

Headquarters

SEPTEMBER 2021 #101 BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Association Profile

Meetings and Events Support
Association

Jeju

The Sustainable MICE Island

Future Meeting Space

Shaping the Congress of the
Future

Milano

A Promising Summer for Events

Mark Levin

No Member Should be Left
Behind

World PCO Alliance

Tips for Associations to Harness
Data



Cover photo:
Porta Nuova Isola
(Bosco Verticale)



HQ

THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2021

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Marcel A.M. Vissers
+32 (0)3 226 88 81
marcel@meetingmediagroup.com

MAGAZINE MANAGER

Manuel Fernandes
+32 (0) 480 632 636
manuel@meetingmediagroup.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Vivian Xu
+32 (0)489 550 485
vivian@meetingmediagroup.com

EDITOR

Tristan Haller
press@meetingmediagroup.com

RESPONSIBLE EDITOR

Mechelseplein 23/1
2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

SOUTH KOREA

Sooheon Oh
+82 2 734 0786
sooheonoh@medireponline.com

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

Farhana Khan
T. +32 (0)3 226 88 81
finance@meetingmediagroup.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

5 EDITIONS PER YEAR
FEB/MAY/JUL/SEP/NOV

65€ in Belgium
75€ in the EU
95€ in the rest of the world

COVER PHOTO CREDIT

© Andrea Cherchi

READ ONLINE

meetingmediagroup.com

WRITE TO US!

press@meetingmediagroup.com
meetingmedia
headquartersmagazine
hqglobalmagazine



EDITOR'S LETTER — 3

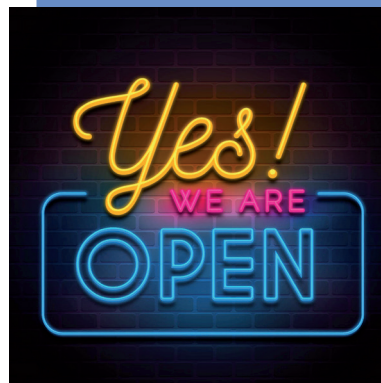


DESTINATION

Jeju — 4



INTRODUCTION — 6



HQ ESSENTIAL REPORTS

Gdansk — 7
Bratislava — 10



ESSENTIAL INTERVIEWS

Future Meeting Space — 14
Sharing Cities — 17
International Leadership Association — 20
Meetings and Events Support Association — 22



CORONAVIRUS VS MICE

EICC — 25
Milano — 26
ECM Summer School 2021 — 28



ASSOCIATION INSIGHTS

GDS Movement — 31
ECM — 34
IAPCO — 36
AIPC — 38
Mark Levin — 40



THINK ABOUT IT — 42



PCO INSIGHTS

Kenes — 45
World PCO Alliance — 46

INTERNATIONAL
ACCREDITATIONS



PARTNERING WITH:





The **Answer** of a Magazine

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

My view has always been that a trade show is the best measure of an industry's success. Our branch in this whole thing had to go on a heavy diet and had to cancel a lot of their contacts around the world, and that's exactly what we're dealing with right now.

The good news is that two trade fairs will be restarting soon where we can meet our industry people again. And we will all tell each other how much we thickened (figuratively speaking) after all this time. It will be different. How different, we will only know when the first trade fairs – **IMEX America** and **IBTM World** – are over. I myself do not believe much in the predictions of the suppliers, as they tend to be very coloured.

I will, however, listen carefully to what the associations have to say. They will eventually express their needs after the post-virus period and make their new expectations clear. The first signs are already there. The **Geneva International Association Forum (GIAF)** was launched in mid-September; **ICCA** has issued a last call for their upcoming forecasting report; then, there are the **UIA Round Tables** Europe and Asia (Tokyo and Prague). And as I am typing this text, I get the news from Dubai that the **Dubai Association**

Centre is inviting me to a meeting on “Associations and the New World: Roadmaps for Reinvention”.

I am very curious about the reports of all these events. What will the future be like? We, at *HQ*, are going to work hard to help shape a new chapter in the meetings industry. A meetings magazine is ultimately the third pillar on which our industry is built. A medium that questions and informs about what is happening around the world in the conference field. We will continue to fulfil this calling even after issue #100 of **Headquarters Magazine**.



Jeju, Asia's representative resort MICE Destination,

Wings for the World's representative Green MICE Destination leap forward!

Jeju: World's Representative Green MICE Destination

Jeju, the largest island off the coast of the Korean Peninsula, is taking sustainability very seriously. A **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, this Korean province is dominated by the 1950m Hallasan Mountain and the idyllic backdrop of spectacular waterfalls, protected forests, caves and lava tubes. With such an awe-inspiring environment, it's only normal that the island wants to lead the way when it comes to green initiatives.

To stay competitive in the ever-growing MICE market, **Jeju Convention & Visitors Bureau (JejuCVB)** is carrying out a large-scale **Green MICE campaign**. Making Jeju a true Green MICE destination and leading the global Green New Deal that South Korea as a whole has embraced, is a reality that cuts across the bureau's goals. This includes initiatives like the "Green MICE Slogan and Idea Contest" which was held in March 2021.

Through the MICE Slogan contest, the Green MICE campaign called "**WE GREEN JEJU**" came to fruition and secured a certification mark based on that same slogan. JejuCVB is promoting the Green MICE campaign through SNS Instagram events highlighting its natural wonders, local attractions and certification marks. It also presents calls for recycling and informs about the need for sustainability.

In addition, JejuCVB and the **Jeju International Convention Center (ICC JEJU)**, along with other stakeholders across Jeju's whole supply chain, are seeking to obtain **ISO 20121 international certification**, which will provide guidance and best practices to help you manage your event and control its social, economic and environmental impact.

In July, the Green MICE Forum was held with the goal of "minimising the use of disposable goods, using fair trade products, and using tumblers." Organised by JejuCVB, it featured keynote presentations and special lectures

on sustainability. On this occasion, Jeju's Green MICE manuals were also introduced, designed to help MICE professionals operate in the most sustainable way.

The **Jeju Green MICE Manual** is a customized guidebook for sustainable event operation targeting organisers, participants, participating companies, and facilities, in each field of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) industry.

Jeju, as a World's Green MICE City, will be officially introduced at the **Jeju Green MICE City Declaration Ceremony**, scheduled in November. As such, the island is looking forward to growing beyond its image as one of Asia's cherished **Resort MICE Destinations** and to becoming a truly global sustainable MICE city.

Representative Green MICE Facility – Grand Hyatt Jeju

Grand Hyatt Jeju (*pictured in the right*) opened in December 2020, with a new vision of the Grand Hyatt brand applied to the island, reflective of its unique environment, and providing travelers with a first-class integrated resort service and hospitality. In particular, the hotel has focused on minimising its environmental impact by encouraging the reuse of bed and bath linen to protect its setting and guests' privacy.

In order to reduce paper waste, hotel menus and programme books are operated by electronic documents. All amenity packaging containers are made from eco-friendly plastic, and the toothbrushes are wood-based, not plastic.

Finally, the hotel is making an effort to protect the environment by effectively saving its energy, with the installation of front LEDs and solar panels, eco-friendly air filters and many charging stations for electric vehicles.

WE Sustainable MICE CITY GREEN JEJU

GREEN MICE CAMPAIGN

WE GREEN JEJU Sustainable MICE CITY
Jeju CVB



Livin' in a **Data World**

Gone are the days when technological tools and digital formats were rendered only as an option for international associations. New technologies changed open or private data in personal or business environments. In order to keep up with their membership ambitions and the ultimate mission that underlies the activities of these associations, technology use and data security are elements that follow the same pace as their own outlined objectives. It is no longer “here” or “there”. It’s “what” and “how”.

Indeed, data analytics is changing the game in the event industry and there is a plethora of reasons that help explain this transition. It has been described as the new oil of the digital economy, and rightfully so. Thanks to the latest innovations – face recognition camera, ai-driven tools, event mobile apps, beacons and more – we are moving to the new era of data revolution that new real-time analytic tools can capture and analyse. Data analytics is the key that allows us to dive into the world of data, and a privileged means of understanding in-depth information by making the most of it and personalising it. To address customer needs regardless of your industry and/or product.

But despite this importance, new challenges in event data management continue to emerge. A research study from *Eventsforce* found that more than 8 in 10 event planners see data management a consistent and growing challenge, with 70% planning to make improvements to their data strategies. This is in large part due to all the different data collection tools we're

using right now around events – from registration systems and event management software to mobile apps, engagement tools and more – so the more systems we use, the more data we can collect. But that doesn't stop there: according to 74% of event planners, calculating ROI and measuring event success tops the list of reasons why organisations collect data from events, while 68% use data to plan goals, activities and content for upcoming events. Fortunately, almost 73.6% of event planners have become more skilled in technology usage due to the experiences surrounding the pandemic, according to **Event MB 2020**.

HQ has extensively covered in recent years the topic of technology applied to the MICE industry and how organisational thinking have changed in light of this reality. In this issue, we dive headfirst into the subject of data management. We conducted two exclusive interviews with the **German Convention Bureau's** new project, **Future Meeting Space**, and the European smart cities network, **Sharing Cities**. We continue to share new information about the best destinations and venues around the world, especially at the technological level. At the last **ECM Summer School**, we took a closer look at the best technology sessions and recreated the best presentations. Finally, a special recommendation to our collaborators' articles, highlighting the **World PCO Alliance**, **Kenes** and **IAPCO** in the data management chapter.

And never forget: own your data – it will definitely be the biggest event technology trend for 2022.





Gdansk, the City of Gates

AUTHOR: *TRISTAN HALLER*, EDITOR OF HQ

The shaky and tormented nature of Poland's history is of widespread knowledge: too often does it cover its glorious part and its wonders. The same can be said about its cities, often obscured by the capital, and while the glitz of Warsaw may outshine the rest of the country, a city stands firmly with a proud face: Gdansk, the city of many names and many gates.

Gdansk is a city on the Baltic coast of northern Poland, and the capital of the Pomerania region. It's notable for having been ruled by many different countries (Poland, Prussia, Germany) as well as for having long periods of autonomy. It was the wealthiest city of Poland before Warsaw's growth in the 18th century. It was part of the Hanseatic league,

and as a port city, home of a very important migratory flow ranging from artists to merchants. During our trip, we got some time to discover a booming locality, ready to welcome the MICE industry with open arms. It's a testament to Gdansk's identity, fully committed to preserving its past while thriving for the future.



The Radisson Hotel & Suites

Our first sight was one of majesty and serenity: the **4-star Radisson Hotel & Suites**, which granted us the privilege to be hosted in one of its suites, is located right in front of the Motława river. The view from our room was therefore quite impressive, and we could gaze with wonders at the boats slowly gliding away as the streets display a very active life. The hotel itself is a thing to behold: its entrance is covered with amber – the gold of Poland as they say – as are the other rooms. Capable of welcoming 700 delegates in theatre style (350-400 in banquet style) in its 700 m², we were apparently the first MICE press guests they had received since the outbreak of covid-19. The guide tour showed us the conference rooms, all equipped with the most relevant technologies – from the audio-visual system to automatic curtain blinds. There are three meeting rooms (with a capacity of 250 people max), a boardroom, as well as a pre-function ballroom area.

After a first appetiser, we were delighted with a three-course meal – foodies will quickly realise that Gdansk is a haven of gastronomy with an extremely diverse offer of food, ranging from multinational food court to traditional or high-end cuisine. The Radisson Hotel has different spaces for guests to enjoy their meal. One which caught our eyes is composed of two large ones: a big room for seated dinner, and then above a beautiful, cosier one for conference goers. A perfect setting for more close-up encounters and intimate face-to-face talks.

One of the most pleasant characteristics of this city is that everything is at a walking distance. It only takes 20 minutes by car to get to the nearest airport, and 20 minutes on foot to go to the **European Solidarity Centre** and discover another major part of Poland's history: the Solidarność movement and the role it played in Poland's liberation. The place itself has a good, albeit not too big, conference room, and in general it's a nice incentive for people to get to know more about this town. And it would be a sin to miss out on the exhibitions there, with an interior design reminding us of the first local industry back then: boat construction and repair.

Later that evening, we discovered how dynamic our district's nightlife was, with a lot of locals and Polish tourists, as well as many bars to hang out in. You'd be surprised how much punch the Old Town packs on a Friday night!

