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Editor's Letter



I WAS THERE IN PERSON

AUTHOR: MARCEL A.M. VISSERS, EDITOR IN CHIEF

What a satisfaction to attend another conference in the flesh. After three years of being cut off from direct eye contact with soulmates and being completely wrapped up in digital pulses, I finally saw the real world of meetings, greetings and embracing again.

The beautiful Polish city of **Kraków** was the perfect place to experience the long-awaited, in-person, most important annual event of meetings industry – the **61st World Congress of ICCA**, the association serving the world of international conventions. Around 900 delegates had registered for the congress according to the ICCA staff. With my 4-day attendance, I experienced first-hand how much damage the Corona atomic bomb had done to the meetings industry. Friends from the past and colleagues from the publishing world I longed to revisit with were no longer there. Many anchor contributors of ICCA had disappeared and new faces appeared in their places.

It brought out a remark from a well-known Asian DMC that she was no longer recognised by the younger crowd. It made me note that much of the ego culture in the meetings industry had also disappeared down the same route – and I'm glad it did by the way. Still, one thing I have to get off my chest is how expensive the ICCA membership fee has become! Suggested new rate is about €3,450 per year from 2023!

If I make a comparison with SMEI – the Global Sales and Marketing Professional Association, I no longer know what standard fees are and what value members get from that price. I also notice more and more that members are struggling with the membership bill...moreover, the registration fees for congress and meetings are not cheap either. All added up, it results in a small sour burp for many associations. I would still urge a little soul-searching about “how far can we go.”



What will it "**Cost**" to **Hold an Event** in the Next Few Years?

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

Several international studies show that business travellers generally spend on average three times more than an international tourist, and also stay longer than the average tourist. It is no wonder that most governments want a piece of this action and move their resources strategically towards association campaigns and bidding for large congresses. According to the *Economic Significance of Meetings to the US Economy*, only 43% of this direct expenditure was for travel and tourism products such as food, beverage and air transportation. The remainder, 57%, was allocated to meeting commodities such as venue hire, meeting planning and production.

Along the lines of this plot, a study conducted by *Conferli*, a conference matchmaking platform, shows that sustainability and legacy are still not considered as priority decision-making criteria when selecting a destination for a conference. Only 10% of associations take these concepts into account when choosing a host city as opposed to other much stronger criteria such as the cost of the organising party, the cost for delegates or the variety of hotel supply. Another survey by *Skift Meetings* reveals that a clear majority of planners feel

that events today use more technology, are planned with fewer lead times, have lower attendance, and most retained the option to attend remotely leaving the impression that pandemic times have indeed changed the mindset of many. Things are changing but, as always, not at the speed that many pointed out.

This makes that in the minds of many destination promoters and event planners the direct impacts of these international conferences are still as (or even more) important than their intellectual output and underlying issues: it is in this balance of interests that the events industry still finds itself in 2022. As we will see on the following pages from the pen of our contributors, event sponsorship is a great way for associations to receive support from companies and to score valuable partnerships in terms of funds and publicity. There are various types of event sponsorship that you can choose for your business. These include financial sponsorships, in-kind sponsorships, media event sponsorships, and influencer and content creator sponsorships.

However, as our friends at the **World PCO Alliance** say, relying on event revenue for an association's source of funding is an unnecessary risk and may not guarantee a stable basis for its financial health. These days, associations have to wear the mantle of content providers, industry experts and information mediators... with fees in place. Setting up an association is relatively simple, the biggest challenge of course is to keep it running, cover its expenses and offer strong assets to its members. Associations need to apply a playbook ready to be run through a period of crisis, working closely with their members to align experiences and connections through their technology stack and innovative tools – this is vital to instil a sense of relevance in this new digital-first world. As our esteemed **Mark Levin** tells us in his article, "value proposition is the key to building sponsorship relationships".

How can they do so in such a competitive environment inheriting one heavy burden from the pandemic and with lower cash flow? That's what you'll find in this last *Headquarters* of the year with the different contributions of our editorial partners and the various stories of industry players around the world.



HQ

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CONTENTS
NOVEMBER 2022



EDITOR'S LETTER — 4

INTRO — 5



HQ ESSENTIAL

12th IAS Conference on HIV Science — 9

UEG Week 2023 — 12

BETTER FINANCE — 14

BC&A — 16



DESTINATION INTERVIEWS

ICC Sydney — 19

Maastricht Convention Bureau — 22

Hungarian Tourism Agency — 24

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau — 28

Scottish Event Campus — 30

THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES
IN THE MEETINGS
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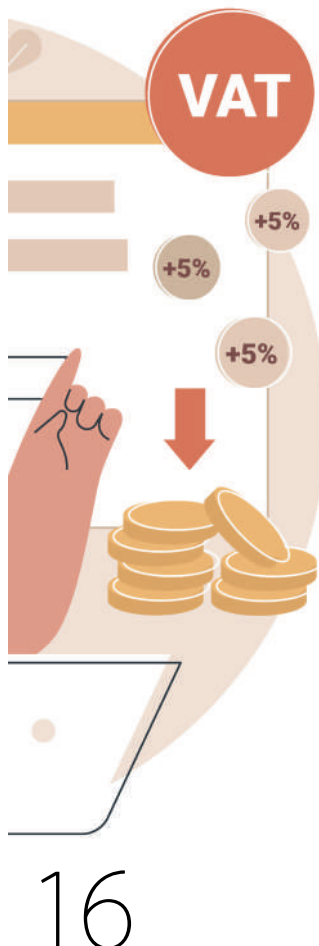


The 12th IAS
Conference on
HIV Science in
Brisbane



BC&A

What is the
difference between
Sponsorship and
Donation?



Maastricht

Hosted The WCO
2022 Technology
Conference and
Exhibition





EVENTS

- Cvent CONNECT Europe — 32
- PCMA Convening EMEA — 34



PCO INSIGHTS

- Kenes — 37
- World PCO Alliance — 38



ASSOCIATION INSIGHTS

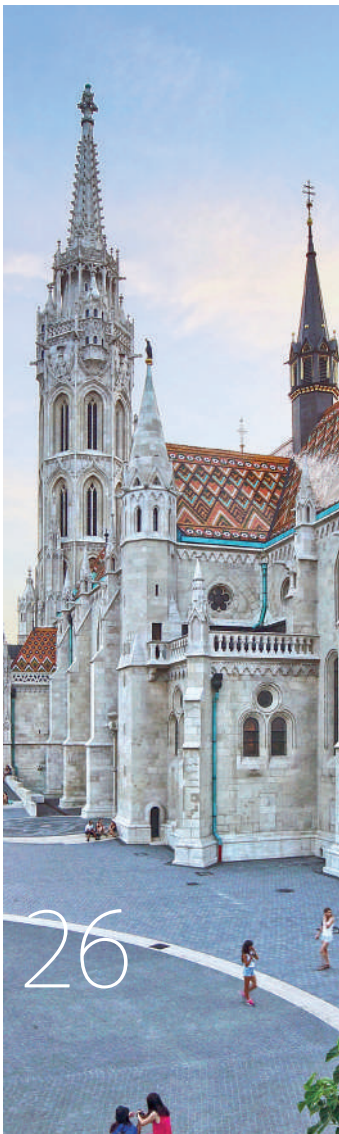
- Interel — 40
- Mark Levin — 42
- AIPC — 44
- IAPCO — 45
- CityDNA — 46

Interel

New Rules of Engagement for Sponsors

Hungary

A Spotlight in the Middle of Europe



Scottish Event Campus:

Social and Environmental Commitment to Glasgow



PCO Alliance

How to Leverage and Optimise Revenue Streams



40



HQ ESSENTIAL INTERVIEWS



FUNDING

- 9** The 12th IAS Conference on HIV Science
- 12** United European Gastroenterology Week 2023
- 14** BETTER FINANCE
- 16** BC&A: Sponsorship & VAT

The **International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS 2023)** will take place at the **Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC)** in July 2023, presenting a global focus for Australia's evidence led approach to HIV, leading the world in the minimisation of infection rates. BCEC together with local host organisation ASHM (Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine) submitted the winning bid to the International AIDS Society (IAS) to host its 2023 Conference, allowing Australia's key learnings in this area to be shared on a global scale. Organisers are anticipating that 6,000 members of the international research community at the forefront of HIV science, will attend the five-day on-site event, testifying to Australia's scientific excellence in the immunology and infectious disease space critical to Brisbane's choice as host city.

The **12th IAS Conference on HIV Science** Upholds **Brisbane's** Position in the Fight Against HIV!

Holding the conference in Australia is intended to be an accelerator for the country to achieve its goal of virtually eliminating HIV transmission by 2025, while also bringing an important focus of attention to the most vulnerable communities in the Asia-Pacific region. A number of scientists from leading Australian research institutes involved in the COVID-19 pandemic played an active role in securing the Brisbane HIV Science Conference, expanding the role of science in the areas of infectious disease and viral medicine to the conference. Headquarters spoke to both sides of the issue (the host venue and the organising association) to understand the reasons for this partnership and the significant legacy for the Australian HIV research community, the whole country, the Asia-Pacific region and the world.



*Alison Gardiner, Director of Sales
at BCEC*

What scientific and academic reasons led Brisbane to emerge victorious in the international competition for this conference. What was the secret sauce for this success?

Alison Gardiner: Australia leads the world in the minimisation of HIV infection rates. It was our science excellence within the immunology and infectious diseases space that was key to the selection of Brisbane as the host city for what is the world's largest and most influential HIV Sciences conference. The bid was underpinned by the strength of the science and record of Australia's

leadership in the elimination of the disease, and in the area of HIV cure research. It is Australia's and Brisbane's objective to partner with IAS to create an outstanding HIV Science conference that will reflect current scientific knowledge and emerging science in the areas of HIV treatment, prevention, cure, ageing and obstacles to HIV elimination including stigma.

BCEC has a strong track record of supporting scientific collaboration and exchange through its highly successful Convention Advocates Partnership. Tell us more about this local partnership.

Just over a decade ago we set up the BCEC Convention Advocates Partnership, a form of "ambassador"

programme, to recognise the internationally renowned leaders in sectors that are a priority for our government and our universities. We have 75 Advocates and a Patron, and together they have helped to bring over 135 conferences to Brisbane creating AU\$190 million in economic impact for our city. The pride these local leaders have in supporting their city and ‘shining a light’ on the innovation in their sectors, has been inspirational. The partnership is known and highly regarded across the city, in our universities and within our state government as an example of successful collaboration between the Research & Development sector, industry and government.

What impact do you hope to bring to Brisbane with this mega-conference?

AG: We are looking forward to the economic impact of having 6,000 HIV research experts visiting our city and experiencing the amazing quintessential Australian lifestyle and the world class infrastructure we enjoy here in Brisbane – but the follow-on benefits are so much more.

The Australian impacts include: virtual elimination of HIV transmission by 2025; free medications and clinical care for all people living with HIV in Australia; an agreed roadmap for addressing stigma; Australia, hoping to become a fast track country as part of a fast track global strategy to end the HIV, TB and Hepatitis B and C epidemics; decriminalisation of sex work in our home state of Queensland; furthering the national plan for Health Equity for First Nations peoples.

Regional impacts for our Asia Pacific neighbours include: Shining a spotlight on “at risk” communities from climate change; and a Regional Fellowship Programme to support scientists and clinicians across the region. As for the global impacts: COVID-19 learning and Adaption; and IAS HIV Science 2023 Indigenous Legacy Statement.

Do you believe that the conference of the future that aims to eradicate disease, save lives, and advance science will have to unequivocally include this virtuous triangle – people, government and experts in the field?

AG: Absolutely, we do! One of our key BCEC missions in life is to attract the right meetings for the right sectors for government and our innovation community. It’s the win-win-win and most definitely the virtuous triangle with business events as a strategic and tactical vehicle for the international peak body, and the Australian community in that sector. Everyone wants positive impact. Together with our destination partner, **Brisbane Economic Development Agency**, we put in a great deal of time and effort to ensure that we bring a range of social, economic and environmental impact options to our clients choosing Brisbane. Now that the post-COVID recovery is well underway, we are doubling down together to look at new ways we can support international associations’ goals and United Nation Sustainable Development Goals in areas like public awareness, educational legacies, next generation engagement and policy change, to truly deliver optimal impact in hosting events in Brisbane.



What do you look for in a destination as a partner at this level?

Charles Gilks: We were looking for two features: the enthusiasm Brisbane showed in hosting this conference and showcasing what Brisbane has to offer as a world city for delegates and their accompanying partners. A very powerful offer was made that was clearly aimed at the whole city, far more than just hosting a major science conference at the convention centre.

How do you plan to spread the Australian example on a global scale and use your expertise within the conference to make that goal happen?

CG: Brisbane will, on World AIDS Day 1st December 2022, sign “the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities – ending the HIV epidemic” and then host a Fast Track cities workshop pre-conference to review progress made globally but with special reference to our Asia-Pacific region which has special issues and challenges to overcome. We also hope to have significant political engagement in the opening and closing ceremonies where there will be a renewed commitment to the HIV elimination agenda. Complacency is a real threat to sustaining the efforts to elimination; those last parts can be very challenging and need special focus. We are planning several symposia that compare and contrast our responses to HIV and COVID-19, both nationally and globally; we will have a special session on pandemic preparedness to ensure that the learnings of what to do and how to do it are not forgotten as and when the next pandemic arises.

How do you intend to bridge the gap between representation from more developed countries and low and middle-income countries to ensure the scientific outreach drawn from the conference?

