association community. He currently serves as Executive Vice President of the Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, an international trade association, and as President of B.A.I., Inc., his speaking and consulting firm.



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The GM starts off telling you how much he was looking forward to hosting your meeting (*note that he said 'was'*), but that he needed to inform you of a '*situation*.' It seems that his hotel was the target of strike by a couple of local hotel workers unions, and they had walked off the job. That alone would have probably caused your meeting to run a little less smoothly but there wouldn't be too many inconveniences. The real problem he continued, was that the other employees refused to cross the picket lines of the striking workers, so the hotel was being run strictly by administrative personnel (*probably none of whom could make a bed or cater your meeting*).

Given that it was too late to try to find another hotel, and they couldn't guarantee what level of service they could provide, he was offering a you chance to cancel your meeting with no penalties.

I told you it wasn't going to be good news.

We all have contracts with cancellation clauses that cover things like natural disasters, strikes, wars, etc. The problem is these clauses almost always address the financial concerns and liabilities, but we (*association executives*) have to deal with much more than just the money.

Our organisations have a lot of actual work that gets done at these meetings. We have speakers that have been secured; we have Annual Business Meetings required in our Bylaws; we have Boards and officers that have to be elected; we have trade shows that have been scheduled for years in advance, and the exhibitors are not only a huge part of our budgets, they are also our partners in providing value to our members.

I could go on and on.

Not to be trite, but it is fact that we live in a very uncertain world. No one likes uncertainty, but we have to deal with it. Here are some things I would recommend you think about as (*it seems*) uncertainty is now the norm.



ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN

This doesn't mean just having insurance to cover financial losses. It means having a full checklist of things that will need to be done if (*heaven forbid*) the event - *any event* - gets cancelled. Ask yourselves questions such as:

- Who will notify everyone?
- In what format?
- Is your legal counsel being consulted at all appropriate steps?
- What part does each staff person have?
- Who has the authority to make which decisions?
- How much input does your volunteer leadership have?
- How (*and who*) do answer your members' questions about what they need to do?
- How are refunds going to be handled?
- What's the time frame?



DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Just because you have a plan, don't assume everyone knows what it is and where to find it. Cancellations are not unheard of, of course, but they do happen fairly infrequently. There has almost certainly been a big turnover of staff, and definitely volunteer leaders, since your plan was created. Be sure to review it as part of your meeting preparations with everyone necessary. Check to see if anything needs to be updated, etc.

3 INTEGRATE YOUR PLAN INTO YOUR ORGANISATION'S MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE.

Go back and look at your organisation's Bylaws and Policies. When was the last time they were updated? Do they still have terms in them like '*members must be present and voting*' to conduct business or hold elections? Why not change them to anticipate cancellations and allow for electronic voting in certain situations?



HAVE OPTIONS READY FOR YOUR MEMBERS/ATTENDEES

Part of your plan should include (*where appropriate*) a way to give your members at least a part of the value they would have received by coming to the meeting/ event/ conference. Can you schedule an online educational package so members can hear and see some of the speakers at a future time? Could you work with exhibitors to do product and service showcases before or/and after the educational sessions? Could you hold the Annual Business Meeting online with voting and question and answer options?



TRY TO TURN THE POTENTIAL DISASTER INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE

Are there really any positive outcomes of a cancellation? Nothing is going to replace the excitement or professional value of your meeting, but there are a couple of things to consider.

A | When you develop a cancellation contingency plan, get your insurance carrier/agent to be a part of the discussion, or at least send him a copy and ask

for suggestions. If you have a plan, and not just a policy, you may be able to negotiate a lower rate on your insurance.

B | Instead of only asking members how they want their refund, ask them if they want their refund. Could you offer them the choice of a refund or having the refund credited toward their registration for the next Annual Meeting (*or another event*)?

Once your staff financial officer and accountant get up off the floor, remind them that yes, there will be a lot of bookkeeping to do to keep the money straight, but there will be a lot of bookkeeping to do to refund it, too. By offering the credit option three things happen: one, your cash flow problems may not seem so bad; two, you now have (*potentially*) a lot of attendees pre-registered for next year; and three, when those who take the cancellation credits fill out the registration for next year's event, you send them a credit memo ("*Don't forget to deduct the fees carried over from last year*") rather than an invoice. Risk management is all about anticipation. Try to envision everything that could possibly go wrong, and then think about what you are prepared to do if it does.

If you are like me, you probably have some work to do.



Russia

Open to the World



MOSCOW, A WONDERLAND

It has been nearly four months after the FIFA World Cup, but I could still feel the lingering warmth of the event. The Nikolskaya street where FIFA fans celebrated the victories of their teams leads us to the world-famous Red Square, located perfectly in the core of Moscow, gathering most of the city's significant relics such as the walls of Kremlin, the state history museum, GUM Shopping centre etc., and of course the iconic Saint Basil's Cathedral should not be missed. Its multicoloured fusion of the onion domes reminds me of a wonderland of colourful candy floss and creamy ice creams.

We checked into the **Crowne Plaza Moscow World Trade Center Hotel**, which is located in the heart of Moscow. The hotel is connected to the **Congress Center of World Trade Center**, possessing 30 meeting halls and 14 restaurants with seven types of international cuisine. Providing the optimum convenience for any kinds of events, it earned its well-deserved moniker of a 'Business Living Complex'.

A towering giant sits across the Moscow River – the second tallest of the neo-classical Stalin-era 'seven sisters' – the **Radisson Royal Hotel**, also known as

Following the successful footprint of FIFA World Cup 2018, Russian Convention Bureau organised its first International Press Tour (from September 30th to October 6th) to present Russia's business event-driven regions – Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Rostov-on-Don and Sochi.

Reported by Vivian Xu



the Ukraina. Built in 1957 and renovated in 2010, there are 57 original sculptures from the Soviet Union Era decorating the hotel. 497 stylish rooms and luxurious suites reflect the elegance and iconic architecture of the historic building. Most importantly, the Mercedes Bar on the 31st floor (with a panoramic view of Moscow) is an irresistible selling point.

The **Expocentre** is just a convenient five-minute drive from our hotel. A proud member of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), as well as the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC), the Expocentre devotes tremendous efforts into MICE events from home and abroad.

Featuring 32 modern multifunctional halls equipped with state-to-the-art audio systems, Expocentre has attracted large events, such as the 4th Forum of Russian and Belarusian Regions (which President Putin has taken part in); the 68th FIFA Congress; and other large corporate events with up to 8000 delegates in banquets, etc. My favourite meeting hall is the 12,204m² Pavilion Number 1. The pyramid-shaped glass roof provides natural light during the day and let stars light up the place in the night.



HQ'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Radisson Royal Flotilla Yacht
Seeing all the significant sights of Moscow on a 2-hour yacht trip while enjoying a delightful meal, isn't it appealing?

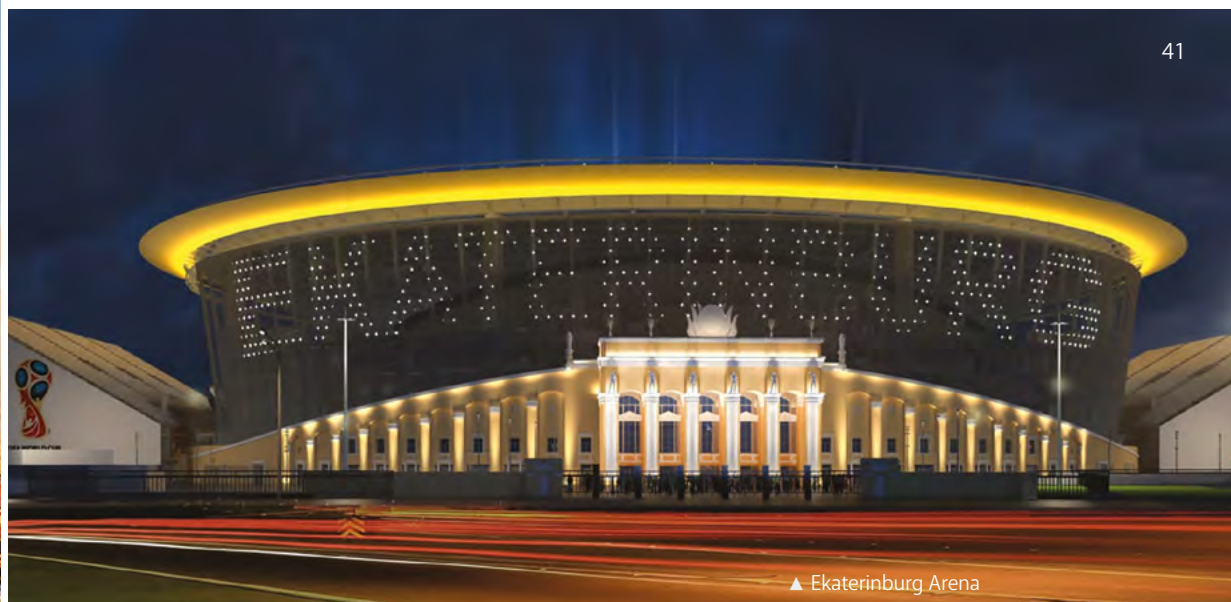
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▲ Ekaterinburg Arena

EKATERINBURG, A NEW RISING STAR

Regarded as the gateway to Asia, Ekaterinburg is situated in the centre of the Eurasian continent and it ranks as Russia's 4th largest city. It is also the largest cultural, scientific and educational administrative centre in the Ural region.