The City of Gargoyles

Our second day started with an impressive tour of the **PURO hotel** (4 stars). Suffice it to say that if the Radisson Hotel offered us luxury and classical refinement, this one bluffed us with a very bold, eclectic and elegantly designed architecture. Everything inside is shaped to make a reference to the city's atmosphere and historical shipyard. Such care and attention to details are quite rare with hotels, which commonly adopt a conventional look and end up all looking the same: here, the desire is to be completely unique and it's all in the best of



taste. Conference rooms all have specific names with different moods (red mouse, granary, etc.); the second floor can be booked exclusively, as well as an incredible rooftop which is also open to the public in the evening.

After this, we enjoyed a very insightful guided tour to the **Old Town**, with various stories on the fantastic architecture, which reminded us of Bruges as well as some small Dutch towns – heritage of Dutch architects who settled here and brought their style with them. Amongst all of these historical wonders, and the numerous adorable little gargoyles recently placed around the city as landmarks, one statue stands out: Neptune and its trident. Just like any other places in the world, the city has its own legends – two associate the former statue with the creation of the local alcohol named “Goldwasser” – a blend of vodka and aromatics. One says that Neptune got pissed off at the habit of throwing coins into his fountain, struck the water into vodka and smashed the coins into small flakes of gold. Another tells a more positive tale, with a smiling Neptune rewarding the local people by transforming the the fountain’s liquid into pure vodka to water the whole town.

Then, came the moment to visit the **Gdansk Shakespeare Theatre**. Gdansk is a Shakespearian destination, as it was the place where English travelling companies from the 17th century would come and play. From the outside, one might think it was created by some evil character to become their lair. It’s a completely dark structure, a “black box” per se, made of bricks imported from Belgium, assembled according to Renato Rizzi’s schematics and dedicated to theatre as well as exhibitions. Inside is a completely different story and counterbalances

the heaviness of the exterior. It can host from 250 to 400 people for a cocktail, has its own bar – you can even bring your glass inside and drink during the performances, just like it used to be in the past – and uses modern technology to recreate an open-space environment with a retractable roof. Around the latter, the flat surface is large enough to welcome an outside gathering.

Modernity Amongst the Nature

Following this intense cultural half, we immediately hopped into a cab to discover the **Olivia Star** (*pictured below*). A huge skyscraper of 34 floors where the last 3 can be used for MICE events. Beware of the fear of heights! The view is astonishing and you can wander outside to see everything around, from the forest to the sea. Each floor has different restaurants, with one in the 33rd overseen by the renowned chef Paco Pérez and aiming for a Michelin star. Amongst them, a tremendous wine collection for the amateurs who share the passion for this divine beverage. On the 34th floor, 850 square metres of functional space can welcome 350 guests, with nearly 6m rooms height that can be used as whole or divided in 3 distinct halls.

Last but not least, we had the pleasure to discover the **Novotel Marina Hotel**, a cute resort on the shore of the Gdansk Bay, where you can enjoy fish & gin and convert downstairs rooms into events. While it might not be the best place for big conferences, it is nevertheless interesting for smaller events where its numerous corners and activities make for a very family-friendly environment.

All in all, Gdansk is bound to charm you if you give it a chance!





Bratislava: A Mosaic of **Illustrious History**; A Patchwork of **Leading Industries**

AUTHOR: VIVIAN XU, HQ MANAGING DIRECTOR

A city borders the Danube River, only a few kilometres from Austrian border, with a baroque palace commissioned by Hungarian nobles and a medieval-looking yet vibrant old town. Lying in the geographical centre of Europe, Bratislava, with its crowned numerous kings and royal spouses; is the capital and the largest city of Slovakia. Flipping between the picture-postcard settings and gorgeous event venues, the city never fails to intrigue.

Surprisingly close

Slovakia became an independent state in 1993, after the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, and joined the European Monetary Union in 2009. Bratislava is served by two airports: its local airport and Vienna airport. It

only takes 40 minutes' drive from Vienna airport to the city centre. Alternatively, shuttle buses are scheduled every 30 minutes. Moreover, Bratislava can also be reached by cruise from the neighbouring countries.

Driving into the city, the iconic bridge cannot be missed.

A UFO-shaped observation deck sits on the top of the bridge, 95 metres above the Danube River. This is where you will find an exotic restaurant with an astonishing panoramic view of the city. Offering seasonal culinary experience and unique cocktail tasting, the **UFO tower** is an excellent option for small intimate events.

Exceptionally smart

You might not know it, but the automotive industry has a strong tradition in the country and has been an important pillar for its economy. Slovakia has been the world's largest car producer per capita since 2007. In 2019, over one million vehicles were produced. Currently operating automotive plants are Volkswagen, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Kia Motor, Jaguar Land Rover. No doubt, Slovakia plays an irreplaceable role within the European automotive production hub.

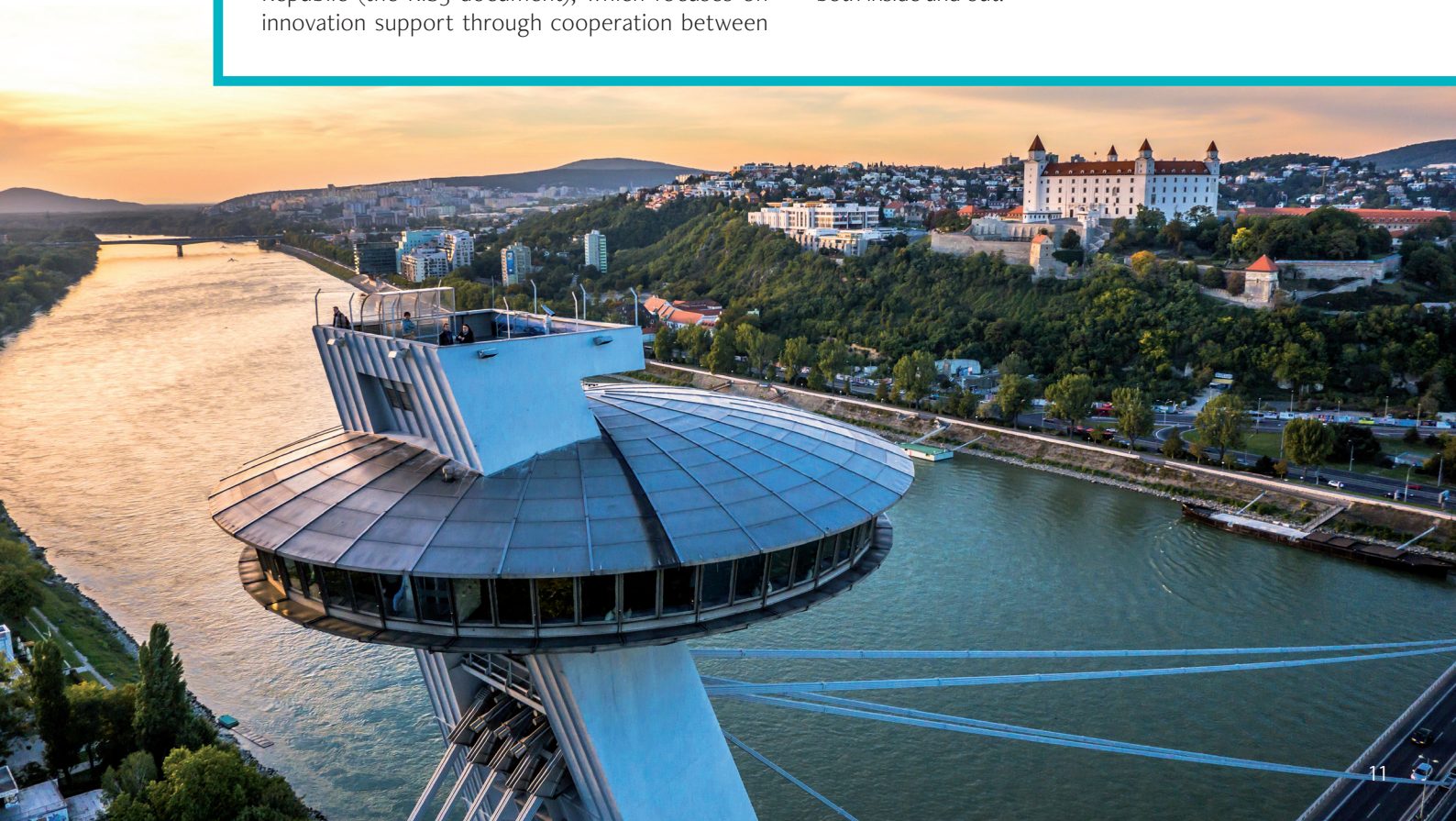
Another leading industry is electrical engineering, which also attracts a lot of directly foreign investment. Slovakia is home to many global companies such as Foxconn, Samsung, etc. At this moment, 17 electric or partly electric models are produced in the country.

Last but not least, under the banner of "Through knowledge towards prosperity", the research and development (R&D) is the top priority for the Government of the Slovak Republic. The latter passed the Smart Specialisation Strategy for the Slovak Republic (the RIS3 document), which focuses on innovation support through cooperation between

enterprises and research institutions in key sectors of the Slovak economy. Such sectors include material research and nanotechnology, biomedicine, biotechnology and Information and communications technology (ICT), amongst others.

Slovaks are known for their excellence in three major areas: **productivity, qualification** and **cost-competitive**. Therefore, the country is evolving toward higher value-added centres and industries. In this very innovative concert of performances, international companies are joined by the local start-ups, which have also shown their stellar performance. Bratislava based **ESET** is a world leader in anti-virus software; Aeromobil, the evolution of flying car accomplished its first fly in 2013; more related to the meetings industry, Slido offers an exceptional platform to engage participants and make everyone feel connected!

Another fun fact that most probably ignore: Slovakia's winemaking tradition can be dated back to Roman times. Since the collapse of the communist regime, Slovak winemaking has experienced a renaissance and is now competing in the international wine competitions. A fine example of this craftsmanship can be found in the restaurant and wine bar **Elesko**. An outstanding example of a modern event-to-go place. Located in a green vineyard, an hour's drive from Bratislava, the venue combines wine production, fine dining and local art gallery, all the while providing large event spaces both inside and out.



Highly competitive

The well-established educational system in Slovakia has prepared students for a successful entry into society. In 2015, the local government has implemented a dual vocational education, in order to improve the labour market prospects of young graduates. Dual vocational education and training (VET) is based on collaboration between secondary vocational schools and companies, with the aim to provide practical learning. Foreign language is also of capital importance in this education; the most popular second language is English as expected, followed by German, Russian and French.

The Slovak universities, medical schools, engineering schools and law institutions are highly respected and well known in the academic communities. Looking back in history, the first university was founded in the territory of present-day Slovakia in 15th century. However currently the main – and largest – one is **Comenius University**. The well-established close cooperation between companies and local universities provides a solid academic background for international association events.

Extremely efficient

The **Bratislava Convention Bureau** is a one-stop shop for business event planners. A full range of services is provided from initial MICE event planning to coordinating and connecting local suppliers and experts. Slovaks like to compare themselves with the Finns, because of their efficiency and ability of execution, and the convention bureau’s team will be delighted to demonstrate this in practice.

Bratislava ranks among the top 10 of international meeting destinations within New Europe region, which can host a maximum of 2,000 congress participants

(Source: “Meetings Star Awards”). A city offers a wide variety of venues and about 3,200 hotel rooms in the 4- and 5-star range, most of them surrounded by the enchanted environment of a city centre where traffic is prohibited and the past remains immortalised. Moreover, compared to the larger and better-known cities in the region, Bratislava’s prices are substantially lower, even though the quality and standards are on the same level. Adding on top the security and connectivity to all these aspects, it is easy to conclude that Bratislava tops the most sought-after European destinations when it comes to small and medium-sized international events.

Obviously, an event’s success cannot be achieved without reliable local DMCs, which in this Central European capital can range from catering and accommodation to programme design and intellectual partnerships.

Flitting through the city, you will finally notice there are numerous construction sites where new projects are ongoing. Worth mentioning, the idea of building a brand-new convention centre in Bratislava is incubating. Sixty-five million euro was funded by Slovak government. Once the project is settled, this Central European capital will be another gleaming star, shining brightly in the meetings industry.

Implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic.



▲ Group photo of the press trip 2021

HO ESSENTIAL & INTERVIEW

14 Shaping the future of business events

17 Gearing up a common platform for shared challenges

20 "How can leaders strengthen democratic norms?"

