



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

Headquarters

MAY 2020 #94

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

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IETA: The Era of Climate Action is Now

Women Who Advance Associations in 2020

Montreal: Home for Sustainable Associations

A Taste of New Zealand For the Future

Special Feature:
Meetings Industry's struggle in Face of the Novel Coronavirus
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Zürich, a Capital of **Climate Neutrality**

Zürich is one of the most sustainable convention destinations in the world, ranking third in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS) 2019. Climate-neutral excursion activities, hotels with sustainability certification, short distances, and a highly efficient public transportation network: the city provides the perfect framework conditions for holding sustainable events.

On the move in a climate-friendly manner

Zürich’s high quality of living is unique. Its first-class mix of mobility options plays a considerable role in this regard. This is firmly anchored in the political strategy of the City of Zürich and encompasses the resource-saving use of energy and the protection of the environment. Thanks to committed players in the field of mobility, the carbon footprint of group events in Zürich is also reduced.

The place to be green

In Zürich, event managers will find the necessary conditions to design socially, ecologically and economically sustainable congresses, meetings and incentives. For example, 73% of all hotel rooms in Zürich are certified for sustainability.

Beside the Umwelt Arena, which is well known as the most sustainable event location in the world, the refurbished Convention Center in the heart of Zürich, will re-open in March 2021 and is very much committed to sustainability as well.

A long tradition

Zürich Tourism has intensively been committed to sustainability since 2010. As Switzerland’s first climate-neutral tourism organisation at that time, the destination had around ten years to develop the complex topic of sustainability to make it accessible and understandable to all employees. Step by step, a wide variety of measures were implemented. For example, the compensation of all unavoidable CO₂ emissions or a guideline for sustainable internal events. The Convention Bureau team is committed to bundle all relevant information related to the topic of sustainability in MICE. To make this information available, a webpage with tricks and tips for sustainable event planning went live recently.

A positive future

“Zürich Tourism has been working on sustainability since 2009. Experts have been pointing out for some time that sustainability will become increasingly relevant, especially in the MICE sector,” says Ricarda Jacomet, project manager at the Zürich Tourism Convention Bureau. “However, we have only been experiencing concrete demand for about a year. We have reacted to this and have also expanded the necessary know-how in the congress team. In addition, the first concrete measures are being implemented.”

“The new topic page ‘Sustainable Congress City’ goes into the evidence as to why Zurich is the perfect place for sustainable events and offers event organizers practical tips and checklists. The Congress Office team supports event organizers from planning to implementation, currently, for example, a team from the ZHDk on the occasion of the ELIA Conference in November 2020, which is to be particularly sustainable. The new “Sustainability” filter function in the Venue Finder, for example, is also practical. This makes it possible to quickly find venues that have official sustainability ...certification”, ends Ricarda.



**Zürich,
Switzerland.**

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"This is the toughest of the challenges!"



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"Systems Change not Climate Change!"

THE ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

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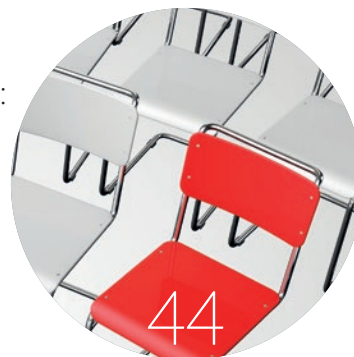
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A Feeling of Unease

Lately I have been struggling with a feeling of unease, particularly when thinking about the future of the meetings industry. A lot has happened to us in a short time! Incomprehensible.

I usually dare to call for help from a brilliant philosopher, when things around me become too much to bear. In this case, it's Voltaire who showed me a solution for thinking about the current situation.

Voltaire once said that - if you have tried everything to pull yourself up out of the mire and aren't able to succeed - there is only one avenue left open to you: go to your garden and here you will find peace again.

Well, I am privileged to have a beautiful garden in the middle of a historic city. Every day, when the sun shines, I come here to think about the future of the meetings industry.

It was, and still is, a very difficult exercise. For instance, I think that there are two things that are of crucial importance to the life of a congress delegate: the ability for people to travel and congregate. And those two things just happen to be prohibited for the time being. How long will this prohibition be in force? This feeling of unease keeps coming back.

I shudder to think that I will have to miss physical contact more and more, that most of the communication directed at me will be electronic and that I will no longer be able to have a drink in the beauty of so many destinations in person. These are difficult emotions indeed.

But I have learned from my garden that nature is reawakened every year. One idea is constantly recurring in my thoughts and that is the virtual explosion of the digital society. Can I draw the conclusion from this that a new future will dawn for the conference world?

In conclusion, here is another quote from Voltaire: "Il faut cultiver notre jardin." Which basically means that we should all take care of our own garden and everything will work out eventually.



MARCEL A.M. VISSERS
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READ MY BLOG
[1B.YT/E38TK](#)



The Era of **Climate Action** is Now

The International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) has just celebrated its 20th anniversary. A non-profit business association, based in Brussels, IETA was established in 1999 to serve businesses engaged in market-based solutions to tackle climate change.



Stefano De Clara

IETA is dedicated to the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and ultimately climate protection. Today, it is the leading voice of the business community on the subject of carbon markets. IETA continually promotes the establishment of effective emission trading systems that are demonstrably fair, open, efficient, accountable and consistent across national boundaries - while it advocates for maintaining societal equity and environmental integrity while establishing these systems.

IETA's 130+ member companies include some of the world's leading corporations in oil, electricity, cement, aluminium, chemical, and other industrial sectors, as well as leading firms in the data verification and certification, brokering and trading, legal, finance, and consulting industries.

On behalf of its members, IETA advocates for an emissions trading regime that results in real and verifiable greenhouse gas emission reductions, while balancing economic efficiency with environmental integrity.

"We contribute to the fight against climate change by promoting and supporting the implementation of ambitious emissions trading systems able to generate a strong and reliable carbon price to drive the shift towards less CO₂-intensive technologies and to ultimately decarbonize our economies," says Stefano De Clara, director of International Policy at IETA.

It's a long story of climate action to fight against global warming. Emissions trading systems help countries and companies with less polluting emissions earn credits for their well behaviour and then



sell them to others. All in all, emissions will eventually be reduced in this way.

“Emissions trading systems, by putting a price on carbon and by placing a limit to the overall emission levels, are a key policy tool to reduce CO₂ emissions and meet climate goals. The price on carbon generated by an emissions trading system gives a clear signal that covered entities can internalize in their business strategy and investment decisions,” De Clara explains.

“With regard to the use of fossil fuels, a price on carbon makes the shift towards cleaner fuels and renewable energy more economically viable and will eventually lead to the phase out of fossil fuels to a level compatible with the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement, meaning reaching net zero emissions around 2050.”

For IETA, the emissions trading system space is quite lively at the moment and a lot will happen in the coming months. Just to mention a few key developments foreseen in the coming months:

- UN negotiations are expected to agree on rules for international carbon markets under the Paris Agreement at COP26, taking place in November;

- China will start operating its announced nation-wide emissions trading system in the coming months;
- As part of the European Green Deal, the EU will work on strengthening the 2030 target for the EU emissions trading system (ETS) and to align the system for the net-zero emissions goal by 2050;
- Emissions trading systems are expected to be implemented by more subnational jurisdictions in the United States and Canada;
- Several countries in Latin America and Asia, including Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Thailand, have committed to design and implement emissions trading systems in the coming months and years.

“We plan to engage with policy makers in these jurisdictions to assist them with the implementation work that lays ahead. We will also help our members navigating these developments”, De Clara adds.

Obviously, challenges are innate in IETA’s work. “The biggest one at the moment is probably the fact that the fight against climate change is still not perceived as a key problem by everyone

and, as a consequence, does not yet have the widespread support it needs.”

For the association, then, a key priority for the coming years will be to build widespread consensus for climate action and carbon pricing. It will be important to clearly communicate the benefits of emissions trading systems and build momentum for the implementation of ambitious climate change policies.

“Action against climate change will be at the forefront for every sector of the economy in the coming years and will involve every business. It will therefore be important to be prepared for the climate challenge to make sure to strive, and not lag behind, in the low carbon ...era”, concludes De Clara.



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“This is the toughest of the challenges: **time to redefine strategies**”

No country in Europe has been as battered as Italy. HQ sat down with **Carlotta Ferrari**, president of the Convention Bureau Italia, who told us about the past, present and future in uncertain times.

How did the pandemic affect your network?

The outbreak of COVID-19 was of course a huge shock not only for the tourism industry, but also for the entire country, at any level. In this dramatic scenario, the meetings industry has been one of the first and most heavily sectors hit by the crisis. As part of the social distancing measures taken by the central government, the prohibition of any public or private event has been introduced. Moreover, the spread of the virus led to a complete stop of international business. All the above were of course necessary decisions to be taken, but at the same time this has put an entire industry under an unprecedented pressure.

However, deep crises lead to new disruptive ideas and this is what we have to do now.

How do you intend to complete what remains of your action plan in 2020?

Our 2020 business plan has included the participation in many international events as well as the organization of many promotional events in Europe and in the US. Unfortunately, most of these activities will not take place.

It is in these moments that if you stick to your previous plans - hoping for the possibility, sometimes and somehow, of reaching your goals in the same way you'd initially thought you are most probably going to fail. This is the toughest of the challenges: the time to redefine strategies, targets, communication tools... and this is exactly what we are doing.

This being said, I am also extremely confident to be able to confirm our main event 'Italy at Hand', which will take place in Matera from the 10th to the 12th of December. We are working on it not only to create a celebration of Italy but also the celebration of the restart.

How are you facing this unprecedented situation?

This situation is pushing us to take care of many different aspects: the relationship with the institutions, the national tourist board, the main industry associations and with our members. We have spent the past few weeks collecting the needs of the industry. Our aim is to predict the different possible future scenarios in order to be ready with the right solutions. We are therefore working on a communication campaign to relaunch the domestic market, we have joined forces with all other industry associations



to highlight the strategic importance of events for our country's economy, we have also prepared some tangible solutions to help our members to restart their business and to communicate.

How are you anticipating the post-Coronavirus period for the meetings industry?

I think that all countries affected by this crisis will go through a similar path. Since no one knows when and how we will be able to travel again, tourism and events will restart with domestic clients and associations first. Most likely, destinations will be hosting international business from the first quarter of 2021. By then, it will be crucial to be ready and able to provide services that meet the new requirements that clients will ask for, in order to guarantee not only a great event but also a safe and healthy environment. Italian companies are already working on this so I have no doubts that we will manage events as well as we have managed this crisis: with full transparency and effectively.





The Chinese Case: Focus on Mutual Support

About 700km from the Chinese province where it all started, Hangzhou has been one of the first locations to feel the impact of COVID-19. People working in the meetings industry soon realised that something had to be done to contain the damage and be ready to start fresh again at the end of the crisis.

Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, TV and Tourism recalls how they managed to respond quickly by organising a campaign, whose total value was eventually 20,000 yuan.

“The epidemic hit us fiercely, only a few days from the closure of Wuhan on the 23rd of January to the virus sweeping the country and medical supplies asking for emergency everywhere. In just a few days, the Bureau, together with the Association, decided to initiate donations through the Hangzhou MICE Charitable Fund and find channels to purchase masks and other epidemic prevention materials. The whole process was also very rapid: the search for mask supplies began on the 25th of January, fund-raising started on the 27th, masks shipped on the 29th and donations in place on the 30th.”

“In the face of COVID-19, the whole society is working hard to fight,” they added. “In response to the call, Hangzhou MICE enterprises are willing

to do what they can. On the one hand, they support the epidemic area to share the national worries. On the other hand, they also demonstrate the social responsibility of the local MICE industry and win the reputation for the long-term development of the industry in the future.”

Frankson Lee, general manager of InterContinental Hangzhou and area general manager at IHG Zhejiang, is optimistic: “With the public’s feelings in mind, we expect MICE’s business to return to normal soon and, of course, our hotel has stepped up our security measures to ensure participants a safe and healthy meeting environment.”

Hangzhou’s recovery plan is based on support.

“In February we did a survey and we noticed most of the events planned to take place in the first half of 2020 were cancelled. Thus, the impact is huge,” a spokesperson of the Convention Bureau told *HQ*.

“However, we regard this as an opportunity to promote the image of the destination as well as improving the operational capacity. We have just finished a 6-day online training programme in the team and in the upcoming days we will start our promotion plan. While the plan will mainly focus on supporting local businesses, we will invite the ‘MICE Ambassador of Hangzhou’ to support the campaign.”

They also shared four tips for other destinations that are now struggling:

1. Make surveys among the local partners is very important. Through the survey you will be able to understand the difficulty of the partners in the sector, in order to help them efficiently. The Convention Bureau should play the role of leader at this moment to guide and help partners;
2. Take this opportunity for online professional training, improving the operational and management abilities;
3. R&D. Gathering date, analysing the situations of RFPs and bidding updates;
4. Be honest with the public about the local COVID situation. This will help build the trust in the organisation and improve the image of the destination.