CG: This is a perennial issue for IAS Science, as most of the resources for science and therefore most of the research is in the global north. IAS aims to award hundreds of scholarships to young scientists and health leaders from the global south in HIV/AIDS, and Brisbane will have as a specific legacy a particular focus on youth leadership in First Nations scientists, community and healthcare.



*Professor Charles Gilks,
Queensland Professorial Chair of
BBVs and STIs at the University
of Queensland and International
AIDS Society 2023 Local Chair*

“

We also hope to have significant political engagement in the opening and closing ceremonies where there will be a renewed commitment to the HIV elimination agenda

The **United European Gastroenterology Week 2023** in Copenhagen: What do They have in Common?

Digestive health will be in focus in Copenhagen next year with the **United European Gastroenterology Week 2023** taking place at the **Bella Center**, bringing together once again gastroenterology professionals from all over the continent. Organised by the **United European Gastroenterology (UEG)**, the congress is a leader in its field and thus returns to the Danish capital after the 2005 edition, expecting to attract around 10,000 delegates.

Considering the new trends the events industry has been grappling with - information technology, hybrid events, social impacts and sustainable practices - we tried to find out what new features the international congress will bring and what were the main points and criteria covered in the RFP. To this end we spoke with the two entities responsible for planning this event, following this new association momentum around initiatives that integrate international conferences more deeply with the local community, businesses and scientific institutions of the host destination.

How did this cooperation come about and what were the main reasons you attribute for the return of the International Gastroenterology congress?

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier: We have been in contact with UEG ever since they were last in Copenhagen, and have had some great conversations along the way on when and how UEG potentially could return. We have also had, for many years a strong involvement and commitment from Danish experts and professionals in UEG. The UEG Week is not only a very important and significant congress in terms of size and topic; life sciences are also a stronghold in our region and an area where we are increasing our investment, including the further partnering with new life science stakeholder groups that may be beneficial to UEG. At the same time, Copenhagen meets UEG’s needs of in terms of logistics and functionality, but also as a safe, reliable, liveable destination for its delegates to meet in.

Are you devising a new strategy to attract association meetings in this post-pandemic period?

BRM: We are indeed. We recently launched a new strategy with **Meetingplace** – our member association – called “Copenhagen together for positive impact”. It replaces “Copenhagen Means Business”, and is a move

away from a strong focus on winning bed nights to, instead, focus more on relevance, partnerships, sustainability and legacy. The strategy consists of three main pillars: transforming to meet changing client needs; sharing communities; and creating broader sustainable impact. We firmly believe that this is the way forward for our industry – not just CVBs but for the entire meetings ecosystem.

How did you explore the legacy angle and the potential impact for the city in the bid for this congress?

BRM: We presented the **Copenhagen Legacy Lab** as an offer to UEG for the organisation, in close collaboration with the destination, to look at UEG’s vision and mission and match it with the potentially challenges and barriers Denmark has in the field of digestive health. In this match, we have the ambition to find opportunities to develop specific activities targeted at solving these common challenges with the aim of driving long term positive impact. Copenhagen Legacy Lab and UEG will meet in November to further explore the potential here.



Bettina Reventlow-Mourier, Deputy Convention Director-Head of Congress at Wonderful Copenhagen CVB





*Doris Möstl,
Executive Director at UEG*

How will you ensure a more efficient, productive and inclusive congress for all your delegates in this 2023 chapter?

Doris Möstl: As the European home for multidisciplinary gastroenterology, we unite over 50,000 engaged professionals from national and specialist societies, individual digestive health experts and related scientists from all fields. Thus, it is in our DNA to be inclusive and deliver excellent scientific content that is of interest to those from many different backgrounds. We provide what we call a “truly hybrid” congress by offering two different delegate journeys, which allows attendees to join us in-person or online via our virtual platform to get updates on therapies, innovations, as well as new diagnostic and product insights. While UEG Week is a very important touchpoint for our community, we also provide through our myUEG Community countless opportunities (both online and in-person) for individuals to engage, interact and advance over the course of the entire year. Our myUEG Community is the connecting tool for our diverse digestive health community and provides a plethora of outstanding free resources, educational activities and opportunities to our specialists. With our platform and free social feature, My Connect, we enable our associates to grow a strong network of friends, colleagues, peers, and collaborators within the field of digestive health.

Why did you decide to partner with Copenhagen for the International Gastroenterology Congress?

DM: Copenhagen and the Bella Center have a good track record in organising international medical congresses. We have found a meaningful and reliable partner for our congress with Copenhagen, and the Bella Center offers us the necessary size and flexibility to organise our event and host our large industry exhibition. Other important criteria include number of hotel rooms, international accessibility, venue reachability, public transportation system and support in the process provided by the local convention bureau. In our assessment, we also talk about currency risk, VAT situation, average price level of hotels, dining locations and other services we use; we look at ICCA and Mercer ratings (quality of life, safety, political stability) and of course we need to make sure we can present a reasonable budget for the event.

How do you plan to introduce the Danish scientific community and your local partners in digestive health to the congress delegates?

DM: UEG is a truly international organisation, and we are fortunate enough to have the representation of many Danish colleagues within our myUEG Community and on several of our boards and committees. Our Scientific Committee oversees the development of the scientific programme for UEG Week and I am certain that in 2023 we will welcome renowned faculty from Denmark to our congress. We additionally look forward to receiving and featuring many abstracts from the Danish digestive health community, as we understand there is a great deal of excellent research ongoing.

BETTER FINANCE was created in 2009 in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis to give a voice to consumers of financial services, and today represents around 4 million financial users through nearly 39 organisations in 26 countries, including 20 European Member States. Its predecessor, Euroshareholders, merged with BETTER FINANCE in 2012 unifying the interests of all financial users at European level.

Its membership is made up of dedicated European non-profit financial services user organisations that act as representatives of European users in their respective Member States. They believe that the financial system exists to serve the real economy and therefore their focus is on restoring confidence in capital markets and financial intermediaries and promoting sustainable financing for their users.

“A Sustainable Real-life Economy is not Possible Without Value for Money”

We spoke to the **Executive Director, Aleksandra Mączyńska**, about what it is like to work in the interest of the many ensuring good governance, independence and preventing conflicts of interest, and how they intend to strengthen the participation of financial services users in EU policy-making.

As an independent centre of financial expertise, how do you analyse the current state of the European association community from a financial point of view?

Most consumer associations are already stretched pretty thin in terms of resources, and this is only getting worse in the context of high wage cost inflation. Having already had funding difficulties during the COVID years, I can imagine that few organisations have much room left for manoeuvre in terms of internal reserves or possibilities for further “efficiency savings”. Austerity which significantly reduces overall funding levels is likely to force a reconfiguration of the European NGO landscape, and probably not for the better.

How can NGOs and associations find new revenue streams and sponsor their projects in times of austerity?

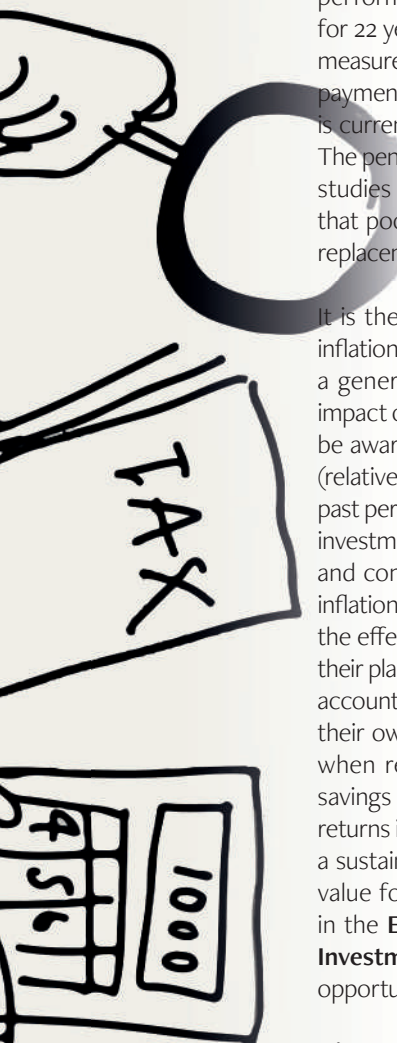
The safest and best bet in the long run is to diversify as much as possible and not rely on just one source of funding. Unfortunately, this is often easier said than done, especially if – as in the case of BETTER FINANCE’s

research reports – you need to ensure the objectivity and independence of your projects. The most evident trend in recent years in the non-profit sector seems to be that in order to get funding from public or private sources, having sustainability related projects and outlook is key. While there are a lot of positives in this trend and sustainability is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges of our time, there is also a risk that associations that focus on other important issues will lose focus on their original mission or lose the funding needed to fulfil it. A common feature of interest is to convince donors and, in particular, public donors to index their multi-annual grants or other funding to inflation, which is most often not the case.

How can we strive for a sustainable real economy serving citizens with historic levels of inflation, an ongoing war and the consequences of a two-year pandemic?

For 10 years now, BETTER FINANCE has been pointing to the often-poor real net returns on long-term savings and pensions in a large number of EU jurisdictions. It is getting worse, and while a couple of years of poor






performance can be offset, the same cannot be said for 22 years. BETTER FINANCE has already pleaded for measures to protect pension contributions, savings and payments. The plight of individual savers and investors is currently compounded by historic levels of inflation. The pension time bomb is already ticking in Europe, with studies by BETTER FINANCE and the OECD showing that poor real returns are insufficient for an adequate replacement income upon retirement.

It is therefore important to include product-related inflation risks in key disclosure documents and provide a general warning that inflation has an exponential impact on real investment returns. Investors should also be aware of the actual past performance of products (relative to managers' benchmarks) alongside nominal past performance. EU law information requirements and investment firms should provide a clear, non-misleading and comprehensible view of the impact and risks of inflation, especially while interest rates remain low, and the effect this may have on the real long-term value of their planned investments. Public authorities should take account of the risk and negative impact of inflation in their own reporting by raising awareness and provide, when relevant, both nominal returns on long-term savings and investment products as well as the actual returns in real terms (net of inflation). Last but not least, a sustainable real-life economy is not possible without value for money, and this concept should be applied in the **European Commission's** forthcoming **Retail Investment Strategy**, which is a once in a generation opportunity to attract citizens to capital markets.

Given the current reality of the markets and the many events at the heart of Europe (such as Brexit) what is the strategy designed by Better Finance to defend the interests of European citizens as users of financial services?



We will continue to work on our 2019-2024 priorities, as there is still a long way to go to achieve the desired outcome: a true European Capital Markets Union (CMU) built on the trust of citizens as individual investors, insurance policyholders, pension savers and other savers. With our advocacy campaigns and research reports, we aim to support the defusing of the pensions time bomb, which requires positive and decent long-term real returns for pension savers, i.e. sustainable value for money. Today, the European Commission's Retail Investment Strategy is a high priority for BETTER FINANCE as it has a direct impact on our constituency: individual, non-professional "retail" investors across the EU, to rebuild their trust in financial institutions and encourage them to invest more and boost value for money. Moreover,

the Retail Investment Strategy is a key pillar of a CMU that really works for people.

Do you think that a large part of European society still has limited horizons in terms of financial mechanisms and individual investments?

We agree that financial literacy is a key competence necessary to ensure adequate financial protection in old age and make it possible to understand whether your investment is providing **value for money**. Given the low level of financial literacy among EU citizens, it seems important to increase numeracy and reduce "maths anxiety". Ideally, basic financial mathematics and capital markets should be part of school curricula and taught at an early age. However, the current trend of focusing too much or only on "financial education programmes" is not enough. EU citizens also need access to **bias-free advice** to understand the difference between salespeople and advisors. The financial industry should focus on improving its offer of simple and standardised products, and while financial education is crucial, it cannot be considered a substitute for consumer and investor protection and should in no way relieve financial institutions from providing individuals with effective, clear and comprehensible information. Public authorities should favour "nudging" techniques to address the cognitive biases of retail investors, rather than exploiting them to their detriment, like they do for instance with "monetary illusion": people are not aware of the very negative impact of inflation on the real return – purchasing power – of their savings over time.

Finally, what are the major institutional events you are currently preparing?

Since sustainability and sustainable investments are one of our main interests, our next two events will focus on this topic. On 6 December, BETTER FINANCE and its German member **DSW** will hold their biannual **International Investors' Conference** in Frankfurt. This year the conference will focus on "The Green Deal vs Geopolitics", taking a closer look at Sustainability in the New World Order, CMU and the Green Deal, Say on Climate for Shareholders and whether including ESG and Sustainability in Finance can deliver value for money, among others. A week later, BETTER FINANCE and the **LEVEL EEI Consortium** members will hold their second annual **High Level Expert Forum for Sustainable Finance (#HLEF)** on 13-14 December in Brussels to discuss how to best address the financing gap hindering investments in Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy.

Sponsorship and VAT: Terms and Concepts

AUTHOR: OUMAR COUNTA, DIRECTOR OF TAX DEPARTMENT AT BC&A.

Since there is no legal text, sponsorship can be defined as a financial contribution to a cultural, artistic, sporting, scientific, educational, entertainment or similar event in exchange for a certain acknowledgement that will increase its notoriety and possibly improve its image. Sponsorship gives significant exposure to the sponsors' targets, visitors and exhibitors, often professionals in the same field and therefore potential clients.

Cornerstone of the financing of an event such as a congress, a conference or a corporate meeting, sponsorship is thus very important in financing the annual budget of a not-for-profit organisation (NPO). While annual memberships secure some income to keep NPOs alive, event revenue is of significant importance in helping them achieve their goals.