The **Ekaterinburg Arena Stadium** was built in 1957 and fully renovated (*according to FIFA standard*) in 2017. Where modern meets history, the Arena kept the monumental walls from the original Soviet building and constructed their state-to-the-art stadium on top. With a capacity of up to 35,000 seats, including 12,000 temporary seats, the Arena successfully held four FIFA intergroup matches this year.

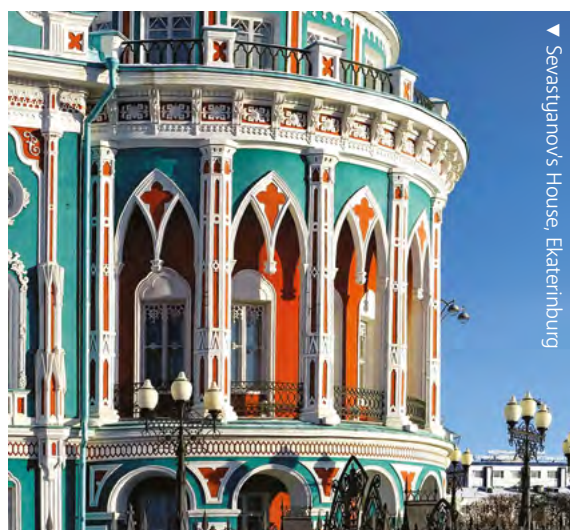
As the candidate of the World Expo 2025, Ekaterinburg is ready to put on a show. **Ekaterinburg-EXPO** is the largest exhibition centre in the Ural region. It offers a charming combination of up-to-date exhibition space and convenient location for international delegates, (*to spice up your expectation*) they even have a unique helicopter landing site at your disposal!

For a quick stopover in Ekaterinburg, the **Angelo Hotel** in the airport is the ideal choice. The hotel management team is committed to organise innovative and creative events. The Angelo Hotel is surely a favoured event venue with nearly 500 events per year.

DID YOU KNOW?

After the match between Japan and Senegal (*which took place in the Ekaterinburg Arena Stadium*), not only all the Japanese fans kept their area tidy, but the dressing room of the Japanese team was clean as a whistle.

The **Angelo hotel** hosted a group of Peruvian fans during FIFA World Cup. After their defeated by France, nearly 200 heartbroken Peruvian fans arrived at the hotel lobby. No Russian meals could satisfy them but hamburgers and fries, so the magical hotel kitchen prepared 200 sets of hamburgers and fries within 2 hours and served drinks till 6am to mend all the broken hearts.



▼ Sevast'yanov's House, Ekaterinburg

ROSTOV, A CITY ON THE DON RIVER

Southern Russia's largest and most cosmopolitan city, Rostov-on-Don, has one million inhabitants overlooking the beautiful Don river. It is the gateway to the Northern Caucasus region, and one of the eleven host cities of FIFA World Cup.

The **VertolExpo** (*connected directly to the Topos Congress Hotel*), moves ahead with a philosophy of creating an effective journey for event organisers. Equipped with 3 exhibition halls and 12 conference rooms, VertolExpo won awards in the category "The best regional congress centre" among the organisations of all regions of Russia in 2013.



42 SOCHI, A NATURAL BEAUTY

Facing the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea and sprawling along the Caucasus Mountains, Sochi, the second longest city in the world, President Putin's personal choice for confidential meetings on his private yacht.

We arrived in a rainy night when the city was peaceful and quiet, and checked into the **Golden Tulip Hotel** next to the Sochi River. Having travelled from cosmopolitan cities, the sound of the rapid flowing river provided much-needed inner peace.

The next day, the country's main resort city revealed its beauty under the sun. Thanks to the natural advantage of the location, Sochi successfully held the XXII Winter Olympic Games and XI Paralympic Games in 2014, and inherited cutting-edge sport facilities in the coastal and mountain clusters. Moreo-

ver, the Russian Formula 1 Grand Prix in Sochi which started from 2014 will run (*at least*) till 2020. Sochi has proven its successful transformation from a tourism destination to a business event city.

The city's infrastructure was built in harmony with the natural attractions. The Rosa Hall Center located in the **Rosa Khuntor Resort** area is one of the main multifunctional convention venues. During the visit, the 70th meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (*CITES*) Standing Committee was taking place in the centre with over 700 participants. The welcome hall on the first floor can host up to 1,400 people in cocktail style, and the second floor covers a meeting space of 1,000m², with 10 breakout meeting rooms. The 5-star Radisson Blu Hotel is just a 5-minute walk.

The **Social and Cultural Center Galaxy** is a fun zone where your excitement will

be lit up immediately as you stand on the LED floor of the glowing galaxy with a gigantic gently-rotating planet hanging above the entrance lobby. You'll find a big conference hall for up to 950 people (*in theatre style*) and a rooftop terrace for welcome reception with the panoramic mountain view.

In 2017, the Gorky Gorod mountain resort welcomed its first world-class entertainment venue – **Sochi Casino**. The concept of this project was inspired by the best casinos in Las Vegas. Their seven individual luxurious VIP gaming halls and the biggest conference venue which can accommodate up to 2,000 delegates make it a stand out. Also worth a mention is the stunning **Brunello fine dining restaurant** in the casino which offers an unforgettable and gorgeous fusion Eurasian cuisine – *give their Burrata with spicy plum and sweet cherry confiture a try and you will know what I am talking about!*



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▲ Sochi Skypark Bridge



ICCA Announces FIEXPO as Spanish “ICCA Language Champion”

During the General Assembly at the 57th ICCA Congress in Dubai, ICCA announced FIEXPO Latin America as the first “ICCA Language Champion”, marking the launch of ICCA’s first venture into providing multilingual services to its members. Providing Spanish translations of ICCA’s most important advisory publications and digital resources, the “ICCA Language Champion” programme will ensure more ICCA members have access to valuable meetings industry expertise in their native languages.

ICCA, the leading global organisation for international association meetings industry, has traditionally used the English language as its main mode of communication, but with the diversification of the association meetings market in recent years, the association recognised the growing need for industry resources for non-English speaking members of their community.

In partnership with FIEXPO Latin America, they launched the “ICCA Language Champion” programme to ensure language was not a barrier to meetings

industry professionals accessing the association’s popular knowledge publications. A Spanish version of the association’s website is made available on ES.ICCAWORLD.ORG, which includes Spanish translations of some of its most important advisory publications on international association meetings.

ICCA Interim CEO Dennis Speet said: *“The ICCA Language Champion programme was born out of a desire to reach out beyond the English-speaking community in the meetings industry and make our knowledge resources available to professionals who do not possess strong English language skills. In doing so, we hope to become more inclusive, while extending the ICCA profile in Latin America and other Spanish-speaking countries and regions. We thank FIEXPO for being the first ICCA member to join us in pioneering this new initiative. We hope that is the beginning of similar partnerships for other languages”.*

FIEXPO Latin America Director Arnaldo Nardone said: *“A strong commitment to improve the development of the meeting*

industry in Latin America by the creation of this bridge that unites all Spanish speaking countries whiting the ICCA world community”.



EVENTOS LATINOAMERICANOS

Latin American and Caribbean Meetings & Incentive Magazine

This article was provided by EVENTOS LATINOAMERICANOS, the only publication specialised in the meetings and incentives market with coverage and distribution in Latin America and the Caribbean. A strategic partner of Headquarters Magazine.