22 "We are now in the 4th industrial revolution."





The challenges of a post-pandemic era are immense and reflect a new event ecosystem that is underpinning a set of emerging trends. With this in mind, the **GCB German Convention Bureau**, together with the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, conceived an innovation project that aims to outline the future of business events and its active role in the global strategy of the MICE market. How important will they be for organisations' communication in the future? What kind of new skills will be needed? What criteria can be used to measure the success of events? It is these and other questions that **Future Meeting Space (FMS)** tries to answer, here voiced by **Matthias Schultze** (pictured left), managing director of the GCB.

“The Pandemic Illustrates the **Fragility** of **Established Systems**”

Before getting into specifics, how did you come up with the idea to create this innovation network?

Our world is becoming more complex and is changing dynamically, that's why it became more and more important for us to be ahead of things that might come. So, we came up with the idea of cooperating with the **Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO** to jointly create the FMS innovation network as early as 2015. The Fraunhofer IAO is part of Fraunhofer Society Europe's largest application-oriented research organisation and thus the perfect partner for a research project like FMS. The project aims at developing ideas, concepts and practical advice for the continuous development of the German (business) event industry. It provides an important building block to secure the country's future competitiveness and market position as a leading

meetings and conference destination, by enabling innovation leadership. The FMS research focusses on trends, innovations and technological and social developments, identifying their possible influence on the event industry, trying to find out how future events should be designed, and how participants' needs develop as well as the requirements that result from these aspects for all those involved in the event planning process.

One of key findings from this research highlights that the relevance of events to the communications mix of organisations will continue to grow. How so?

The relevance of events will continue to grow, because they are an essential part of the communications mix of organisations. With rising digital and virtual forms of communication, it becomes more

important to create real and genuine experiences. For strengthening a brand or enabling identification with a company, spontaneous, physical encounters which can create surprising moments, networking activities and emotional experiences become more and more relevant. If they are well staged, they promote the loyalty and identification of customers with a brand – that’s why business events will remain an important marketing instrument for the communication toolbox of meeting planners and organisers. The results of the FMS research have shown that events cannot and probably will never be solely replicated in the virtual space. They change in design and format with more hybrid aspects and building global communities through social media, but still require personal, emotional and physical interaction. Another change is that events will no longer take place on a fixed date alone, but will circulate in a kind of event loop.

It is also clear that the effectiveness and relevance of these future events will be determined by new smart city concepts. Could we be watching a new stepping stone for knowledge transfer and capacity building in the destination selection process?

The transfer of knowledge between event planners and a destinations’ intellectual and innovation resources has become an important way to offer better value to every participant. According to the results of the **Meeting- & EventBarometer**, 83% of event planners choose the destinations for their events based on topics. Whether it’s about medicine, health, sustainability or economy – authentic and real places representing a specific issue are gaining more importance in an increasingly digital world.

The references to explicit and implicit (or tacit) knowledge and the contrast between the

interaction and networking methods that result from it, are quite noticeable throughout your research process. Coming from a critical period in which the explicit model of knowledge was king, do you believe now in a balance between these two elements?

Know-how comes in different shapes and forms. Expanding knowledge is not only about sitting in an audience and listening to a speaker, implicit knowledge is the information, experiences and values that we carry around within us. It is below the surface, “invisible” and more difficult to share. Depending on the format of an event, the balance between the explicit transfer of knowledge and the implicit transfer of knowledge varies a lot. The “visible”, explicit knowledge is well documented and can be shared easily and be imparted in digital formats. But it’s time to implement new, innovative and creative concepts that focus on personal interaction and to reduce the amount of explicit knowledge, because the “invisible” is what might lead to new ideas and innovative solutions.

FMS came out strategically with six different scenarios and a “Future Meeting Room” in order to meet the needs of future participants and serve as an eco-chamber for new realities. Tell us more about these event scenarios and the meeting room.

In the future, a variety of different event types will take place and be in demand. Therefore, we have identified six scenarios: the interactive forum scenario, the multi-site congress scenario, the co-working congress scenario, the analogue congress scenario, the hybrid congress scenario and the virtual goes real scenario. Each scenario has different requirements with regard to the event location, number of

“ According to the results of the Meeting- & EventBarometer, 83% of event planners choose the destinations for their events based on topics.





participants, timetable, transfer of knowledge and infrastructure. The “Future Meeting Room” combines different scenarios and covers participant needs and requirements that will arise in the future.

This global standstill led to drastic consequences in the market which were not only due to changes in economic structures and turnover, but also towards more flexible working models. According to pre-COVID trends, do you consider that the pandemic was a trigger for a faster transition?

The pandemic illustrates the fragility of established systems, but it also shows how a change in circumstances can lead to quantum leaps in many areas. Pre-COVID trends already went towards more digital tools, virtual and hybrid event formats, as well as virtual interaction and collaboration, but the COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be an accelerator for digitalisation and hybridisation, inspiring a wide range of new solutions. The increased wish for personal meetings is still there and will soon bring back face-to-face events, even though in different, more hybrid formats. The results of this year’s Meeting & EventBarometer have also shown that only about 20% of event planners expect to schedule the way they did before the pandemic. The participation in virtual events will decrease soon, whereas the proportion of physical events with more hybrid aspects will rise. 61% of event planners expect a lower travel volume in the future and thus a higher number of smaller and more regional events. This has reinforced the importance of anticipating future developments in the events sector. Future scenarios as we had described them in previous research phases became reality. The Covid-19 pandemic brings about a kind of “fast forward” to the future. It is now clear that the event ecosystem will change considerably and for the long term. Customer and participant needs are now more than ever the key to success.

Finally, given the new role and purpose of business events, new platforms and groundbreaking approaches and the ongoing transformation that leads to new forms of sustainable and technological governance... where are we in this race for innovation as a global event community?

The future of the global event community is promising. The current period of change opens up many new perspectives and possibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how flexible the event sector can adapt to new challenges. The success of future events will now be measured by how well we succeed in bringing innovative ideas, virtual worlds and the personal, emotional experience of the participants together. The collaboration inside the global event community will also lead to smart solutions for the digital transformation of events worldwide and thus create new business opportunities. Platforms like the “Response Room”, initiated by the GCB and its partners **PCMA** and **IMEX**, enable all stakeholders to work together on the future of business events, develop creative ideas and take them to a new level. Together with partners and members, the GCB German Convention Bureau supports this development with its various research projects and campaigns

“ *The participation in virtual events will decrease soon, whereas the proportion of physical events with more hybrid aspects will rise.* ”



Sharing Cities is a major international smart cities venture addressing some of the most pressing urban challenges facing today's cities. In short, three lighthouse cities (London, Lisbon, Milan) are implementing innovative models in close collaboration with three fellow cities (Bordeaux, Burgas, Warsaw) in order to craft a smart intersectional plan. After drawing on €25 million in EU funding, the project aims to trigger €500 million in investment in a collaborative effort to expand a smart strategy that involves energy use, low carbon transport and data management. The programme director, **Nathan Pierce**, shed light on this destination incubator for *HQ*.

“The **Global Events Industry** Has Been **Critical** to our Programme”

How has this circular approach been implemented by these cities? What kind of collaborative practices are they adopting right now?

Since 2016, our six cities have collaborated to develop workable business models for smart technologies that can be scaled up and replicated across other European cities. In doing so they have supported the growth of a new green smart infrastructure market. Replication has allowed our fellow cities to emulate smart city strategies or measures that our lighthouse cities have successfully implemented. This approach is so valuable as it allows fellow cities to collaborate with lighthouse cities through a process of research, analysis and assessment of what can be done within their own city contexts. The approach is more than just a copy of one solution, and takes into consideration the circumstances of the recipient city.

All six cities have demonstrated the benefits that using smart tech and working together can have on carbon reduction and service delivery in our cities. In the first phase, lighthouse cities implemented replicable smart city measures – from smart building retrofits, e-mobility, and sustainable energy management systems, to smart infrastructure, urban sharing platforms and digital social markets. Using the circular

process and learnings from demonstration cities, fellow cities co-designed, validated and implemented similar solutions and models within their own city contexts. Our cities are connected with 34 partners from the public and private sectors which really enhances collaborative practice and success

What were the major key findings and turning points you found both in the lighthouse and fellow cities?

It is vital that we take a focused, city-needs led approach to commissioning smart and digital technology to address local challenges. Solutions, or technology-led approaches should not be developed independently and then retrofitted to a city. A city needs to identify what outcomes it wants to achieve at a local level and then engage the marketplace in designing a solution for that need – including the citizen in this journey.

We have also demonstrated the investment potential of smart infrastructure by leveraging in over €264 million of investment as a result of the Sharing Cities programme. Moreover, the value of public, private and academic partnerships and the role they can play from design through to monitoring, is really crucial.



We learnt that these partnerships often result in solutions with greater longevity.

These are just three takeaways, there are many more including what we learnt from the technical implementation of different types of technologies, good and bad. Scaling up a programme like Sharing Cities will always come with challenges and opportunities. And of course there are blockers to progress, that is the nature of these programmes. It's common to see a lack of confidence in technical solutions, absence of city budget to cover costs, challenges in justifying expenditure, and difficulties in aligning inputs and returns across the various city departments and service providers.

How are you planning to replicate, scale up and improve the best practices of this trial period at European level?

The €500 million trigger investment goal is a great catalyst for collaborative action. Through the efforts of all 34 Sharing Cities partners, coordinated by the **Greater London Authority**, the solutions demonstrated hold considerable legitimacy. It's exciting to see city projects take off. Milan is influencing the adoption of urban data platforms in a dozen other Italian cities. Lisbon continues to expand its soft infrastructure solutions for urban mobility across the entire city, transforming the way people think about moving around the city. Greenwich is taking advantage of the proven building upgrades to expand the approach across its building portfolio.

The “fellow” cities of Burgas, Warsaw, and Bordeaux, are also reaping the benefits of their commitment to co-create and adopt solutions from the lead cities.

Warsaw is in the process of implementing electric mobility islands upgrading the city's parking facilities, including more than €800,000 towards its “Park & Ride” car park scheme designed to boost the use of e-mobility and reduce congestion. This concept combines renewable power management with green infrastructure and will be deployed in 16 locations across the city. And Burgas has already captured a €175 million investment across 15 projects influenced by the learning from being part of the Sharing Cities network.

A major output and legacy of Sharing Cities is the development of playbooks – practical guides that provide a step-by-step process for other European cities looking to replicate smart solutions in their own urban contexts. The process of moving from pilot to scale-up has been captured and published in the playbooks, and will help councils considering using smart technology to deliver better services, covering topics ranging from improving urban mobility to engaging communities in sustainable lifestyles.

How can these key measures – such as citizen engagement, energy management or urban sharing platforms – impact a new business events industry along the lines of innovation and technology?

As cities get smarter, they are becoming attractive destinations for the world's best thought leaders, policy makers and innovators to link-up and guide the smart city urban transformation. City networks and the opportunity to connect in different urban environments has been essential to the success of Sharing Cities, facilitating knowledge-sharing and learning, and accelerating the testing of smart city solutions. This has raised the level of ambition



amongst cities, giving political leaders the confidence to deploy solutions that will make their cities smarter.

The global events industry has been critical to our programme. Since 2016, we've used major trade shows like Barcelona's **Smart City World Expo** as a destination for our partners to come together to design, learn and share. Over the last five years we've seen new events emerge that reflect what we are trying to achieve as a network of cities – and this galvanises interest and provides greater confidence in landmark programmes such as Sharing Cities.

How are these cities converging their sharing activities and urban regeneration with the goals of a green and circular economy?

Sharing Cities is an agile and collaborative smart cities ecosystem. The technologies our stakeholders have deployed have been integrated to contribute towards existing city agendas and targets to reduce carbon emissions. The programme draws on €24.5 million in funding from the EU Horizon 2020 Smart Cities and Communities programme and has a target to reach €500 million in investment by the end of 2021. So far, Sharing Cities has seen 10 low-carbon technologies hit 50% of their target investment from a mix of public and private funds. This includes retrofitting buildings with energy-saving measures, developing sustainable energy management systems for new and existing developments, shared electric mobility and smart street infrastructure. Flexible power consumption is essential for balancing the energy network and supporting the integration of renewable energy generation. Through adjustments in temporal power consumption, participants of Greenwich Energy Hero demonstrated the capability for domestic

consumption to be an important component in the future energy landscape.