What about VAT?

For Value-Added Tax (VAT) purposes, a 'supply of services' shall mean any transaction which does not constitute a supply of goods (EU Directive). Sponsorship is a commercial operation, more specifically, it is a supply of advertising services provided by the organiser of an event to the company contributing to the organisation of the event. Then, the question is: where should sponsorship be taxable?

For sponsors with a business status (B2B)

Under current European regulations, the general rule for services applies whether or not the company sponsoring an event is based in the European Union.

This means that the place of provision of sponsorship will be where the sponsor has established its fixed business receiving the said supply of services.

However, if those services are provided to a fixed establishment of the sponsor located in a country other than the country where it has its headquarters, the place of supply of those services will be the country where that fixed establishment is located. For the sake of simplicity, sponsorship is most often subject to VAT in the country where the sponsor is established.

When the sponsor is not established in the country of the organiser, no VAT is charged and the sponsor self-accounts for VAT in its country of establishment. This is called the **Reverse Charge Mechanism**. This means that there is no amount of VAT applied on the sponsorship invoices issued by the organiser. For instance, the organiser is established in Belgium and the sponsor is VAT-registered in Germany. The German company has only one establishment in Germany and nowhere else. The organiser issues an invoice without VAT and the sponsor self-accounts for VAT in Germany. No Belgian VAT is due on this supply.

On the other hand, when both the organiser and the sponsor are established in the same country, local VAT should be charged on the supply of the sponsorship and paid to the tax administration of their country of establishment.



For sponsors without commercial status (B2C)

If a European sponsor does not have an intra-EU VAT number, he will be considered as a non-taxable person and the reverse charge cannot be applied. According to the special rule for event-related services supplied to non-taxable persons, the sponsorship will be subject to the VAT of the country where the event takes place.

“ *When the sponsor is not established in the country of the organiser, no VAT is charged and the sponsor self-accounts for VAT in its country of establishment*

An intra-EU VAT number is a number that individually identifies companies subject to VAT in each EU Member State, whether or not they are established in that country. This allows the company to do business abroad from its country of establishment. For example, Spain or Italy provide the intra-EU number only on request, it is not automatically assigned, with the difference being an internal VAT number. The internal VAT number is not registered in VIES which is a European system that allows operators to check the validity of the VAT number.

If a non-European sponsor cannot prove its commercial status, the place of delivery of the sponsorship will remain the place where it is established. This is due to the special rule on advertising services provided to non-taxable persons established outside the European Union. This rule shall be applied to a USA-based sponsor.

The specificity of Sponsorship Packages

Often, organisers not only provide advertising on screen, bags, in the catalogue... but a complete package including admissions on site, and/or meeting rooms. Since admissions and meeting rooms are

subject to VAT in the country where the event is held, no reverse charge can be applied on the whole sponsorship package.

For VAT paid on services subject to local VAT, sponsors with business status may submit a VAT reimbursement request. Non-Europeans may have to appoint a Tax Representative in this regard.

What is the difference between Sponsorship and Donation?

Donations are made by entities that contribute financially to non-profit organisations without any consideration and are used to help the organisations achieve their goals and objectives. Donations can be made to charities that operate exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, educational, or other specified purposes.

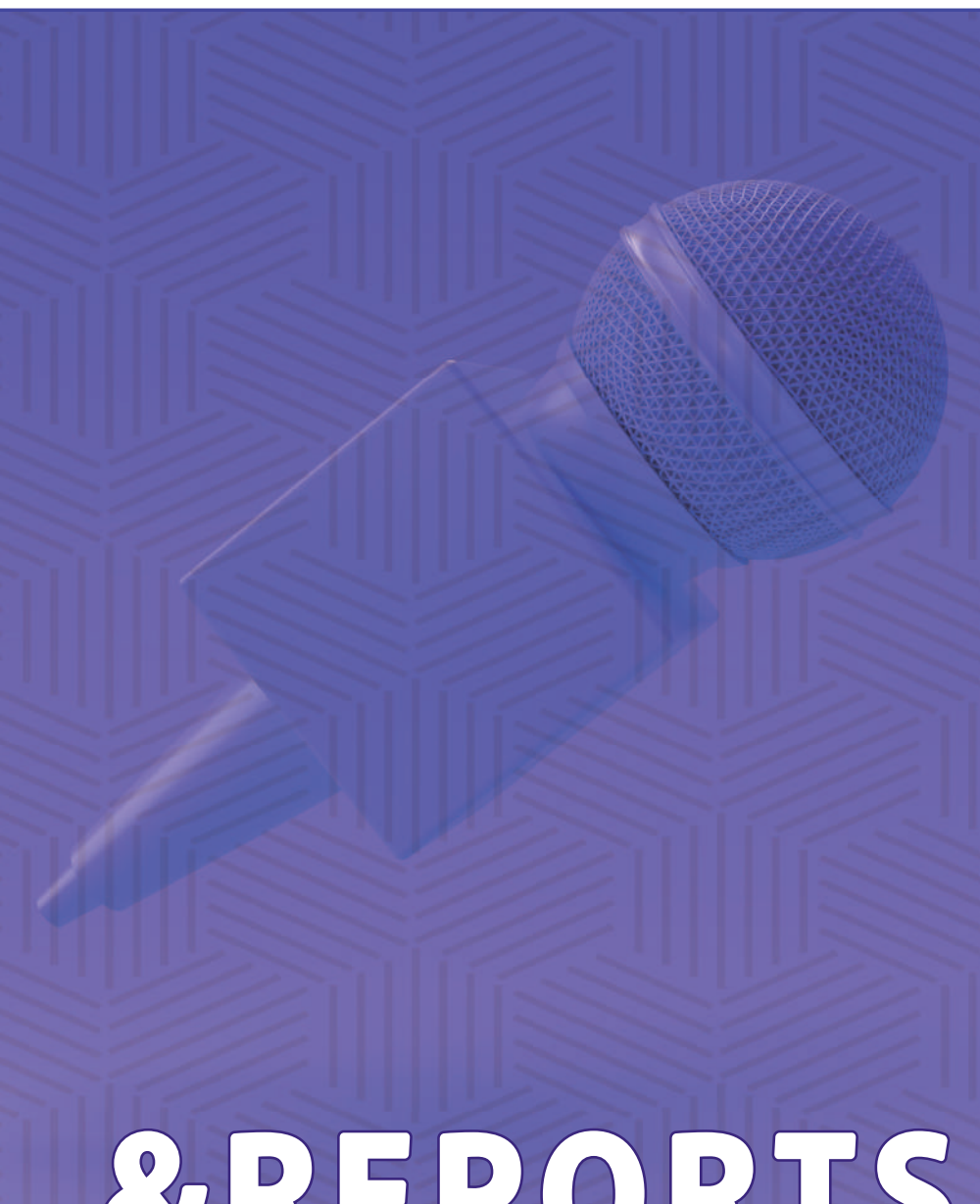
Since there is no service in return, these transactions are not considered commercial operations and are outside the scope of VAT. As a consequence, no invoice shall be issued for these transactions.



ABOUT THE BC&A

Founded in 2004, BC&A is a VAT consultancy firm specialised in VAT management and recovery for association events. BC&A has been involved in hundreds of events, some with as many as 25,000 participants. Its expert guidance allows for several advantages: maximum recovery for the organiser and the participant; no local VAT registration required; and expedited reimbursement in Europe.

HO DESTINATION INTERVIEWS



19 International
Convention Centre
Sydney

22 Maastricht Convention
Bureau

26 Hungarian Tourism
Agency

28 Penang Convention
and Exhibition Bureau

30 Scottish Event Campus

32 Cvent CONNECT
Europe

34 PCMA Convening
EMEA

&REPORTS



ICC Sydney: Community Legacy and Home-grown Innovations!



When it came time to flip the switch, **International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney)** ended up back in business very quickly. Thanks to clear and constant communication that allowed them to apply the right settings on the ground and to transition from the home office to be back on site. They were able to keep the vast majority of the core team busy during this period while continuing to deliver successful events.

To discuss all these developments and the convention centre's desert crossing, we spoke to **Director of Communication, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Samantha Glass**, about expectations of their event outcomes, legacy, diversity and inclusion, and key innovations.

How did ICC Sydney cope with this slowdown in demand caused by the pandemic?

The need for clear and consistent communication became more critical than ever. Thanks to the excellent relationships we have with all tiers of government, we were able to quickly navigate the communication streams relevant to our business and to build new relationships with departments such as Health.

We were able to quickly demonstrate that we had robust safety measures in place that met government guidelines allowing at least some of our business to go ahead. So, we were able to continue to run virtual events even during the most stringent lockdowns.

People still had to communicate, governments still had to receive messages, businesses still had to communicate with their customers, and from time to time, different associations also had to move forward with their updates. Some parts of our business were just as busy as when the

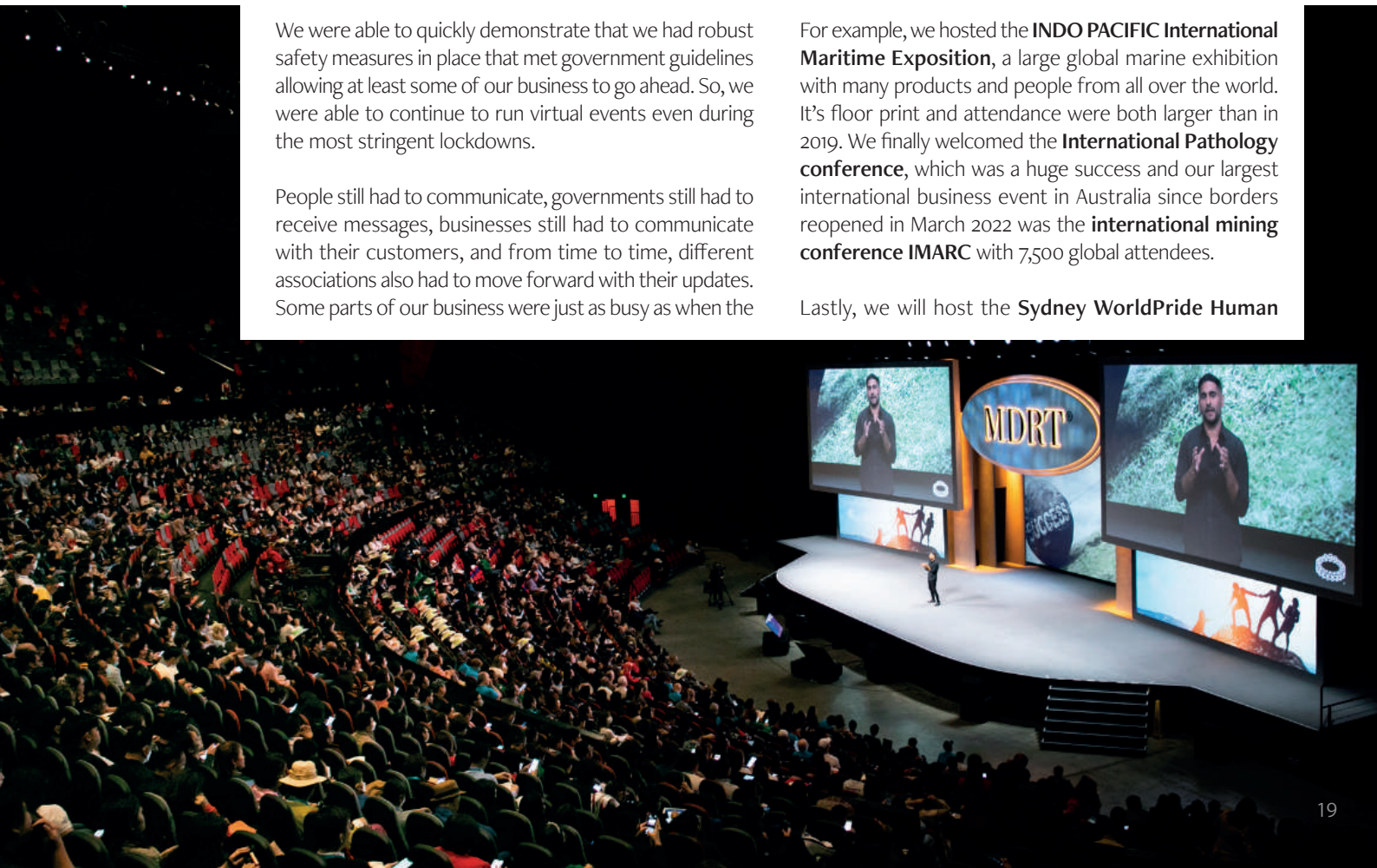
venue was full, mainly the technology and audio-visual part, managing all our enhanced services within our team.

What kind of association conferences are giving the first signs of return to ICC Sydney?

From mining to medical, conferences of all types are back at ICC Sydney. In fact, they returned faster and stronger than we had anticipated.

For example, we hosted the **INDO PACIFIC International Maritime Exposition**, a large global marine exhibition with many products and people from all over the world. It's floor print and attendance were both larger than in 2019. We finally welcomed the **International Pathology conference**, which was a huge success and our largest international business event in Australia since borders reopened in March 2022 was the **international mining conference IMARC** with 7,500 global attendees.

Lastly, we will host the **Sydney WorldPride Human**





“ *We work very closely with our universities allowing students to participate in events through volunteering or running competitions to promote a new generation coming into the fields of expertise.* ”

Rights Conference in March next year. Attendance, however, does remain mixed as the risk profile of people to travel is different for everyone and of course for Australia, China is still closed which impacts attendance at events in Australia.