Eventful Cities Featuring: **The Festival of Failures!**

Next ECM Spring Meeting “Eventful Cities” will take place in Edinburgh, on February 13-16, 2019. The unmissable conference programme will tackle both the successes and failures of some urban events’ organisation.



Urban events are awesome communication platforms and can generate great public excitement and boost the soft power of the city. Moreover, big events bring with them increased economic turnover, and – if conceived and executed strategically – they might boost your city’s international brand and stimulate urban development both physically and socially.

Events can be a great way of manifesting your city for a global audience. In the cultural economy, small is often beautiful and what is local might go global. Pamplona, Davos, Kassel and Park City – with original and exclusive content, even the smallest of towns can be world cities for a few days every year. Events have the power to make nowhere places go everywhere. If you thought the name Sochi was a new ice cream, a Japanese rock band or perhaps an advanced yoga position, the Winter Olympics 2014 should have taught you otherwise.

Yet, as it turns out, the major events business can also be a minefield of public dispute and an ugly waste of taxpayers’ money. For host cities, major events in culture, commerce, science or sports have become a complex and high-risk business with many pitfalls and diverse stakeholder interests.

The fully loaded two-day conference with leading international experts, event owners and selected international show-cases will provide attendees with all the

insights and inspiration they need to cultivate the event scene in their city. The conference will present event leaders and creatives from some of the world’s leading happenings and dissect the strategies that made them successful.

But it will also uncover the dark side of the moon with a “festival of failures” where brave survivors of epic disasters in event management will share their experiences and valuable learnings. Indeed, some events just don’t go as planned and three examples will be presented during the conference:

First, Wonderful Copenhagen veterans Emil Spangenberg and Peter Rømer Hansen will give their version of the hybris and nemesis that brought an epic catastrophe to Wonderful Copenhagen... and list everything they learned from the project from Hell aka the Eurovision Song Contest 2014.

Then another Nordic example. For decades, Göteborg & Co has been a leader in hosting megaevents as an integral part of the destination strategy. However, in 2017 the city got severely burnt on a European horse show. Now, the city is well back on the horse, and Camilla Nyman, former CEO of Göteborg & Co will look back and share the lessons for the future.

Finally, Fêtes de Genève is the big, traditional summer festival in the Alpine city by the lake, but in 2016 and 2017

the party resulted in a serious financial hangover that killed the fun. After a year on garden leave, Philippe Vignon will be back from the sack and happy to share his – *now former* – CEO confessions for the common good!

There may be no universal risk management key but somehow the experiences and lessons learned by these former ECM members will help the ECM Spring Meeting conference attendees.

All of this will unfold in the world heritage city of Edinburgh, Scotland’s proud capital and “the world’s festival city” on February 13-16, 2019. For longer than a lifetime, Edinburgh has made cultural, sporting and commercial events the principal ingredients in the city’s efforts to connect and communicate with the world. The Edinburgh International Festival, Festival Fringe, and the famous Military Tattoo have become signature events with a global outreach and a massive touristic attraction that helps drive the number of visitor arrivals to outnumber the population of 500,000 friendly locals with a ratio of almost 10:1. Still, the city was very recently ranked the most attractive city in the UK to live and work in and it is easy to see why!

Registrations are now open on ECM Website.

EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING
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FEAT.

Robert Govers,
Festival of Failures,
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ECM SPRING MEETING

EDINBURGH, FEBRUARY 13-16, 2019

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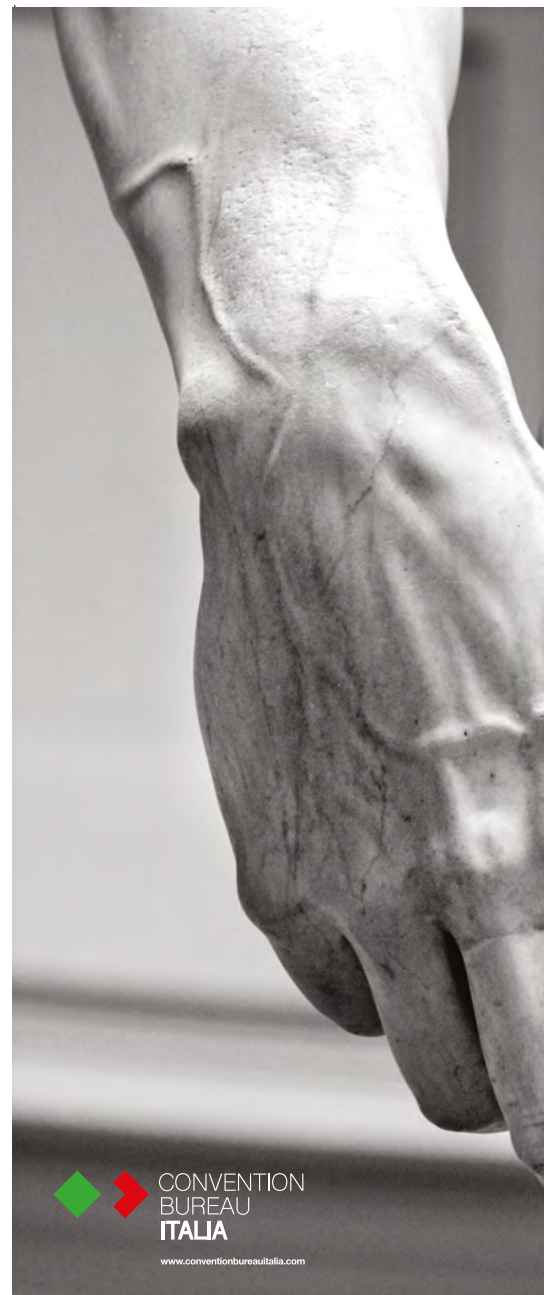
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MEET EUROPEAN CITIES



Italy Has Joined Hands

When the Convention Bureau Italia announced 'Italy at Hand' from the promise of creating the most interactive MICE event to ever be held in Italy, the Headquarters Magazine was instantly interested in becoming a part of the first edition as International Media Partner. I can tell now that **'Italy at Hand - The Event'** was all this and more thanks to the dynamic collaboration of the bureau's many partners.

Marcel A.M. Vissers reports



From 1 to 3 November, 45 international buyers from 18 countries and 48 qualified Italian suppliers gathered in Bologna to see first-hand everything Italy has to offer to the meetings industry, the event generated 888 business appointments. For many of the participants, this was their first visit to the city. What an experience, what a breath of fresh air this city is!

Being able to attend an event in an Italian palazzo is already a great experience in itself. But, being able to attend Italy at Hand in the historical Palazzo Re Enzo, the chosen venue for the business event, set the atmosphere to reach the great success of this new MICE format.

For me, Convention Bureau Italia (CBIItalia) scores well in the meetings industry on an international level for two main reasons. Firstly, this convention bureau is unique in Europe, because the government is not involved in it. It consists of a variety of partners, who undertake joint promotion activities and offered their services to devise a passionate marketing programme. This is almost unheard of in Italy. Secondly, Convention Bureau Italia created a brilliant branding with the clever (*and so true to Italians*) concept of 'hands'. This event is the logical outcome of the marketing campaign 'Italy at Hand' which was launched at IMEX Frankfurt 2017 by CBIItalia and Top Agency TerraEvents Italy.

Lorenzo Pignatti, President of TerraEvents Italy, explained from A to Z how they managed to do this. Their story, which is told with hands, the same Italian hands they use for almost everything, is of capital importance in this framework. How to capture the essence of Italy so the rest of the world can understand the message? Which logo or image is best suited to present the new Meetalty?

The partners were not interested in throwing the classics overboard, they really wanted to promote themselves in a different way, with hands that connect everything. After several months of discussions, the bureau's partners decided that Hands are a very important part of Italy, because as most people are aware, they are used in a unique language of gestures, which is internationally famous: a real symbol of Italianness in the public imagination. As Lorenzo Pignatti explained it so succinctly, *"we started to play with our hands, developing a new format to put Italy solidly on the map at international meetings. To this end, we invited conference organisers to present this new language."*

In my opinion, the happiest face during this event was that of Carlotta Ferrari, the dynamic President of CBIItalia. During the pre-event activities at Palazzo Re Enzo, she managed to show the participants very clearly how Italy has



A UNIQUE NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU

I know of very few national convention bureaus that run on private funds and are self-financing. Convention Bureau Italia is a very unique partnership of 121 Members of the Community and more than 2,000 Italian Suppliers represented. This business partners have joined forces to promote Italy around the world.