Before, During and After Coronavirus Worldwide

This health crisis has not only affected the sector of associations but has also shaken the entire structure of the industry. Several convention destinations still resist and try to overcome a long period of uncertainty in their businesses and action plans. Here are the testimonies of four MICE suppliers in the face of this global pandemic.

- 1 How did this Covid-19 pandemic affected your business as a meeting destination?**
- 2 How are you managing this situation in order to overcome the current crisis?**
- 3 What are the strategies that your destination intends to apply to return to its original form?**

DESTINATION DC

BY **ELLIOTT L. FERGUSON, II**, PRESIDENT AND CEO.

1 Obviously, this is an unprecedented crisis that has severely impacted the travel industry. We continue to feel the effect of groups that are unable to meet face-to-face and the climate remains uncertain as the pandemic continues into the spring, which is typically DC’s peak season. The economic impact of lost business booked by Destination DC totals at least \$78.4 million and will likely grow. Large-scale groups that were canceled include the American Urological Association, the National Association of Realtors and the Rock & Roll Marathon.

2 Even with the ongoing crisis, we’re developing a recovery plan. Right now, we’re evaluating our advertising budget and trying to find ways to make sure that when business goes back to normal, we have the resources to promote DC globally and domestically. DDC has been sharing daily statements outlining the latest information with staff to utilize

with clients, members and stakeholders. We are also sharing email updates with its 1,000+ members regularly and actively updating our content on washington.org/dctogether to encourage folks to explore the virtual side of DC and support local businesses from home. On social media, #DCTogether gives us a chance to reflect on things in which individuals can do in our community right now.

3 The pandemic might have a lasting effect on the global tourism industry. Like our travel industry counterparts, Destination DC is being impacted and has to make tough and necessary decisions to remain viable as an organization. Many of the small businesses that help make DC’s tourism industry are faced with closures and relief efforts are crucial from a local and federal perspective. DDC is working with U.S. Travel, Events DC, Brand USA, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and other industry partners to actively develop a strategy



to market the nation’s capital to help mitigate the short-term loss in business and long-term strategic recovery. The team is working closely with its international representation around the world including DC’s top overseas market, China, to be poised for recovery once travel resumes.

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ICC SYDNEY

BY THE CEO, **GEOFF DONAGHY**.

1 The outbreak of COVID-19 is having an unprecedented impact on people, livelihoods and businesses across the globe. Alongside our colleagues in the events industry across Australia, ICC Sydney has been feeling the impact deeply, though in many countries the situation is already much bleaker. With the progressive measures taken over by the Australian Federal Government to protect our country, we now find ourselves in a situation where, all indoor events have been shut down. For venues such as ICC Sydney, this means we are no longer able to deliver nearly all events. In these circumstances adapting to the current situation and looking to the future has proved absolutely critical.

2 One key way ICC Sydney has adapted to the current situation is by shifting our focus to deliver more online events. Our team of experts has set up audio visual services that enable clients to continue to connect with their audiences through broadcast and telecast technologies. As

well as adapting our product offering, our top priority has been retaining ICC Sydney's incredible team, which has been the driving force behind building the venue's reputation for delivering world class events. ICC Sydney is also working closely with industry representative bodies to contribute to lobbying and submissions to the Federal Government for ongoing support for our industry. Finally, I am pleased that even in the current climate our Business Development team continues to work closely with clients who are already looking to the future and starting to place bookings for next year and beyond.

3 I cannot downplay the impact that a pandemic combined with an economic downturn is having on ICC Sydney, the events industry and the wider economy. Until earlier this year, Australia's business events sector brought \$2.5 billion into the economy every month, making it the highest yielding component of our visitor economy. In 2018-19, ICC Sydney



alone generated A\$896 million in direct expenditure for the State. This is why it is absolutely critical that while we deal with and adapt to the crisis at hand, we also keep a strong focus on the future, and our recovery and relaunch as a world class venue. Among all the uncertainty, at some point this crisis will end. Our industry and ICC Sydney, will be at the forefront of local and national economic recovery.

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WONDERFULL COPENHAGEN

BY THE DIRECTOR OF CONVENTION BUREAU, **KIT LYKKETOFT**.

1 There is no doubt that Copenhagen as a meeting destination is going through a very difficult period right now because of the Covid-19 outbreak. Several congresses, meetings and other events have been postponed or cancelled with the result that businesses in the industry are financially strained. Hotels and venues that up until a few weeks ago were close to being fully booked are now forced to send staff home or close temporarily and restaurants and bars are temporarily shut.

2 In the short term, many businesses in the industry have been thrown a lifeline by the Danish government and its Covid-19 economic aid packages that are aimed at preventing redundancies. We are also seeing a great deal of entrepreneurship and creativity among partners in the industry. Thus, restaurants that usually offer fine dining experiences are now offering take away, venues are organising all sorts of virtual events and some city hotels have turned their rooms into home offices while others





have made an agreement to offer their rooms to homeless people. At Wonderful Copenhagen, we have adopted a number of measures to help us get through this difficult time. Some short-term activities have been cancelled, while the long-term focus is being reviewed. The immediate need to assist partners is of key importance and the implementation of new initiatives which will be needed post-corona, are in the planning.

3 Inevitably, the entire world will return to a new normal. It is currently difficult to predict what that future holds, but it is no doubt an opportunity to think new ideas and embrace change. Naturally, a key component of our post-corona strategy will be to revitalise our destination and welcome back visitors. Our goals and activities moving forward will be different to what we originally set out to do in the beginning of the year. The

team within our organisation has proven that it is more than capable of adapting to this evolving situation and change in tasks and scopes.

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TOURISME MONTRÉAL

BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT, **MILÈNE GAGNON**.

1 Our priority is to ensure that our clients are able to move their events with the least negative impact possible. As we speak, our team is working to move and, in some cases, cancel nearly 150 events. These events represent more than 100 million dollars in direct expenditures in our economy. It's important to point out that, while we have responded to several requests to cancel events, we are seeing a lot of requests to postpone events. The biggest challenge is the uncertainty of the situation, and the fact that it can change quickly from one day to the next. This makes it difficult to give accurate information. Another challenge is the fact that all our industry partners, like us, are heavily affected by the crisis, and are operating with reduced staff. Let us be clear, we want to save every booking we can, as long as it's in the best interest of associations and partners. One thing that has been wonderful to see is the spirit of collaboration between CVBs to shift events and make life easier for our clients.

2 We are hopeful that we'll start to see signs of recovery in late summer. It's very

important to emphasize that the job of a sales team, is to feed the future business pipeline for a destination. We continue to do our work and to support associations that are looking for solutions for their 2020 fall events or for future events. With many events being postponed to next year, we already are more confident that it will be a very good year for conventions, as well as for future years. For now, our plan is to ensure that clients affected by the situation have the best experience possible, and to build relationships for the future. We are also working closely with our Team of partners, a coalition of stakeholders in the meetings and hospitality industries, to evaluate different scenarios.

3 We need to promote the meetings industry as one that is resilient and solutions-oriented, and can take on the challenges of an uncertain future. After all, managing the unexpected is what professional meeting and event planners do best. In the medium term, with all the postponed events, we have a few good years ahead of us. Ironically, 2020 was the best year for conventions ever



seen in Montréal and all these groups are looking ahead to the future. But in the shorter term, it remains to be seen if associations will want to attend meetings in person. In the long run, we're optimistic: people will always want to meet and discover new destinations. But to answer specifically your question, we believe that this setback is undoubtedly an opportunity to change, adapt to the requirements for safety, cleanliness, food, technology and showcase the creativity for which Montréal is renown to bring our business to new heights.

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Hangzhou,
inspiring new
connections

Hangzhou

A City of
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 Business Events Hangzhou
www.micehangzhou.com/en

How is COVID-19 Affecting Associations?

When the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) first appeared in Wuhan, China, at the end of last year, no one could probably have imagined what consequences this would have. Yet, three months later, European countries declared a lockdown and all not essential activities were suspended to prevent further spread of the virus and protect the population's health, as well as public health systems.

Many events were cancelled or postponed to an unknown date. Even more after the World Health Organization declared the disease a pandemic on the 11th of March.

"ICCA is constantly monitoring the situation and following the advice of local official bodies, and in some instances events have had to be postponed," Lisa Harrison, marketing and communication executive at ICCA, told HQ. "If we're unable to host in the planned meeting destination, where possible we are making the move to digital and looking for alternative solutions before making a final decision to cancel.

"As for the biggest challenge we are facing, COVID-19 is undoubtedly changing the way we work. In particular, the significant uptake in home and remote working will make us all more open to hybrid meetings and far wider use of tech across our content and distribution. Most importantly though this crisis will cement the power and value of events in the hearts and minds of people around the world."

According to their report, the unfolding crisis has significantly affected the meetings industry with events being postponed, relocated or cancelled.

Since February 2020, ICCA and CIMERT have embarked on a joint research project to bring their connected

expertise together to monitor the status of meetings in the ICCA Association Database. This is part of ICCA's wider initiative to work with CIMERT (Center of International Meetings Research and Training, Supported by ICCA) to track meetings which have been affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.

As on the 20th of March, 393 meetings (out of 4,632 meetings in total) had been canceled, postponed or took place in a new place globally. Among those, 248 meetings were postponed, 128 canceled and 17 meetings took place in new destinations.

According to ICCA's analysis, Europe is the most impacted region compared to the rest of the world (with 168 events affected), followed by Asia Pacific (161) and North America (28). Only 21 events felt the impact of the pandemic in Africa and 15 in South America. Of the 168 European events, 101 were postponed, 61 were cancelled and 6 reselected their destination.

HQ asked four associations about the impact the pandemic is having on them, and on the destinations they had chosen for their events before the virus put everyone in danger.

SolarPower Europe had to postpone the SolarPower Summit that was supposed to take place on the 25th of March 25. They still hope that by September the

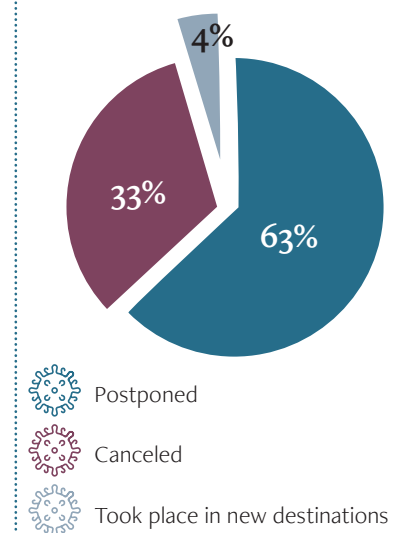
situation will be settled, therefore they have rescheduled the event to the 29th of September, keeping the same destination and venue.

"We took the COVID-19 situation very seriously from an early stage. We prepared a contingency plan for several weeks. Once the decision to postpone the event was finally taken, we didn't face many challenges because everything was already prepared," Charlotte Otten, head of events at SolarPower Europe, told HQ.

"Our guests were relieved to have an alternative option. With the new date we might face the challenge of competing with other established events. To overcome this situation, we chose a date with the least competing events, but if the situation continues nothing can prevent that other events might appear at the same time."

Otten added that, if the situation continues for a long period, companies might have to restrict the event they attend for budgetary reasons. In her opinion, this could lead to less attendance from the corporate side.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON MEETINGS



In fact, nobody can tell when the isolation will be over and when we will all be able to come back to some sort of normality. Official guidelines fix different ending dates, between the first and the second week of April, but scientific estimates and the Chinese experience show another scenario. We may have to wait much longer than a couple of weeks.

Florence Biddelle, secretary general of European Issuers, described in four words the current struggle: “Fighting with the uncertainty.”

“We do not know if, by the beginning of April, the situation will be better, but events that are scheduled for March and April were all postponed to June. However, we do not know if June is a good month to go for.” On the management side, Biddelle added: “Working remotely with a team is a new lesson. How to maintain business like usual, if this situation will last long, remote working platforms shall be invested.”

At this moment, European Issuers don’t see the need to change the destination of rescheduled events. Of course, this will depend on the schedule of the event venue, on the virus situation in the destination, and also on the timing of the travellers (because some companies or organizations do not allow employees to go on business trips in Summer).

They have rescheduled a couple of events and, for the ones that can not be postponed, they will do it through

conference calls. “It is a challenge to do conference calls and it is more exhausting,” Biddelle said. “Fighting with busy lines, it is harder to communicate through calls without seeing faces, problems of concentration.”

Roma Guziak, communications manager at CECE aisbl, insisted that “meetings are of most importance to guarantee the smooth work and knowledge flow within the organisation”.

The events they had planned up until May have been postponed. “We are currently looking into finding new dates and possibly locations,” Guziak said. “We are also researching into organising live-streamed conferences, which may become necessary if the outbreak will not be contained.”

One of the biggest fears is to waste energy in organising something that won’t eventually take place, like it’s been for this Spring’s events. “We do not want to put our efforts into organising an event that will have to be cancelled later,” Guziak said. “In addition, taking into consideration the financial impact of COVID-19 on our industrial sector, we are already foreseeing members’ challenges and restraints regarding travelling & events’ participation in the coming months.”

“We plan to monitor this unprecedented situation and come back to face-to-face meetings as soon as it is safe for participants,” Guziak concluded. “Even in this

time of digital technologies and social distancing, we still believe in the importance of meeting in person!”