In Milan, the SharingMi digital platform was deployed in the city to bring together citizens who care strongly about sustainability issues. It encouraged users to share stories, experiences and ideas with other members to grow awareness and stimulate action around urban challenges. The community seeks to reframe and normalise sustainability and encourages users to reflect on their own behaviour and make changes for good. Once again, the platform was developed to fit within the city's existing sustainability agenda – and it connected the needs of local government to the aspirations of citizens and businesses.

“ *A major output and legacy of Sharing Cities is the development of playbooks – practical guides that provide a step-by-step process for other European cities looking to replicate smart solutions in their own urban contexts.* ”





The **International Leadership Association (ILA)** is a global community committed to increasing quality research, teaching, and practices of leadership around the world. ILA's 23rd annual global conference, Reimagining Leadership Together, will take place October 20-23 in Geneva, and virtually thereafter. President and CEO **Cynthia Cherrey** explained why leadership is important in today's turbulent world.

“One's **Success** is **Determined** by One's **Connectedness**”

How has ILA been advocating for leadership over the past two years and what kind of follow-up has been done with your members and collaborators?

Given that uncertainty is the new certainty, for profit and not-for-profit organisations took different approaches ranging from keeping the status quo, to retrench and restructure, to developing new business models. At the beginning of the pandemic, we immediately developed and released free resources to help members who were suddenly thrown into the world of online leadership education and virtual teams at work. We also shared resources around crisis leadership, resilience, and mindfulness to help support our members' adaptive responses and wellbeing.

As a purpose-driven association, we were able to stay true to our mission as we adjusted to the new reality, taking into consideration disruptive threats and emerging opportunities. We already had a strategic planning process prearranged for 2020, but the context of the pandemic heightened the importance of reviewing, renewing, and regenerating our work as part of envisioning a flourishing future for the ILA as a trusted space for dialogue and transformation.

How threatening can these once-in-a-lifetime pandemics be to the cohesion and maturity of democratic societies, even (or especially) from a leadership standpoint?

We have members who actively work on the question of democracy. How can leaders strengthen democratic norms? How do democracies fall? For the past three years, we've had keynotes and sessions on this topic at

our global conference – it's that important.

As those experts would tell you, there's a certain path that failing democracies tend to follow that includes deepening economic inequalities, alarming increases in hate crimes, and the installation of leaders that have personalities prone to self-aggrandizement and lack of empathy. A global crisis, like a pandemic, can further erode a democracy by propping up charismatic leaders who claim to have the only answers to a crisis. Better leadership and better followership can make a difference in whether a democracy becomes more fragile or more resilient.

That's one reason why ILA launched a **Global Leadership Initiative** in 2020 that asked: How successfully is the leadership community supporting the development of global leadership at this time of uncertainty and accelerating change? This initiative regularly convenes a small group of influencers, political leaders, scholars, and practitioners to explore the big conundrums facing global leaders today and offer insights and foresights to our members.

Have you thought about the weight that hybrid and digital events will have in the future strategy of ILA meetings? And how can it be reconciled with the return of physical events?

It's clear that our turn to online community and communications during this time period is not just an interruption to business as usual; it's a disruptive force accelerating certain trends and reshaping how associations will engage their members long after the pandemic ends.

Certainly, this turn to the digital brings opportunities

to reach a larger and more diverse group of global members who may not have the time, resources, or inclination to travel to an event. But association leaders also need to think differently about how they use digital technologies. Leaders can't just ask "how do we replicate an in-person event in the virtual realm". We all need to be thinking about designing different, engaging experiences in the virtual realm.

Hybrid events tend to focus on replicating or merging formats rather than redesigning an experience. It's why we went with a **HyFlex model** for our conference where we meet on consecutive days – first in person in Geneva and then in person online. Each day of the conference is live, in the moment, and designed to maximize the unique benefits of where it's taking place whether that's in Geneva or online.

Our Hyflex model empowers our members to choose what's best for their unique situation. We know that many members are eager to meet in person, while many others are not yet able to do so for a variety of reasons. Flexibility is really important during uncertain times both for individuals and organisations.

In increasingly diverse organisations, everyone plays a leading role in building trust and creating sustainable value. Does this mean that horizontal leaderships are stepping over pyramidal hierarchies?

Global economic, political, and societal issues affect our organisations and how we think and work within them. Effectiveness used to be measured in part by a person's ability to work autonomously and maintain distinct boundaries. Now, effectiveness is measured by a person's ability to develop and maintain cross-boundary relations and see patterns in the whole system. One's success is determined by one's connectedness. That includes leadership that is distributed throughout the organisation. That said, many of us live and work in hierarchical organizations and we must pay attention to hierarchical leadership as well. It is not an either/or; it is an and/both.

To build the physical part of your upcoming conference, you had to draw on several local partners who were instrumental in designing this event. Tell me more about the process of choosing a destination.

Our director of conferences, **Bridget Chisholm**, began meeting with the **Geneva Convention Bureau** five years ago to explore having the **ILA global conference in Geneva**. The ILA focuses on cities with a reputation

as a hub for international leadership, which is a draw for our members and participants. Geneva also has a convention centre located in the heart of the city that would accommodate our space requirements. The next step was connecting up with local members and, with the **Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)**, we found the ideal partner.

ILA has a tradition of calling on our local and regional members to participate on the conference organising committee. From writing the programme theme to crafting meaningful offsite activities, inviting keynotes and featured speakers to recruiting local student volunteers, we could not produce a conference of this magnitude without them.



Cynthia Cherrey, CEO & President (left) with Bridget Chisholm, ILA's Conference Director

“ *A global crisis, like a pandemic, can further erode a democracy by propping up charismatic leaders who claim to have the only answers to a crisis.* ”



ILAGLOBALNETWORK.ORG





The UK has recently gained yet another trade association with the scope of rebuilding the MICE industry: The **Meetings and Events Support Association (MESA)**. This newcomer says its principal aim is to “create a community network of companies and a ‘people-first’ ethos, collaborating and working together with fresh ideas.” The founders include **Sandie McCoubrey**, who was formally head of membership services at the Meeting Design Institute, **Adam Fillary**, an entrepreneur and personal networking specialist, and **Gordon Glenister** (in the photo), a marketing specialist and founder of the “Membership World”, with whom we spoke for this interview.



“We are Great **Advocates** of **Digital Transformation**”

MESA was conceived to embrace innovation in the meetings and events industry, placing its professionals at the top of priorities. What message and new ideas do you want to champion for an industry that has been swept away these past two years?

Mesa was born out of the **Meeting Design Institute**, and so we already had an existing group of companies and people that wanted to come together to form a community of like-minded people and who wanted to help shape and steer a new industry. In terms of new ideas, we want to foster an environment of “people and community first” this is a core to our CEO principle. “C” is for a Community of members collaborating and sharing, “E” is for Educating leaders and teams, and “O” is for Opportunities to network with colleagues and for new business. As someone personally connected to many trade associations, we really want to be different by allowing our members to collaborate and foster new ways of generating business and enhancing partnerships. We are going to be investing in niche research that allow our members to use

data to educate their clients. We have a number of plans to drive innovation through the industry, and are delighted to have already won an award for the **Event Concierge Service** spearheaded by one of the founders **Adam Fillary**.

The association held its first online roundtable in May to define its Steering Committee and bring together several event leaders. Can you share some insights from that meeting and set goals?

We have a steering group that meets on a regular basis to help us set the agenda for the organisation. These are CEOs from **Shocklogic**, **Fieldrive**, **Crowdcomms**, **Idloom** and **Conference Compass**. We held our first founders FORUM in May which are held to Chatham House Rules or what we call the MESA Prayer, allowing the group to express their opinions and thoughts in a safe confidential environment. That said, one of the challenges that many CEOs did face over the pandemic was one of “leadership pressure like no other” for a number of reasons: financial concerns, furloughing staff,

increased demand, isolation and staff engagement. Goals were not set at this first roundtable event as it was largely about sharing feedback from some of the challenges over the last 12 months. Our next Founders Forum will be held in September and focused around mergers and acquisitions within the sector. We will be producing a white paper following this.

For several years in a row, event planning has been ranked as one of the most stressful jobs on the planet, and “CareerCast” has even pegged “event coordinator” 5th on its list of stressful jobs. How does MESA see this threat to the mental health of our professionals and plan to advocate for them?

We host monthly member online meetings and addressed this issue only recently, allowing some of our members’ entire teams to join and share experiences both negatively and positively. To know that they are not alone and being able to talk about this in a safe non-judgemental environment is seen as very important by MESA. As our membership grows we will be considering in wellness services to greater enhance this very important issue.

Many of the members involved in your newly created Steering Committee are CEOs and founders of various virtual platforms and event software. What is your principle position in the MICE industry’s digital transition?

We are great advocates of digital transformation, in fact I would go to say we are now in the 4th industrial revolution. Our industry has probably advanced ten years in digital transformation through the pandemic and those organisations that don’t have a digital offering are going to be left behind. Our existing members are certainly from the technology

background and are core to our membership base and future plan.

How will you go about connecting and engaging with new audiences across different channels, with different membership concepts and diffused business priorities?

We are very clear about the type of member we are looking to engage with – for example we are not promoting venues, event organisers or destinations. By having a tighter niche, we are able to serve this audience well, while embrace social media and having an active presence at the event industry. Initially our aim is to focus on small to medium-size businesses helping give have a voice in a crowded marketplace. Our membership is very affordable with a corporate membership at just €575 per year. We have a number of companies that have, however, become patron members of the organisation because they believe in our purpose, value and offering.

With MESA arriving at such a risky time under the COVID-19 dark cloud, what is your conviction about the future of the associations’ business model?

As the author of the research study “COVID-19 impact on the membership sector”, I would argue associations will be fine as long as they remain relevant to their members’ interests, find effective ways to build communities, never lose sight of their vision and purpose, embrace online education, look after their members as “people” not mere membership numbers, and, above all, are financially prudent. Associations that lose sight of this, will struggle. We may see some associations merge or consolidate and others that decide to outsource their secretariat function.

“ *Our industry has probably advanced ten years in digital transformation through the pandemic and those organisations that don’t have a digital offering are going to be left behind.* ”



MEETINGS & EVENTS SUPPORT ASSOCIATION
COMMUNITY | EDUCATION | OPPORTUNITIES



Coronavirus VS MICE

25 A Scottish stage for high-profile events

28 Let's talk about data?

26 When refinement marries efficiency in Northern Italy!





EICC: Ideas to **Change the World**

Edinburgh is one of the most important economic, historic and cultural centres in the UK and continues to enjoy great popularity among business visitors. EICC did not flinch and took on the role of innovation hub to improve events in the city.

The **Edinburgh International Convention Centre (EICC)** was formed in the early 1990s as a joint venture between the **District Council and Lothian & Edinburgh Enterprise**, being part of the largest urban regeneration scheme outside London at the time. After nearly 26 years of operations and serving as a bulwark for the region's business travel, EICC has adapted to move forward. "In the 12 months that followed the pandemic, our business and industry were unrecognisable – we held no in-person business events at the EICC, from last March to May 2021," says **Marshall Dallas** (pictured below), **EICC's chief executive**. That said, the venue quickly began to work on the development of a tool that would allow customers to continue their events, albeit in an online format. "In May 2020, we launched **Make it Edinburgh Live (MIE Live)** our bespoke online events platform which offered a sense of place in a virtual world" – with online links to local experiences – "as we felt it essential that delegates still enjoyed a connection with our destination." Since last May, the venue has hosted 35 events via MIE Live which are more than just live-streams - as well as plenary sessions, breakout options, exhibition and virtual poster halls, the programme deals ample opportunities for audience participation, including attendees' ability to enter networking spaces by subject matter.

The Scottish government lifted restrictions that allowed the resumption of conferences and events from August. This allowed them to host the **Edinburgh Fringe Festival** throughout the summer, and welcome a series of conferences which will run through the end of the year

and beyond. "We're confident that once international travel becomes more widely available, we will see these levels increase. In the interim the UK market is responding positively," adds Dallas. In this reentrée, EICC's focus is to be as flexible as possible with clients, business partners and associations. "We recently introduced an initiative for third-party agents whereby we pay them instalments of their commissions as we receive instalments from our clients – it's called the **One-for-One Commission Plan**." For the EICC team, associative relationships will seek to identify and develop mutually beneficial partnerships that create positive outcomes.