FOR MORE INFO
ITALYATHAND.COM
CONVENTIONBUREAUITALIA.COM

changed tack as a meeting destination: *“For us at CBItalia, this event represented a dream we have had ever since we began this activity, spurred by our enthusiasm for our work and for our love for our country. Italy at Hand is a new original and interactive MICE format. The Bologna Convention Bureau was our host destination for 2018 and I hope to be able to present our host destination for 2019 as soon as possible to you.”*

The many participants thought the event was a great success and will remain a success for many years to come. *“What a lovely experience to be able to rediscover Italy like this”,* people said. More generally, all the participants and exhibitors appreciated the efforts of Gemma Biagiotti (*Communication and Marketing*

Manager of CBItalia, the General Event Coordinator for Italy at Hand) and the organising team under the supervision of Tobia Salvadori, bureau manager of CBItalia. The spirit of the event was also apparent in the many social events, including the welcome dinner in Palazzo Popoli (*Museum of History of Bologna*), Palazzo Isolani and the Gala Dinner at Palazzo Gnudi.

I can assure our readers that at the end of the meeting, many people shook hands with each other, which was the original intention of the conference (*and the ultimate objective of the meetings industry*): **to extend hands.**

Next year’s Italy at Hand will take place in Rome, on 7-9th November 2019.

▼ President of Convention Bureau Italia Carlotta Ferrari interviewing Eataly World founder Oscar Farinetti



EATALY WORLD

The World's Largest Agri-Food Park

— a Unique Experience in Bologna



If someone wants to learn more about Italian agriculture and cuisine, then Eataly World is a must-go place, where one can immerse in a world of Italian aromas and tastes. During my stay in Bologna for 'Italy at Hand - The Event', I had the opportunity to visit FICO (*which means cool in Italian*) Eataly World. I was most impressed by the largest food park in the world and its founder Oscar Farinetti, a colourful personality and owner of the high-end food mall chain Eataly. But he is much more than that, he is one of the most successful entrepreneurs world-wide. In the framework of 'Italy at Hand', Mr Farinetti was interviewed by the president of the Convention Bureau Italia, Carlotta Ferrari. An interview that told the unusual story of Italy and its place in the world.

This is for me one of the remarkable take-outs of the event, it was also one of the very few times that I heard a businessman speak so glowingly about the promotion of this country. That's the reason his company collaborates so closely with Convention Bureau Italia, and the reason they are jointly promoting Eataly as a sustainable brand with respect to tradition but looking to the future, creativity and innovation.



ABOUT THE PARK

This impressive park comprises of 2 hectares of open-air fields and stables, that are home to more than 200 animals and 2,000 cultivars. Here you can visit 40 farming factories, and see how meat, fish, cheese, pasta, oil, beer, sweets, etc., are processed. In addition, you can taste samples of the best Italian cuisine at FICO's 40 restaurants and refreshment points. The easiest way to get around this huge site, is to hop on one of the six educational themed 'rides' guided by one of the FICE Biodiversity Ambassadors. Every day, the park offers up to 30 events and 50 classes in the onsite classrooms, theatres and learning facilities. It is also possible to plan meetings and conferences at FICO's fully equipped Congress Centre, which can accommodate anything from 50 to 1,000 people in its meeting rooms.



FOR MORE INFO
EATALYWORLD.IT/EN



What we can expect from ICCA's new leadership?

James Rees, Executive Director of ExCeL London (*and recently elected ICCA president at the 57th ICCA Congress*) shares his journey, motivations, and objectives.



HQ: Can you share with our readers your professional experience and personal ICCA journey?

JR: Just like many of us in our industry, my career in meetings and events began by accident when I was asked to join the conference organising team during my first job out of university. From there I moved to my first venue management role at the Wembley Stadium complex and have been in the industry ever since, which has led me to my current position as Executive Director of ExCeL London, where I'm responsible for the sales and marketing strategy of the Conference & Events Division.

Being a part of the ICCA community has changed the direction of my life professionally and personally. From early on in my ICCA journey, which began with me attending my first Congress in 2004 in Cape Town, I wanted to become more involved in shaping ICCA's future direction and development. To achieve this, I joined the UK & Ireland Chapter Committee in 2006 and became its Chair in 2008. In 2012 I joined the Board of Directors after being elected Co-Chair of the Sector Venues; I had the honour of being re-elected twice in 2014 and 2016, before becoming the Vice President in 2017. Throughout my time helping to lead our association, my passion

for ICCA and the ICCA family has simply grown and grown!

In fact, I can truly say that I understand the meaning of the ICCA family! I met my wife Claire at the ICCA Congress in Shanghai in 2013, and together we have two daughters, Ava and Beatrix.

What moved you to run for the ICCA Presidency?

My involvement in ICCA has given me so much, a point I emphasised during my campaign and in my Presidential Speech in Dubai. As we enter a crossroads in our history and come up against the inevitable challenges posed by a rapidly-changing political and economic world, I feel a personal responsibility to do my utmost to give back, and to support and steer ICCA members as we adapt to this transition.

I'm immensely happy that ICCA members have placed their faith in me; I tried to be clear and consistent in my campaign, which I hope compelled them to vote for me.

What are your plans for ICCA in your tenure?

As well as increasing turnover, I want to continue to push forward with the strategic plan agreed by the Board

of Directors in 2015, with a focus on helping ICCA to become a more agile organisation, particularly with regards to how we deliver our services to members on a regional level. Despite the European region being our biggest, our other regions are growing at an unprecedented speed: for example, the Middle East Chapter grew by 70% between 2016 and 2017! It is therefore becoming increasingly crucial for us to enhance the benefits of membership for our diverse global network.

I also plan to increase our advocacy activities and our communication of the importance of business events. Our industry delivers billions to the global economy and changes the world for the better; it's time for governments to understand, support and celebrate this!

In addition, I want to encourage the creativity and talents of the younger future leaders of our association. ICCA already runs programmes for young meetings industry professionals, like the Forum for Young Professionals, but I want to expand on the opportunities we already offer. By creating a shadow board of young ICCA members, we can bring fresh ideas to ICCA's strategy and make sure our young professionals are fully represented at all levels.



An Invaluable Ambassador for Business Tourism



HQ: How was the experience of being the President of ICCA?

NFP: The opportunity given to me by the ICCA members to lead the association for the last 4 years has been a truly humbling, inspiring, educational and enriching journey which I will always value.

Were you able to put in place all the ideas you had from the beginning? Can you share with us some of the ideas or changes that you didn't manage to implement?

Whilst serving as ICCA President for the last 4 years, I have served on the ICCA board and also as the African board representative for 6 years. So, in total I have been on the board working with Leigh Harry and Arnaldo Nardone

With 25 years of experience in the conference industry under her belt, the beloved former President of ICCA, Nina Freysen-Pretorius, continues to raise the profile of MICE industry, and live up to her PCO's mission and vision of *"bringing people together to learn and aspire"*.

plus various board members. Making changes and implementing new ideas and adapting to the world we live in is not something that any one person can do – it is and have been a team effort.

Working with the previous two presidents and various board members, we have established the regional offices so we can be closer to our members, and can respond to the education and lobbying needs. In addition, we have been working and will continue to work under our new president to ensure that our association structure, approach and engagement is best suited to serve our members.

Establishing a closer engagement with associations and enhancing the ICCA brand and our members objectives with the UNWTO and other government bodies is something that requires more work and continued activism. Without this recognition, Business Events, Conference and Conventions will always be in the shadow of Tourism

What do you think about the potential and developments of the association market in Africa? What are the strengths and challenges of African associations?

Considerable education and support are needed to grow and improve the international association sector within the African context. With other more essential basic challenges such as infrastructure development, health and governance, more work and continued awareness will have to take place.

However any or all association growth, improvements and engagement will result in tremendous benefit to the communities and the continent. We therefore have to continue with constant support, education and knowledge sharing.

Are you able to give our readers more information about the sudden departure of Martin Sirk, ICCA's former CEO, which happened a couple of months ago?

Martin Sirk had been with ICCA leading our association for the last 16 years. Martin contributed towards the growth of our membership, travelled extensively to raise awareness of the work our members are doing and laid the foundation for what ICCA is today. However, based on the continued growth strategy and our association objectives, the ICCA board agreed that a new approach in leadership was required.

What are your wishes for the future of the organisation and the newly elected President of ICCA?