What kind of role have you played in strengthening your CSR initiatives?

Making a difference for our planet and community has long been important for us at ICC Sydney and ASM Global we launched our legacy programme in 2018 and now it’s about building on that platform to help our customers make a difference.

We have great relationships with our community, particularly with First Nations cultural advisors and businesses, as well as the creative industries, young entrepreneurs and students. We work very closely with our universities allowing students to participate in events through volunteering or running competitions to promote a new generation coming into the fields of expertise. We seek to provide opportunities for start-ups to exhibit on a tradeshow or network with international experts or foreign investors.

Those relationships are often built through one of our government departments, “**Investment New South**

Wales”, which also provides links to local talent. Since this year, we have seen an increase in client engagement and our legacy programme. To address this, we have hired a new CSR manager, and we have a number of carbon footprint measurement tools in place so we can co-create a pre-event and post event reports for events.

What kind of projects and improvements do you have in mind and what has the pandemic pushed forward?

Connect Hub was an evolution of the virtual event services we introduced during COVID-19, keeping in mind that it is important to have the ability to stream parts of an event, or even all of it. It is a one-stop destination for digital events solutions and is part of our excellent in-house suite of services that we provide to speakers entering either a live or a digital environment. We believe it will continue to be relevant in an environment where most people return to face-to-face meetings.

Some clients are now also looking for pay-per-view elements for post event content. The need for digital event support will certainly be in demand in the future. We have also launched a new **Interactive Venue Map** to help event organisers plan and promote their events at ICC Sydney. We’ve brought all our floor plans and services together on a map to guide people through every level



and building and see how they connect. It eases the understanding of connectivity through five storeys and three interconnected buildings.

The interactive site map shows all our rooms, as a static image or in a 3D version in its phase 1. Phase 2 will be almost like a “dollhouse”, where you fly in and go from room to room virtually inside.

What are the main CSR requests that the associations have been asking you for?

Event organisers are often considered with their energy and waste – the biggest areas of impact at a venue level. However, we are keen to promote our Legacy program meant the positive social handprint they can make in Sydney. On this front, they are most interested in the programme’s First Nations pillar, so being introduced to traditional owners of the land, having elders come and welcome guests to the country. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, we are able to offer connections to ensure they are also making culturally sensitive decisions around First Nations culture.

Do your major conferences and congresses converge with this trend of providing a specialist hub for Sydney’s strongest industrial clusters?

Our event pipeline is very strong for the next three years for international events. Our business events bureau, **BESydney**, targets the academic and economic strengths of our city, which are set by our State Government.

Through an ambassador programme they are also connected to local universities and research centres – experts in their fields. While many events are held at ICC Sydney, we have a notable strength in a large number of areas from agribusiness and aeronautics to robotics and microscopy to a great many health sectors. The entire city gets behind those bids to ensure successful outcomes.

How are you designing your sustainable place and what should be addressed in this area?

We have a very strong sustainability programme run by our own in-house staff, rather than external consultants, so we can report on your event’s carbon footprint and help reduce your waste. By providing these in-house, we have direct control over the quality of your event and the service we can offer, enabling a direct line of communication with no third parties. We are also building our new three-year strategy with a vision up to 2030.

We are signatories of both the **Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC)** Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge and the Sustainable Events 2030 Pledge with a local association called **Events and Exhibitions Association of Australasia (EEAA)**. I think our future is to continue to work together and move the needle with all these industry partners, because alone we will never get to net zero. Everyone is raising their game and the industry is now adopting a very competitive attitude in a positive way growing the reputation for everyone. A high tide rises all boats.

Maastricht: Reassuring Words from Event Experts!

Not surprisingly the first thing that comes to mind about Maastricht was the start of the European journey with the signing of the EU Treaty in 1992. Essentially, the Dutch city carries that unblemished reputation as a prime venue for meetings to this day as a result of a multitude of leading institutions with a focus on innovation, science and technology. Headquarters went there last month to visit the renovated MECC Maastricht hosting the WCO 2022 Technology Conference and Exhibition, and with the local bureau about meaningful events.

AUTHOR: MANUEL A. FERNANDES , HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

From Brussels, it only took about an hour and a half until we spotted the Maastricht train station after a short change in Liège. Connected to several other locations in the region and sharing an airport with the German city of Aachen, the multitude of transport options marks the centrality of this city in Benelux, just a few kilometres from three different countries. Crossing its cultural and historic buildings (the second highest number in the Netherlands just after Amsterdam), it didn't take much to find the charms of this lively Romanesque town with a compact, walkable centre and a Burgundian lifestyle. However, Maastricht's gloss of history gives way to a bubbling academic, scientific and industrial quarter surrounding its premium, brand new convention centre after some renovations in the process – the **MECC Maastricht**. This combination of antiquity and modernity is at the heart of the city's promotional campaign where “heritage meets science”, and “history meets innovation.”

“We try to generate maximum impact for each event through the unique combination of our intimate and historic city in the heart of Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, our innovative knowledge ecosystem in the areas of science and innovation and our strong destination community,” explains **Anouk Maas** (*featured on the right up*), **Business Development Manager Associations at the Maastricht Convention Bureau (MCB)**. Getting back to MECC Maastricht, the venue now has a total capacity of 5,000 participants,

with two auditoriums up to 1,700 seats and over 55 themed rooms. The 2,500 m² multifunctional Expo Foyer holds up to 2,000 seats, and there is also a 30,000 m² exhibition space divided into 3 halls that can be connected. Four conferences can be held here simultaneously. Because of the close cooperation of all stakeholders, the Municipality of Maastricht decided to locate the MCB offices here where everyone works together in this new event hub. “The pandemic has caused venues, to redirect staff members' positions. On the other hand, it also made us communicate and share knowledge with our destination community more than before to rebuild trust in business travel,” **Ingrid Grimbergen** (*featured on the right down*), **Marketing & Communication Manager at MCB** tells us. MECC immediately installed a studio, specifically designed to host online events, adding all the necessary technical facilities with an application to host virtual events.

Rising to the post-pandemic challenges, Maastricht has leveraged a number of pillars for sector businesses: Health, Chemicals and Materials, Data Science and Food, Nutrition and Agricultural Businesses – all in close cooperation with **Brightlands Campuses, Maastricht University, Maastricht University Medical Center** +, and the entire destination community. “The impact of organising a conference in Maastricht goes far beyond the exchange of knowledge, providing education and widening anyone's network. As well as empowering the region and fostering economic growth, an association



can leave a significant impact on community and social development,” says Maas. As a result of strong synergies with their destination community, MCB will be able to connect an association or meeting organiser with these local stakeholders to work on activities that can leave a lasting, positive and sustainable legacy. In alignment with an association’s overall legacy objectives, they will help them develop a tailor-made local impact programme with a unique point of contact along the entire bidding phase. In addition, the Netherlands also provides a pre-financing fund to provide financial security to associations, especially in uncertain times of global economic inflation. Another point of order discussed with the hostesses was the multimedia campaign “**A Word from the Expert**”, giving voice to key personalities from the academic, business and R&D ecosystem who are promoting the city’s efforts in various professional areas. “About 80% of our bids are related to one of our region’s top expertises so this operation was very important to us. We recently hosted the **International Conference on Mass Spectrometry** after two years in virtual format, and one of the reasons for its coming is that Europe’s largest molecular imaging center is set here – the **Multimodal Molecular Imaging Institute (M4i)**. This event was also associated with a distinguished professor and highly acknowledged researcher in the field of molecular imaging (Dr Ron Heeren) who was one of the top ambassadors of the conference,” Grimbergen tells us.

“ *The pandemic has caused venues to redirect staff members’ positions. On the other hand, it also made us communicate and share knowledge with our destination community more than before to rebuild trust in business travel* ”



Another example of an event they recently won was the **European Sleep Research Conference** in a collective bid with Belgium and Luxembourg and their three national societies. “As we have industry-based business development teams, giving voice to key personalities within our knowledge ecosystem is very important. On the other hand, as there is a high demand for a local committee to support a candidacy, it is a bonus for our teams to be in close contact with these local experts. It’s a win-win situation,” adds Maas. With nearly 6,000 hotel rooms, the pandemic has been a difficult time especially for the hospitality industry. “Our partners were very creative and flexible, doing their best to look at their employability.” An example of this was the catering sector with almost all restaurants offering take away options, prompting...a vibrant industry around this niche. For Maastricht, adapting to new times and building trust is crucial. Many conferences were rescheduled and the flexibility of dates and reconfiguration of venues gave planners the ability to reassess their initial decisions. “We want to transform client events into educational workshops with asset-generating potential,” says Maas.

MCB also sees technology as a complementary improvement to the destination by including online sessions that allow to broaden the audience and diversify the scope of the programmes. If we look at the population of the city, one-sixth are college students and these generations intuitively use new technologies as everyday tools. This also comes as an advantage, because during the pandemic we all saw that large congresses of about 10,000 people had to scale down. “Given our size, this also gives us a chance to compete for these big hybrid congresses

“ *As we have industry-based business development teams, giving voice to key personalities within our knowledge ecosystem is very important (...) We want to transform client events into educational workshops with asset-generating potential.*

– hosting more than 6,000 people would be quite challenging for us, but if they split the number with online attendees, Maastricht could emerge as a real option,” says Maas. In Maastricht, the aim of creating a healthy and innovative city with a high quality of life for all has brought the city’s sustainability ambitions, from a community perspective, into line with global sustainable development goals. Maastricht is a city with a large green environment that is doing its bit on waste management which in turn encourages the use of local products. “Within our industry, we feel a commitment to minimise the life cycle impact of the event and specifically in the field of production and consumption methods. For example, at the events we organise, many stands, materials and food are left over behind us. Our partners were already connected to the ‘Too Good Too Go’ app and decided to use it to dispatch these leftovers where all materials and food were packed and distributed by them,” Grimbergen concluded.

The WCO 2022 Technology Conference and Exhibition in Maastricht

From 18 till 20 October, more than 1,200 participants from 136 countries attended the **WCO 2022 Technology Conference and Exhibition** at MECC Maastricht, with around 600 additional delegates joining the online event. During those three days, under the theme “Driving Customs performance with data and technology in the changing landscape of global trade”, representatives from customs, international organisations, the private sector and academia discussed issues related to the various technologies used to manage the flows of goods, people and means of transport across borders. Participants who attended the event in person had the opportunity to test and discover innovative solutions and equipment by visiting the Exhibition running in parallel with the Conference. “The highly innovative and international nature of the region makes Maastricht a great venue for the conference that we as the Dutch Customs Administration wanted to put on for our international colleagues. The destination community really walked the extra mile to ensure maximum impact of the WCO conference. The Dutch Customs organisation was keen to keep delegates engaged in the programme and wanted to avoid people straying off for shopping or other distractions. They managed to keep their delegates really engaged in both the educational and social programme,” **Frank Heijmann – Director National Committee on Trade Facilitation & Head of Trade Relations at the Dutch Customs Administration**, told us.



World Customs Organization
Organisation mondiale des douanes

WCO Technology
Conference &
Exhibition
Maastricht, The Netherlands





Hungary: A Spotlight in the Middle of Europe

Hungary today offers a perfect combination of leisure, adventure, incentive programmes and event spaces with excellent infrastructure for meetings and events. This also makes its capital Budapest a very pleasant destination for tourists and delegates.

Well positioned in central Europe, Hungary has seriously invested in its tourism performance with several valuable prepositions for the MICE industry. Despite the pandemic-driven setback, Hungarian tourism sector bounced back almost entirely to pre-pandemic levels registering some 16.2 million foreign guest nights, according to the **Hungarian Tourism Agency (HTA)**. This summer, Hungary was able to welcome almost 2.5 times more international tourists than last summer with around 6 million foreign and 10.7 million Hungarian guest nights spent in all of the country's accommodation. Lake Balaton, for example, retained its title as the number one tourist attraction with over 5.6 million overnight guests this year. The country also has an excellent reputation for gastronomy – who has never tried a good *goulash* or a fish soup called *halászlé*? Moreover, there are 22 wine districts with different climatic, topographical, soil and historical characteristics to be discovered within 6 wine regions.

When 'Buda' meets 'Pest'

But what is making Hungary one of the world's top destinations anyway? Right from the start, its incredible and convenient accessibility makes life easy for those who visit: the capital Budapest has an excellent rail network with direct links to destinations such as Vienna, Bratislava and Prague. From Budapest, you can also reach Vienna in two and a half hours, Bratislava in two hours and anywhere in the country in less than three hours. The capital is also very well provided with a modern public transport infrastructure that includes metro, bus and tram. Budapest's attractions are countless but among them it

is impossible to miss Buda Castle, the embankments of the Danube River and the entire Andrassy Avenue, all recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, in addition to the Hungarian National Gallery, the Matthias Church the Parliament Building and the splendid Margaret Island. There are many opportunities for cycling in Budapest while exploring both banks of the Danube: Buda the most historical and traditional part of the city, and Pest with all the leisure, catering offers which makes its atmosphere way more vibrant and trendy. The city has great cultural offers like the newly renovated opera house, the biggest synagogue in Europe on Dohány street, and several "ruin bars" with a very pleasant environment. With the development of **HUNGEXPO**, which opened last year, Budapest now has its go-to convention centre, sharing the city's agenda with the **Budapest Congress Centre**. This has meant that the volume of business has demanded greater hotel capacity with several multi-star hotels scattered around the city centre. The Accor hotel group has many hotels here, from the utilitarian Ibis to the upscale Sofitel.