The two that were cancelled by Kenes Group will just skip the year, while the plan is to continue with them in 2021. Magdalena Atanassova, Kenes’ marketing communications manager, agreed uncertainty is the biggest issue.

“We are planning for a future that we have no idea if it will be as we imagine it,” Atanassova said. “On the other hand, we are used to dealing with challenges and in our over 55-year history, we have been through quite a few situations where we had to rely on our quick analysis and creative solutions adapted for all possible scenarios.”

Preserving existing relationships will then be key to survive and to manage the great number of events that will likely need to happen at the same time next Autumn. Being in this together will help us level off, as mutual understanding is going to become essential. Also, medical associations will have a hard work to do.

“We may not be the ones to figure out the cure for this virus, but some of our clients are. So for us, it is important to support them more than ever with their associations and conferences, while they have the time and energy to help all of us with COVID-19,” Atanassova concluded. And she added: “Together we stand.”

Region	APAC	EU	AFRICA	N. AMERICA	S. AMERICA	TOTAL
Postponed	111	101	18	9	9	248
Reselected destination	8	6	1	1	1	17
Canceled	42	61	2	18	5	128
Total	161	168	21	28	15	393



COVID-19's Impact on the Tourism and Events Industry

COVID-19 has undoubtedly brought our global economy to a halt. As world leaders are taking increased measures to reduce the virus's spread, businesses across all sectors are experiencing difficulties. Tourism in particular will see a sharp decline in tourist arrivals and international receipts, which are estimated to drop by US\$ 300-450 billion this year according to the *World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)*.

The outcomes of this pandemic are still very blurry and will depend on different assumptions. An efficient government response will lead the economy back to recovery while an inefficient one could result in a global recession. Governments have prolonged quarantines and social distancing measures, which will assumedly slow down the number of cases within the next few months.

Lately, China has seen a decrease in its infection rates following the strict quarantine measures imposed by its government. *Shine News* states that "Over 80 A-level tourist attractions and about 4,200 hotels across Shanghai have reopened, and the city's cultural and tourism venues have received about 1.7 million visits so far since their reopening". On the other hand, Italy and Iran have not been as successful in handling the situation and have seen an exponential increase in death tolls as hospitals get overwhelmed with patients.

Another assumption to take into account is COVID-19's seasonality, which assumes that the virus will become less contagious as temperatures begin rising this

Spring, as was the case during SARS-CoV-1. If this hypothesis stands true and authorities keep their efforts up, worldwide tourism would be able to recover some of its losses by capitalizing on its busiest period of June through September (*UNWTO*).

The tourism industry experienced an impressive growth in the past 20 years, except for the noticeable declines during the SARS-CoV-1 outbreak in 2003 and the

economic recession of 2008-2009. In the worst-case scenario, the current pandemic will result in a recession because of its much larger scale than SARS 1: elements of earlier pandemics (prolonged travel restrictions and quarantines) coupled with elements of a recession (rising unemployment and lower wages) will amplify the dip in tourist arrivals.

In addition to the decline in touristic activities, many international events have been postponed to a later date this year, given that the situation improves by then. Those events include major music festivals that attract hundreds of thousands of attendees. One such event is Coachella, the most famous



and profitable music festival in the world that showcases popular artists over the course of two weekends during Spring Break. According to *Goldenvoice*, “Coachella will now take place on October 9, 10 and 11 and October 16, 17 and 18, 2020.”

IMEX 2020, a large German tradeshow that specializes in the tourism and events industry, has been postponed to May 2021.



Events' Portfolio Director, Shane Hannam, “This is not a decision we have taken lightly; our customers, partners and team in Singapore have worked incredibly hard on the event and while it is disappointing to postpone, it’s imperative that we prioritise the health and safety of everyone involved. We are extremely grateful for the understanding of our customers, partners and team, and for the strong support we have had since announcing this new addition to our portfolio. We also recognise that business has to continue.”

IBTM’s cancellation will also have a detrimental economic impact on its hosted buyers, composed of established companies and organizations such as Facebook, AMEX Global Business Travel, and the CFA Institute, which will not be able to further promote their services. In the same way IMEX started a social media wellness trend, IBTM Asia promises to offer an alternative way of connecting its members despite the current circumstances, as stated by Hannam: “With this in mind, over the coming weeks, we will be creating ways of keeping our community connected to support and collaborate and to keep our world moving during this difficult period.”

The organization has decided to positively respond to the pandemic with a social media movement that promotes an active lifestyle for its members. *An article from Conference & Meetings World* states that “On 13 May, those who would have otherwise attended IMEX in Frankfurt this year are, therefore, encouraged to run, walk or exercise in place as a virtual #IMEXrun, and keep that part of the main event ‘running’ in some form at least.”

IBTM Asia is another major tradeshow in the conferences, travel incentives, and events sector that has been postponed to 2021. According to IBTM

On the brighter side, countries have responded to the economic downturn

with various monetary and fiscal policies. According to the *Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)*, China has reduced reserve requirements for its commercial banks, “which will allow them to loan an additional \$80 billion to struggling businesses”. Many governments have developed stimulus packages to minimize the financial impact of this crisis. For example, Germany will spend 10 percent of its GDP to “bail out struggling businesses, including by making unlimited loans and potentially taking equity stakes.”, while the U.K. government has decided to pay its citizens “80 percent of workers’ salaries for several months to keep companies from resorting to huge layoffs.”. Research and Development has also become a major investment focus for many economies in order to find a cure as soon as possible. In Europe, human vaccine trials have already started in the United Kingdom as well as in Germany. According to *Marketwatch*, “Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock praised both teams for making “rapid progress” and said the U.K. will throw “everything we’ve got” at developing a vaccine.”

This crisis is still in its early phase and it will take months for governments to fully control the situation. Even then, businesses will not completely recover from the financial hurdles brought by COVID-19 and many of them will have to shut down.



Make your **Next Event** a **Sustainable One** at **ICC Sydney**

ICC Sydney's commitment to sustainability runs deep. The landmark convention and event venue on Sydney's Darling Harbour, which opened in 2016 following a major redevelopment, is Gold Certified by the US Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Many of the building's features and fixtures were designed with energy efficiency in mind, and 4% of the venue's electricity use is supplied by a 520kWh, community funded, photovoltaic (PV) array. Water is also a major focus for the harbourside convention centre, with a 200kL rainwater tank serving to reduce ICC Sydney's reliance on the city's mains supply.

And if you look beyond the innovative design features and global certifications, you will find a philosophy grounded in social and environmental sustainability. ICC Sydney as an organisation is genuinely committed to sustainability, and to helping its clients tap into unique programs that contribute to the preservation of Sydney's natural environment and the betterment of local communities.

People, planet, profit

An enthusiastic proponent of the triple bottom line approach to business, ICC Sydney has a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan that would be the envy of many progressive companies. Over the past few years, the organisation has launched a number of CSR initiatives, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), designed to improve the situation on the ground, such as instituting a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to facilitate better engagement with Australia's First Nations population and removing plastic straws from circulation.

In line with SDG No. 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, ICC Sydney committed to collaborating with clients and



▲ ICC Sydney's Edible Centrepieces are transformed by our chefs into nutritious meals for the local Matthew Talbot Hostel.



stakeholders to deliver sustainable and community minded events through its Legacy Program.

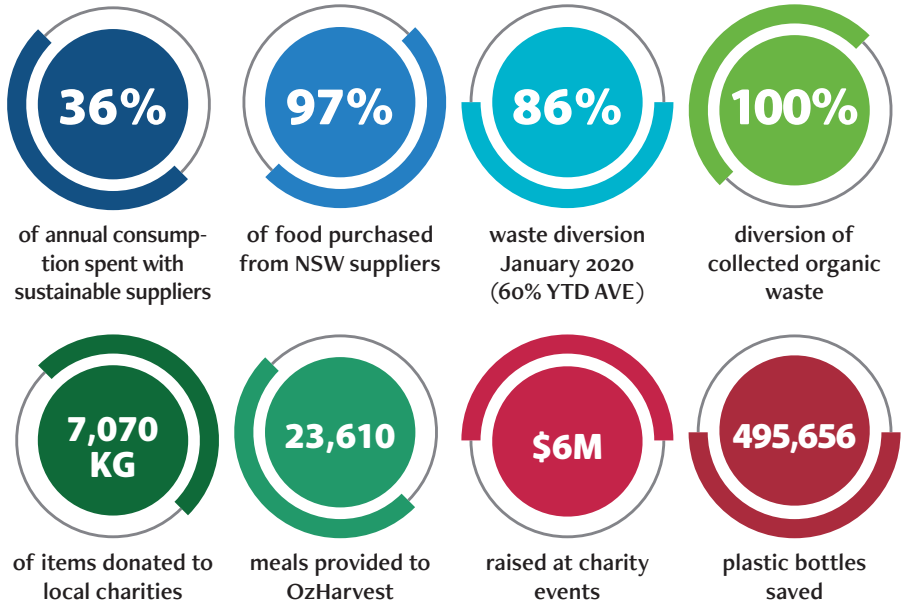
Sustainable events

Staging an event for thousands of delegates doesn't have to leave an enormous environmental footprint behind. ICC Sydney's CSR team supports sustainability-conscious clients to achieve the social and environmental objectives set for their events. Whether it's practical measures, like offering edible centerpieces which are transformed into meals for the homeless after the event, or more innovative solutions, like providing Australia's largest EV charging station, ICC Sydney helps clients organise outstanding events that don't come at unnecessary environmental costs.

In terms of social sustainability, the organisation's unique Legacy Program streamlines clients' community contributions and experiences. Clients can join forces with one or more of ICC Sydney's Community Partners; tap into the organisation's donations program to reduce waste and landfill; embrace Australia's First Nations cultures with a traditional Welcome to Country or cultural performance; welcome local students to their event, or connect with the city's creative class. In other words, ICC Sydney makes it possible to both contribute to and benefit from the city's enviable cultural capital.

So, where are you hosting your next event?

2019 SUSTAINABILITY STATISTICS



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ICC SYDNEY'S LEGACY PROGRAM, CONTACT:
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The **CTICC**: a **Sustainable Impact** on Tomorrow

Since it opened its doors almost 17 years ago, the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) has built an enviable reputation and set the global standard for excellence in conscientious business practices, hospitality and event hosting, both locally and internationally.

The beautifully designed, high-tech centre comprises two buildings offering flexible exhibition halls, meeting spaces and auditoria. In total, our spaces can welcome up to 10 000 delegates for conferences and over 35 000 attendees for concerts.

An increasing number of trade fairs, exhibitions and conventions from around the world are attracted to the centre's world-class facilities, which are complemented by its friendly, experienced staff. The CTICC's excellent location in Cape Town as well as its proximity to the finest hotels, restaurants, and internationally acclaimed V&A Waterfront, offers delegates an unbeatable holistic experience. To add to this, last year, the CTICC was

named African Business Centre of the Year 2019 at the MEA Markets Africa Business Excellence Awards.

How has the multi-award-winning, light-filled centre at the tip of Africa achieved this success? By aligning its operations to the 10 guiding principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and strategically implementing a triple bottom line approach that puts people, planet and profit at the core of its business.

The UNGC principles, contained within the sustainability goals for the year 2030, set out strategic policies for a value system that predicts long-term success, based on upholding best practice in

the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

This practice ensures the centre focuses on seeking innovative ways to mitigate its impact on the environment while advancing its people and providing them with new opportunities to grow within the organisation.

Driving the sustainability objectives outlined by the triple bottom line strategy is the centre's Nurture Our World (NOW) committee, which is composed of representatives from across the company. The committee ensures that sustainability remains an imperative in every aspect of the centre's operations.

This team oversees the design and implementation of sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that contribute to social growth and ensure the effectiveness of all efforts to minimise the centre's environmental impact, while maximising the positive contribution made to a sustainable future.

The centre strives to impact lives through innovative use of space, facilitating the creation of economic opportunities and jobs by providing a platform for people to connect, now and in the future. This is enhanced by aligning with the Western Cape Government's trade and investment areas, which are further augmented by the City of Cape Town's catalytic sectors.

This commitment has ensured the centre has consistently made significant contributions to the Western Cape GGP and the South African GDP (more than R47.3bn to date), created 130 465 jobs since inception, enhanced the country's knowledge economy, grown businesses and enhanced leisure tourism.

Further to this, last financial year, a recorded R1.6m was invested in CSR initiatives. A significant portion of this was invested in the centre's five local community partners, Abalimi Bezekhaya, Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR), Ikhaya Le Themba, Journey of Enrichment, and Mothers Unite.



Additional events are hosted for a number of other charities and non-governmental organisations working with the elderly, the youth and those at risk, including Jireh Community Projects, Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (NOAH), Haven Night Shelter, the National Institute for Crime Prevention

and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) and schools, such as Zeekoevlei High School in Lotus River.

The CTICC is always looking for ways to green its business through its sustainability efforts. Constant vigilance regarding waste management and energy consumption has paid dividends, while the R8m invested in a reverse osmosis plant and other water saving initiatives has effectively enabled the CTICC to manage its water supply.