I am committing my support to the new ICCA president, James Rees, for continuing the work that the ICCA board has started and implementing the changes that are needed to ensure that ICCA continues on the right path. Our commitment to creating member benefits whilst at the same time being sensitive to our environment, equality and a broad democratic leadership.



Remarkable Women in the Meetings Industry

Marcel A.M. Vissers reports

A few weeks before the opening of the 57th ICCA congress in Dubai, the outgoing president Nina Freysen-Pretorius shared with me about her farewell gesture to the women in the Meetings Industry. “What kind of gesture?” I curiously asked. Her answer was quick and clear:

“As you know I will be stepping down as president in Dubai and as a farewell gesture I want to acknowledge a few of the remarkable women within ICCA. What we have done, is ask the ICCA Board to nominate members, as well as the chapter chairs and regional directors – female members of the ICCA family who have given their time and shared their passion about our industry. And we have some wonderful names and nominees!”

The second female ICCA president is keen to show her gratitude to her industry partners from across the world for their support during her time as president of the global meetings industry association, Freysen-Pretorius reached out to colleagues in the ICCA leadership for their nominations of women they consider to be the “unsung heroes”, leaders, innovators, pioneers and advocates of business events. This initiative is particularly important as women still represent a minority in the association’s board of directors – 6 out of 17 board members are women.

Nominated for a variety of reasons, each woman was ultimately chosen for their dedication to the ICCA community and meetings industry, and because they exhibit the values and actions that the association encourages and upholds. The Inspirational ICCA Women are:

Alice Au

Business Events Toronto, Canada

Anne Wallin Rodven

Honorary Member, Norway

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier

Wonderful Copenhagen, Denmark

Carina Bauer

IMEX Group, UK

Joyce Wittelaar

Rotterdam Partners-Convention Bureau, The Netherlands

Kitty Wong

K&A International Co., Ltd, Taipei

Maria José Alves

Cascais Convention Bureau, Portugal

Nonnie Kubeka

Gauteng Convention Bureau, South Africa

Roslyn McLeod

Arimex Pty Ltd (INCON Group), Australia

Ulrike von Arnold

Vienna Convention Bureau, Austria

Nina Freysen-Pretorius paid individual tribute to each recipient of the Inspi-

rationnal ICCA Women award during her President’s Choice (ICCA Congress) session on Monday 12 November, presenting the ten women with their awards on stage.

She shared during the award ceremony: *“Through my role as ICCA president, I have continuously sought to champion and encourage the achievements of women in business events. Gender equality in the workplace globally remains a challenge with unequal opportunities and remuneration packages a reality. Without female role models and champions seen as leaders, presidents and activists as examples, women will not be able to take their rightful place in society at different levels.”*

To quote ICCA’s Interim CEO Dennis Speet, *“We all know women amongst our industry colleagues who go above and beyond to share their time, expertise and energy in supporting ICCA’s many initiatives and member opportunities. Without them, we would not be able to provide such a nurturing, welcoming environment for our global membership. Too often the achievements of women in our international and diverse industry go unmentioned; I am proud today honour these ten fantastic women for their monumental support and work to further our association’s values. Congratulations to our Inspirational ICCA Women - to them we owe a large part of our continued success!”*

Antwerp: A Small But Valuable Diamond

The city of Antwerp, known for its port activities, its petrochemical industries and its diamonds, might not immediately ring a bell as a frontrunner in digital innovation. Yet the Flemish port city is exactly that. The city administration extends a hand to start-ups, research partners and its industrial hinterland in several projects that elevate Antwerp to the status of one of Europe's most promising smart cities. To great success: start-ups are booming, digital connectivity abounds, and the city is slowly but surely carving out a position for itself on the international stage.

Antwerp welcomes some of the largest seagoing vessels in the world, and houses Europe's largest integrated oil and chemical cluster. Yet the image of the lumbering giant – *strong on logistics and industry but characteristically slow on adaptation and flexibility* – doesn't fit the bill, at least not anymore.

Over the course of the last several years, the Antwerp administration developed a start-up-friendly support system and an ambitious smart city vision. It is a facilitating partner in an adaptive ecosystem, involving industrial corporations, research institutes, the educative bodies, business mentors, venture capitalists as well as the Antwerp citizens themselves. Add to that Antwerp's legacy as a hub of creativity, with international acclaim in the areas of fashion, modern arts, design and architecture; an extra explanation of its magnetic appeal to innovative companies.

START-UPS

The city administration acts as a facilitator of private projects, clearing administrative obstacles to create a solid footing for starting businesses. It has scaled up the number of business savvy yet tech-minded university graduates to give much-needed oxygen to its innovative workforce. In general, it encourages students with big ideas to take the plunge and become entrepreneurs, by offering them a co-work-

ing hotspot to mix and mingle free of charge. The city provides financial support to Antwerp entrepreneurs wanting to sharpen their entrepreneurial skills and their network abroad, and is a relevant partner in several Europe-funded projects on the exchange of best practices and the support of SME's.

Antwerp is host to an ever-expanding array of business incubators and accelerators, such as Start it @kbc, The CoFoundry and The Birdhouse, accommodating and coaching those new digital entrepreneurs. A significant share of new co-working spaces that offer an *experience*, combining work and leisure on top of the common office amenities, have followed in their wake.

A centrepiece of the city's policy on innovative entrepreneurship is Start-upVillage, a picture-perfect growth space for promising local start-ups. It accommodates them for up to three years, giving them comfortable breathing room to look for international opportunities. Several business incubators have set up shop at the same location. They bring in start-ups of their own, offering coaching, expertise of experienced business mentors and networking opportunities. Together with the city's hospital network, but also some of its private partners such as Agfa Healthcare, UCB, Cronos and Microsoft, the city hosts Flanders' only e-health incubator – *BlueHealth Innovation Centre* – in StartupVillage, coaching

and investing in start-ups building wearable, applications in elderly care and patient management platforms.

SMART CITY

The city's trademark tag '*open for business*', perhaps rings truest when it comes to Antwerp's unique smart positioning on the European stage. The city invests significant resources in connectivity, a future proof open data strategy and digital interaction with its citizens. But rather than becoming just another smart city, Antwerp chooses another path. It created a partnership – *named Capital of Things* – with the Port of Antwerp, the University of Antwerp and Imec, a world-renowned institute for nanotechnology and digital technologies. Together they're transforming Antwerp and its port into what's soon to be Europe's largest real-life Internet of Things living lab.

As such, Imec is outfitting the city with data transmitters and sensors that gather data on – *for instance* – traffic flows or air quality. The port experiments with drone technology and smart trucks, and is opening up its logistics and shipping data on an open platform, accessible by other companies. The city's IT department is building an open data management and visualisation platform centralising all data flows. All of these initiatives combined, make Antwerp a very attractive prospect for Internet of Things companies that want





▲ Havenhuis, a gem by world renowned architect Zaha Hadid (Foto Lebak Photography)

to test a particular sensor or application in real life. Antwerp actually invites companies to test their technologies into a specially designed Smart Zone.

In a more traditional fashion, Antwerp invests in smart digital services as solutions to any modern city's challenges. Clogged at times by road works and rush hour, the city works together with private suppliers of smart multimodal mobility solutions. It invests in smart bins and smart garbage trucks. And it has put durable technologies and renewables on the centre stage, with infrastructure projects such as 'Nieuw Zuid' (*self-sustaining smart homes*) and Blue Gate Antwerp, a brownfield redeveloped into a highly sustainable business park.

The city, its Capital of Things partners and Agoria unveiled The Beacon in September 2018, just ahead of the international technology festival SuperNova. The Beacon is an innovation hub for

companies developing products and services through the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence. It offers offices and flex seats to start-ups, scale-ups, tech corporations and researchers, bringing innovative minds together under the same roof. Managed by the experienced Belgian ecosystem builder Co.Station, The Beacon will accelerate its residents' development in the domains of smart city, smart logistics and smart industry by enhancing their business models, stimulating their R&D and providing them with a dense network of potential partners and clients. Combined with the city's living lab premise, The Beacon garners significant international attention to Antwerp as a hub for smart industrial solutions.

Being able to show what's on offer, is obviously part of the game. Antwerp's next economy is a perfect companion to its more traditional economic engines in attracting major international conventions. The brand new confer-

ence Flanders Meeting & Convention Centre Antwerp, can host all mid-size conferences up to 2000 delegates. A few examples of upcoming conventions in the field of technology are Cleantech Forum Europe, imec's Imec Technology Forum, and the Internet of Things Convention Europe. Antwerp is as well present at international exhibitions like Smart City Expo World in Barcelona or World Cities Summit in Singapore.