From September to December 2020, EICC offered its space to **Napier University** which allowed the venue to generate some revenue. Two months later, they also opened part of its building as the main vaccination centre for Edinburgh and Midlothian. "When we closed our doors to in-person events we took the opportunity to support a local charity – called **Empty Kitchens, Full Hearts** – by donating large quantities of food supplies from our kitchen larders," reveals Dallas. EICC's sustainability practices were recently renewed with the launch of **Step Change** which comprises three main pillars: the "Desk to Door" policy with sustainable travel options to delegates; an "Event Impact Reporting", basically a legacy piece, standing as a record of environmental and social feats made during the event; and a carbon mitigation programme. "Sustainability has been ingrained into our values and Step Change is a continually evolving programme which accommodates new science, technology, and partnerships as we strive to do the best," concludes Dallas.





Milano: *La Bella Estate* for **MICE**

Milano is where all delegates meet in northern Italy. The city has managed to combine a state-of-the-art business and innovation environment with a strong historical and cultural heritage, to create a unique and conducive network for events.

The Lombard capital has faced a radical urban transformation over the last decade, investing in urban reforestation, smart solutions (read the piece on “Sharing Cities”) and green energy. After all, Milano has always been Italy’s financial and industrial powerhouse, generating nearly €144 billion in total value – more than 10% of Italy’s GDP – and with a GDP of €397 billion – larger than 18 EU countries’ economies. An example of this is **Fiera Milano**, one of the world’s biggest players in international trade events for all key sectors, responsible for 80 trade shows, 160 congresses per year, and representing 36,000 exhibitors and 4.5 million visitors in the pre-COVID period. Living up to the model of any MICE city, here, business, large-scale meetings and lifestyle go hand in hand, bringing together the characteristics of an international hub, with an excellent transport network, a thriving hotel and restaurant scene, innovation, and – last but not least – *la bella vita italiana*. That’s the exact premise behind the campaign slogan “**Not in Milano**”, which rebuts stereotypes and clichés normally associated with business travel, to reshape the city’s activity.

YesMilano

In 2019, Milano attracted a record number of almost 7.5 million business and leisure tourists (11 million in the metropolitan area) spending at least one night in the city, a 9.4 percent increase over 2018. The city also has a clear vision for the legacy of its events. After hosting the World Expo in 2015, the fair grounds were converted into one of the most ambitious research centres in the world: **Milano Innovation District – MIND and Human Technopole**, focusing on biomedical research, big data, and preventive medicine.

As we all know the pandemic made us stop to reflect and make the best possible decisions. The Municipality of Milano responded to this challenge, last April, with the launch of a new CVB, meeting the needs of business tourism and MICE operators: The **YesMilano Convention Bureau**. “Never before have the city’s agents presented themselves as a united front, eager to showcase Milan’s strengths,” said **Luca Martinazzoli, CEO of Milano & Partners**. “The Milanese business community is very efficient and compact, constantly interacting with our key



business assets such as **Fiera Milano** or **MiCo (Milan Convention Centre).**” In turn, these two cornerstones of the city also kept stakeholders constantly updated on what was emerging, even in the toughest months of 2020. Some took advantage of this period to update venues, infrastructure and equipment, while urban works advanced, making the city ready to receive business visitors in a conscious and sustainable manner.

The Past and the Future

The vaccination campaign in Italy has significantly accelerated in recent months. “By the end of summer, we will have 75/80% of people over the age of eleven fully vaccinated. Despite the onset of Delta variant, today we have no saturation of intensive care units and hospital beds,” Martinazzoli tells us. Health safety protocols are still in place, applying together with the measures required to ensure that visitors meet the conditions of the **EU COVID Green Pass.** The director of the city’s promotional agency also confirms that during this year and a half, “many things have changed. Contracts with customers have become much more flexible, our attention was turned to solutions for hybrid events, or with additional costs in preventing contagion.” However, the city and its facilities are looking ahead with a win-win mentality that seeks a balance for all stakeholders.

Milano’s goals are well defined looking through the 2022 window: **Bring in new partners, new sponsors and new requests from potential customers.** Unfortunately, there are also wounds to heal, minor players who have suffered greatly and for whom the vitality of the MICE sector is destined to trigger a much-desired recovery. “We are confident in building an increasingly hospitality community with a growing number of ambassadors who can become spokespersons on how productive it is to conduct business events in Milano,” adds Martinazzoli. In 2026, the city will host the **Winter Olympics** and, as part of *Scalo Romana* urban renewal project, the municipality plans to redesign the old railway yards located in key areas of the city.

Sustainable Tech

Digital formats, technology and innovation are of paramount importance to capture rising market opportunities in this cosmopolitan city. With the aforementioned integration in the “Sharing Cities” programme and the ongoing urban rehabilitation, the so-called smart technologies are not actually a new thing here. “By becoming an integral part of face-to-face events, tech solutions will help make content spectacular, expand audiences and offer new experiences,” says Martinazzoli. For him, this means that venues’ infrastructure must be adequate, updated to the circumstances, without fear of implementing digital innovations that are becoming more pressing and crucial. **Sustainability** is also a path that the city, tradeshows and congresses had already started before the pandemic. For example, on the roofs of the exhibition centre, a huge photovoltaic system is about to go into operation, and MiCo is already certified as a **Gold Healthy Venue**, plastic-free, using only renewable energy. “This is an irreversible trend, attentive to the well-being of all and the protection of the environment that surrounds us. Ultimately, a legacy of the pandemic: the enhancement of ecological awareness,” concludes Martinazzoli.





The 35th edition of the ECM Summer School took place from August 24th to 26th for the second consecutive time in virtual format. Regular partners of this highly appreciated MICE faculty for business destinations, we've focused our summary this time on the topics that give this month's issue its name: Technology, but especially Data. And specifically, one session.

ECM Summer School 2021: Let's Talk about **Data**, Shall We?

AUTHOR: *MANUEL A. FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER*

After 33 physical editions dedicated to the newcomers in the Industry, ECM Summer School adapted last year to established professionals with strategic discussions on the resilience of the MICE sector. The world is changing and we shouldn't assume that we know all the pieces of a puzzle that isn't even finished yet. Slowly coming out of the state of hibernation we were forced into by the pandemic, the European Cities Marketing Summer School was once again a beacon of knowledge, practices and regulations that will be fundamental in a "brave new world" without COVID. The three half-days programme covered interactive and insightful sessions that focused on the pillars of the meetings industry: **Business, People and Places**. Presentations about data, clients and stakeholders, partnerships and sponsorships, business plans for virtual events, bidding for virtual & hybrid events, tradeshow, ambassador programmes, convention bureaux, sustainability, diversity, communication, social media, well-being at work, all this was dealt with and scrutinised in these three mornings of August with a lot of selflessness and commitment by the speakers and guests. However, there was a conversation that emerged from the others...

"Without data you are just another guy with an opinion!"

The first session was also the most noteworthy for the content of this edition. Of course, we are going to talk about data here. The two faculty members of this session, **Olivier Henry-Biabaud, TCI Research CEO**, and **Olivier Ponti Vice President Insights, ForwardKeys**, led widespread spotlights on how to manage data within your association. In his presentation, Ponti shared a couple of success stories and a monumental failure proving the tremendous importance of data information. From his early years with the **Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau** through his experience with **Amsterdam Marketing**, Ponti has always stressed the importance of data collection and meeting statistics as tools for measuring destination success. "It's not only about having data. It's about making sure you and others within your destination know how to use them to grow your business." Cumulatively as Chair of the ECM Research & Statistics group, he decided to run a similar project but on a European scale. The aim was to demonstrate that any destination could place their results in a





SEPTEMBER 2021

Online

SUMMER SCHOOL

EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING

#ECMSS2021

broader context by, for example, benchmarking new event opportunities. That's what they did in Amsterdam working together with cultural institutions and attractions to help them compete with other cities for small-scale events. The problem for Ponti is that all these concepts and methods are "backward-looking." This is where his journey at **ForwardKeys** comes in a step further: predicting the future of travel using essentially data. The most comprehensive data available on air travel, between booking and purchases, length of stay and combinations of destinations. Why is this relevant for meetings professionals and CVBs? Using the case study from the **International AIDS Conference 2018** in the Dutch capital, the researcher highlighted the advantage of a data-based decision-making over gut-feeling expectations. Ignoring essential patterns in the behaviour of delegates or business travellers can lead to disastrous results. That's what happened and what led to a significant drop in the occupancy of rooms in the city, right after the end of the conference.

Mapping a New DNA with Data

The other Olivier (Henry-Biabaud) followed suit with a **Malmö case study** and how the Swedish city has been using social data to map its activity in the MICE business. The expert discussed the details that influence meeting planners in choosing trustworthy places, such as social sentiment and business experience. In this regard, the data collected by TCI indicates that since the beginning of the year there has been a growing conversation about the MICE industry, especially rooted on non-COVID factors. Another huge trend worth revealing is the great satisfaction and positive feeling towards MICE activities, since the public backlash that followed

the pandemic. Furthermore, the gradual feats brought about by innovation and sustainability at the heart of cities continue to act as a positive catalyst in the public perception of the industry. This can be seen by MICE's outstanding reputation in place for the hotel industry. According to the TCI/Resident Sentiment Index, from the outbreak of the pandemic until 2021, business travel was the only segment that presented a positive rating increase in terms of visitor experience. Furthermore, the same study shows that 3 in 4 European residents expect to see more business visitors in the future. Plenty of "data" to be on a positive mood. Let's head towards new DNA maps with social data and how can event professionals can benefit from it. The pre-COVID case study of Malmö revealed all the KPIs, topics and professional segments that make this small Swedish town highly competitive on the sentiment positivity index. And these conversations are not only triggered by the CVB promotion, but also by event-driven content, leading trendy sectors or social impact. This potential makes Malmö associated with sectors such as gaming, robotics, technology, engineering, science and research, preserving a social capital that extends far beyond the MICE events it hosts. That's why meeting planners will look to a location that not only offers flexibility and price competitiveness for reservations and venues, but also those that prove to be content generators and encourage a collaborative environment. Finally, the Malmö brand has been in the leading edge of social awareness and openness, with a strong focus on the future and international resonance. Shared values like sustainability, diversity, mentorship and tolerance are the new building blocks in the architecture of a new global MICE village. The proof is in the pudding.

HQ INSIGHTS



- 31** Telling better stories for regeneration with the GDS Movement
- 34** The **ECM Autumn Meeting** will not be a tourism conference...
- 36** "How can a brand have a strong and strategic identity?"
- 38** Join AIPC's pledge for sustainability
- 40** "There is no excuse not to be data-driven – or data secure."
- 42** How to serve the needs of association members?
- 45** "What should be your strategy for digitalisation?"
- 46** Tips for Data Management

ASSOCIATION & PCO



Storytelling and its Role in Bringing Great Strategies to Life...

...and in regenerating mindsets and skillsets.

AUTHOR: *MELISSA BAIRD*, HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS, *GDS-MOVEMENT*

Eighteen months into the pandemic and its effects, our sector is still grappling with restrictions on travel, gatherings and meetings. Those citizens who lived the impact of over tourism have now regained their cities but not their travel economy. The rise of the online conference has got us all talking about how to revive the sector so that it can begin functioning as a contributory part of the economic mix without causing social and environmental degradation.

If that is the story so far, how can a better next chapter be created? What can we share and tell that will inspire collective action and appreciation of a destination to be relevant, attractive and worth visiting? How can these stories add to its appeal by demonstrating the promise of a destination regenerating its nature and people and enabling them to thrive?

The GDS Movement – a global network of committed destinations benchmarking their sustainability progress and discovering ways to catalyse positive social, environmental and economic regeneration through tourism and events – has over 75 destinations benchmarking their sustainability progress in 2021. As a result, we are able to discover their wonderful stories of hope, regeneration and inspiration.

Telling Better Stories

Brands are the most effective storytellers in the world and the big brand names have done it so well that their value is often higher than a developing country's GDP.

Advertising agencies know how to create messaging that drives purchasing behaviour by working with neuro-science. Behaviour change techniques like priming and nudging are increasingly being used to shift opinions, and this has good and not so good applications as we see in the spreading of fake news and disinformation.

Which brings me to the point about authenticity – for a good story to be great it often needs to be true. Our globe has many heroes and adventurers who overcome every hurdle before they reach their goals. We celebrate them and learn from them and are inspired to dream big.