Country's investments and major industries

Long before COVID-19, there was already a lot of investments, especially in the booming automotive industry. "We have well-known automakers in the country, such as BMW, Suzuki or Mercedes-Benz with one of the biggest factories in Europe, attracting many other small manufacturers to the market. A Chinese manufacturer of car





batteries has also entered the country with a plant, in one of the biggest investments ever in Hungary. They are a magnet for our economy,” tells us **Ivan Ljubinkovic, regional head of business development at HTA**. One of Hungary’s largest industries is still the pharmaceutical industry, which is responsible for a large number of congresses in the country. Along these lines, projects continue to be carried out in R&D centres, mainly in the IT sector. “We have a lot of dynamic investments from South Korea like Samsung with a big plan for the country. In 2021, LOT Polish Airlines established direct flights from Seoul to Budapest and, in October, Korean Air opened new routes. These investments validate the direct communication between the two countries,” says Ljubinkovic. Another predominant area is definitely the real estate. The **BudaPart project**, which is a major real estate investment project in the capital, won the Best Neighbourhood Development award at the FIABCI international real estate competition, in Paris. The urban renewal project includes offices, flats and other private ventures in a predominantly industrial area. “We will also have a renewed railway line between Belgrade and Budapest which is planned to be completed by 2023,” Ljubinkovic adds.

Innovation pinches in Hungary

Hungary is now strategically betting on digitalisation. “In September, we launched our **Hungarian Digital Agency** which aims to assist the government in the process of digitalising services, identification and migrating the entire administrative process to online.” But the big news for the tourism sector is a new statistical software that will focus directly on collecting data on stay bookings and tourist information that will be extended to the MICE industry. The **National Tourism Data Supply Centre** – a digital platform that makes all data on turnover statistics from all accommodation establishments in the country visible anonymously, in real time. This has been effectively implemented in all Hungarian accommodation

establishments and will be mandatory next year for all service providers, including restaurants, baths and other tourist attractions. Thus, HTA will be able to collect anonymous information for statistical purposes, taking into account the destination of origin, check-in dates, advance reservations, duration of stay, which will give a good view of the tourist landscape and its evolution. “This tool is essential in the marketing decision-making process based on reliable figures and, in that sense, it is a huge innovation for us. What we want to guarantee at this moment is the return on the investment we made in promoting tourism, campaigns and program development. And the only way we can see it is if we measure it,” says Ljubinkovic.

HTA and HCB strategic promotions

HTA outlined a strategy that aims to boost the country’s tourism by 2030 and with that several partnerships were built. B2C communication marketing campaigns with entities such as CNN, National Geographic, Expedia Group, and other deals with airlines such as Lufthansa to improve connectivity between Hungary and the rest of the world. “We have also established constant B2B communication that aims to enhance our brand with tour operators and international travel agencies. In 2019, we started with ten international markets and today we increase that number to thirty. This also implies the MICE industry especially meetings and incentives.” Even if the biggest and most complex events end up being held in Budapest, it is HTA’s intention to spread the business across the country especially if we are talking about incentives, meetings or events organised by neighbouring countries. “A lot of leisure tourism takes place in the countryside but in the MICE business there is still room for improvement. That’s why we want to support the promotion of MICE to other provinces and cities, splitting our activities between the HTA and the Hungarian Convention Bureau. Often the popularity of a MICE destination is also due to the fact that it is a good tourist destination,” concludes Ivan.



“We are looking now at **experiential meetings** in Penang!”

There are quite a few innovations and new projects happening in Penang's meetings and events sector in recent months. Apart from the "Belong in Penang" destination marketing campaign launched earlier this year and the preparation of "BE @ Penang 2022" - Malaysia's largest business events conference - we dig into what Penang reckons as beyond legacy. *HQ* met with **Ashwin Gunasekeran** at IMEX Las Vegas in time to talk about his candidacy for the ICCA Asia Pacific Board of Director.

The much-anticipated reopening of Malaysia's international borders early in the 2Q of the year has also rung the bell for the public launch of a new campaign run by the **Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB)**. "Belong in Penang" sought to instil optimism in the local business events industry while laying the foundation for continued domestic hybrid event funding in the run-up to the return of international clients and events. According to PCEB, the campaign concept revolved around three key messages: readiness to host the first post-pandemic wave of business events; reinforcing uncompromised hospitality; and ensuring that all health and safety measures remained in place. "Belong in Penang was envisioned as a pick-up campaign to build trust and excitement between our clients and the destination. The campaign became Penang's cure for tomorrow - we didn't talk so much about what destination had to offer but rather gave a hand to our partners with the aim of giving back to the industry," **PCEB CEO, Ashwin Gunasekeran** tells us. The campaign which basically means "your events belong in Penang", sends a strong message on the various aspects that have influenced a new iteration of post-pandemic events. "We are talking about social, economic and political aspects that we cannot predict so far because everything today goes on a different scale and value. There is a lot of wisdom behind the decision that takes a particular event to a destination. It's a question of

what's in return and what's there for a potential congress."

What the Malaysian bureau has noticed is that meetings have moved to a different level, where delegates now demand to experience a specific destination in many ways, for the benefit of both parties - they either want to actively contribute at a meeting or they expect something substantial to come out of that meeting. "In short, we are looking at experiential meetings and that is very important for Penang. Meetings are way beyond grants and fees - if you compare the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic requests, they have definitely changed," says Gunasekeran. Although they allocate a certain kind of support, the most important thing at this point is to understand how Penang can play a role for a congress by looking at the flip side, where that same congress can also contribute to the destination. "All this means that meetings have become much more selective and have a high value for both ends. It is true that every conference leaves a certain mark on a destination, but here in Penang we are already talking about something beyond legacy. That's what today's meetings industry is all about - experiential meetings are the complete package for the future of the industry," Ashwin declares.





“

All this means that meetings have become much more selective and have a high value for both ends. It is true that every conference leaves a certain mark on a destination, but here in Penang we are already talking about something beyond legacy

As further explained by our interviewee, most meetings leave something that adds value to a particular destination and that can take the form of a donation, a post-event campaign or scientific/social outcomes for the community. A key development for a school or an infrastructure for a particular area or community. “When we refer to beyond legacy, we are looking at the long-term investment of conferences and associations. Let’s say we have a congress related to a specific industry that might drive the creation of a research centre or a manufacturing plant. If we consider the contribution of such an investment we will be open to directly and indirectly improve society in the form of future manpower and other professional development opportunities. This is basically a high-value, high-impact event strategy – not just a one-off legacy but an ongoing fuse that acts as a value proposition for a meeting.”

BE @ Penang 2022: BE Forward, Evolution and Beyond

“**BE in Penang**” started as an industry related meeting in 2016 with the aim of opening the discussion for the development of congresses and Penang’s capabilities as an event destination. The idea of this conference was to educate, train new professionals and continually share perspectives on current and future trends in the industry. In other words, what can you expect from the future? For Ashwin, much will be owed to education: “This year we are going to talk about the future, so the core theme of the conference will be “**BE Forward**”, referring largely to the aspect of labour and its scarcity driven by the pandemic, and the current situation of the world economy. We will also talk about technology, robotics, how the human dimension and the future will come together – as is already

happening in the manufacturing industry. So, when will this happen in the service industry?” The 7th edition of **BE @ Penang 2022** will bring experts from various latitudes who will share their thoughts on future winning technologies, cybernetic evolutions, robotics with bold predictions on how man and robots can peacefully coexist in our daily life. This year’s edition will take place at the **Setia SPICE Convention Centre** on the 8th and 9th of December.

Ashwin Gunasekeran to Stand for ICCA Asia Pacific Board of Director

On another note, our respondent Ashwin Gunasekeran also had a chance to comment on his official candidacy for the **ICCA Asia-Pacific Board of Director**, presented last month. According to a video posted in support of the candidacy, its aim is to lead the chapter towards a “value-driven, member-centric direction” for the entire region while also emphasizing the professional commitment to the meetings and events industry. The candidacy will focus on four main pillars of action: youth empowerment and development; call for collaboration; government-to-government alliances; and training and knowledge growth. It should be noted that, in 2019, the inaugural **ICCA Asia-Pacific Summit** was held in Penang under the theme “Journey of Discovery”, an event that served as a brainstorm for innovative ideas, relevant discussions and to unveil important partnerships that, according to Ashwin, led to this candidacy. “Finding out what Asia-Pacific members wanted to experience at the inaugural summit was quite inspiring. We cultivated partnerships with corporate partners and I was able to gather significant insights into how ICCA Asia-Pacific Chapter should lead and move forward,” he concluded.



Scottish Event Campus: Social and Environmental Commitment to Glasgow

Carrying on the legacy of COP26 has greatly served the Scottish Event Campus to stand out as a globally recognised venue, showing the ability to deliver one of the most significant events ever held in Glasgow. In our conversation with the Conference Sales Director, we found out a great sense of purpose in providing social, economic and environmental benefits, and supporting associations to build great meeting experiences.

Having a multi-purpose convention centre is a must to unlock complex, multiform events that can recreate the imagery of an association. Scotland's largest city has the luxury of having one of the centres with the most pioneering sustainability policies, a very high level of customer satisfaction, and all-inclusive facilities that unfold across a vast property. The **Scottish Event Campus (SEC)** features the **SEC Centre** – five interconnected exhibition and meeting spaces – the iconic **SEC Armadillo** – the latest addition with 3,000 seats – and the **OVO Hydro** – a 14,300-capacity sports, entertainment and special events arena - in a testament to its unquestionable flexibility and expansion that has helped position Glasgow on the global MICE scene. During the pandemic, the Scottish venue's mantra and one that kept them afloat was to be “all in this together” – that was the north star that dictated how they responded as a company. “First and foremost, we wanted to provide the right level of support to our clients, offering them flexibility in meeting their needs. We took a long-term

approach with the relationships we had built with our clients over the years, while balancing the needs of our business,” **Kathleen Warden, Director of Conference Sales at SEC** tells us.

A key priority was #TEAMSEC – a skilled and experienced workforce that was core to this success by navigating the new functions the centre embraced as it transformed into a medical institution. “We were able to invest in our digital infrastructure, our streaming and recording technology, and evolve our people to adapt to new ways of running events.” In addition, they had the privilege of hosting one of the most noteworthy global meetings last year – **COP26, the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference**. The meeting was originally scheduled for November, but the pandemic caused it to be postponed to



the same month of 2021. “The event was an amazing way to challenge our team to provide something genuinely innovative. We had to be agile to reschedule some events and accommodate the COP26 date change,” says Warden. But it’s not all about flexibility and adaptability; a new era of events is being driven by both the lessons of pandemic constraints and the ambition for events to be more inclusive, sustainable, and responsible. “I think there is a new business model that is being driven from a reliance on streaming and broadcasting to remote audiences, but also on a focus on sustainability and inclusivity.”

As Scotland’s leading events venue, the SEC is where locals come to learn at a conference, enjoy a great day out, or have an unforgettable experience with a favourite band or artist. “During the pandemic, we became Louisa Jordan medical facility, and over time, we became a vaccination centre as well. All of this was part of our responsibility to the people of Glasgow. It is fair to say that this experience has brought us a greater purpose contributing to the lives of the people who live in the city they call home.” Warden told us. Furthermore, Glasgow is beyond dispute one of the UK’s most vibrant bastions in areas such as research, innovation and academia, positioning itself strongly in key sectors such as healthcare and science, engineering, energy, technology and arts. “We seek to target events that match with our city’s knowledge and sectoral hubs, as well as government policy agendas. There are major benefits for organisers to host their conference in a destination that can add intellectual power to the event, and at the same time provide a gateway to greater impact and legacy.” The SEC has benefited from partnerships with the **Glasgow Convention Bureau** and **VisitScotland**, laying the groundwork for a new conference era and bringing global talent together in one central location to share knowledge, ideas, experience and learning.

Through a sustainable food strategy that was developed in partnership with **Levy UK** and the Scottish supply chain, food has become a central part of the SEC’s journey and commitment to Net Zero by 2030. This work, built on innovative ideas to decrease the carbon footprint, included more than 80% of all locally sourced food, highlighting suppliers practicing regenerative farming and the implementation of carbon labelling on menus. COP26 provided the stimulus for SEC to progress its mission, focused on supporting a sustainable future for the industry. “The strategy is integrated into every area of the venue’s business, including waste, energy, food, transport, and sourcing. It also allows us to support our clients reach their own sustainability promises,” says Warden. COP26 also saw leadership within the SEC contribute to the creation of the globally recognised



Net Zero Carbon Events initiative. Representatives from across the global events industry came together to commit to action on climate change and ensure a lasting legacy for the future of the industry. Today, the initiative has more than 400 companies worldwide that have signed up for net zero carbon before 2050.

For Kathleen, “meetings have always been smart, but they’re getting smarter!” Clearly, business event technology has been high on the SEC’s agenda for the past couple of years, but it has also been important to assess demand for tech solutions and gauge what would be right for a venue to offer. The SEC did not go down the path of creating a studio, but dedicated itself to understanding the value of reaching a digital audience by focusing on in-house streaming capabilities and expanding capacity across the venue. “Digital participants are important, particularly for associations, and bringing this knowledge to the digital audience is about democratising education and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be included. This is a fundamental shift in the events industry and the role it plays in delivering social good and advancing humanity,” concludes Warden.



There are major benefits for organisers to host their conference in a destination that can add intellectual power to the event, and at the same time provide a gateway to greater impact and legacy.