VISITANTWERPEN.BE/EN/BUSINESS



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Las Vegas, Truly a **Convention Paradise**

The world's famous glitz convention city, Las Vegas, is in a stage of constant development and innovation, spear-headed by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA)'s commitment to the ability of reinventing this MICE destination.

Vivian Xu reports

ON THE STRIP

It was a windy day, as the plane hurtles down the runway experiencing strong turbulence, the glamorous Strip lit up the sky and sprawled across the city. “Welcome to Las Vegas!” the Captain said.

I quickly made my way to the luxurious **Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Hotel**. Operated by MGM International, this 43 storey hotel resort has 3,209 rooms and 24 elevators! One of the hotel towers operates as Delano, where I in-

dulged myself in the fascinating fluorescent-painted panoramic view of Vegas city from the Skyfall Lounge located on the top floor. Adjacent to the hotel is the 2,000,000 square feet **Mandalay Bay Convention Center** and the 12,000-seats **Mandalay Bay Event Center**, which hosts a number of various music, sport, and martial arts events.

I personally enjoyed taking the free Mandalay Bay Tram, which is easily connected to the other sister properties of the hotel as well as the Strip. Be warned

that Vegas is known for its magical distance on the Strip, the walking distance can be much longer than it looks – a 3-minute-drive from Mandalay Bay to Park MGM can take you 25 minutes to walk!

The partnership of MGM Resorts International and Sydel Group had produced a new distinct result – the **Park MGM Las Vegas** redefines Las Vegas's hospitality with a fresh experience. Joined by the Sydel's NoMad Hotel, the resort brings fine dining experiences, lounges, shops and innovative meeting spaces





all under one roof. This 20-year-old property devoted itself to cater to the innovation of hospitality. Having adopted a new “Stay Well” concept after the completion of their renovation last May, the hotel truly pays attention to the well-being of guests and infuse wellness into their hotel rooms and meetings spaces, minimising the impact of travel fatigue and maximising the experience at the same time.

With a tender mix of pale green and light pink colour, the **Madison Meeting**

Center generates an instant residential feeling. It houses about 3,000 custom-designed guest rooms, open floor plans (*which gives guests a space to socialise*), 10 flexible meeting rooms, and two self-service community lounges integrated with high tech audio and visual equipment and rolling whiteboards. The Madison Meeting Center caters specially to custom meetings of 10-50 occupants, which is ideal for classroom trainings, certifications, workshops and any other tailored events.

Newly opened in the past October, **The Ideation Studio** possesses 10 unique environments and 4 distinctive meeting room configurations. With the goal of creating high engagement for corporate retreats and brainstorming sessions, the Ideation Studio is furnished with high tables and chairs, allowing audiences to have similar eye level with the speakers for a better learning conversation.

Collaborating with Cisco company, the All-In-One Collaboration Board can conduct wireless presentation, meeting room collaborations, secure connections to virtual meeting spaces for continuous workflow during and after meetings, as well as high resolution visual and audio conferencing. Park MGM is honoured to be the first property of MGM Group to present the idea of Ideation Studio.

What event planners cannot afford to miss is the intimate and authentic outdoor public spaces in the hotel, **the Central Park Terrace**. Accommodating up to 5,200 guests across 30,000 square feet, it delivers an ultimate sophisticated vibe with their open-air foyer which makes it the best choice for an inspiring and cosy networking event.

IN THE DOWNTOWN

Perhaps the overwhelming Strip would wear you down after a couple of days,

that’s when you should go downtown to the tiny and old part of Las Vegas. Comparing to the stunning Strip, the downtown may seem seedy like an outlaw, but hidden treasures abound. Fremont Street is home to most of downtown’s hotels and casinos, and also the original casinos of Las Vegas which existed before the Strip.

I was introduced to **The Mob Museum**, the National Museum of Organised Crime & Law Enforcement, a non-profit organisation with a mission to advance the public understanding of organised crime’s history and impact on American society. Presenting true stories of organised crime from vintage Vegas to the back alleys of American cities and across the borders to the entire world, the museum exhibits the artefacts found, in a restored 1933 former courthouse and post office building located just minutes from Fremont Street.

The Historic Courtroom (*furnished with original furniture*) can host up to 200 guests in reception style. The Speakeasy space (*which was used as a hard-to-find place during the prohibition era*), is built around a well-stocked bar and space for a stage for evening entertainments, can accommodate up to 90 guests in reception style. The Mob Museum is a popular event venue which provides a memorable and iconic experience. The entire museum is available for buyout, combining 3 floors the maximum capacity is 600.



FOR MORE INFO

LVCVA.COM

MANDALAYBAY.COM

PARKMGM.COM

THEMOBMUSEUM.ORG

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Hangzhou,
inspiring new
Connections

BUSINESS EVENTS HANGZHOU | 

[HTTP://WWW.MICEHANGZHOU.COM](http://www.micehangzhou.com)

Hangzhou MICE Event Roadmap



Awards & Honours

- Chinese Top Ten Best Business Cities (Forbes) from 2004
- Top-ten happiest cities in China (State Statistical Bureau) 2007-2018
- Top-five urban security in China (Blue Book of public service)
- China Top-ten smart city (MOHURD) 2012
- China's Best Tourist City (UNWTO from 2006)
- The best sample city for global tourism of 2017 United Nations World Tourism Organisation
- World Tourism Alliance headquarter located in Hangzhou (2017)
- Top-ten tourism cities in China 2018
- Top-ten tourism cities in Asia 2018



Meeting Organising & Promotional Performance

Data of conference consumption of more than **5.4** billion yuan

More than **220** batches of award-winning enterprises

Total income: **304,134** billion

More than **20** batches of more than **700** professional conference buyers

Hangzhou M.I.C.E. Association already has

206
Members

90
Hotels

29
Travel
Agencies

56
Conference
Companies

31
Meeting Service
Providers of
Others

The Future's Right Here

— Alibaba Computing Conference 2018

Organised by Alibaba Group, one of the top influencers in the global stage of the technology industry.

The Computing Conferences 2018 was held in different Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Chongqing, Guangzhou and Wuhan. Hangzhou – *where the headquarters of Alibaba Group is located* – was also (*proudly*) one of the event's hosting cities. The conference took place on 19-22 September to great success in Cloud Town, Hangzhou.

The overall scale and impact of the conference has reached a higher level compared to last year. The conference attracted in total 75,985 scientific and technological elites from home and abroad. A total of 125,626 delegates participated in various activities during the four-day session. The conference provided a panoramic view of Alibaba's technology commitment by inviting most influential speakers of the world data technology and sharing the vision of the future on cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

NEW TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

This conference consisted of two main forums, 20 summits such as ATEC developer challenge conducted by Ant

Financial, AI Summit, New manufacture summit and other 151 sub forums. Alibaba Group has announced a series of new technological achievements and business cooperation programs, such as Smart Mobility Initiatives, Roadmap for Frontier Technology Research and Innovative Cloud Solutions for the Olympic Games.

INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION DISPLAY

In order to create immersive, scenario-based experience of professional exhibition, the conference gathered international top science and technology enterprises to work closely to present interactive exhibition. Various of interactive exhibition programs were implemented during the exhibition, including the Starry Sky theme exhibition, Cloud Surfing Water World and KOB Global Robot Fighting Competition, etc. More than 200 international companies took part in the exhibition.

INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES

Apart from the interactive exhibition program, numerous innovative activities

took place during the conference, such as The Cloud & Xiami Music Festival, The Cloud Geek School, The Cloud Intelligent Games, etc.

The Cloud & Xiami Music Festival, known as Silicon Valley Music Festival in China, merged with leading scientific and virtual technology, brought an extraordinary live performance to the conference. Advanced tech-installations showed on the stage, such as AI intelligent capture, 200 glittering UAVs, and intelligent robotic arms.

CHALLENGES

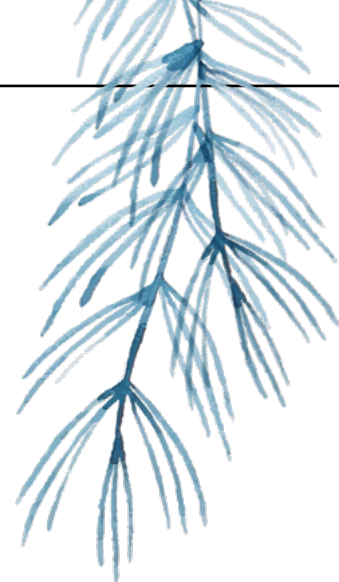
Though a thing to celebrate, the unprecedented scale of the conference was the biggest challenge. The newly developed and launched conference service APP designed by Nail-Based provided non-stop bus transfer service, catering ordering, personalised agenda booking services, customised private calendar, exclusive traffic navigation, check-in guidance and real-time view of the forum, restaurant inquiry, exhibition area display, etc. The aim of the Nail-Based conference service APP was to offer delegates a convenient one-stop service during the conference.