This commitment to going 'green' extends to shows the centre attends and exhibits at. This year CTICC won the Small Stand Award category in the Event Greening Forum Awards at Meetings Africa 2020. The show highlights the best African services, products as well as venues and is a meeting point for event industry professionals.

The stand will be used at multiple events for the next two to three years, with minor touch-ups. To ensure a sustainable exhibition stand, during the design phase, the centre specifically chose construction elements that could be upcycled, recycled or reused at the end of the stand's lifespan. While the stand is not in use, it will be stored in a warehouse.

The CTICC's commitment to connect people and help grow the economy remains steadfast, while ensuring that we continue to observe responsible and sustainable business practices," said Taubie Motlhabane, CEO of the CTICC.



Cape Town International
Convention Centre



✉ INFO@CTICC.CO.ZA



2019 GLC

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



“Macao has a lot to offer!”

EVENT: 2019 Global Leadership Conference

DATE: 12-15 April 2019

EVENT SIZE: 1,300 delegates

VENUE: Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel

ORGANIZER: Entrepreneurs' Organization

INTERVIEWEE: Priscilla May D'Souza, Director of Communications, Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO)

What are the objectives of this event?

Our objectives are to teach our member leaders how to fulfil their role within their chapter and to bring our members together to network and immerse in the city and the culture of the chosen destination. It's our first time in Macao. It's really a great location.

What are the main reasons for choosing Macao?

I hadn't actually considered Macao until I met Macao representatives at the IMEX in Las Vegas a couple of years ago. After talking with them, we came for a visit and discovered the facilities, capabilities and local culture. Having Hong Kong

International Airport nearby allowed our members from all over the world to get to Macao easily. We are always looking for a place accessible through a big international airport.

How does Macao compare with other destinations?

There are very few destinations around the world that can have all the hotel rooms and all the meeting spaces in one place. We've looked at some other places but they really can't fit us. Macao is the first time we've been able to hold this conference under one roof. That's really special to be able to house all our delegates and have all our meetings here, so they don't need to travel all over the place.





How many countries are your delegates from?

We have over 13,000 members across the world. They are spread out across 188 chapters in 58 countries.

What do you and your delegates find the most attractive in Macao?

What's been really thrilling so far is the mix of new and old, and the fact that you don't have to travel far to get an entirely different experience. That was quite well thought-out.

What do you think of Macao as a business events destination?

It's very interesting to see the old and the new, and have a little taste of everything. You've got a combination of Portuguese and Chinese cultures. You can go to the old part of the city and see some European buildings, and then just two streets over, you can see very traditional Chinese houses and streets. Macao has a lot to offer!

Out of a top score of 10, how did entrepreneur organizations rate the following aspects of Macao as a business events destination

Accessibility to/ from Macao	▷	9
Ease of entry	▷	9
Transportation within Macao	▷	8
Event venue	▷	10
Accommodation	▷	9
Food and beverages	▷	9
Social programme	▷	9
Tours and attractions	▷	9
Local event management services	▷	9
Government support	▷	10

Convention and Exhibition Financial Support Programme

The programme is offered by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM). It includes subsidies for accommodation, dining, transportation, promotion, etc. Events being organised in Macao that meet the following criteria are eligible:

General Convention

- Size: more than 100 delegates
- Duration: at least two days or one day of convention and one day of activities

International Convention

- Size: more than 200 delegates
- Duration: at least three days or two days of convention and a half-day of activities



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澳門貿易投資促進局
 Instituto de Promoção do Comércio e do Investimento de Macau
 Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute



A Taste of the Future

New Zealand optimises its natural conditions – fertile land, temperate climate and open spaces – with safe, sustainable production and cutting-edge science to produce some of the finest dairy, meat, seafood, fresh produce and wine the world has to offer.

Food production is an integral part of New Zealand’s economy, comprising nearly half its total exports. Some 40 million people consume New Zealand food.

The country is also at the forefront of future foods, ensuring New Zealand is a leading knowledge hub in the high value food and beverage sector, and a tastemaker of what’s to come.

Dr Jocelyn Eason, General Manager of Science and Food Innovation at New Zealand’s Plant & Food Research, believes the future is green. And probably crunchy. But most definitely packed with nutrients.

Eason, who manages 140 scientists in the Food Innovation Portfolio, believes the future of food lies in plants – and that New Zealand has both the scientific capability and growing expertise to be globally competitive in a plant-based food market. That means optimising plant genetics, developing future growing systems and capturing an eco-premium for new food products.

“The goal for us is to add value at each step of our food value chain. What does the market want?”



DR JOCELYN EASON

“The biggest trend we’re seeing is the connection between climate change, sustainability, animal welfare and food. The consumers of the future – GenZ – also want to embrace tech, but they are demanding healthy food produced in a sustainable manner.”

Plant & Food’s current crop of research reflects the trends: superior-tasting apples and pears that can thrive in the planet’s increasingly warm climate. Mushrooms packaged in waste-free, mushroom-based packaging. Apples produced in orchards suitable for robotics to manage future labour

shortages and manage quality and by-product streams. Potatoes packed with flavour that don’t need added salt and butter.





“New Zealand’s brand is clean and green, but we are high tech as well. When our people are overseas, they have a queue out the door of people wanting to speak to them for their expertise.”

New Zealand’s food industry is supported by four Crown Research Institutes and government-funded Centres of Research Excellence. Six of New Zealand’s eight universities now offer courses in food science. The sector benefits from more than half a billion dollars a year spent on agrifood research.

Yet, “in New Zealand we are close enough to primary production to know where food comes from,” Eason notes. “I grew up on a small farm in Southland. We milked cows and had pigs, sheep and goats. Because that’s my background I do ask different questions about food. How did you grow this? Is it sustainable? What’s the impact? The waste stream? That knowledge leans over the farm gate and goes all the way to market.”

It’s this all-round expertise that has seen the country win a number of major food-related conferences, including:

- **IUFoST 20th World Congress of Food Science and Technology, Auckland**
- **16th ICC World Cereal and Bread Congress, Christchurch, 2021**
- **International Congress of Meat Science and Technology, Auckland, 2027**

Eason says that hosting these events is really valuable “They are good opportunities for New Zealand to walk the talk and show we can really be at the forefront of smarter food production.”

For Eason’s group, it means further research into active components – nutrients, fibre, gut microbiomes – and health benefits.

Kiwifruit is a golden example. New research shows that adding gold kiwifruit to your diet may lead to less suffering from symptoms of common illnesses such as colds. Plant & Food has also found that consumption of kiwifruit may significantly slow the uptake of sugars into the bloodstream, helping people to manage their diabetes.

“We have a contract with the Ministry of Health that helps us maintain data on the composition of New Zealand foods,” Eason adds. “We’re looking at the impact of food on physical performance, sleep, immunity and cognition. We breed the plants, but can we harvest them and bring them to market without losing those health impacts?”

While much food tech work currently revolves around replacing animal-derived protein with plant-based protein, Eason – who holds a PhD in Plant Physiology from the University of Otago – sees New Zealand has a role

to play in the introduction of premium, genuine plant foods.

“New Zealand is a small country, and we’re really flexible. The primary producers are highly innovative so the opportunities for Food & Beverage are large. We can do something on a small scale and test it out.

“There is also cool stuff happening in 3D printing at Plant & Food Research’s Lincoln site around edible biomaterials. They’re looking at plant polymers and how you can produce printable food products while still incorporating texture and nutrition. Then, how do you scale that up?”

**100% PURE
NEW ZEALAND**

FOR MORE INFO:

To learn more about New Zealand’s expertise in food science and other key sectors, visit



[BUSINESSEVENTS.NEWZEALAND.COM](https://www.business-events.newzealand.com)

Or contact Leonie Ashford at



LEONIE.ASHFORD@TNZ.GOVT.NZ with your conference enquiry



The **Right Place** at the **Right Time**

Montréal is home to various associations that work in the sustainable development sector and has been hosting many events around the topic of sustainability. Montréal International gives insights about the city's mission and development in this field.

For several years now, Montréal has attached great importance to sustainable development. The Québec metropolis has adopted a number of measures to promote the development of a dynamic ecosystem for this growing sector.

One example is the Local Sustainable Development Plan 2019-2022, based on the 17 sustainable development goals established by the United Nations. Montréal is also actively involved in international sustainable development networks (such as C40 and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy) and mayor Valérie Plante has been appointed Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity for ICLEI, a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. The governments of Québec and Canada support this commitment to promote sustainable development via numerous policies, like Québec's International Climate Cooperation Programme

(among the 2019 winners of the UN Global Climate Action Awards).

Montréal is betting on a unique ecosystem in which collaborative spirit is placed firmly to the fore. The sustainable development sector is enjoying rapid growth, not only in the metropolis, but also nationwide. In Canada, more than 500 companies specialise in clean technologies, and the environmental sector represents over 30,000 jobs in Québec alone.

For its part, Montréal was named best city in North America for sustainable finance by the Global Green Finance Index 2019. Many non-profit and international associations and organisations also contribute to the sustainable development sector's buoyancy in Montréal, including the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Research centres also have an important role to play, since much of their work is carried out in partnership with industry and government authorities. As Canada's

university capital, Montréal can rely on its 11 academic institutions and some 50,000 students enrolled in programmes that tie in with sustainable development to contribute to this research.

The city has become a strategic hub for international associations and organisations, ranking third most important host city in North America behind Washington D.C. and New York. Several international non-profits focused on sustainable development have settled in the Québec metropolis in recent years (the case with Future EarthLast). Last fall, the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) organisation relocated its headquarters from Oxford in the UK to McGill University in Montréal. The International Secretariat for Water (ISW) is also doing a remarkable job to promote universal access to water and the preservation of this natural resource.

Montréal International works within this framework to support international associations and organisations with their projects, in particular by putting them in contact with key players in institutional, academic or commercial circles. These interventions are decisive in order to help international non-profits create their own networks and achieve their goals.



Montréal
International

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An Entire Palais Full of Projects

Last spring, Montréal Convention Centre (also called 'Palais') joined the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to equip themselves with a global development framework. Let's explore some of its sustainability projects.

Since spring 2019, the Palais des congrès de Montréal has been rolling out a series of concrete steps aimed at curbing its environmental footprint and that of its users, while also improving its impact on society and the community. Not by chance, this is also one of the first convention centres in the Americas operating a carbon neutral building.

Some examples of the actions taken?

- Offset the GHG emissions stemming from the building's energy expenditures with planting trees on four hectares of Université Laval's Montmorency Forest (the largest teaching and research forest in the world)
- Offset GHGs stemming from our business development operations
- Pursued innovative projects on our rooftop Urban Agriculture Lab
- Assembled a Sustainability Innovation Committee made up of experts from 10 Québec universities
- Created a carbon offset program for events and their participants
- Supported a major global study on the social impact of business events

- Championed local creatives through major exhibitions and providing studio space to emerging artists
- Funded various programs operated by organisations working with the homeless

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provided the centre with an international framework, within which to anchor their own initiatives. By tying every action to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN, the Palais was able to come up with ideas to maximise the extent of commitment and the impact of the sustainability initiatives. The process also provided the opportunity to broaden the scope of sustainable development.

The program is big on achieving goals through partnerships, something the Palais is equally big on. It works closely with the various sectors of the convention industry, local business, as well Montréal's and Québec's artistic, academic and scientific communities.

In order to help customers reduce the environmental impact of their events, the Palais, together with Planetair, a leader in the field of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) offsetting, has created a carbon offset program intended for event organisers and participants. This gives customers the opportunity to quantify, reduce and offset the GHG emissions stemming from organising and hosting their event, with Planetair shepherding them every step of the process.

Finally, they developed a fast and efficient platform empowering everyone participating in an event at the Palais to offset their travel. Event organisers and participants interested in offsetting their GHG emissions can choose from a range of Gold Standard certified options supporting forest management and conservation projects in the Montréal area.

**BUSINESS
EVENTS /
MONTREAL**

FOR MORE INFO:

 INFO@MTL.ORG

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“With a **conscious collective effort** we can drive **positive changes**”



Future Earth is an international network, with offices in 20 countries, of researchers and innovators working to advance the sustainability agenda. Montréal is one of five cities among which the secretariat is distributed, hosting the executive office. The organisation recently launched a new initiative called ‘Sustainability in the Digital Age’ (SDA) and anchored it in Montréal because of the city’s artificial intelligence, ethics and sustainability sectors.

HQ interviewed the executive director **Amy Luers**.



How and when was SDA born?

The SDA was first started as a Future Earth initiative. Traditionally, the digital sector had not been on the Future Earth Agenda. Personally, I have a long history working in both digital and sustainability issues. When I moved to Montréal to become the Executive Director of Future Earth, I was excited to take this opportunity to explore this intersection in depth. Back in 2017, I started to engage with leaders from the AI and digital sector here in Quebec and around the world to begin to shape a vision for how we could contribute to this space.

Some of the first efforts of the budding SDA team was leveraging digital technologies to capture collective intelligence about global systemic challenges. To do this, we worked with MIT Center for Collective Intelligence to build Futures

CoLab (a platform, process and international network for facilitated dialogues).