Cvent CONNECT Europe

Delved into the Accelerated Digital Transformation

Cvent brought together event organisers, marketing and hospitality professionals from across Europe to its annual event technology conference, **Cvent CONNECT Europe**. This year's event saw a nearly 170% increase in in-person attendance over 2021's hybrid event, highlighting the desire for our industry professionals to get back to in-person events and prepare their organisations for the future.

The multi-day hybrid event, which ran from 4 – 6 October, offered both an in-person experience at the **InterContinental London – The O₂**, and an immersive virtual experience powered by the Cvent Attendee Hub for those attending remotely. An additional in-person experience was hosted in Germany on 5 October at the Frankfurt Marriott Hotel, offering local attendees the opportunity to view and engage with live sessions streamed from the conference in London. It also provided localised breakout sessions and networking opportunities between peers and industry experts.

Cvent CEO and Founder, Reggie Aggarwal, opened the conference with an optimistic keynote on the future of the events industry. In his address, Aggarwal reflected on the accelerated digital transformation the meetings and hospitality industries have undergone over the last few years, and the positive rebound in the return for in-person experiences around the world. “Because of the pandemic-driven digital transformation... we’re stronger, smarter, and savvier than ever,” said Aggarwal.

In his presentation, Aggarwal referenced his late 2020 prediction that, “because of digital transformation, the industry was on the cusp of the *Golden Age of Events*; a time when events are more numerous, more impactful, and a more critical part of the business landscape.” He declared the future he anticipated is now being realised as organisations embrace technology as a core competency to maximise the impact of their MICE programmes.

Throughout his keynote, Aggarwal highlighted real-life examples of clients across Europe who are leveraging event technology to drive positive business results across four key pillars: **The Total Event Programme (TEP) Powered by One Platform; Attendee Engagement;**

Data & Insights; Unifying the Ecosystem. The conference agenda included more than 45 workshops, panel sessions, roundtable discussions and networking events, and was designed to educate, inspire and empower industry professionals with the tools and insights they need to flourish in the evolving events landscape.

New 2022 programming

Cvent Europe Excellence Awards | Following a successful ten-year run in the United States, this year marked the inaugural European awards programme, which showcases industry leaders from a diverse set of organisations who use Cvent technology in new and inspiring ways to deliver best-in-class event experiences and drive positive business results.

Leadership Summit | Running parallel to the conference agenda, this invitation-only programme brought together senior event and marketing leaders from across Europe (from sectors including finance, life sciences, technology and hospitality) to share their ideas and discuss best practices that can inform strategies and plans to maximise business impact in 2023 and beyond.

Fast Forward 15 (FF15) Education Day | Running alongside the main conference agenda FF15, a top mentoring programme for women in the events industry, brought mentees and mentors together for an interactive session dedicated to confidence building exercises and upskilling.

Additional conference highlights

Featured Keynote Speakers | Cvent brought renowned external keynote speakers to the main stage including **Ashley Banjo MBE**, choreographer and founder of dance troupe *Diversity* and **Cally Beaton**, media entrepreneur, podcaster, writer, stand-up comedian and former Senior VP at Viacom. Ashley discussed leadership strategies including how to establish supportive and empowering environments and create pathways for group success. Cally's presentation combined her unique brand of wit and storytelling to provide useful tips on how to successfully navigate personal and organisational change.





Innovation Pavilion | In-person attendees had the opportunity to engage and interact with Cvent solutions. In addition, the product roadmap general sessions offered attendees a comprehensive look into new features and exciting developments across Cvent’s entire platform.

Curated meetups | In-person attendees enjoyed numerous face-to-face networking opportunities throughout the conference as well as evening events to connect with their peers, while virtual attendees interacted with other online delegates in topic-driven roundtable discussions and talked (via chat functions) with each other in real-time.

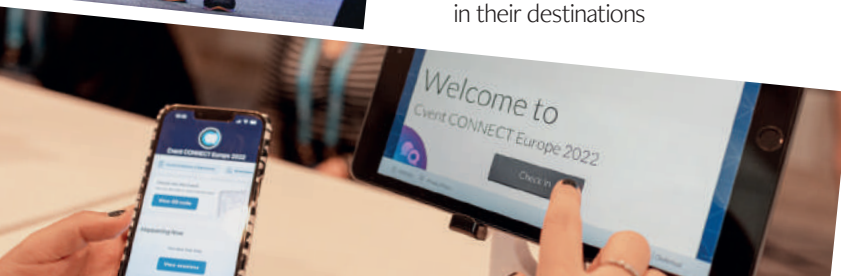
Key session highlights

“The BIG Community Conversation – MICE Associations United”: Leading MICE associations and membership groups came together, and with attendees shared their perspectives and experiences on critical diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) issues that face the industry today. The aim of the conversation was to unite across sectors to find strategies and actionable insights that will drive positive change.

“Track Your Sustainability Goals: Understanding the Impact of Your Events”: A panel of carbon calculator experts and sustainability specialists joined this panel to unpack the complexities of how to track and improve the environmental impact of events. The follow-up session to this: “Act on Your Sustainability Goals: How to Implement Tangible Emission Reduction Strategies,” provided best practice tips to help create meetings and events in a sustainable way.

“How to Activate the Goodness of Your Event Beyond its Live Date(s)”: This session covered how to utilise marketing and event data in tandem to create more personalised content programmes that offer year-round engagement, community support and development.

“CVBs and MICE Business: Destinations’ Role in the Recovery”: In this session, attendees heard from speakers including **Charlotte Gough**, Divisional Director of Corporate Engagement, MCI UK, **Bart Antonissen**, Account Manager of the Amsterdam Convention Bureau, **Paul Black**, Head of Business Events at Visit Britain, and **Emma Waycot**, Managing Director of Vine Tree Connections about their MICE strategies and tactics to deliver outstanding in-person event experiences in their destinations



PCMA Convening EMEA:

An Agenda full of Trends, Revelations... and Question Marks for the Future?

The annual meeting in Vienna of the European PCMA family was an essential opportunity to put all our concepts and certainties to the test. Technology, sustainability, the future of meetings and CHANGE (yes, in capital letters) were the themes that dominated the 3-day event and the chats in the corridors of Messe Wien. *Manuel Fernandes Reports*

A year has passed since the launch of this regional iteration in Lausanne that welcomed all EMEA business events professionals to discuss the challenges of the present and address the dilemmas of the future. Initially launched as the “European Influencers Summit” in 2017 – an invitation-only event – the **Professional Convention Congress Association (PCMA)** opened its circle for the second annual conference of the renamed **Convening EMEA**, an omnichannel event envisioned for industry professionals and creatives to share learnings and experiences, and collaborate to build a stronger and more resilient events community. “2022 is set to build upon the success of 2021 and the ‘connections’ facilitated at a time that was critical for the industry and our community as we continue our journey in making Convening EMEA the Nexus of Business Events. The event will create a platform for our entire industry where voices are heard, learnings are shared, and collaboration is the key to building a stronger future together.” said **Jaimé Bennett, PCMA Regional Director, EMEA**.

This year’s host destination has been collecting accolades in various global indices, to which was added the first place in the ICCA 2021 ranking as best meeting destination: **Vienna**, which was also named the world’s most liveable city in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Global Liveability Index, set a new attendance record with 400 participants from 42 different countries at this second PCMA Convening EMEA. Incidentally, this communicability and eco-consciousness had an assertive response on arrival at the event that justified the Austrian Green Meetings Eco-Label certification: each delegate received a travel pass for use on the Vienna transport network and a round-trip voucher for the express train to the airport, which allowed delegates to physically connect to the event and explore the city seamlessly and with minimal impact.

Under the theme “Together we move forward”, participants were able to enjoy three days of engaging content, panel discussions, workshops and case studies at the **Messe Wien Congress and Exhibition Centre**, focusing on key topics of the future, engagement and planning, along with an afternoon of exploration and a highly curated off-site social programme. The next 10 years will bring more change than the last 100 years, and according to **Gerd Leonhard**, futurist and CEO of think-tank group the **Futures Agency**, these hard times will not last although we are currently experiencing a defiant period. The upside of this disruption could come out of the profound revolution and never-before-seen innovations we will witness in technology and science, with the rise of augmented, mixed and virtual reality, cloud – everything and intelligent machines that could impose a new sustainable and ecological balance.

The programme carried on with a collective pitch for **Innovation-led products and services that solve problems**. Six entrepreneurs made us rethink our current moulds and business models, helping to create new value for stakeholders. Innovation-driven products and services that solve common challenges in the meetings industry and pressing issues such as talent retention, content delivery and event management. And minutes later the conversation continued in the same vein as the inaugural session: it is time to reflect and adjust the way we think about and plan face-to-face experiences. In other words, “all great changes are preceded by chaos.” As speaker **Colleen Bisconti, Vice President Global Conferences and Events** at computer company **IBM**, noted, “this quote talks about our ability to take this time and to create great change for events moving forward.” Between what delegates want in an acquainted and properly understood experience and the growing stimulus of new consumer trends to move the goalpost, Bisconti has plunged headlong into the disruptive thinking of





accepting that certain changes are here to stay but, at the same time, can give way to so many others.

After some afternoon conversation starters on how to create a diverse work environment as a key to success, new solutions to engage qualified talent for teams and the new role of convention bureau / DMO's in the community, we moved on to high potential partnerships. "How to capture a new era of opportunity" was the motto of the session led by **Opus Agency** representatives **Kim Kopetz** and **Dena Lowery**. Successful alliances and powerful partnerships were at the surface of this presentation, built on an innovative set of strategic pillars catalysed by our new realities and spread across the events industry ecosystem. Through the lens of the Opus Agency, perspectives on new innovative approaches for a new generation of high potential partnerships were shared as well as case studies of recent alliances.

A smart city within the city

Later in the afternoon, the event participants in the event were divided between several exploration tours in different corners of the city, showing the various transformations Vienna has undergone as well. One of them led us directly to Vienna's fast-growing 22nd district in the north-east of the city: **Seestadt Aspern**, one of Europe's largest urban development projects. Designed to be a smart city within the Austrian capital, by 2030 this area is expected to be inhabited by 25,000 inhabitants offering a similar number of jobs. Sustainability was at the heart of this short tour through the stylised streets of this district with its innovative, resource-saving and climate-friendly approach to modern urban development. Diverse, open and planned for the future with excellent transport connections, Seestadt was supported by a 5-billion euro investment as a benchmark for international-calibre businesses and a living environment with a high feel-good factor, evidenced by community-initiated urban spaces, green mobility concepts as well as different approaches to sustainable buildings.

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HO INSIGHTS

37 Kenes: The importance of onsite marketing

38 World PCO Alliance: Leverage and optimise revenue streams for associations

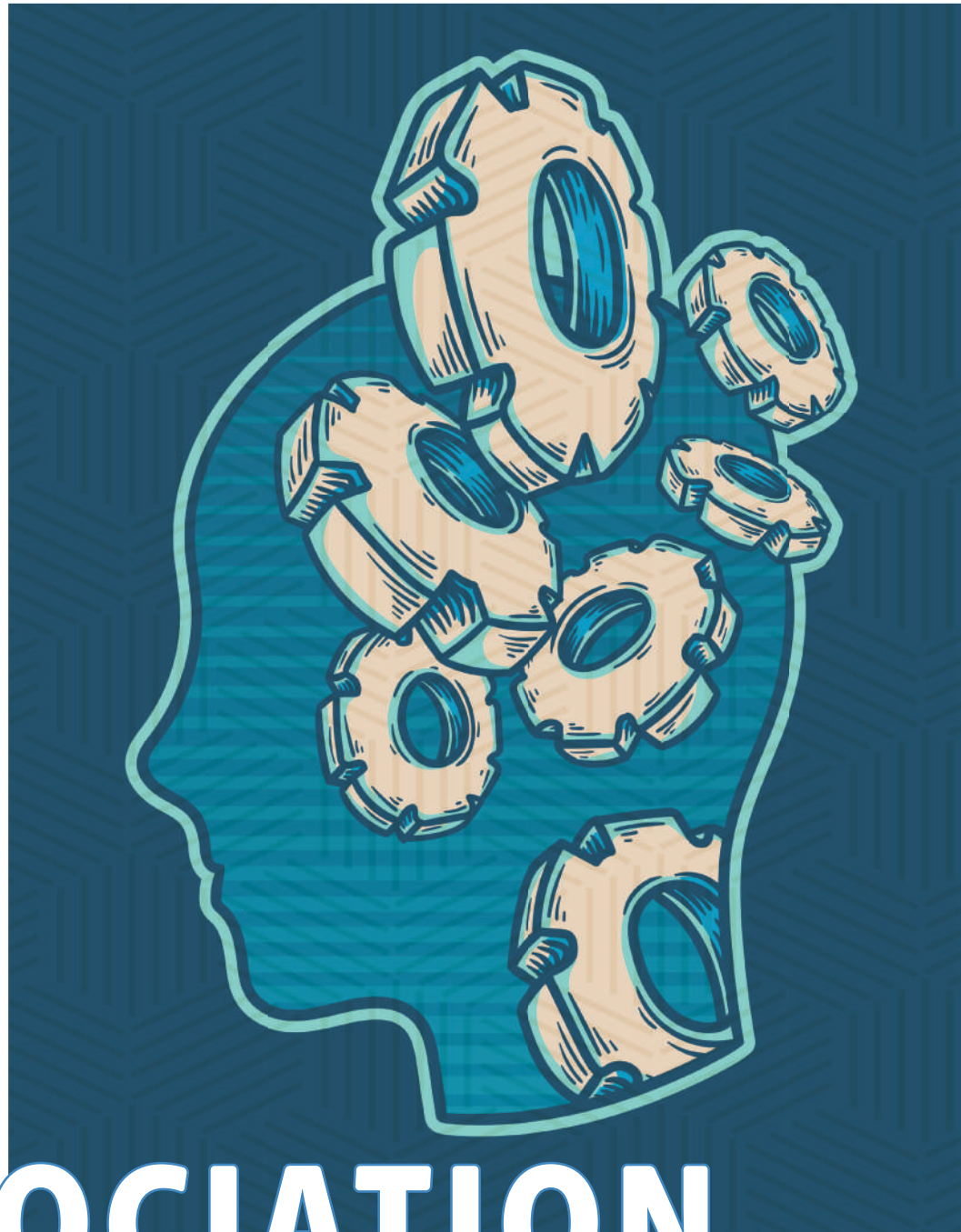
40 Interel: New rules of engagement for sponsors

42 Mark Levin: The keys to build relationships with sponsors

44 AIPC: African convention centre leaders

45 IAPCO: Thriving in the midst of a changing economy!

46 CityDNA: Mentor Programme and event agenda 2023



ASSOCIATION & PCO



The Importance of Onsite Event Marketing

...Or why you need a campaign until the last day of your event

The way you market your event might determine its success. A well-thought, structured strategy can get you far without a big budget. A messy and disorganised advertising approach can fail even if you invest a more substantial amount of money.