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Recommended Routes



2 Business Tour

HIGHLIGHTS

- Famous local enterprises and universities (such as Alibaba, HIK VISION, Zhejiang University and China Academy of Art)
- Longjing Tea Village
- Famous social location such as Chenghuang Pavilion, Qiangwang Temple, and Hangzhou Cuisine Museum, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Visits to well-known universities and enterprises in Hangzhou for knowledge exchange, a buffet party can be held at the hotel or social location.

1 Cultural Tour

HIGHLIGHTS

- West Lake
- China Silk Museum
- The Imperial Street of South Song Dynasty and Hefang Street
- Chenghuang Pavilion
- Wangxingji Fan Museum
- Doctor Hu Qingyu's Clinic
- The Grand Canal

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Attend a themed evening banquet in West Lake
- Watch the performance of "Enduring Memories of Hangzhou" and "The Romance of the Song Dynasty"
- Practice Taiji
- Trace the ancient canal by boat





4 Innovation Tour

HIGHLIGHTS

- Xixi Wetland Creative Industry Park
- LOFT49 Studio
- Kaiyuan198 at West Lake Creative Valley
- Zhijiang Cultural Creative Park
- West Lake Digital Entertainment Industry Park
- The Cloud Town

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Visit Kaiyuan198 at West Lake Creative Valley
- Admire artistic buildings in China Academy of Art
- Take a boat on the West Lake
- Exercising at Air Runway in the Cloud Town

3 Romance Tour

HIGHLIGHTS

- West Lake
- Leifeng Pagoda
- Louwailou Restaurant
- Xiling Seal Engraver's Society

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take the bicycle around West Lake
- Cook Hangzhou-style dishes at the local household
- Selfies with West Lake sceneries and at Xixi Wetland Park



VIII Distinctive **Conference Hotels & Venues**



Hangzhou International ↑ Expo Centre

Located in the Qianjiang Century City (*Xiaoshan District*), on the south bank of Qiantang River and east of the Third Qiantang River Bridge, Hangzhou International Expo centre is affiliated to Hangzhou Olympic and International Expo Centre Xiaoshan Construction Investment Co., Ltd. and has been entrusted to North Star Events Group, the largest convention and exhibition output management group in China, for its management and operation.

Famed as the main venue for the G20 Hangzhou Summit, the Hangzhou International Expo Centre had a remarkable performance in its first operational year — hosting 1804 conferences in 2017, and totalling exhibition area of over 3.62 million square metres. By being a member of various international associations (*including ICCA, UIA, IAEE, UFI, AIPC*), the venue has fostered a stronger presence on the international stage.



Cloud Town ↑

The Cloud Town International Convention & Exhibition Centre is a 197 million yuan (€25million) investment creatively designed as an open ‘3D park’ full of attractions, and it covers an area of 42.7m² and total construction area of 20,150m². It has an exhibition area of 2,300m², a lecture hall with a capacity of 3,000 people, and 15 small to medium-sized conference rooms. The Centre has a meaningful colour palette — its

white facade represents a cloud; the blue and green external decorative bars symbolise science and technology (*blue sky*) and innovation (*green field*).

This project was launched on 25th June, 2015, and construction was completed on 17th September within 85 days! Its official opening on 14th October 2015 has spawned the term ‘West Lake Speed’.



EVENT CASE STUDY

The 22nd International Forging Conference

The 22nd International Forging Conference was successfully held at the Hangzhou International Expo Centre on September 17—22, 2017. The conference was attended by nearly 300 foreign representatives from 18 countries and 300 domestic and Taiwanese representatives.

The IFC is an important exchange platform, which not only promote the progress of technology, equipment, tooling, heating and heat treatment, as well as experience exchange of marketing and business management. Integrating with the world, it also drives the com-

munication and cooperation among entrepreneurs, scholars and excellent workers to co-build the platform which belongs to the forging colleagues of the world.

During the conference, 40 domestic and foreign enterprises (*SAT, ASİL ÇELİK SANAYİ VE TİCARET A.Ş., Transvalor S.A., Actemium Maintenance Presses, Fagor Arrasate, CONDAT, etc.*) displayed their latest products and technologies in the designated exhibition area, which provided delegates with an intuitive update of the latest industry development and progress of new technologies.

The International Forging Association is supported by twenty national and regional associations and organisations, such as the European Forging Alliance, the American Forging Association, and the Japan Forging Association. The International Forging Association began in 1953 and has a history of 60 years. The conference is held every three years and is rotated by national and regional forging associations.

Distinctive **Conference Hotels & Venues**

Intercontinental Hotel Hangzhou →

Located in the beautiful and scenic Hangzhou Qianjiang New Town, the InterContinental Hangzhou is nestled in the pride of the city, 25km away from Xiaoshan International Airport. Its unique design and magnificent architecture make the hotel one of the city's newest landmarks. The InterContinental Hangzhou has five restaurants in various styles as well as over 30 meeting rooms of different sizes — which includes a pillar-less 1,780m² grand ballroom and two auditoriums. It also houses a spa, 384 spacious rooms, a club lounge and clubrooms for delegates to unwind.



Park Hyatt Hangzhou ←

Designed by award-winning New York duo Yabu Pushelberg, Park Hyatt Hangzhou has been conceived as a contemporary Jiangnan-style residence, referencing the local South Yangtze River (Jiangnan) area. Inspired by the former home of Hu Xue Yan, a legendary merchant during the Qing Dynasty who was hailed as a “Hong Ding Shang Ren (*Red Merchant*)” for his contributions to Chinese society, Park Hyatt Hangzhou mirrors the home of the Hangzhou connoisseur who loves travelling, art, culture and, most of all, hosting friends from around the world.

Park Hyatt Hangzhou's event facilities includes a 9,849 square feet (915m²) conference centre, three restaurants, a bar/lounge, and complimentary wireless internet access, onsite-parking, indoor pool, steam room, and 24-hour fitness centre. This luxury hotel also has a nightclub, a rooftop terrace, and provides tour/ticketing assistance.



The Dragon, Hangzhou →

The Dragon is Zhejiang's premier luxury hotel, and the first hotel in the world to be fully equipped with groundbreaking high-tech intelligence systems. The 110,000m² hybrid establishment marries modern elegance with traditional Hangzhou architecture style, providing an ideal relaxation destination for business and leisure travelers alike.

The hotel contains 566 guestrooms, which includes a wide range of suites such as the superior rooms, deluxe rooms, ladies' superior rooms, executive floor, executive suites, deluxe suites, dragon suites, chairmen suites, and presidential suites. The 13 function rooms have a total 4,500m² space (including two 1,200m² ballrooms), and the intelligent management systems enhances efficiency and productivity of business meetings. There are also cafes, a cigar lounge, and a veritable smorgasbord of restaurants for gastronomy indulgence such as the all-day-dining Chinese restaurants which makes every meal a refreshing experience. From the menu design to the interior décor, The Dragon's special attention to details ensures an unforgettable experience.



Shangri-La Hotel, Hangzhou ↑

Shangri-La Hotel is located beside the picturesque West Lake (*by car it is five minutes from the downtown; 15 minutes to the railway station and 45 minutes drive to Xiaoshan international airport*). The hotel has 382 beautifully appointed guest rooms and suites located in two wings (*the East and West Wing*), and three villas in a separate annex. The spacious rooms (*some of the largest among Hangzhou luxury hotels*) are tastefully designed to complement the alluring natural setting. The Horizon Club rooms offer an enhanced level of service, com-

fort, and convenience for busy travelers. The hotel is also suitable for seminars and celebrations besides conferences, with 21 meeting and function rooms and a traditional fixed seating auditorium which accommodates 600 guests.

The hotel strives to meet all kinds of requirements from guests. The professional and experienced staff is always available to offer complete service and support from picking up meals to decorating venues for private parties of ten people or large business meetings.