The underlying motivator for SDA is that we need widespread societal transformative system changes. The digital age is already driving societal transformations at an unprecedented scale and pace. While it is not clear where these transformations will lead society, we believe with a conscious collective effort we can drive the positive transformative system changes needed to tackle the climate crisis.

Why did you choose Montréal for the executive office?

Montréal is home to a unique combination of major universities, numerous private and non-profit, and intergovernmental institutions focused on sustainability, and it is a dynamic international hub for AI and digital technology

development and innovation more broadly. Furthermore, the Future Earth Global Hub in Montréal has, over the past five years, developed a strong network of collaborators in and around Montréal. All these factors make Montréal the ideal location in which to root SDA, which is based there but has a global reach as well as regional centres and offices. Through this extensive network, Sustainability in the Digital Age is able to reach a huge diversity of stakeholders around the globe and to engage them as appropriate in various endeavours throughout the four main streams of work.

What do you think is particularly challenging when we talk about sustainability?

I see the biggest challenges of vulnerability are best characterised by the concept of VUCA – vulnerability,

uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity – a term first coined by the military but subsequently adopted by business and leadership training more broadly. My optimism lies in the opportunities to leverage AI and the digital sector to help humans make sense of our VUCA world and transform in ways that enables us to tackle the huge challenges presented by the changing climate, increasing inequality, and the degradation of life support systems. At the core of my optimism is humanity. We are poised to work together to drive the transformative system changes that the kids on the streets are calling for today “systems change not climate change.”

Can you please provide us with some examples of current projects?

The goal of SDA is to leverage the digital age to drive the transformative systems changes needed to tackle climate change and the broader sustainable development goals. With this goal in mind, we focus our efforts on four key areas.

• Research and innovation

The first phase of SDA has focused on developing the Digital Disruptions for Sustainability Agenda, exploring digitally enabled levers of systems change. In September 2019, CIFAR supported a workshop in Montréal as part of their AI & Society series. Stemming from this workshop, we are currently finalising a special issue of the IEEE Technology and Society Magazine which is due to be published in June 2020. The special issue will highlight cutting edge research and innovation on leveraging capabilities of the digital age from a diversity of perspectives, building on discussions held during the workshop.

• Training and networks

Many projects are in the works within this stream of work. We now have confirmed funding to set up a training program together with partners in Montréal that will help us build the next generation of leaders at the science-policy-technology interface, around the two biggest forces

shaping humanity’s destiny: global environmental changes and the digital revolution. This training program will hone the skills of young leaders through a variety of mechanisms including workshops, summer schools, and internship opportunities.

• Policy and best practices

Through our international engagement over the last year and a half, we have defined a set of priority actions that need to be taken in the near-term:

- Establish a social contract for the digital age
- Promote inclusion as a touchstone of the digital age
- Establish foundational standards for the digital sector
- Expand open access to high-public-value data
- Expand public-private partnerships to build our digital future
- Reduce environmental impacts of the digital age
- Foster cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation
- Invest in targeted communication, engagement, and education

SDA will advance these through policy analysis, promoting best practices, and building partnerships and platforms to tackle them. These will be done through joint statement and policy analysis. Some are already in development and will be released shortly. The enabling conditions will also be developed through strategic partners with implementing agencies.



• Collective foresight and intelligence

Together with the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence, the Futures CoLab project brings together an international network of subject matter experts to participate in bespoke, facilitated dialogues through an online platform. In the past, Futures CoLab exercises have involved scenario development, employing a structured process to draw out and integrate diverse knowledge to outline a range of plausible futures related to specific challenges, as well as facilitating more open-ended dialogues about identifying opportunities for positive transformative change. Plans for the future include building on the 2019 Future Earth Global Risks Perceptions report to conduct a Futures CoLab foresight exercise on risk. We are also exploring opportunities to scale up the Futures CoLab project.

What are your future plans?

SDA continues to grow as a pivotal contribution to the growing initiatives in the digital and sustainability space. A UNEP led initiative recently identified SDA as one of the top 20 international programs in this space. Our unique contribution is around the focus on cross-cutting transformative systems changes.

Our future plans are to further expand our work streams in the four areas listed above. The realities unfolding with the COVID-19 crisis are making the issues we are focused on even more critical. In the coming months we will be assessing our work plans in each of the four areas to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances.

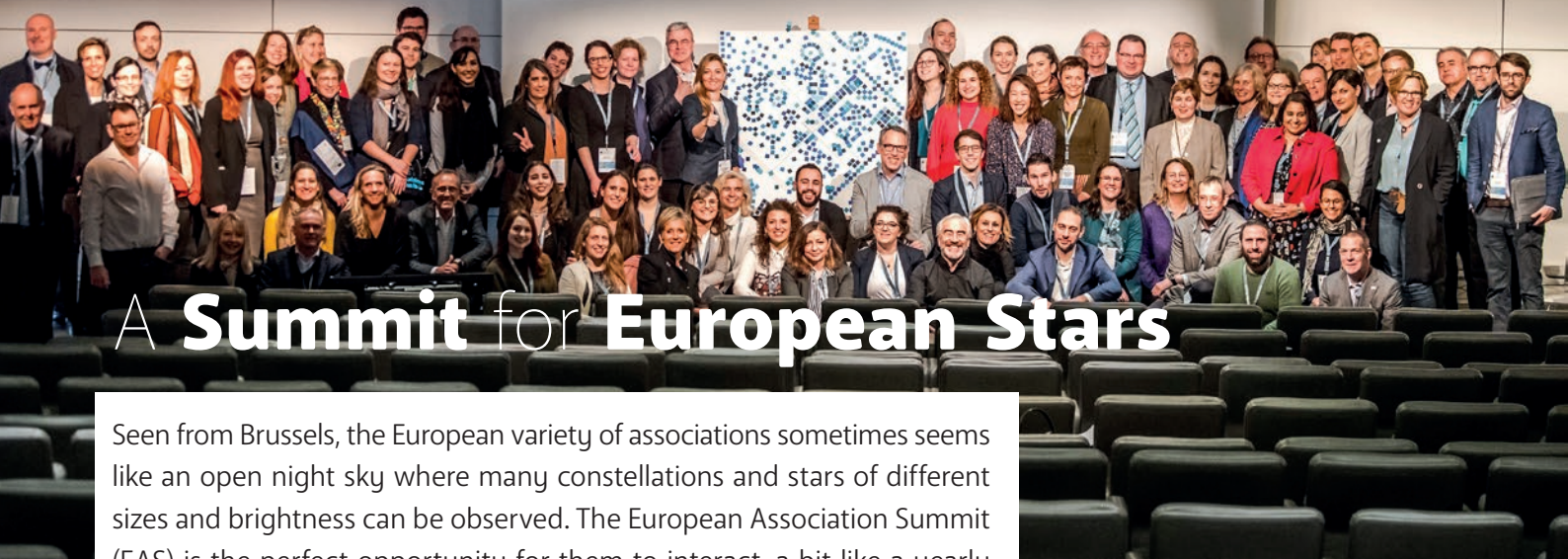
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A Summit for European Stars

Seen from Brussels, the European variety of associations sometimes seems like an open night sky where many constellations and stars of different sizes and brightness can be observed. The European Association Summit (EAS) is the perfect opportunity for them to interact, a bit like a yearly astronomical conjunction.

HQ went there to report on the special event.

Constantly moving around regulations, guidelines and concerted actions, associations are always eager to find new working methods, effective partnerships, credible leadership and community management to climb aboard. EAS fulfilled this need by being a catalyst for discussion, interaction and networking between.

The event took place at the SQUARE Brussels Convention Centre and had about 200 participants coming from different countries, professional branches and industries. Two intense days of presentations, talks, business card exchanges and workshops that underlined the importance of collective work and sharing experiences, led by association representatives and internationally renowned experts.

Assembled by Visit Brussels, the summit was supported by the European Society of Association Executives (ESAE), the Federation of European and

International Associations (FAIB) and the Union of International Associations (UIA), with HQ Magazine as media partner.

In this eighth edition, the range of topics under discussion included Digital transformation, brand and change strategies, GDPR and sustainable management, with an unfortunate and last-minute intruder: the COVID-19 pandemic that forced the introduction of topics such as social distance and online meetings. With 20 sessions divided into several time blocks, the programme reflected associations' active reality and focused on practical cases from local issues to globalisation, governance, legal challenges for non-profit, marketing, branding and new technologies.

1st Day

After the opening session conducted by the visit.brussels hosts, our team split to follow different sessions.

In one of the many rooms reserved for the event, Bennet Napier, board chair of AMC Institute, and Alfons Westgeest, managing partner at Kellen, explained the progression of the AMC model in reference to the outsourcing of associations.

In another one, Solvay Brussels School's Prof. Dr Sandra Rothenberger showed the importance of being 'S.A.V.E.D.' when it comes to marketing. She provided a new way of rethinking marketing principles but not rethinking the marketing wheel.

In the following session, an interactive workshop was carried out to design the perfect partnership for an association, under the responsibility of Martin Sirk, international advisor for the Global Association Hubs Partnership. Participants discussed the current problems that affect an association with a list of case studies that have brought to light all the essential features to their work frame.

Based on its expertise of Belgian non-profit law and in-depth knowledge of

the Belgian and European non-profit sector, EY Law's Non-Profit & Trade Associations team selected some legal challenges that non-profit organisations are likely to face in 2020. They shared tools to comply with legal obligations this year.

One of the first sessions after lunch circled around Paths to Professional and Personal Growth for association leaders. Anna Koj, board member of Professional Women International Brussels, and coach Joana Visa expressed their views on the challenges of leadership in women.

A membership session, moderated by Jeffer London and hosting Jimena Gomez de la Flor from the European Flavour Association (EFFA), was all about connecting with people and sharing recipes for engagement. They brought

a real case of a successful brand ambassadorship campaign that stimulated diversity, volunteering and association brand awareness.

In the MPI session given by Babs Nijdam, a concrete case was presented to guide the strategic goals of associative events. How to focus the attention of your speakers, how to boost your relationship with the event and squeeze the results by the measurable goals and objectives of your business or association.

One of the last sessions of the day was dedicated to the General Data Protection Regulation and the measures that an association has to protect the secrecy and privacy of its members. Digital manager Yves Braeckman, together with lawyers Christophe Delmarcelle and Jan Decorte, took the role of tutors in a

back and forth conversation that went through legal issues of membership and data protection in various associative areas.

Eventually, Belgian flavours united with cocktails inspired by drinking culture in Dubai, Singapore and Washington, D.C., created a walking dinner with an allure of the partner destinations.

2nd Day

Wednesday started with a legal roundtable called Strengthen your association by better managing your board, tips from the legal world. An interactive session with Q&A was conducted with Ruth Wirtz and Frank Hoogendijk of the law firm Osborne Clarke.

At the same time, a session on communications organised by UIA focused on how to communicate your UN SDG mission as an association representative. Nancy Carfrae invited participants to take a moment and think about their mission to make the world a better place.

The second session was the so-called 'Association Knowledge Café' organised by ESAE. People were divided into four groups, with the aim to identify disrupting elements in associations' life and then produce suggestions to overcome difficulties.

The EAS closing session was a homage to all the European stars that surround us and an invitation to keep working on those bright conjunctions.



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Preserving Associations in **Relentless Times**

An ambitious and eloquent vision for the future can be crucial for a non-profit organisation. Yet, today we can safely say that action plans for unprecedented situations, such as the current global pandemic, are what truly matters to keeping afloat. Are associations, the oldest form of a community, prepared to take on uncertain times and preserve themselves?

We commend non-profit organisations, especially medical ones, for serving their purpose in these relentless times. They have opened communication among themselves more than ever, supporting international members to speak and exchange knowledge. They have shown us all what collaboration truly means, with whole fields gearing up to solve the issue at hand.

However, while there are many benefits to associations and their stakeholders, there is another, less positive reality – what happens to non-profits who depend exclusively on their boards? What happens when board members find themselves in this difficult situation balancing between volunteering their time at an organisation and being on call at their hospitals? With an unprecedented global crisis, now more than ever we see the benefits of association

management companies (AMCs) and professional congress organisers (PCOs). Let us explain.

Effective education is vital. Yet, conferences have to be postponed, and alternatives are sought. But how many non-profits have the resources and time to address these ideas *right now*? Postponing a congress for a few months sounds good, and it is. Every organisation needs its planned income in order to survive in the long run. But this action has so many moving parts and questions to be answered. The least it requires is dedicated personnel to work on solving all issues, in order to mitigate any potential risks to the organisation.

For associations to be preserved and education to keep going, professionals such as AMCs and PCOs work harder than ever to support their clients. Many

have the volume and buying power to be able to negotiate new deals and ensure the financial stability of associations. We are more connected than ever. It is true that the meetings industry depends on its clients – associations, who in turn need the conference world to support them to stay viable. But let's not forget that at the end of the day, *now more than ever*, we need each other to push through this. We need people to help people. We need doctors to help the sick. We need the professionals to help their clients and give them room to focus their energy where it matters – toward saving human lives.

In times where not one person on this planet can clearly see what the future holds, we urge you – be human above all. Help where help is needed. Together we stand.