Timing is another very important point when structuring your event marketing strategy. Ideally, the marketing efforts begin a couple of months before the event and should continue throughout the event itself and even after that.

Let's take a deeper look at why you need a marketing campaign right up to the last day of your event.

The Importance of Onsite Marketing

Conducting marketing activities onsite is vital as this is the culmination of your marketing efforts. The community is brought together, the site is all set and showing that your event has come to life is very important because:

1. it keeps the interest of the community – encourages people to share photos and comments, and to participate in the conversation creates the feeling of “togetherness”, and makes participants feel like stars.
2. Live reporting gives you the chance to show what exactly is happening onsite, how and what the vibe is. It provides an opportunity for further exposure and reaching out people outside of the immediate community or social media followers, which brings me to my third point.
3. Onsite reporting is a great advertising tool to reach more people online and expand your network. It allows you to showcase how exciting and attractive your event is and what people who didn't register to attend are missing out on. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is a big factor in the times we are living in and a very powerful one. It has the power to bring a whole lot of new people into your community.
4. Onsite marketing is a great image and reputation builder. It has the potential to present you in your best light, show your impeccable reputation and help you re-establish your name in the field you are working.

Lately, I went to a sports event (a world championship) which I noticed at first, didn't attract this much audience. The event's

marketing team, however, was very active and professional over their social media channels presenting everything that was happening in an attractive and engaging way. I saw it with my own eyes how the sports hall went from almost zero attendees to a full hall of 5,000 people – all thanks to good marketing.

Onsite marketing is important also in less emotional terms, so to say – it's proven that follower numbers grow on social media, the impressions of the posts and hashtags grow a couple of times than their usual reach, and overall it's great for your stats.

Last but not least, the person who reports live can turn into someone who unites the community – practice has shown that attendees sometimes reach out to marketer themselves, offer to be interviewed, to provide their pictures for publication and so on. This is great for keeping the community together and makes people feel noticed and appreciated.

The Importance of Pre-Onsite Marketing

Onsite marketing wouldn't be that powerful without a good marketing campaign prior to the event. You need it to gain enough exposure, advertise, spark the flame, and of course, sell registrations.

Make sure you have a well-planned and organised strategy before you begin the actual activities. Decide who, how and when you are going to contact and ask for help; create a timeline with your paid advertising; create a social media calendar clearly stating the topics you'd like to advertise.

Avoid last minute ideas or ideas “on the go”. They are usually not very effective as there is rarely any time to organise them properly and, most likely, they won't be consistent but more of a one-time thing. And consistency in marketing is everything.

Marketing professionals nowadays are lucky to be living in a technological age which allows them to reach hundreds of people worldwide quickly and easily. We should all take advantage of these opportunities and make the most out of them.

The Bottom Line: How Associations Can **Leverage** and **Optimise Revenue** **Streams**

Managing an association is an involved and complex task, comprised of many elements. One of the most important – if not the most vital – of these is revenue. While an association may have an admirable mission statement and doing a stellar job of engaging with members, the fact is steady and reliable revenue streams are vital for the association’s long-term success. And yet financial struggles are an all-too-common challenge for many organisations.

In this article, several World PCO Alliance partners share their views on the topic of revenue streams for associations, and some insight on how associations can explore and leverage alternate sources of income.

When examining the most common funding source for an association, event revenue is obviously a staple. Yet, depending too much on an event is dangerous; it does not guarantee stable income and thus can leave associations in precarious and vulnerable financial situations. One of the most critical aspects of any association’s financial health is the cash flow that will fund and enhance an association’s wide range of activities, which in turn will automatically increase its visibility and member benefits. As **André Vietor** of **Bco Congressos** states, conference revenue should only represent approximately 20% of an association’s overall income. So, the obvious question is then: what other sources of revenue exist?

One such source is leveraging educational content, a strategy that blossomed with the pandemic. With events shifting to virtual or hybrid formats, associations increasingly offered scientific/educational content online for a fee. In addition, the hybrid meeting model is not disappearing anytime soon, and virtual participation at conferences has increased over the past few years. Associations have adapted accordingly, selling live or recorded sessions online to those members who, for various reasons, opted to not attend the event in-person. Selling content is definitely an interesting and more common revenue stream for associations.

Kitty Wong of **K&A International** points out that, in fact, virtual meetings have increased revenue over 2021 and 2022.

Another revenue stream with great potential is what Vietor calls “the industry partnership model.” This model calls for associations to move towards industry partnerships rather than solely sponsorship relationships. In doing so, associations can raise institutional – and additional – funds that are not necessarily related to their conferences. Such funds can be in the form of scientific trials, virtual educational platforms, webinars, and on-demand, workshops. In so doing, however, associations want to also avoid the trap of becoming an industry-driven association – that is, an association being driven by industry interests. Associations must remain focused on the professionals in their field – independent and empowered to make decisions without the influence of third parties.

To avoid this pitfall while still giving the industry a voice, Vietor suggests associations set up Industry Advisory Boards. In cases of the absence of such a board, it is vital to conduct industry site meetings for any upcoming events, as well as debrief meetings to solicit industry feedback on their experience and input on how to improve the next conference.

Despite alternative revenue sources available to an association, event sponsorship remains a key priority. The opportunity to interact with professionals in the field is the primary reason that exhibitors and sponsors support a conference in the first place, and **Jean-Paul de Lavison** from **JPdL International** urges associations to remember that the depth of their relationships with sponsors are ultimately the catalyst for sponsorship revenues. “Money does not fall from the sky,” says de Lavison. “Rather, it’s a result of common interests and initiatives that are being showcased at the event.”

To optimise sponsorship revenue, the answer is at once simple yet complex: deliver a “wow experience.”



The COVID-19 pandemic and its enormous impact on event attendance has created a big challenge for associations: restoring the number of physical attendees from pre-COVID years. Because this is a hefty task, Vietor says that associations must set the highest standards for themselves. Events have to offer a unique experience for both industry representatives and attendees. We have seen many innovations with this goal in mind, including taking on-site activities out of meeting rooms and placing them close to the exhibition space, gamification and spaces for unique experiences. Vietor also mentions the unexpected social media success at one recent conference where attendees had a piano at their disposal: “Associations must show people that their events simply cannot be missed.”

All in all, associations must be relentless in their pursuit of creative and new sources of revenue while continuing to nurture their relationships with event sponsors. In doing so, associations are assured of long-term viability as well as the industry support that will allow them to continue the advocacy that reinforces their relevance in an ever-changing world.



World PCO Alliance



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New Rules of **Engagement for Sponsors**

Sponsorship is coming of age and your conference sponsors are going to have high expectations... as they should! The easy days of selling a logo on a brochure are gone and while virtual offers new opportunities, the market is competitive and the post-COVID era has added complexity and uncertainty to the picture. So, beyond technology, what are the new rules of the game and how can associations be more convincing and on point?

AUTHOR: LINE JUBERT, ASSOCIATION MANAGER AT DENTONS GLOBAL ADVISORS

Prioritise market research and make your event relevant

Many things have changed with COVID, nevertheless some constants remain. The first thing sponsors look at is a conference's demographic break down – ie. the numbers, sector, location and job title or level of seniority of your attendees. What used to be straightforward in 2020 has become more complicated in 2022. Numbers and attendance patterns are likely to have changed over the past two years but this should still be the starting point of your research.

Market research may sound daunting to associations with limited resources but picking up the phone will teach you what your sponsors are up to: Is anyone launching new products, working on new markets, or communicating on sustainability? How have COVID and Ukraine affected your sponsors? Do they travel? What are they working with in terms of budgets, timelines and decision-making?

The answers you receive may surprise you and sponsors may express divergent interests from your board members or from each other. At a medical conference, one sponsor may want attendees to test medical devices on-site while another prefers virtual because of the global reach... and you may not have the budget to please both with hybrid.

While you speak to them, consider engaging them further in the event: Could they contribute to developing a session? What are they expecting? Chances are they will have ideas to share and their input will help you design an event that remains fresh year after year and not rely upon attendees returning out of habit.

Keep the conversation going...

When speaking with prospects, remember to showcase the unique strengths of your association. These could be anything from a tight knit group of experts to a media-savvy president or a great following on social media. If



you are lucky, you will have all of this and more! Focus on what makes your association and event stand out and start building your relationships early if they don't exist already. Budget decisions tend to be made in the last quarter of the year and with many still working remotely, getting ahold of people on the phone post-COVID could take a while.

Once you have a foot in the door, don't just email but multiply contact points and offer to meet in person whenever possible. Not everyone travels as much as they used to, but many long for in-person contact and will be pleased to meet face to face.

Social media is of course also a great way to connect. Lots of business intelligence is shared online and by sharing, retweeting and using sponsors' hashtags you can easily gain popularity, visibility and followers. Just make sure that sponsored content does not overshadow your own. Avoid heavy handed sales posts and follow compliance rules if any apply to your sector, as you would in other situations.

... and make the relationship last beyond the event!

Once a sponsor is booked, you may want to think of how you can do more for them – making an introduction, facilitating an interview or adding a social media post to the plan are always appreciated and not everyone thinks of going the extra mile once the contract is signed.

Once the event has passed, you can and should share some analytics. Some sponsors will request event statistics, especially

when events are virtual and data is plentiful. That's great but before promising any data, be sure to understand sponsors expectations and the information that will be available to you. Making sense out of the data you extract can be time consuming in some cases and you certainly don't want to take any chances with the GDPR.

Last but not least, take the opportunity to get their feedback on the sponsorship. What did they find to be most beneficial? What didn't meet their expectations? Getting their input while it's still top of mind should help to build an even more successful event in the future! And don't forget the golden rule: Maintaining existing relationships is always easier and cheaper than starting new ones from scratch.



Focus on what makes your association and event stand out and start building your relationships early if they don't exist already.

DENTONS GLOBAL ADVISORS **interel**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET IN TOUCH?

In a time when events are picking up but the future remains somehow uncertain, long term business relationships are key to many associations' financial stability. If you would like to share a good story or some thoughts on sponsorship and/or partnerships, please feel free to contact me on:

line.jubert@dentonsglobaladvisors.com

Your story may feature in the next edition of this article!



Value Proposition

is the Key to Building Sponsor Relationships

What are sponsors really looking for from your organisation?

That would seem to be an easy question. The answer, obviously, is to gain exposure to our members and realise some tangible (i.e., financial) return on their sponsorship investment.

I would certainly agree with that, but I think we must look at the new environment in which we are seeking to keep our current sponsors and attract new ones. We keep hearing references to the “post-COVID” business environment but do we really know what post-COVID means? Does that mean that the pandemic is over, but we’ve got another flu on our hands and every year we’re going to go through something like this? Does it mean that we can’t expect more outbreaks on cruises, at conventions, and at other large gatherings? Nobody knows.

When we seek sponsorships in an uncertain environment, we have to present the value of the sponsorships in terms that are meaningful at several levels. We need to be prepared to answer questions about the return on their investment in a clear, informed, and positive manner.

To start with, there are a couple of questions we need to ask ourselves about sponsorship.

- what do we have to offer sponsors other than “exposure to our members”?
- what if that exposure doesn’t include as many members attending our programmes?
- do we have a unique “value proposition” for our sponsors?

Let’s look at these questions as opportunities to focus our message to new and returning sponsors.

1. What do we have to offer sponsors other than “exposure to our members”?

This question is the one that is most critical, because exposure to members is the starting point. Being exposed to members is just another marketing slogan – It doesn’t necessarily translate into value unless the sponsor does a lot of extra work and follow with the leads we promise them.



Remind your sponsors that through their sponsorships they become a part of the association's brand. That is, we are "guilty by association" with the sponsor, and they are the same with us. Make that a positive. Sell it as benefit, not as a feature. Talk about the multiplier effect of having their name and yours linked.

Be creative in the types of sponsorship you offer in today's world. Focus on the ability of sponsors to help advance your scientific or community service efforts (and those of your members). Talk about how the reach of your organisation can help the sponsor fulfill its commitment to being a positive corporate citizen. Tag lines such as "A Proud Corporate Sponsor of the XYZ Association Public Service Awards Programme" can help create an image that has real value for a sponsor.