Using the above metaphor, there are many hurdles to be overcome to build back better and regenerate tourism and society in order to thrive again.

Imagine that each traveller in your destination could connect and contribute their commitments to a better



3. Story Doing

With a goal to decrease the cost and complexity of purchasing local food, the award-winning **Ljubljana Green Supply Chains project** unites food and drink producers and farmers, with hotels and restaurants twice a year. The locally grown food exchange connects the local food producers with buyers in the hospitality industry. By supporting local producers and farmers, destinations can play an integral part in building the community while giving

future. By sharing stories of intent, hope and action everyone who lives, works and plays in a place can be connected by a common narrative thread and shared values.

Stories connect people, they provoke new ways of thinking and help unravel the complexities of subjects that are now taking centre stage. Just what does it mean to be sustainable, regenerative and leave a legacy?

attendees a unique gastronomic experience at the same time. The project is also contributing to inclusive and sustainable economic growth, social inclusiveness, poverty reduction and environmental protection. It has been so successful that it has now spread to 25 other municipalities, and involves schools and hospitals in the hub. This is an exceptional example of a story of regeneration unfolding.

Another upside? Sourcing locally also reduces pollution, carbon emissions and costs from long-distance freight transport.

7 Tips for Great Storytelling

1. Make it Local and Authentic

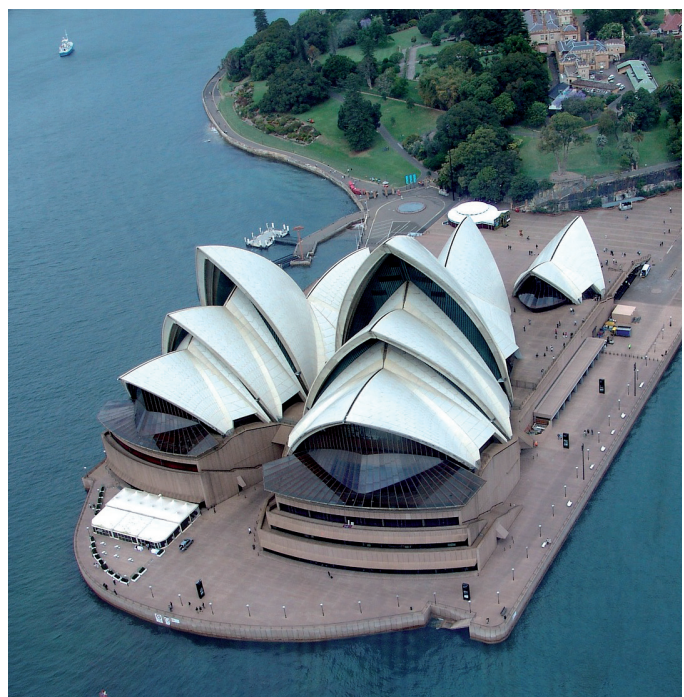
New Zealand has the goal of growing a sustainable tourism industry that benefits all New Zealanders. The aim is to deliver an outstanding visitor experience by encouraging the community to be welcoming hosts. There is a focus on the guardianship and protection of natural, cultural resources and people are showing respect, care and generosity towards others. These positive stories, framed in the authenticity of the Māori culture are encouraging experiences that create a sense of belongingness.

2. Storytelling is Collaborative

Staying in New Zealand – the *#goodmorningworldnz* encouraged locals to welcome the world to the new day by filming a short video of greeting the dawn and sharing it using the hashtag. This campaign generated so much content that was truly heart-warming and that brought the geographical position of New Zealand as the first place to welcome the sun each day – to the world.

4. Bringing data to life

The City of Sydney has set bold targets for a 70 per cent emissions reduction by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050. They have achieved this by monitoring and measuring their impact, in order to set meaningful



targets using science-based goals. They recorded the hospitality footprint and found that 11% of CO₂ emissions were generated by the sector, using 14% of potable water and 46% of the city's commercial waste. Using infographic icons, the data points became visual reference points for ease of understanding.

Take note however not all data is inspirational because objective facts can seem dispassionate. Also bear in mind the audience may not have knowledge about sustainability so creating context is vital as is making it personal and inspiring.

5. Visual imagery is a powerful stimulator

The picture of a seahorse with its prehensile tail wrapped around an earbud took the world's media by its heart and enabled the conversation about plastic pollution to be amplified as a result. Taken by Justin Hoffman off the coast of Sumatra in 2017, it enabled those who dissociate plastic pollution and its impacts on the natural environment to take stock and actually see the impact.

6. The Power of Humour

Fun from the Nordics – Oslo uses the theme of “rubbish” to highlight the achievements of the destination in terms of positive waste management. The series of short light-hearted clips position Oslo as a leading sustainable destination with a sense of humour and an environmental plan.

Iceland literally taps into its water source to provide a humorous call to action to drink it. The Kranavatn commercials positions tap water as a supreme drink of choice and was designed to reduce the plastic footprint of their 2.5 million visitors.

7. Activate the heart

Appealing to universal human values cuts through barriers and a story told with full heart can change a person's perspective in an instant. Our call to action is to explore how stories can contribute to inspiring innovation in a way that enlivens more creative thinking.

How can we work with stories to create a narrative of unity and shared humanity; that help us all re-connect? What unique aspects of a destination's culture can be celebrated and enhanced through a great story?

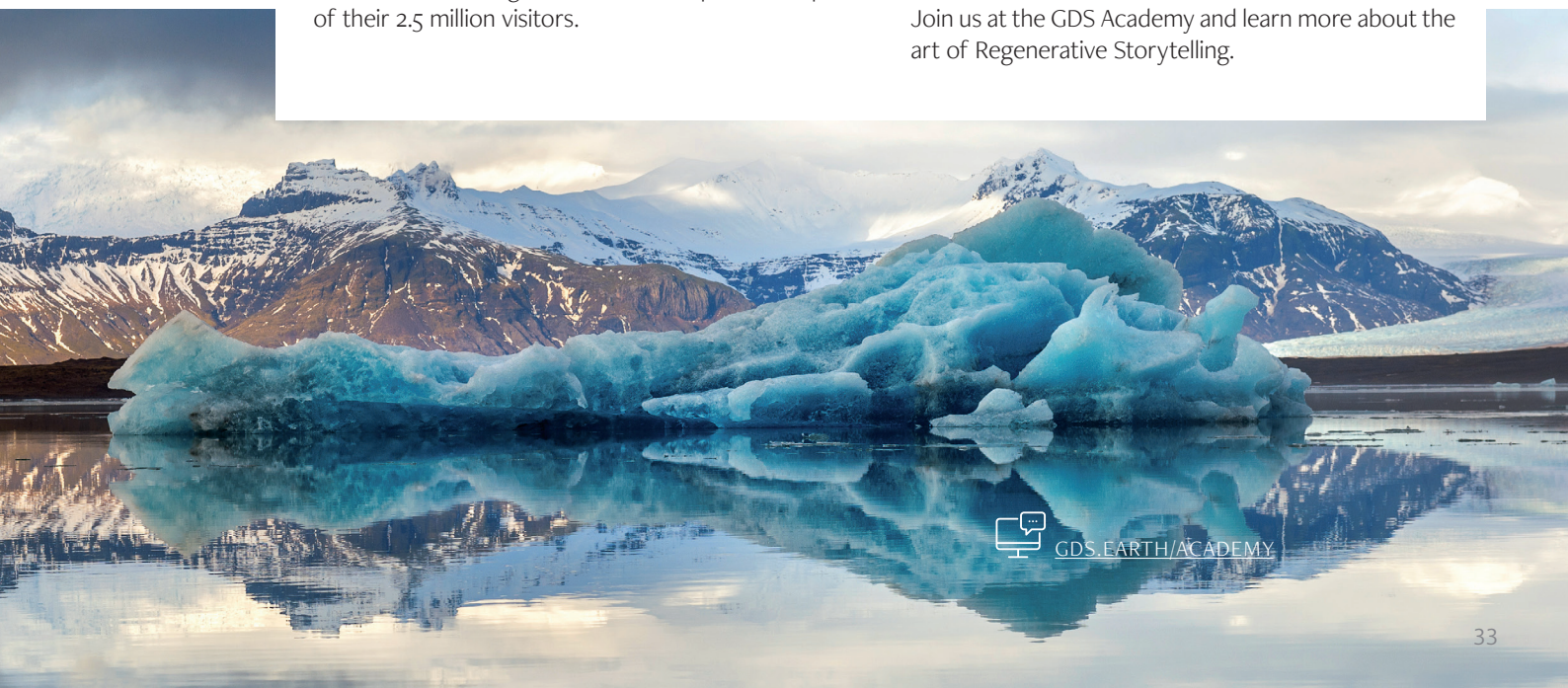
Helsinki have created a wonderful campaign that acknowledges and reveres personal freedom and choices.

Change is Upon Us

We are on the cusp of an impactful new era that will encourage regenerative practices. This offers an unparalleled opportunity to reshape the way we live, work, meet and travel for the better.

To do that we need to learn how to express hope and strategy more effectively and we need great stories to inspire us to grow and take better care of our resources and people. The GDS Academy offers a Masterclass specifically tailored for marketing professionals who wish to learn the art of storytelling in order to bring their destinations sustainability strategy to life and to garner the support of as many stakeholders within and without the value chain as possible. There are tools sets and skill sets that can be activated and learning the “how to” will unlock many doors to new forms of powerful communication.

Join us at the GDS Academy and learn more about the art of Regenerative Storytelling.





2020 has been a tough but also inspirational year for the meetings industry: The COVID-19 crisis pushed all the industry to adapt, to create new innovative content and ground-breaking new forms of meetings and conferences. Of course, everyone is looking forward to meeting in person again, but for the second year in a row, to stay relevant and provide support to its members but also to the industry worldwide, European Cities Marketing events are held online with innovative formats to allow maximum interaction between participants.

Technology Serving Education

ECM Autumn Meeting – This is not a Tourism Conference...

... but very much a conference for DMOs professionals. Why? Because they constantly need to remind themselves to look outside their own industry echo-chamber – reinforced by their SoMe news feeds, by their inboxes, the reports they read, the articles they share, and in the tourism conferences, where they meet.

At the **ECM Autumn conference**, attendees will deliberately expose and challenge themselves and their colleagues to seek inspiration from both within and beyond the industry – for purpose, for understanding of challenges and possibilities ahead, and for exploring the broader needs of their destinations and cities.

This may not be a tourism conference, as we know it, but it is a conference for all DMOs professionals. Attendees will join us for two immersive days of

exploring decarbonisation and what this means to tourism and the role of DMOs, and they will learn about new technologies to push forward tourism transformation, or to reimagine the business models of events. There will be engagement in discussions around tourism and stereotypes, or how to develop more accountable tourism and participatory destination management. Attendees will be encouraged to make sense of their destinations, or simply sense them in new ways. This and much more together with the speakers and facilitators in formats like *Outside-Incomers* and *Frameworkers*, or when zooming into their *Horizons* and buckling up for *Fasterclasses*, *Disasterclasses* and high energy *Cross-inspires*, or while seeking inspiration numerous *Case Clubs* presented by ECM member cities.

The first ever **ECM pre-conference** will be held for FREE on September 16 to warm up everyone's curious questioning and shared exploration before the 2-day



European Cities Marketing

PRESENTS



ECM AUTUMN CONFERENCE
ONLINE
September 23 - 24, 2021

conference a week later. Attendees will dive into the big question of what comes after the pandemic and what has been the impact on destinations, on consumer behaviour, traveller and booking patterns.

Keeping on helping the industry with the launch of ECM Mentor Programme second edition!

The raging of the COVID-19 virus across the globe has had enormous consequences for the meetings industry. It has resulted in a big shift in the ways people network and develop relations when attending industry events. This has also posed a huge challenge for newly appointed professionals, whether working in CVBs, hotels, venues or as a PCOs, because they have been missing out on being at these central platforms, which are essential for them in terms of being introduced to the industry and which give them critical opportunities to build up a network.

With this in mind, ECM has therefore created in 2020 and prolonged the ECM Mentor Programme, endorsed and supported by close industry partners (HQ, IAPCO, ICCA, IBTM & IMEX).

This programme enables mentees to develop their own professional network, build up their industry knowledge and be inspired by other destination business models and insights. At the same time, it gives mentors an opportunity to contribute with their knowledge, share their visions and perspectives of the industry and on the other hand, get to know the views, new perspectives and skill sets from newcomers.