ABOUT KENES GROUP

For over fifty years, Kenes Group has been creating success stories with associations around the world. We're experts in helping associations reach their true potential by strategically building awareness, loyalty and satisfaction among current and potential members, as well as stakeholders. We harness the power of community, strengthening your association's brand through unforgettable experiences - fostering change, inspiring members, educating, and improving your association's business performance.

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Five Practices for an Association's **Lasting Success**

Associations face many challenges, including establishing solid processes and systems, embracing technology, and incorporating a younger demographic. These five tips are here to help.



Many of these issues, however, are tied into a bigger and more important question: how can an association have the sustainability to withstand the tests of time and emerge from any change even stronger? In other words: how can an association ensure not only that its mission remains relevant but that the organisation's leadership is informed enough to vigilantly negotiate any changes (and changes are guaranteed!) the organisation faces?

Sustainability of any organisation depends on its leadership accepting the following five key responsibilities:

- The duty of **service**
- The duty of **foresight**
- The duty of **data**
- The duty of **action**
- The duty of **community**

The duty of service

No organisation could survive without members. Before determining how to best serve them, however, an association should examine its mission statement. Is the statement clear? Are the objectives attainable? Are the organisation's products and services aligned with its mission? Is the mission still relevant? A regular review of the organisation's vision and mission statements and the key strategic goals is a critical exercise in ensuring an association remains sustainable.

The duty of foresight

In addition to keeping an eye on the present, an organisation's board must look ahead—not only at possible challenges but also at the changes occurring in the field that they represent. What are the trends shaping that industry and those professionals? How can the association respond to or incorporate these trends into its mission statement, products, services, general practices and processes?

The duty of data

It's imperative that an association measure its performance. There are a number of effective tools to accomplish this: annual membership surveys, focus groups, interviews, needs assessments, evaluations of all programs and services. These are all excellent opportunities to accurately assess how well an association is fulfilling its mission and serving its members. A sustainable association is eager to receive feedback and has a system in place for analysing the data to draw appropriate conclusions.

The duty of action

While trackable and measurable data is important, it's only valuable if it is leveraged. Associations must be willing to take into consideration the data they receive in order to make any necessary adjustments. They also need enough

clarity to know when *not* to react just for the sake of reacting.

The duty of community

No association can thrive in a bubble. They must rather actively seek to build alliances with other associations and activities that reflect their own mission and objectives. Association leadership must also do their part in maintaining these relationships. Organisations that partner with others do better. Why? Because by collaborating (instead of going alone), they have figured out how to accomplish their objectives more effectively, faster and cheaper.

Ensuring an association's lasting success is a challenge with many complex layers. In adopting the five above-mentioned practices, organisations can equip their leadership and culture with an astute and proactive approach that secures their future.



World PCO Alliance

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Membership Engagement

Keeping Your People Connected

Membership relationships hold associations together in the best of times; in times of crisis, these connections are put to the test. Will your members lean in to the challenge? Opt out? Or use this time in the way you suggest? Here are five ways associations are working with members in these challenging times.



Jeffer London is a facilitator at the Center for Creative Leadership and sits on the board of the International Association of Facilitators. For insights into the facilitation of engagement, see Jeffer's blog about stimulating conversation at jeffer-london.com.

I. Encourage social connection

“Social relationships are an incredibly important buffer against the negative consequences of stress” said Katie McLaughlin in the online Covid19 roundtable event of the **Association for Psychological Science**. She goes on to say “Strong emotional support not only prevents anxiety and depression in periods of stress, but also buffers against the negative physiological consequences of stress on the immune system and physical health.” Their event discussed the psychological dimensions of COVID-19 and how it is affecting both society and individuals. The online gathering was a natural response for their association, and offers us all insights into **maintaining social connectedness**, reducing overwhelming emotions, and self care. See: psychologicalscience.org.

II. Caring for caregivers

Many neighbourhoods have gone to their windows to applaud caregivers at eight o'clock each evening. **The Alzheimer's Association** has taken this a step further by equipping their caregivers with the information and skills needed in their particular context – where their patients may not be fully aware of the precautions necessary to mitigate corona risks. As you think about your members, what is the message and necessary behavior that is needed for them right now? Have a look at how they **adapted their message** for their members at alz.org.

“How can members make the most of a crisis situation?”

III. Members supporting members

Faced with simultaneous event cancellations and a wave of Virtual Facilitation requests, members of the **International Association of Facilitators (IAF)** turned to each other for support. With daily zoom calls attracting 50 people each, groups worked through their challenges together in breakout rooms on client communications, revenue loss, event transformation and how to best make a difference. As IAF’s chair, Vinay Kumar, wrote to their members “this is the time to reach out to your connections and make new ones” and they have facilitated this with a **Virtual Facilitation Resource Page** with tools and events, found at iaf-world.org.

IV. Time for learning

With more personal time for reflection, encourage your members to take advantage of **learning opportunities**. Suddenly confronted with home-schooling, we all need

activities that keep our kids engaged. Homeschool Ideas is a collection of activities and resources to help families create an educational environment at home. And while the young ones do their things, the **Center for Creative Leadership** is offering free resources on adult topics like crisis leadership, virtual teams & remote work. What educational assets could your association leverage now? See: homeschooling-ideas.com and ccl.org.

V. Living your mission

“Medical Alley is once again demonstrating its unmatched ability to communicate, connect, and collaborate in order to address the world’s biggest healthcare challenges,” said Shaye Mandle, President and CEO of the **Medical Alley Association (MAA)**. MAA has applied its *raison d’être* to the corona crisis, by creating a match-making platform that invites all parties around the globe to use their **COVID-19 Resource Connect Tool**, in order to assist in ensuring no patient has to go without the life-saving resources they need due to lack of supplies and capabilities. See: medicalalley.org/covid19/.

“How will your association keep your members connected?”



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Why **Paying it Forward** Contributes to a **Sustainable Organisational Culture**



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Koj is a Managing Partner of Akronos Consulting – a boutique consultancy in Brussels, VP Partnerships at Professional Women International Brussels (PWI Brussels), and recruitment and leadership Consultant at EARS – European Affairs Recruitment Specialists.

She helps individual clients to thrive by aligning their personal and professional vision and organisations to identify the best talent. She specialises in strategic communications, institutional relations and organisational leadership.

Gratitude, as studies show, can be an incredible motivator. It improves people's mental and physical health, it enhances the quality of their relations with other people, and it can lead to a lasting feeling of satisfaction and happiness. Sounds like a perfect ingredient to build a successful organizational culture on. So, where is the trick?

In a world where nothing comes for free, we've gotten used to seeing everything as a transaction, even acts of kindness. 'One good deed deserves another', the proverb says. Come to think of it, a version more reflective of today's many working environments would be 'I scratch your back and you scratch mine'.

There is nothing wrong with building alliances at work to ensure you've got people who can have your back, nor for that matter with returning a favour if you get a chance to. It's the silently attached expectation what has in many cases eroded the nature of a good deed itself. Ultimately, people end up feeling more stressed by being in debt over a favour, than relieved by the support received. And because they cannot openly talk about it, they fake it. You are left with

a house of cards – beautiful on the outside, yet very unstable and risking a total collapse at every minor shift.

How to harness the power of gratitude then, for the benefit of an organization?

The answer is by shifting the focus from paying it back to instead paying it forward. What if it was no longer, 'I scratch your back and you scratch mine' but rather 'I scratch your back and you scratch someone else's'? Paying it forward is all about passing on the good deeds, just not necessarily to the person that you have received one from. Building your organizational culture on the premise of generalized reciprocity (vs direct reciprocity when you pay it back) is extremely helpful in creating the social glue that makes organisations stick together and succeed. It also builds a natural matrix-style organization where people interact more across departments or teams, thus driving creativity and strengthening the organisation's shared knowledge. While the concept of paying it forward is not a new one, it still is not commonly used in organisations. And it could. To the benefit of all.

How does it work? It goes back to genuine gratitude. When people receive spontaneous support without the expected "return on investment" attached to it, they not only feel grateful, but they are also more inclined to help a third party, spontaneously. This is how a positive deed chain reaction can start. This is also how, ultimately, a more sustainable organizational culture can be created, where giving is not about building one's professional brand or collecting future favours, it's about the nature you instill amongst the team members. The success is a collective one, and it's in making sure that every team member feels safe and sure that there is a support system in place. Individuals feel free to experiment, get creative, more committed and, overall, more successful in what they do. The organisation additionally benefits by becoming less dependent on single individuals, risking to lose the drive or half of the organizational knowledge is one or two employees leave.

As Adam Grant argues in his book "Give and Take", givers are often overlooked and yet they are the ones that succeed in ways that lift others up.



The **EAIE** and **Messukeskus Helsinki**: Thriving for a Sustainable Event Together

The EAIE Conference and Exhibition is the largest international higher education conference in Europe and the second largest in the world. Such a large and visible occasion provided the opportunity to showcase the close co-operation between the client – the EAIE – and the hosting venue – Messukeskus Helsinki – to build a more sustainable event.

“Working at a conference venue, you encounter many different clients with many different needs, interests and deciding factors. Sustainability is getting without a doubt more and more attention from various event organizers. But sustainability is a mammoth project, which you can look at from many angles and which sparks as many opinions as solutions. A perfect opportunity to make a real case study came along with the EAIE (European Association for International Education), a client that strives to make a real difference.”, Paula Blomster states.

“The EAIE confirmed their international conference at Messukeskus Helsinki already in 2015. “During our encounters at different industry events, we found that the EAIE was working towards making their event more sustainable, setting new green goals to be reached annually”, adds Paula.

With the assistance of Fiona Pelham, the green hearts of the EAIE and Messukeskus Helsinki were united. The EAIE Conference with 6000+ attendees organized in Messukeskus in September 2019 was a perfect showcase to execute a more sustainable event. It felt natural to decide to join forces under the motto “a shared problem is half a problem – or a way to find a solution!”.

That's why the EAIE Conference in Finland was taken as the focus for ISO

2021 workshops, run by Fiona Pelham. The workshops were an excellent way to embark on a year-long journey of planning. Sabrina Nielebock from the EAIE and staff from different departments of Messukeskus Helsinki joined these interactive workshops. This made it easier to ensure that projects were followed through and that everyone would be working towards one common goal: a more sustainable event.

Sabrina remembers: “It was amazing how quickly it became clear, that we share the same concerns. During the series of workshops we defined our main objectives and approaches. We noticed that we are looking exactly for the same things and could use this to tackle our objectives together for this event, but also for future events. It was thrilling to see how empowered and excited everybody attending the workshops were. It gave new energy for the project planning. Our plan now is to share our experience working together with people in the industry and inspire them to organize and execute more sustainable events.”

The EAIE Conference and Exhibition in Helsinki was unique thanks to the close collaboration of event organizers and event venue. From the beginning, the efforts and ideas of the EAIE to create a more sustainable event aligned with the goals of the venue. This close cooperation allowed for initiatives to be carried out in its entirety - from planning to execution - and allowed both parties to try and test new ways of working to see what would be most beneficial for future events. When reflecting on this Paula says that: “This fruitful experience has shown us that client-supplier cooperation is crucial to success, especially when tackling overarching issues like sustainability or security.



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We found that being open and disclosing options and costs honestly has brought us further – generating results we are very proud of. We stand strong together.”

“I thought it was such a unique way of working, as everybody had the same mind-set and presented sustainable alternatives or at least made you aware of your options. As a young professional, as for many other people in the field, sustainability is very important and in an ideal world would be the deciding factor for everything”, Sabrina said. Having the client and departments so heavily involved in the project, we were able to move a huge step forward and stayed motivated throughout. From the EAIE’s perspective “it was a great success, as everything was very transparent”.

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The Associations' **Aenigma**

How can associations ensure their longevity? In this article, we examine the three key principles for sustained association success: relevance, diversification, and governance.

Views from **Professor Rajiv Hanspal**, past president of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) that celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2020, and **Enrique Velázquez**, director general of the Association of Consumer Credit Information Suppliers (ACCIS) that is reaching 30 years of activity.

Relevance

Whether catering to the needs of your members, or providing services to your industry, delivering value to a community is the *raison d'être* of all associations. To sustain the relevance of your association, you must continually assess community engagement. Associations should regularly survey their membership and external stakeholders to understand which of their activities serve their mission. Nowadays, the services offered by associations go far beyond membership, as 'customers' can select specific services rather than subscribing to a comprehensive membership package. Therefore, as underscored by Prof. Hanspal, associations must identify gaps in the market to design attractive products and services that meet the needs of their communities. While associations frequently prioritise increasing the size of their membership, factors such as reputation, influence, and impact must equally

be considered in the long-term strategic development and sustainability. Velázquez also underlined the importance of providing a return on members' investment in terms of the resources that they commit to their association. To accurately identify this 'return-on-membership', it must be understood that members' interests change over time. Velázquez also stressed that associations should evolve with their membership so that they can refocus their contribution to the industries and communities they represent and serve. By swiftly adapting their products and services to topical developments, changes and concerns affecting their communities, associations will serve them more effectively and improve their relevance.