2. What if that exposure doesn't include as many members attending our programmes?

The early signs of conference attendance after the pandemic are, for the most part, positive. But we all admit that there is no guarantee that this is the way things will be in the long term. Selling sponsorships based on attendance at conferences and events is somewhat tenuous.

We need to do our research to make the best case for our sponsorships. Talk about the referral value. Tie in social media and newsletter ads to event sponsorship. Promote the branding value of sponsoring educational programmes and even individual speakers. Offer video sponsorship options to reach non-attendees. Package more opportunities so there is less dependence on any one "exposure" avenue.

Set your sponsors up for successful interactions with your members by providing them with information to help target their (the sponsors') messages. Share surveys of what your members see as their biggest professional or business challenges. Promote the idea of sponsors being "problem-solvers" for your members and let them use their creativity to tell members how their company can help.

3. Do we have a unique "value proposition" for our sponsors?

Much the same way we need

to have an effective Value Proposition for association membership, we should have a targeted value proposition for sponsors, too. Identify the core value of being a sponsor in your organisation and present it in the most concise and appealing way.

A value proposition can be customised by filling in the blanks of a template that was developed by British membership expert Sue Froggatt. Her template is straight-forward:

For (your target market) **who want or need** (the prime benefit or outcome they require or the problem that needs solving) **sponsorship with our Association provides** (the solution-the highest value your organisation offers). **We provide this through** (the list of ways they can gain that value).

So, in this case, you might have a value proposition that reads:

For companies who need the most-cost effective way to attract younger customers, sponsorship with our Association provides **exclusive, multi-level interactions with our Young Professionals group**. We provide this through **corporate speaking opportunities, joint leadership meetings, and three-tiered marketing packages**.

The important thing is to remember that a value proposition is a problem-solving statement for your sponsor's needs, not for the organisation's. Showing empathy for their desired outcomes is how we will gain new sponsorships and continue to build vital partnerships for our association.



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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BAILEADERSHIP.COM

African Convention Centre Leaders: Let's Meet in Johannesburg!

AUTHORS: SVEN BOSSU, AIPC CEO & TAUBIE MOTLHABANE, CEO CTICC AND AIPC BOARD MEMBER

The worldwide community of convention centres is going through an unprecedented period of change, often triggered by causes completely outside our zone of control. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the warp-speed implementation of digital solutions, climate change and energy prices force us to re-think our sustainability plans and labour shortage impacts our ability to deliver the unique experiences delegates are seeking for. Now, more than ever, we need to come together, learn from each other, and take our future into our own hands.

Africa is a continent with enormous potential for the events industry. It is the second largest and second most populated continent in the world. The diversity in terms of culture, economy and nature reflects the myriad of opportunities Africa offers to organisers of events. At the same time, these organisers – our customers – are facing a suite of challenges. Research done by AIPC shows that the key areas of concern are uncertainty around attendance, rising costs and issues related to travel (as a lot of us witnessed over the last 6 months). So, the question is: how can we articulate the African value proposition in such a way that organising an event in an African convention centre becomes the obvious thing to do? And what are the areas of that value proposition that require additional investment?

These are exactly the questions we want to address during the first ever face-to-face **AIPC Africa Summit**, which will take place on February 26th in Johannesburg, as part of the Meetings Africa 2023 calendar. The objective is to bring together as many African convention and conference centre leaders as possible – whether they are an AIPC member or not – and share knowledge in order to grow as a community. The expected outcome is threefold:

1. Learn: by bringing in global thought leaders to share their views on key areas such as technology, security, and design;

About AIPC

AIPC is a global network of more than 190 convention centres across 64 countries. Their goal is to promote the best in convention centre management by providing education, research and networking opportunities to management-level events professionals worldwide. Visit aipc.org for more information.

2. Connect: share knowledge, lessons learned and best practices;

3. Shape: agree on the key next steps to elevate the value proposition of the African community of convention centres to the next level.

The next step will be to create a platform dedicated to the African convention centres, allowing to learn, connect and shape on a more continuous basis – both face-to-face and digital. This should include topic based working groups, special training for upcoming leaders, staff exchange programmes, etc.

This is obviously not something to be achieved on a stand-alone basis, but in partnership with other key stakeholders and service providers. This is where AIPC comes into place, bringing value to this new platform by providing access to its global network and resources – from education to research or quality standards – all with one single focus: support, promote and recognise excellence when it comes to convention centre management in Africa.

It is our conviction that – despite all the efforts done so far – the full potential of the African community of convention centres remains untapped. Our combined talents, assets and know-how can bring organised events in Africa to the next level.

But before we can achieve any of this, we need to hear your voice. We need to fully understand the challenges you face and the solutions you are looking for. This can only be achieved by meeting each other, exchanging ideas, and developing plans. So, join us in Johannesburg on February 26th (just before Meetings Africa). We can promise you an inspiring, elevating & energising summit.





Farewell 2022: Thriving in the Midst of a **Changing Economy!**

In 2022, we saw the flourishing of people gathering again, and with this trauma of unbeknown certainty, time was our customers' most precious commodity. Our challenge for 2023 and beyond is how we can not only ensure this survivability of our growth and revenue streams, but enhance its sustainability.

AUTHOR: SARAH MARKEY-HAMM - IAPCO PRESIDENT-ELECT

Traditional income streams have been brutally challenged over the last two years, which allows us to now pursue and confront the previous conventions and processes and write a new playbook that sustains the new environment your organisation now lives in, and how it can adapt in the future.

An enormous part of this is to understand what your customers' goals are for the next evolution of their business, and what you can offer to help them achieve this. Our partnership between the customer and the organisation should not consider their investment of their membership a necessary expense, rather than a discretionary one. Show, don't tell them why they will not be sustainable without your experience, expertise, and execution. The obvious revenue growth model is to showcase your events in a hybrid format. Whilst it is evident that in-person events provide the most engaged experience, there are a series of missed opportunities present by not offering a virtual attendance. A virtual experience gives you a chance to showcase your product to those who may not have ever been able to attend your event, as well as offer a "visual demonstration" before they turn up in-person to the following events.

Another opportunity that should be capitalised upon is offering shared business services for your members. To be able to access high-level professionals such as lawyers, business specialists, or marketing experts, you can offer a substantial level of value to their businesses. Offering these services to those who may not traditionally have the means or access to at a more competitive or affordable rate is an opportunity that should not be ignored.

Whilst exploring new revenue streams is both appealing and necessary, reinforcing the foundations cannot be left behind! Maintaining your relationships with key stakeholders is crucial in fortifying long-term financial security. By following an already established engagement strategy with your key stakeholders, acquiring new customers will

become a refined practice. Throughout events, we plan for every scenario, so why not plan for these key communication points? From regular catch-ups we can create opportunities to combat unexpected eruptions that would only have eventuated by our planned engagement strategies.

Don't let yourself get distracted by the new, bright, and shiny and forget the basics! Regular board turnover is healthy for any organisation, as it allows a fresh perspective that is typically paired with a refined level of expertise. This is why on-boarding your board is paramount towards the lifeblood of your organisation. To ensure new members are on-boarded properly, it is essential that the prospective members are vetted properly against an established suitability criteria you should have in place. What do you need? Do they have the skills to provide it? Are you intimidated by their skillset? Good! Then it likely means they know something you don't, and can teach it to you!

Members of risk and finance committees have a greater responsibility than other sub-committee members. It is vitally important that they have a broader knowledge of the intricacies of the association, and a keen knowledge of management accounting and fiduciary responsibilities. They also need a deep understanding of the responsibilities of the role on the committee, pain points of the organisation, and what mechanisms of growth exist and should be explored.

Managing an association, or being on the board of that association, in the ever-developing current economic climate is challenging, but not impossible. Your goal should not be to just survive amongst the changing economy, but to thrive! By surrounding yourself with bright, genuine people who have an innovative mindset for growth, and not intimidated by daunting opportunities or responsibilities, you are halfway there.

CityDNA Mentor Programme:

To Attract and Retain Talents in the Meetings Industry

Launched in 2020, the CityDNA Mentor Programme (formerly known as the ECM Mentor Programme) has been created with industry partners to generate exchange and knowledge between new and advanced professionals in the Meetings Industry.

More than ever, established members of City Destinations Alliance (115+ DMOs and Convention Bureaux all over Europe) and Meetings Industry professionals (employees from CVBs, tourist boards, congress centres, airlines, hotels, DMCs, PCOs or meeting planners) want to give back, to inspire, to share, and thus to make sure that the new professionals, despite the turbulent times, get the best start in what we hope will be a long and successful Meetings Industry career.

In close collaboration with industry partners *HQ Magazine*, IAPCO, ICCA and IMEX Group, the CityDNA Mentor Programme aims to act as a sounding board for the newcomers in the industry. It is a way for the mentees to develop their own professional network, strengthen their industry knowledge and be inspired by

other destination business models through their Mentor, who has been chosen according to a set of criteria matching the Mentee's needs.

After 2 successful years of the Programme, CityDNA adapted it to the new reality where everyone is now just as busy, if not busier, than before COVID-19. From now on, the Mentor Programme becomes more flexible and on-demand: Mentors are encouraged to put their name forward and Mentees to call upon them when they need support. The programme runs all year long to fit into everyone's busy agendas. Matches are made based upon a series of questions on the Mentor's expertise and the Mentee's needs. The goal is to be easier and less time-consuming: Mentors and Mentees can set up as many or as few meetings as needed, according to their own needs and deadlines.

MENTOR PROGRAMME



Attracting and retaining talents in the Meetings Industry!

CITY DESTINATIONS ALLIANCE

Endorsed by



CityDNA EVENTS (EXCLUDING WEBINARS AND ONLINE KNOWLEDGE GROUPS MEETINGS)

- VALENCIA** CityDNA Annual Meeting of Chief Executives of Capital & Major Cities
November 20-21, 2022 2-day meeting providing CEOs with an opportunity for open, peer-group discussion of current prospects, issues and concerns relating to city tourism
- GOTHENBURG** 9th TIC Expert Meeting
November 24-25, 2022 Meeting targeted to TIC managers and staff who are looking to improve and share knowledge
- SOFIA** CityDNA International Conference & General Assembly
April 19-22, 2023 Conference ; Knowledge Groups meetings, city showcases, keynote sessions
- FRANKFURT** IMEX Policy Forum
May 23, 2023 1 day to bring meetings industry leaders together with key government policymakers in order to garner government understanding and support, critical to the advancement of our industry
- LJUBLJANA** 12th City Cards Expert Meeting
May 25-26, 2023 Meeting targeted to city cards product managers who are looking to improve and share knowledge
- LONDON** Destinations Exchange Europe (former City Fair)
June 15-16, 2023 2-day programme with pre-scheduled B2B business meetings and series of knowledge sessions (in partnership with ETOA)
- GDANSK** 37th CityDNA Summer School
August 26-30, 2023 4-day learning opportunity for professionals working in convention bureaux, tourist offices, congress centres, airlines, hotels, DMCs, PCOs and meeting planners
- VIENNA** 18th TourMIS Users' Workshop & International Seminar
September 7-8, 2023 2-day training on the usage of the TourMIS database and highlighting new tools and methodologies for analysing city tourism, organised by CityDNA, the UNWTO, ETC & MODUL University Vienna
- TO BE ANNOUNCED** GDS Forum
October 2023 A global event that convenes and unites destination management professionals to catalyse innovation for regeneration.
- TO BE ANNOUNCED** CityDNA Autumn Conference
October 2023 Conference ; Knowledge Groups meetings, city showcases, keynote sessions

PARTICIPATION & PROMOTION AT TRADE FAIRS

- FRANKFURT** IMEX
May 23-25, 2023 3-day worldwide exhibition to do business while maximising connections, networking and education
- LAS VEGAS** IMEX America
October 17-19, 2023 3-day America's worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events



About Business Events Sarawak (BESarawak)

Business Events Sarawak is a non-profit organisation supported by the Sarawak Government, industry, and academia to bring domestic and global business events to Sarawak in addition to developing homegrown events.

As Malaysia's first convention bureau, we have the resources and excellent connections to help you develop, organise, and host business events that deliver social and economic impact. Our services are impartial and free.

Develop, Bid and Plan with BESarawak:

- ✓ Conventions, Conferences
- ✓ Corporate Incentives, Teambuilding
- ✓ Exhibitions, Tradeshows
- ✓ Seminars, Workshops
- ✓ Corporate Meetings, AGM
- ✓ And Other Business-Related Events










Sarawak Business Events Fund (SBEF)



Eligibility

- ✓ Supports all types of business events
- ✓ Application to be made at least 1 - 4 months prior to event date (depending on type of business event)
- ✓ Event must be held for a minimum of 2 days
- ✓ Delegates attending the convention/ conference/ seminar/workshop or similar will be required to pay a registration fee

SBEF Supported Items

-  Bidding Cost
-  Exhibition Enhancement
-  Promotional and Marketing Materials; Delegate Boosting
-  Speaker Expenses
-  Site Inspection
-  Professional Conference Organiser (PCO), Professional Exhibition Organiser (PEO), Destination Management Company (DMC) and other services
-  CMCI Enhancement
-  Cultural Performance
-  Contact us to know more about our supported items

To Apply or Enquire

For conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, tradeshows and similar, email **Donny Tan, Senior Business Development Manager (donny@sarawakcb.com)**

For corporate meetings, AGM, corporate incentives and teambuilding, email **Gloria Pahang, Senior Business Development Executive (gloria@sarawakcb.com)**

Visit us at www.businesseventssarawak.com