Registration is now open for the 2021/2022 programme that will start in September 2021. For more information about the roles and responsibilities of the mentors and mentees, please visit ECM website.

Don't hesitate to spread the word and invite colleagues to join! If you have any questions, please contact ECM at julie@europeancitiesmarketing.com.

35th ECM Summer School

It was another successful version of the Summer School dedicated to all meetings industry professionals

For years, the ECM Summer School was an introduction to the secrets of the Meetings Industry for the newcomers, to allow them to acquire some insight view from a non-academic perspective, from highly appreciated senior professionals of relevant European organisations.

Based on last years' experience, this summer, ALL meetings industry professionals were invited to the 35th ECM Summer School on August 24-26, 2021, no matter their level of experience, to give them the opportunity to interact with senior experts and learn from each other with relevant presentations and engaging activities.

The three half-days' programme covered interactive and insightful sessions that focused on the pillars of the meetings industry: **BUSINESS, PEOPLE** and **PLACES!**

“We took advantage of the online world to deliver more content and create a space fit to exchange and challenge ourselves with different formats and sessions, while allowing students and faculty members to network with their peers, all from the comfort of their home and office”, concluded **Pier Paolo Mariotti, ECM Summer School Course Director.**

Next ECM Summer School will be held in Turin, August 2022. Stay tuned to register!

MEET. SHARE. GROW.

MENTOR PROGRAMME

EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING
MEET EUROPEAN CITIES

europeancitiesmarketing.com

Endorsed by



How to create a strong, strategic brand identity that allows associations to increase their impact.

Smart Association Branding

AUTHOR: *GIULIA INEKE SARRI, CREATIVE STRATEGIST AT AIM COMMUNICATION.*

How can a brand have a strong and strategic identity? What is the secret behind it? Well, it's better said than done!

Today, more than ever before, all organisations – be it a company, an agency, a private institute or an association – should be seizing the moment to take a break and reflect on their values and purpose, and then develop brands and materials that really reflect those.

Brands can fail many times before finding their way to really stand out. Yet there are some easy steps associations can take, by focusing on producing some interesting assets, to make their audience fall in love with their brand.

Let me share a few:

1. Refresh owned media

The term “owned media” refers to any online property owned and controlled by a brand, such as a blog, website or a social media channel. The more owned media channels an organisation has, the larger their digital footprint is, which means more potential to reach stakeholders and followers.

I invite you to first take a step back and analyse how each channel is perceived by its stakeholders. Is the association acting as a professional reference point? Does it provide valuable education opportunities or is it just considered a duty that needs to be paid for? A comparison between the responses and the Board's beliefs would be a useful starting point to redesign the offering and to refresh the owned media, such as the website, the landing pages, newsletters, social media and why not... also the logo!

It may seem obvious, but it is not! An association's owned media can act as the business card of the organisation, especially for those who are still not

100% familiar with the association's offering. For instance: new generations, younger members, prospects from new geographical areas to name a few.

A modern, straight-forward user experience and clear messaging on all association collaterals can also have a positive impact on new members.

2. “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence”

In the process of considering some (or all) of an association's owned media, I advise conducting a simple activity: to listen. Listening to both your audience and competitors can bring precious insights and ideas for a refinement of the brand. Listening to the target audience means sending surveys, analysing insights and exchanging frank opinions on what it is expecting from the association. In fact, needs and expectations keep changing at a very fast pace and organisations tend to strongly believe in their long-standing offering, while losing the chance to keep the momentum high and adapt services to evolving needs.

On the other hand, competitors may have done so, becoming an example (or not!) – analysing their website, visual identity, colours, tone of voice, events' calendar, may be eye-opening. There could not be a better time to assess an association's situation and find out its positioning towards its stakeholders – if its services are appreciated or not and where limited resources and efforts should be placed.



3. From the core to the essence

The step after the “listening” phase is to deep dive into what the association’s stakeholders believe and tell them about the brand. Sure enough, all entities respond to some abstract concepts: the famous Italian red car brand will definitely recall “speed”, “sporty”, “wealth”, “luxury”. Well, such an exercise could be done with any brand. A survey to members, non-members, partners, suppliers and key opinions leaders would solve this issue by asking them about positive and negative feelings occurring to them when thinking about the association.

The survey results can be eye opening for the Board, it will be crucial to face the facts and perceptions that are exposed. On one hand, positive feedback will need to be mixed and matched with the values the association believes in and wishes to express in the (new) brand identity. Suggestions will come from each side, bringing confusion at some point, but the long list can be shortened and then finally lead to the selection of 2/3 items that will stand out. Those few elements will pinpoint the very brand essence!

4. Augment the value proposition

The association can leverage this momentum to ensure that it is adding value across all aspects of the association’s services. For instance, usually, the annual congress of an association is one of the core activities which is also responsible for a large part of the annual budget. So, this activity needs to be analysed and measured. What is the overall ROI of the congress from a quantitative and qualitative point of view and what is the value for each stakeholder?

The benefit of “augmenting” an event is definitely not about using virtual reality and AR technology, but it’s rather about extending the reach of the congress

content in space and in time. Some tips to create more added value for the conference are to:

- consider the annual congress as one strategic asset within a much broader education programme;
- leverage owned media to create a natural link with all key moments of the year;
- mix digital moments with live ones and create a strong narrative to connect the phases;
- create climax moments to trigger the curiosity of the target audience and build expectations (always find a way not to disappoint them!);
- identify one item (object, gadget, sentence, process, etc) that deeply represents the association’s essence and share it with stakeholders to “augment” their experience with the brand.

Finally, there is an ultimate test in branding that really helps organisations understand if they are on the right path towards the construction of a strong and strategic brand identity.

The power of a brand concept should satisfy 3 criteria at the same time. A brand should be:

- different from competitors and thus easily recognisable;
- relevant for the target audience;
- sustainable in the long run.

When those 3 criteria are met, then the Association did a great job!

AIM Communication is an open innovation network dedicated to communication, brand activation and marketing digital technology. They base a strategy on a four-pillar approach that covers the entire innovation cycle: Think, Build, Measure, Amplify.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers. IAPCO represents today 137 companies from 40 countries, comprised of over 9900 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events. www.iapco.org



 INFO@IAPCO.ORG

 IAPCO.ORG



The impact of climate change is becoming clearer by the day. During the summer, we were confronted with extreme heat waves, floods, and drought, causing the loss of lives and destroying houses, infrastructures and crops. The **IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)** report published mid-August was equally clear on the consequences of global warming and provided some hope: it is still not too late, if we decide to act now. The COP26, taking place early November at the **Scottish Event Campus** in Glasgow is the moment where the world can say: it stops here. And the event industry needs to be part of this commitment.

A Pledge for Sustainability

AUTHORS:

SENTHIL GOPINATH - ICCA CEO

SVEN BOSSU - AIPC CEO

KAI HATTENDORF - UFI CEO

During the **AIPC Annual Conference** mid-July, sustainability was high on the agenda. The three of us were on several panel discussions with representatives of both the industry and the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and the conversation continued during coffee- and lunch breaks. The message was clear: sustainability is not just an option anymore. Convention centres, organisers, suppliers and exhibitors which do not have a net zero plan will struggle to attract customers and investors in the nearby future. At the same time, we need to acknowledge the efforts already done by the event industry worldwide and ensure that all parties involved in defining sustainability policies are fully aware of these efforts. Achieving net zero in our industry is however an objective which can only be met if all the stakeholders in the value chain commit to achieving it, hence the need for an industry wide initiative.

The UNFCCC already initiated such initiatives in other sectors, like sports and fashion – resulting into detailed roadmaps towards net zero with key milestones and measurable objectives to report upon. In their view, the event industry could be the next chapter and the conversation was started with **UFI, ICCA** and **AIPC** – three global trade associations, representing a substantial part of the events value chain. These three associations created a steering group, composed of nine CEOs from organisations representing organisers, venues, exhibitors, and suppliers.

This steering group was complemented with an operations group, which took on the endeavor of defining a roadmap towards an industry commitment which is both inclusive – an element which is of very high importance to the UNFCCC and a key success factor – and ambitious when it comes to meeting the net zero objective. By

mid-August, the pledge was drafted and ready to be shared with the full event industry for further input.

A lot was learnt in the process. The draft pledge evolved from an eight-bullet action list to a four pillar, process driven commitment. The pledge also takes into account different realities across the globe, when it comes to, for example, switching to reusable energy. And the pledge has the ambition to lead by ambition and statistics, demonstrating progress made in a clear and tangible way. In a nutshell, the proposed pledge comes down to the following:

1. Develop a plan to achieve net zero by 2050;
2. Collaborate with the other stakeholders in the value chain to drive change;
3. Measure and track scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions;
4. Report on progress made.

These are very ambitious and much needed commitments, reflecting the very nature of the event industry: driving excellence by collaboration.

We also realised that we needed an industry wide platform to get an industry wide commitment. Therefore, **JMIC**, the **Joint Industry Meeting Council**, will host the initiative and serve as the platform to collect your input and make the

pledge a truly SMART one: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound. Being the global umbrella organisation for the events industry, JMIC is the right host for an endeavour of this size.

As always, the success depends on the parties joining. But this time, there is no doubt about the cause, so there is no excuse not to join.

Sustainability is the single biggest issue we face, and we can – if we act now – make a real difference. So, go to the JMIC website, sign up and make it happen. We can.


 The logo for AIPC (Association of International Professional Caterers) features the letters 'AIPC' in a bold, gold-colored font. A white swoosh underline starts under the 'A', goes under the 'I', and then loops back under the 'P' and 'C'.


 The logo for AIPC.ORG features a small icon of a computer monitor with a speech bubble above it, followed by the text 'AIPC.ORG' in a sans-serif font.



It is impossible to write an article regarding the use of technology in the association management field without being worried about your facts and opinions being out-of-date by the time the article is published and distributed. However, I'm going to try.

No Member Left Behind

Technology advances have changed everything about associations and their meetings and conferences. From the way people find out about events to the way they register (at least for the past two years) to even the way they “attend” events, the use of technology has become the assumed method for participation. That’s fine, because it has proven to be more cost-effective, accurate, time-efficient, and much safer than old-fashioned methods. Moving forward, there are, I believe, some things we need to keep in mind.

1. Not all members/attendees should be considered equal – when it comes to technology.

We still have some huge generational gaps in many organisations. Large scientific organisations still contain as many as five different generations actively involved in the society. While the youngest generations are anxious for your organisation to adopt the most recent technological advances (they think you are going too slow), the older generations are just getting comfortable with some of the basic technologies (they think you are going too fast).

I’ve heard for years that organisations need to use technology in the most efficient ways, and for those members who can’t or won’t adapt, the organisation just needs to move on and admit that maybe they just aren’t the right organisation for those members anymore.

Really?

You would rather have people who have been members of your society for years, maybe decades, just drift away because the organisation has moved on technologically? I think you need to be careful about how that is communicated to your members who struggle with some of the newer technologies.



Of course, it is less efficient to give members OPTIONS on how they can participate, but shouldn’t we at least show some empathy for those who struggle with technology?

Just a quick suggestion: if you don’t already do so, develop videos and other methods to assist members in using the organisation’s technologies, especially on-site at events.

2. There is no excuse not to be data-driven – or data secure.

One of the best aspects of technology advances is the ability to gather more and more data to assist in organisational decision-making. Information that associations used to have to buy or subscribe from third-party companies can now be obtained and stored easily in-house.

However, having the right data in your systems is one thing: being able to access it and use it effectively is another. We also need to remember that all associations, professional organisations, chambers of commerce, etc., obtain confidential information about our members, stakeholders, attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, and other partners. This makes it even more important that data management and data retrieval are in the hands of trained professionals.

Another important aspect of having accurate and relevant data available is the fact that **cyber-security** has become a global issue of importance.

The volunteer leaders of your organisation are coming from workplaces and companies that are relying more and more on data to drive institutional decision-making and planning. They are going to expect their trade or professional organisation to mirror government and private sector best practices in the way you keep your information and systems secure.

(Note: The Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, the association for which I serve as executive vice-president, has sponsored several cyber security programmes for its members that have enabled member companies to upgrade their own systems and head off a growing number of problems in the manufacturing community in North America).