Post-G20 Developments

The eleventh G20 Summit was held in Hangzhou on September 4–5, 2016, coming to China for the first time since its establishment in 1999. This significant global event put Hangzhou on the map, and brought new momentum to the development of the city’s MICE industry.



In addition to the hardware improvements Hangzhou landed many large-scale events post-G20, further benefiting stakeholders by providing more business opportunities for local businesses. In view of the characteristics of the international academic conference bidding process, Hangzhou has set up the Hangzhou International Conference Bidding Service Centre, assembling the destination’s resources (*like hotel, conference centre, transportation company, scenic attractions, PCO, DMC and exhibition organiser etc.*) to facilitate efficient communication with the various professionals in the MICE ecosystem. Adhering to the principle of “market sharing, sharing of results”, these professionals and the government convene to classify and analyse bidding clues to determine the bidding plans for their coalition of bidding centre members, industrial enterprises and the Hangzhou Conference Ambassador.

The series of upgraded measures rolled out by the government have created a conducive environment for the development of Hangzhou’s MICE industry. As more high-profile international conferences descend onto this poetic empyrean, a higher emphasis on the specialisation and service standard has also been imposed. The local award-winning enterprises have taken the initiative to adapt to the new requirements, by recruiting more professional and creative planning talents.

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 HANGZHOU,
 INSPIRING
 NEW CONNECTIONS

“NEW ECONOMY” MICE DESTINATION



Hangzhou seizes these global events as an opportunity to promote their high-quality resource integration and preferential policy implementation. In 2016, business meetings and conferences accounted for 14.6% and 5.9% of visitors to Hangzhou, up 0.8% and 1.3% respectively over 2015. With the influence of the G20 summit, MICE has grown into a force that cannot be ignored in Hangzhou's tourism.

Increasing Bidding Odds Through Resource Integration

Digital economy is the foundation of Hangzhou, reflecting the current height of urban development. The digital economy is the result of "Internet +", and its trove of wonderful possibilities that stem from the infinite imagination of the future. Hangzhou has vigorously conducted major scientific and technological research projects, as well as promoting innovation platforms such as Zhijiang Laboratory, West Lake University, Alibaba, and Yunqi Engineering Institute to achieve world-class levels.

Subfields such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, Internet of Things, Network data security, and integrated circuits have contributed to a number of original innovations and world-class theoretical results in AI chips, new databases, intelligent networking, intelligent driving, and quantum computing. The establishment of a world-class digital economy and technology hub has unleashed new ideas and technologies in China, and the effect ripples throughout the world.

These initiatives are an important part of the "Hangzhou Conference Ambassador" program, which was launched in 2011 to identify leading figures in Hangzhou's key industries, to integrate resources from all aspects and actively introduce high-value international conferences to advance Hangzhou's MICE development.

The title of "Meeting Ambassador" refers to an elite in an industry who can use his or her appeal and influence to recruit professionals for the city. "Hangzhou appoints meeting ambassa-

dor by hiring member, director, executive director, etc. who has a certain influence. Through the relevant information and work provided by the conference ambassador, the city has brought a large number of high-level and large-scale international conference projects with remarkable results." Mr. Zhao Hongzhong, Deputy Director of Hangzhou Tourism Commission said.

Hangzhou has hired a total of seven batches of 52 conference ambassadors to date, covering the fields of medicine, science, engineering, education, art, agriculture, management, law, and history.

Hangzhou will continue to explore new value-added MICE products with a broader global perspective and further enhance service standards; elevating the global influence of Hangzhou's MICE brand to let the world rediscover the lyrical charm of Hangzhou and its values — *to cement its status of a world-class conference destination.*

Take a Poetic Journey through **Hangzhou**



LOCATION

Located in the north-eastern part of Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou is less than 180 kilometers away from Shanghai. The capital city of Zhejiang Province and the political, economic and cultural centre of the province.

AREA

16,596km², consisting of ten districts, one County-level city, and two counties.

POPULATION

9,468 million

CLIMATE

Subtropical monsoon zone with four distinct seasons. The annual average temperature is 16.2 °C, and the annual average rainfall is 1,500 mm.

WI-FI

i-Hangzhou covers all public area

CONNECTIVITY

By Flight — Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport is the third largest air portal in East China, with routes reaching more than 100 cities in China and abroad. The airport is 27km from the city centre.

By Railway — Hangzhou East Railway Station is one of the largest railway hubs in Asia. The high-speed railway connects all major cities in the country, including the fastest 4hrs and 23mins train ride to Beijing and 45mins to Shanghai.

Hangzhou is one of the seven famous ancient capitals cities in China and a key scenic tourist city and historical and cultural city determined by the State Council of the People's Republic of China. Established in the Qin Dynasty as a county government, Hangzhou is steeped in more than 2,200 years of history.

Known as the "paradise on earth" thanks to the natural haven of picturesque mountainous landscape and rivers. With natural landscape, rich history, cultural art performances, fashion, shopping, celebrated gourmet food, leisure and entertainment options, the abundant tourism resources ensure that Hangzhou satisfies every business delegates' needs.

The poetic West Lake, the Grand Canal, and the Xixi National Wetland Park are significant natural attractions, while the cultural landscape includes Xiling Seal Engravers Society, former residence of famous people such as Hu Xueyan. The West Lake and the Grand Canal (both are enshrined as UNESCO World Heritage Sites) highlights Hangzhou's cultural heritage, a valuable treasure of China — 30 million visitors come to Hangzhou each year to gain a deep insight of this representative culture. The iconic West Lake is an embodiment of the traditional and distinctive beauty of a perfect mix of humanity and scenery. The Grand Canal on the other hand is the longest (1,776 km) as well as the oldest canal or artificial river in the world, it intertwines with the regular lives of native civilians. Additionally, the scenic and peaceful Xixi National Wetland Park (nicknamed "wetland paradise") is the first and only wetland park covering urban life, agriculture, and culture in China.

Art performances showcase Enduring Memories of Hangzhou and The Romance of the Song Dynasty. As for shopping, the Women's Fashion Garments Mall delights, but it is mandatory to visit the tea and silk shops. Hangzhou is the "land of fish and rice" and "land

of tea" in China — renowned for the production of the famous Longjing tea. The abundant resources and traditional cultural diversity offer great possibility for the MICE industry.

Positioning Hangzhou as a prime destination for international conferences is one of the city's key goals, as part of the overall mission to transform Hangzhou into an international gateway city. With its extensive resources, Hangzhou is uniquely positioned to develop the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) sector.



As a representative of China's new era of high-speed development, Hangzhou has become an important engine to boost economic development. Over the last few years, Hangzhou's MICE sector has transitioned from one that drew in clients based chiefly on its resource advantages to one that utilises its industry advantages as a strong selling point. The Internet, the culturally-focused creative industries, financial services, healthcare, as well as renewable and sustainable energies are among the roster of industries that have started emerging in Hangzhou.

The destination is devoted to the knowledge economy, integrating it with the development of the digital economy to boost the magnetism of their historical and cultural opportunities. Hangzhou is marching towards the "First City of

China's Digital Economy". As a distinctive tourism destination, Hangzhou has abundant and high-end tourism facilities offering MICE planners with a wealth of different options.

The G20 Summit was an opportunity to comprehensively upgrade their reception hotels, venues, scenic spots and itineraries. The International Expo Centre is ready to receive large-scale exhibitions. High-end hotel clusters such as West Lake, Qianjiang New CBD, Xixi, Wulin CBD, Binjiang District, Xiaoshan District and Qiandao Lake have been created.

Currently serving a China's major MICE destination, Hangzhou has put great emphasis on MICE which has become a sector of importance within the tourism industry in Hangzhou. Additionally, Hangzhou government and its relevant sectors have established close cooperation to guarantee the smooth organisation of large MICE events in terms of transportation, public relations and publicity, food supply and service quality monitoring and other arrangements. Furthermore, the government has issued a series of incentives and initiatives to support a faster development of the MICE industry.

After the launch of its new brand "Hangzhou, Inspiring New Connections" in 2016, Hangzhou's MICE industry has gained attention nationally and abroad as an international destination, and developing rapidly. Escalating its influence, Hangzhou established itself as a high-quality MICE platform which has organised more than 220 batches of award-winning enterprises to participate in 28 domestic and international professional conferences and exhibitions; and invited more than 20 batches of more than 700 MICE buyers to personally experience Hangzhou's rich tourism resources. The city will explore a broader global vision in the future to discover new value-added products and further enhance service standards.

HANG ZHOU,

2018

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MICE
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