Diversification

Whether through geographical expansion, new services, or partnerships with allied organisations, associations should always expand and diversify their activities. For international associations such as ACCIS and ISPO, providing platforms for regional and continental co-operation has proven to be a recognised success factor for their longevity. During its first decades, ISPO focused on traditional educational capacity-building initiatives. While these activities increased its global membership and

geographical impact, the association's global approach now focuses on fostering regional collaboration between national societies. In addition, through its Global Partnership Exchange, ISPO has provided a platform to its community that encourages networking between NGOs in the field of physical rehabilitation to conduct joint activities. Similarly, ACCIS has faced a recent period of intense regulatory and technological transformation. To address this challenge, the management board has strategically realigned its role in the sector and is now redesigning its value proposition and considering an expansion of its membership criteria. These are all follow-up steps arising from the association's Vision for the Future Strategy, a three year plan adopted in June 2018. Associations that embrace diversity and inclusiveness will be better equipped to increase their impact and ensure their longevity.

Governance

Effective governance, strong leadership and efficient staff are all indisputable factors to the enduring success of associations. As encouraged by Prof. Hanspal of ISPO, to account for the challenges faced during 'elected' leadership transitions, continuity structures should be put in place to allow for stability and consistent management of the association. ISPO adopted a successful practice of having the past, present and future presidents working closely together as a trio to manage the association. Prof. Hanspal equally accentuated the need to have a framework of rules, guidelines and procedures in place so that associations are governed and managed transparently and equitably. Finally, to sustain effective governance and maintain their impact,

associations require a well-managed secretariat. For those that have experienced rapid growth and an ensuing increase in their activities, it might be beneficial to restructure the way their secretariat is managed. Associations today are mostly led by volunteers who cannot partake in day-to-day management due to their outstanding professional commitments. Working with an association management company will help increase member value, facilitate the scaling up of activities and increase the association's administrative efficiencies. Reducing the administrative burden that association leaders face will allow them to focus on what matters most: creating impact and value for their communities.

Sustaining the impact of associations over time can be a challenge for even the most experienced leaders and managers. By ensuring that your association's strategic priorities are centred around the key principles of relevance, diversification, and governance, and by preparing your association to quickly and creatively adapt and respond to changes, it will be strongly positioned to keep creating value and impact for the decades to come.



Does your association need support or strategic guidance? Get in touch at

 IAMEU@INTERELGROUP.COM

20 Women Who Advance Associations in 2020

For International Women’s Day, Interel Association Management and HQ magazine launched a campaign to profile outstanding female leaders that advance European and global associations. 20 Women Who Advance Associations in 2020 showcases best practices in association leadership and celebrates women’s contribution to a dynamic and changing sector. With a wide range of backgrounds, motivations and approaches, they make one thing clear: diversity is so much more than an individual’s gender.



Sandrine Dixson-Declève

♀ Sandrine was recognised by *GreenBiz* as one of the 30 most influential women across the globe driving change in the low carbon economy and promoting green business. Sandrine is the first female Co-President of **The Club of Rome**.



Susan Danger

♀ Susan is CEO of the **American Chamber of Commerce to the EU**. She has dedicated her entire career to advancing transatlantic cooperation and was named by *POLITICO* as one of the top 20 women influencers in Brussels in 2016.



Malgosia Bartosik

♀ Malgosia joined **WindEurope** in 2004, working her way up from intern to deputy CEO. In 2015, *Recharge* magazine proclaimed Bartosik as one of the *40 under 40* for her key contribution to the development of the wind industry in Europe.



Corinna Hörst

♀ Corinna is a member of the steering committee of the Brussels chapter of **Women in International Security** and co-founder of **The Brussels Binder**, an online database of female policy experts. She co-authored the book “Women Leading The Way in Brussels”.



Susan West

♀ Susan is a leadership coach, facilitator and educator. In 2006, she was asked to relocate to Belgium and join **GSI** as their first Chief HR Officer. She has developed leaders at every level in the Fortune 500, SMEs, associations and start-ups in the U.S. and Europe.



Otema Yirenkyi

♀ Otema is **Project Management Institute (PMI)** Vice President, Global Engagement and also is responsible for **PMI’s** Africa region, helping to solidify its global impact through regionalization.



Catherine Stewart

♀ Catherine helps create impactful campaigns that influence the direction of European policy and legislation, advising associations. She has held the posts of Vice President and Board Member of the **Society of European Affairs Professionals** and the **British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium**.



Titta Rosvall-Puplett

♀ Titta is passionate about sustainability of healthcare and driving policy change. As Senior Director, Head of BMS' Global Policy Partnerships & Alliance Development, she has co-lead the establishment of **All.Can**, improving the efficiency of cancer care.



Inge Lisenka Wallage

♀ Inge is Managing Director of the **European Association of Communication Directors**. She brings 25 years of communications experience in both the profit and non-profit sector, from oil to Greenpeace to sustainable water management.



Danièle Vranken

♀ Danièle is the Secretary General of the **Federation of European & International Associations** based in Belgium. Danièle's know-how is based on a 29 years' career for the European cosmetics industry association.



Juliana López Bermúdez

♀ Juliana is representing the Latin America region as a board member of **AIPC** and leads Grupo Heroica as President. In 2019, she was acknowledged by "Latinamerica Meetings" as one of the top 15 of the Most Influential Leaders of the Meeting Industry in Latin America.



Florence Bindelle

♀ Florence leads the Brussels team of **EuropeanIssuers** with strategic know-how gained during her work at the **Federation of European Risk Management Associations**, where she was responsible for the management of relations with the European Commission.



Benita Lipps

♀ Benita has been helping non-profits make an impact throughout her career. As Head of **Interel Association Management**, she has been offering agile support, smart solutions and strategy design to international alliances, societies and associations.



Andrea Röck

♀ Andrea leads the Technical Working Group of the **Cloud Signature Consortium**, developing the associations remote signature protocol specification. She is participating actively in **ETSI-ESI** work as rapporteur for several signature related standards.



Sanna-Kaisa Spoof

♀ Sanna, Secretary General of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity leads the **European Network of Research Integrity Offices** (ENRIO). Under her chairwomanship, **ENRIO** is transforming from an informal network into a fully-fledged association.



Lenita Lindström

♀ Lenita is the Vice-President of **ELSA Alumni**, driving its leadership initiative to promote a just world. Since 2015, she also acts as Chair of the Assembly of the **ICH Association**, a non-profit association focusing on the harmonisation of requirements for pharmaceuticals.



Keren Deront

♀ Keren is Senior Advisor for the Association Management and Events Practice of **Interel**. With over 25 years of management and communication experience in a multicultural environment, she is a seasoned association professional.



Mella Frewen

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Lisa Boch-Andersen

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ECM Members Come Together to Overtake The Coronavirus Crisis

The outbreak of Covid-19 strongly encourages our industry to deal with new challenges and emergencies worldwide. In this unprecedented situation sustainability, collaboration and innovation become even more crucial. ECM has kept up the conversation to respond to its member's needs.

Climate change, society transformation, unprecedented sanitary crises, economic progress: today the world has put on a burst of speed in changes. And all of this has been stopped through the Covid-19 epidemic. This crisis is now the opportunity to unlock barriers, initiate innovation and collaborate. In this complex scenario, talking of sustainability becomes more and more important since we are living through the greatest sustainability revolution ever: economic, social, environmental and of course a travel revolution.

Making sustainable choices can be easily embedded into your everyday life. A concrete example is ECM's member Vienna, which recently set up a *Visitor Economy Strategy 2025*. The starting point of this new strategy is the question "what can visitors do for Vienna?". How can we help to sustain long-term success and help as many different stakeholders to participate in it as possible? The key: designing a sustainable visitor economy. Another initiative can be found in Helsinki who set up '*Think Sustainably*', a project which combine sustainable services, experiences and transportation into one easy-to-use service on MyHelsinki.fi pulling together restaurants, bars, venues, shops, hotels, etc.

As ECM, we believe, that the need for strategic destination management is greater than ever before. During crises and emergencies, DMOs have a key role to play in coordinating and supporting

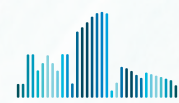
stakeholders, driving the change. The DMO of tomorrow must help ensure sustainable growth and actively work the visitor economy to make a positive impact. It is up to DMOs to demonstrate that the visitor economy can benefit the destinations' social inclusion, cultural repertoire and local communities. In this new role, Convention Bureaux are instrumental for strategic city management, acting both as agenda-setter, project initiator and facilitator.

However, Covid-19 emergency situation sets us against new unknown challenges, from sanitary tensions to societal isolation, from economic difficulties to unemployment issues. In this uncertain panorama, DMO's must keep faith and stay relevant. From the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, ECM has collected information to get a European perspective on how DMOs and, local and national governments are managing the crisis. Thanks to our internal knowledge and partners, we are providing crucial support to our members. In March, our Knowledge Partner, 'FowardKeys' explained us in an interactive webinar what effect Coronavirus has had on the Chinese outbound market. Also, our partner 'Tourism Economics' invited all our members to join a dedicated presentation on Coronavirus tourism impacts worldwide. These webinars among others show us that Covid-19 was spreading more widely and rapidly than expected, that all major destinations will be affected across Europe and that

the virus will deeply alter our way to see travel and tourism in the next months.

Similarly, ECM continuously provides important tools to achieve a common and mutual knowledge on the Covid-19 crisis through collaborative dashboard to share members situation, data & any other useful information. This tool affirms the great teamwork of our members who shared impacts, measures but also innovative initiatives. All these tools show how cities are the first impacted by the crisis and DMOs are in the first line by nature of their activity. ECM provided also regular press releases and articles based on researches and studies. It is crucial to stay positive and believe in a total full recovery in the months to come. The first step after this recovery will be focused on "stay-cation", reorganizing local business and domestic travel.

We are aware of the complexity of this unparalleled crisis. But this crisis showed us something rare and beautiful: solidarity. Sharing, collaboration and solidarity are keys to overtake this emergency. Maybe teaching us how to do things differently, think collectively and rely on each other.



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Sustaining Talent through Inclusion

The conversation around sustainability is most often premised on the idea that our world is changing; that organizations need to be ahead of such change to ensure continued growth and improvement. As a diversity and inclusion practitioner, who focuses on talent and leadership, the single biggest threat to organizations' sustainability is not so much that the world is changing, but rather that it is not changing fast enough.

Talent attraction, optimization and retention are critical to the continued sustainability and success of any organization. Over the past three years engaging with organizations, I have noticed an increase in the gap between 'what talent want', and 'what leadership think talent want'. It is now trite that talent is no longer solely attracted, optimized and retained by the size of the paycheck. Further, we are noticing that the external benefits and comforts of beanbags, meal vouchers, pods and agility too have failed to optimize and retain. The nuance of talent attraction, optimization and retention centers around something intangible, yet fundamental: a feeling of **Inclusion**.

The inclusion gap between talent and leadership

Inclusion is the new currency for talent, yet many leaders feel under-resourced when trying to provide a space where talent (particularly diverse talent) can thrive. I often hear leaders invoking the following three incantations in the hopes to rebuff the growing call for inclusion within the workplace and their seeming soft skills gap:

1. "Talent is oversensitive!"

This is a major narrative used by leadership to side-step the call from talent to create more inclusive spaces. This narrative gained much prominence during the 'Millennial Movement' and is most often followed by "you should have seen how I was managed! I had a file thrown at me from across the room and I

turned out just fine". While yes, matters of entitlement have entered the workplace, to entirely dismiss the call for inclusion as a necessary condition for optimization and retention of talent is one of the major threats to sustainability within organizations as it contributes to talent attrition.

2. "You must be professional"

This corporate trope is one of the oldest and most entrenched. While yes, I support standards of good practice as it relates to clients, collegial interactions and general behaviour at the workplace, I have seen this trope being used to reject essential elements required for there to be inclusion: emotions, such as anger and fear, peoples' backgrounds and historical contexts, and peoples' traumas. Whether we like it or not, we all bring the above elements into the workplace, but with the corporate tenet of "professionalism", we have had to learn to suppress them in order to be "accepted" within the workplace. To further complicate and exacerbate the negative effects of suppression, what we know is that some people (particularly diverse identity employees) have to suppress **more** than others to be seen as "professional", as the standard of what we deem to be professional is most often centered around whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality. This places extra burden of diverse talent which contributes to their attrition.

3. "Top talent always rises"

This is probably the most dangerous of the three narratives used by leadership as it absolves them of needing to invest



Roy Gluckman

time and energy in developing (diverse) talent. If 'top talent always rises', then there is no responsibility on leadership to change their behaviour, nor to inter-rogate their influence on the culture of the organization that fundamentally affect talent development. Most insidiously, however, this narrative normalizes (or universalizes) the notion that if 'anyone works hard, anyone can achieve'. This idea of a meritocracy is dead. Top talent does NOT always (or universally) rise; top talent is nurtured and grown through *relational* and *environmental* factors. If we universalize the notion that top talent always rises, we are supposing that everyone within an organization is having the exact same work experience (standardized employee experience). That they are experiencing the environment the same, have equal access to opportunities, have the same levels of intrinsic and external comfort, have the same mentor and/or manager that gives them equally good work and equal attention and training, is being equally stimulated and integrated and is being exposed evenly to the critical conditions required for career development. As much as we like to think that we have achieved such equalities, we have not, with those most often excluded from the above having diverse identities, and hence why only some of whom we would call 'top talent' rises and others, not. This then gives us the false impression that

the road to success within the workplace is determined solely by the individual (talent) and not so much by the system that may, or may not, support and include them.

But what is inclusion?!

The above narratives have been used by leadership for good reason: achieving inclusion is difficult and elusive. With so many definitions of inclusion, leadership often feel overwhelmed and under-equipped to meaningfully drive it. I seek to break the concept of inclusion down by calling on leadership to understand three principles:

1. Inclusion is a feeling

Much of the conversation around inclusion is on the demographic shifts that need to take place within an organization, the look. While this is absolutely important and necessary to create more representation, just changing the social makeup of an organization will not achieve inclusion. Why? Because inclusion is not a look, it is a *feeling*! This is one of the major reasons why inclusion is so under-discussed; it goes to the heart of what we think the workplace needs to be, unemotional (read: professional). Even though we may include talent in meetings and other work opportunities, it doesn't follow that talent would automatically feel included.

2. Inclusion is comfort

If inclusion is a feeling, what is the feeling we are trying to achieve? If you ask 100 people what it means to feel included, you will get 100 responses. After much research on this topic, I have reduced the feeling of inclusion down to its most accessible and human need: comfort. By 'comfort', I do not mean external comforts (beanbags, meal vouchers etc.), but intrinsic comfort: how comfortable are

you, to show up as you, not a version of you, in this organization each day? What we know, is that the more of a person's identity, background, trauma and emotions one has to suppress upon entering an organization, the less comfortable they will be. Conversely, the more of a person's self that is validated within an organization, the more comfortable they will be. But why is intrinsic comfort

important? The more comfortable one is, the greater one's breadth to explore and to excel. The more comfortable one is the safer one feels to speak up. The more comfortable one is the more engaged one is and the more they participate. The greater one's comfort, the better one learns. The more comfortable a person is the greater their willingness to try something and to 'fail' and the more comfortable a person is the greater their willingness to ask for more or to ask for help.

The greater one's level of intrinsic comfort (how the environment and their relationships make them feel),

the more included they will feel which drives optimization, engagement, innovation and retention.

3. Inclusion and exclusion have always been happening

Inclusion/exclusion doesn't start or stop when we decide to do Diversity and Inclusion training. Either inclusion, or exclusion is happening at all moments in the day, between all people. When leaders are alive to this, one can see why incorporating the skill set of inclusion into their daily practice is an essential condition for optimizing and retaining talent.

Conclusion

In a world that is highly globalized, networked, relational and diverse, building a strong talent pipeline is an essential condition to sustainability. What talent want, however, has coalesced more around the softer wants of feeling included (comfortable), than the traditional benefits offered by organizations. In my work I have noticed the Inclusion Gap between what talent are calling for, and what leadership feel equipped, or care, to provide.

Though overwhelming, leadership is called upon to develop their inclusion skill set and to support a culture that fosters diversity and inclusion, not just because it is a "nice-to-have", nor even that it is the "right thing to do", but to ensure that they attract, optimize and retain top talent, to ensure their sustainability.

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Dealing with a Crisis is fine Having a Plan to Deal with a Crisis Is Better

Last year at this time we talked about the sustainability of an association in the context of sustaining membership growth. The focus was on not relying just on periodic recruitment campaigns to increase membership but rather on have an ongoing *plan* for keeping those members once they join.



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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This year we are looking at the sustainability of your association through a larger window. That is, do you have a long-term strategy for your association's future, and, as part of that plan, have you included contingencies to deal with unforeseen circumstances?

This need to plan for organisational sustainability is being highlighted right now in the association and meetings industry with the corona virus crisis. This is similar to worldwide health crises we've seen in the past (SARS, etc.) but the long-term effects of this one is not known yet.

So, here we are in a combined medical and economic emergency that will not only have a negative impact on associations and hospitality organisations during its peak time, but may - let's hope not, but it may - dictate travel and meeting habits for a long time to come.

In a report just released by Marketing General, Inc., a leading association marketing and research company in the United States, **more than half** of the nearly 400 associations responding said they see the signs of a recession coming (and this study was done before the corona virus outbreak!). Among the "signs of recession" which were used to make that prediction were benchmarks such as meeting attendance, member feedback, reduced advertising and sponsorship sales, and lower renewal rates.

Of these same 400 organization, **only a little over one third** said they had a recession contingency plan in place.

The question for these organizations is: If you know, and are monitoring, the signs of an impending threat to your organisation's long-term sustainability, why don't you have a plan to deal with it?

Is your long-term plan for organisational sustainability ready to deal with it?

A sustainability plan doesn't even have to be a separate document (although it is

probably better to have it that way, for insurance and other reasons). It could also be a defined part of your organisation's larger strategic or long-range plan.

The important thing is that you have thought through the key elements that will enable your organisation to survive various types of challenging scenarios.

Here are some of the kinds of things that should be included in a sustainability plan:

1. **A list of assumptions.** Identify the basis for your plan, and tell what criteria you are using to determine when the plan should go into effect.
2. **Target goals for resources.** Know what minimum levels of financial, membership and other resources are necessary to keep your organization operating at the desired level to serve your members and other stakeholders. Have a plan for building your reserves to meet these needs.
3. **Prioritized programs and activities.** Be sure your Annual Plan/program of work identifies the priority order of all of your ongoing and special programs and projects. This will be important if you are required to cut or reduce costs because it will shorten the time needed to decide what to do with fewer resources.
4. **A communications protocol for unexpected circumstances.** To avoid confusion and mixed messages going out to members, Chapters, leaders, partners, and other stakeholders, include something in your plan to identify how – and who – will answer questions about your contingency plan and its implementation.
5. **Targeted partner organisations and stakeholders.** We all have key members, suppliers, donors, and affiliated organisations that form the core of our support system. Be prepared to reach out to them and tell them specifically what they can do help with your plan and what, if

necessary, you are willing to do to help them (i.e. extending credit, offering discounts, trading services, etc.).

6. **Leadership succession policies.** Make sure you don't lose the volunteer leadership component that is so critical to associations. Check your Bylaws and Policy Manual to be sure there is a comprehensive leadership succession plan. In an economic crisis, we often see individuals and/or companies cutting back on not only association dues but also volunteer activities. Don't get caught unprepared if several leaders are laid off, or if companies hit hard times and their representatives to your organization have to reduce their time commitments.
7. **An even greater focus on your Mission Statement.** Make it clear that everything in your Sustainability Plan is designed to allow you to continue your work toward accomplishing your Mission and providing value to your members. If possible, identify how each element of your plan directly impacts your Mission.

Don't hesitate to ask for help in putting a sustainability plan together. This may require seeking outside assistance from an experienced facilitator. If the cost of doing that is an issue, go back to your corporate or institutional partners and ask them if they have anyone they could provide to help with your planning process (see number 5, above).

Most organisations have an overall Strategic Plan that they follow. These plans are based a certain set of assumptions and forecasts, etc. When those assumptions are disrupted by unforeseen factors, you need something more.

You need a sustainability plan.

A Solution for **Long Term Strategy**

Thanks to **Yukari Ikeda**, senior producer at the Conference Management Department of Japan Convention Services (JCS), we take a glance at the world of physicians. And a precious lesson.

Do you know how many associations currently exist in Japan?

According to 2018 records, the total number of associations registered in Japan is 2,022, out of which 1,027 are medical, dental and pharmacological related. A large number of medical academic societies and associations in Japan were first established in the early 20th century during a time when university hospitals began playing a significant role in the country's medical and academic history. Records show that many of the leading associations that are currently active were initially founded in the offices of university hospitals. It appears that clerical procedures were often handled concurrently by the secretaries of such places.

Meanwhile, research groups were formed under the sponsorship of pharmaceutical companies that manufactured relevant medicines and, following increased membership, they eventually became independent by constituting themselves as incorporated associations. As a result, medium- to large-scale associations were able to obtain corporate status. While many of them set-up offices in Tokyo for the convenience of location, incredibly high real estate prices in the city forced them to opt for small offices. This resulted in invariably limiting the number of people who could work there. Only some smaller associations managed to remain within the university hospital grounds. Regardless of the size or location of each association, the common denominator among them was the absence of a culture of outsourcing work. However, it can

sometimes be a precious solution for a long-term strategy.

As an example, JCS was contracted as the Association Management Company (AMC) of a certain surgical association in 2011. At that time, the membership of the AMC was multiplying and the organisation wanted to become independent in order to be more dynamically active. Because the initial costs of establishing an office in Tokyo were too high, they decided to set-up a secretariat within an outsourced office instead. An interesting aspect of this arrangement was that, regardless of the AMC contract, the congress president had the freedom to select their preferred PCO for their annual academic conferences, thus retaining their options. As the result of hiring skilled staff, who possessed a deep understanding of academic conferences, the AMC was released from a lot of day-to-day work that they now did not have to do. They could concentrate on what they have to do, such as safe surgery.

Despite general advancements in surgery, skills vary with each physician. In light of this, the AMC conducts a technical assessment of individual surgical skills and grants a licence only to those who pass the test. The survival rate of surgeries performed by licenced physicians is high and licences need to be renewed every five years. This is in line with the concept of continuing medical education, for which physicians are required to commit to life-long education and to continuously develop professional performance for as long as they are practising. In order to pass such a stringent assessment,

the training is also crucial. In this context, JCS devised a training programme giving young doctors an opportunity to view surgeries conducted by veteran physicians with the cooperation of leading medical device companies. Such programmes can be used to assist a number of associations under AMC contracts.

Japan faces the pressing issue of a declining population due to a falling birth rate, so a shortage of physicians is projected for the future. Amidst anticipated future decrease in membership, offering sustainable services as an AMC should lead to stable management of associations and provision of better medical services to society. Outsourcing can be a very viable option for a long-term strategy.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers. The author is Yukari Ikeda, senior producer at the Conference Management Department of Japan Convention Services (JCS). Founded in 1967, JCS is one of the nation's largest and leading PCOs. It provides total planning and services for official summit conferences, expositions and other programmes sponsored by governments and public agencies.

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From Crisis to Regeneration

“For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

– Malcolm X



Imagine a future, in which disruptions are not simply seen as enemies to avoid, but also as containing opportunities yet to be discovered. Covid-19 presents the meetings and events industry with a disruption of previously unimaginable consequences. UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, estimates that the negative economic impact on the industry has already reached 14.4 billion euros, and more than 23 billion euros of business contracts will not be signed as a consequence of cancelled events.

Never let a crisis go to waste

This dramatic disordering of ‘the normal’, brings with it a new environment for experimentation, in which we need to prepare the tools that can allow the industry to regenerate during and after this crisis. If we cannot run IRL (in real life) meetings and events, we need to create virtual alternatives. While the immersive and meaningful experience of IRL meetings cannot be fully replaced, the disruptive impact of Covid-19 has

shown that the events industry needs to expand its toolkit. We have the opportunity to create a beautiful synergy, in which shifting how we work can regenerate the industry and foster human connection during times of quarantine. While at the same time we are reducing our negative footprint on the planet, and improving our capacity to adapt to future climate catastrophes.

Currently, there is a real gap in knowledge, expertise and proven tools for running large conventions, or even small meetings, in virtual spaces. To kick-start collaborative innovation we have to take risks, trial virtual alternatives, and share our success stories and failures with each other.

Planning and Technology

Virtual meetings and events will require the use and development of innovative technologies and new competencies. For small meetings we have to build our vocabulary on how to effectively engage participants, by using tools ranging from polling, breakout rooms, and interactive

tasks and games, to digital workspaces for collaboration, such as Miro, Mural, and Klaxoon.

While these same tools can be very useful for webinars, they do not allow us to recreate the whole experience of summits, conferences and tradeshows in a virtual environment. For summits platforms such as HeySummit, offer all-in-one solutions, while for tradeshows big players, such as vFairs and MeetYoo, cater for high-budget events. However, one of the most challenging elements to replicate in a virtual setting, is an environment in which strangers can feel comfortable to connect with one another, and expand their networks.

Neither ‘vFairs’ or ‘MeetYoo’ has met this challenge yet, but there are exciting start-ups on the horizon that may offer the solution. Namely, ‘Hopin’ and ‘RunTheWorld’, which are new virtual event platforms, that include fireside chats and cocktail parties as event networking spaces, on top of the main event stages and virtual trade booths.

What next?

For your events that are cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus, decide which of the tools listed above could help you create a virtual alternative. Ask yourself how you can bring the human aspect into a virtual environment, and contribute to this ongoing discussion. Let’s jump into action, trial potential solutions, and help our industry co-create the innovations necessary for a more regenerative and resilient industry.



Noah Joubert is a Sustainability Consultant of the Global Destination Sustainability Index, a global programme that benchmarks destination management strategy and performance, and consults cities to rebuild thriving tourism and events destinations that serve their citizens and ecosystems.



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