3. When looking to the future, data will be even more important.

As was just mentioned, one area where data is increasingly critical is organisational planning. For many years associations used to call it “long range planning” but you rarely hear that term used any more. Planning committees looking five years or more into the future has become a much less reliable way of envisioning your organisation’s size, scope, financial position, membership base, etc. The main reason we stopped calling it long range planning is because things change so fast that it is nearly impossible to comprehend all of changes and variables that will impact our associations that far in advance.

What we CAN do a better job of right now is strategic planning. Yes, most groups are still limiting their planning to 2-3 year cycles, but they can be more focused (strategic) because of the availability of more credible data. This data not only supports or refutes many of the assumptions that are made during planning sessions,


but it also provides the metrics and benchmarking criteria necessary to monitor the strategic plan as it is being implemented. At certain data points the organisation can adjust goals, reapportion resources, restructure committees and staff, etc. The quality and how much trust the leaders place in that data can help keep the organisation on track and providing higher value to members and stakeholders.

Associations need to engage members not only through various technologies but also by helping members gain new skills as they master and use these technologies.

The ability to “mine” critical data using technology provides associations with opportunities be more efficient in many ways, but also puts a burden on the organisation to be able to manage the data in a secure and effective manner.

Data based planning is perhaps the most important outcome of effective data management. The credibility of your organisation is based on its ongoing success in returning value to its members, and your data management capabilities can be the cornerstone of that credibility.

FOR MORE INFO:

 MLEVIN0986@GMAIL.COM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Levin, CAE, CSP has more than 25 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. He is also the current president of the National Speakers Association: DC Metro Area Chapter.





Membership Engagement: Make Your Members Shine



Members are the lifeblood of an association. Fully engaged, they make our associations thrive, have impact and offer a meaningful experience. But having active involvement can be hard – and when it dips, so do membership, morale, finances and results. So, how to boost engagement?

We're investigating engagement strategies – what's your association doing to ensure members grasp your **purpose** and are able to **participate** in your causes? Do you have a **platform** in place that makes collaboration easy? Are your members making **progress** together? How do you **promote** their contribution?

Dianna Steinbach speaks with **Jeffer London** about serving the diverse needs of members. As the Vice President of Corporate Development at **ISSA – The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association**, Dianna's work has helped us all live with better hygiene, thanks to her membership engagement strategies.

PURPOSE How do members make sense of your *raison d'être*?

Dianna Steinbach: ISSA is committed to change the way the world views cleaning. We do this by providing members the tools, data, education, certifications, accreditation, networking, and public positions to make the business case for cleaning as an investment in human health, the environment, and an improved bottom line.

PARTICIPATION How do your members get involved?

DS: ISSA's team spends significant time engaging member's end customers – the facility management world – to understand their needs and connect the dots between cleaning and how it can support their goals. The best way we can help our members is to regularly bring them together with their customers to learn from one another and collaborate.

This focus enabled ISSA to quickly develop new training, accreditations, and free advice when

facilities around the world had to mobilize protection protocols. We engaged industries we had never worked with before where we knew they needed our help to understand how to safeguard their employees and building occupants. This enabled us to position ISSA's members as thought leaders and critical solution providers to a constantly expanding network.

PLATFORM How do your members connect and collaborate?

DS: I believe that an association needs to create concentric circles of connectivity because there is no single type of member, nor one single way they prefer to interact. ISSA is a full-industry association, serving different company types and a variety of decision makers who each have their own needs and wishes. Therefore, we provide a wide array of platforms from exhibitions and member networking events to focus groups, roundtable discussions, expert groups, committees, councils, social media groups and more.

ISSA has over 60,000 social media followers, more than 103,000 website users and more than 250,000 people

who have gone through its training programmes. Our focus has been to create channels of engagement that allow these individuals to repeatedly return to ISSA to learn, share best practices and connect.

PROGRESS How do your members move things forward?

DS: Our goal is to create thought leader opportunities where members and their customers not only advise us in committees and expert groups, but identify what knowledge is needed next in the industry, and then crowd-source best practices and advice to share through industry reports, webinars and roundtables.

When I was expanding ISSA's global reach, I chose to include non-members in many of our activities because it helped them to touch and feel the value ISSA brings, and it contributed a larger set of perspectives that we could communicate back out to the industry. You can't be afraid to engage non-members, for fear of diminishing the value you provide paying members. By engaging the right decision makers, you expand the sphere of influence for your members, which they value quite highly. There are, of course, levels of access to the resulting knowledge, between public and member-only content. This is where you can categorize consumers

of your knowledge from non-member to member – or unpaid to paid – if they don't fit your membership classification, yet find value in what you offer.

PROMOTE How do you recognise member's talents?

DS: In the past, we've done award programmes to recognise outstanding members. We have a very successful Innovation Award programme in the US, that allows customers to vote on which products and services are most innovative. This has been duplicated in other regions. We publicise all entrants to attract votes, so even if they don't win, they benefit from the exposure.

ISSA's international team runs focus groups with members to discuss key issues and, together with invited subject matter experts from other industries, strategies are outlined. We turn the results into market reports. Our thought leadership webinars are also growing in popularity because members want to be associated with trends and leaders in our panel discussions.

We also gather research data that our members produce, and curate it into infographics and presentations which we spread to a wide network. Every time I and other ISSA team members speak

“ Describe your association's ultimate competitor and become that – then you and your members will always win.





publicly, especially when addressing end customer segments, we usually refer to some of the data points. Those points often help the audience make their own internal business case for investing in cleaning. This then drives an interest, which brings members and their customers closer together, with ISSA as the conduit. We have some great success stories where one member used another member's data, which resulted in their customer gaining additional budget for cleaning.

POSTSCRIPT Any other advice for creating engagement?

DS: You need to constantly be creative with how you engage members and non-members. Even popular programmes should regularly be questioned to ensure you aren't becoming complacent in your approach. Member's businesses and marketplaces are evolving constantly and, if you want to remain relevant, your association engagement tactics need to evolve to match or stay ahead of those trends.

You also need to distinguish the difference between what members want and need. Sometimes they don't know the difference, but it will become evident when you ask them to commit time or money. Want is interesting, but need is what they will pay to access.

Another thing to consider: we often partner with other associations, event organisers or training providers, sometimes direct competitors, if we think it can create the right outcome for our members, and drive engagement and revenue. You need to maintain confidence that your value proposition and your creativity will strengthen your relevance, which reduces the risk of testing new strategies. Being the first one in your market to suggest crazy collaborations or new concepts distinguishes you as an industry leader willing to do what is necessary for its members. Even when you make a mistake, they are more forgiving, because your successes will always outweigh your failures.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Jeffer London is on the board to the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and hosts the Facilitation Impact Awards.

More info at jefferlondon.com or [@jefferlondon](https://twitter.com/jefferlondon).

The IAF promotes facilitators and all who use facilitation to help people work together effectively. Looking for better facilitation? Check out IAF-world.org or talk to Jeffer directly about facilitating leadership teams and association-wide engagement initiatives.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

Dianna Steinbach is the Vice President of Corporate Development at ISSA – The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association. ISSA has more than 10,500 members in more than 100 countries representing the commercial cleaning industry, from manufacturers and distributors to cleaning service providers and in-house facility managers.

Find them at:

www.issa.com and [@ISSAworldwide](https://twitter.com/ISSAworldwide).



The International Association of Facilitators
promoting the power
of facilitation worldwide



Digitalisation – a **Practical Approach**

While many of us have been reacting to the development of all the technology in the past year, it is now time to take a step back and look at the big picture. What should be your strategy for digitalisation? What tools would best suit your organisation’s needs? Where should you start?

Let’s focus on four aspects of association life: education, day-to-day tasks, board meetings, and online communities.

1. Education is an area that has seen a radical transformation since the start of the pandemic. If you are not doing it already, you should look at adapting all your educational offerings to an online environment. It is now possible to offer simulations, game-based trainings, blended e-learning courses, and so much more. Kajabi or Teachable are ready-to-use platforms that include e-commerce and marketing options too. If you need more advanced education features, you will have to pick the right **Learning Management System (LMS)** or if you do not need such a complex solution explore the LMS plug ins, with the ability to track progress, create assignments, tests, and games.

2. Coordinating the day-to-day has also changed due to many more association employees working remotely. Fortunately, many tools exist to increase productivity and online collaboration. Just to name a few tools, Microsoft Teams and Slack both offer excellent features to stay in touch with your colleagues, share documents, organise discussions around projects, and create groups for each committee with the ability to assign tasks and timelines. Monday.com is another useful tool to allocate tasks and plan daily activities.

3. Many associations have seen a huge change in board and committee meetings. In the past, board meetings would take place in-person, so most of the effort went into the logistics. Nowadays, they are taking place online, more regularly, and the focus needs to

be on their effectiveness. You will need to define the goals in advance, design the structure and the tools needed to reach the objectives. Software such as Diligent or iBabs allow you to share documents in advance, send updates and follow-up messages. Miro, Mural, or Synthetron enable online brainstorming and crowdsourcing sessions. Automation is another hot area – for example, did you know that there are tools to automate the recording of the meeting minutes? (check out Reason8, Otter, or Voicera) You will surely not miss that part of the job!

4. Finally, you have probably heard about online communities and are wondering if they would help you increase the engagement of members with your association. You need to understand their needs and habits first – how to encourage them to interact and ask questions? Are they looking for more opportunities to connect with other members? How can you help them to stay on top of what’s happening in your field? Then, maybe setting up an online member community is the right step to take. An inspiring example from the **World Stroke Organisation**: they have set up an online community called Future Leaders Programme to train stroke leaders of the future, and another one called Stroke Connector, which is a meeting place for both clinicians and stroke patients.

There is no doubt that we are in an era of digitalisation where everything is online. It is now time to pause, reflect on what is working and what is not, and review the tools to adopt, to make your work more effective.

ABOUT KENES GROUP

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





“ *The bottom line? Do not attempt a do-it-yourself approach for data management.* ”

Tips for **Associations** to Manage and Harness Their **Data**

When it comes to the to-do list of many associations, technology is often a last priority. This is mainly due to a lack of economic and human resources, but also due to a lack of knowledge about the latest trends regarding technology in administration procedures. The result is weaker processes and efficiency. Data, in particular, can provide an association with so many powerful insights into its membership, its sponsorship strategy, and much more. But data is only useful if the association is able to analyse and leverage that data. So, where to begin?

The **World PCO Alliance** offers the following tips and advice to help any association take the first steps in collecting, managing and harnessing data:

- 1. Perform an initial assessment:** What is the overall need for the association in terms of data, and what are the objectives?
- 2. Consult an expert:** Data management is an enormous task, and one that is best left to the

experts. An AMC (Association Management Company) or a PCO (Professional Conference Organiser) will often have the technological resources and expertise in-house. One can also reach out to consultants. The bottom line? Do not attempt a do-it-yourself approach for data management.

3. Ensuring an efficient monitoring of the association website: This is an essential first step, enabling the association an in-depth website analysis that allows them to learn what is of most importance or interest to members/visitors.

4. Pick a data management system: With the help of experts, select the data management tool that is right for your association.

5. Don't overdo it: Rather than taking on the task of collecting all possible data, better to be selective.

6. Manage the data: Data needs to be collected and maintained on a regular basis, to ensure that it is current and relevant.

7. Advise your members: Your members need to be advised that data is being collected on them, they need to know which data is being collected and how this data will be used. As long as members know that the collected data will create positive impact for them, they will be willing to provide it.

8. Be safe! Remember security is a key issue and no one wants to get surprised with a data breach.

Data collection and management offers numerous benefits for the association as well as its members.

Short-term benefits include:

- Increased staff motivation with the digitalisation of their daily work;
- Improved internal accounting and administration processes;
- Increased transparency and control within the association;
- Enhanced value of the association’s image and brand;
- In the case of federations, increased collaboration and communication among the national members regarding data collection.

Long-term benefits include:

- Added value for both members and sponsors. This strategy contributes to the financial and economic health of an association, in the mid/ long term;
- Ability to drive informed decisions and improve outreach;
- Ability to offer better designed services and products that members want, and the effective delivery of these services and products;
- Ability to monitor and manage data from any device, in cases of remote work or business travel;
- Increased event participation, given that the association’s up-to-date database means that no contact name will be missed;

- Reduced time spent on data management, as the workflow will be more efficient and streamlined;
- Improving the time-consuming auditing processes related to data privacy laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU;
- Improved reporting: data automatization will allow associations to issue up-to-date reports and statistics, getting internal analysis that will lead to strategic decisions.

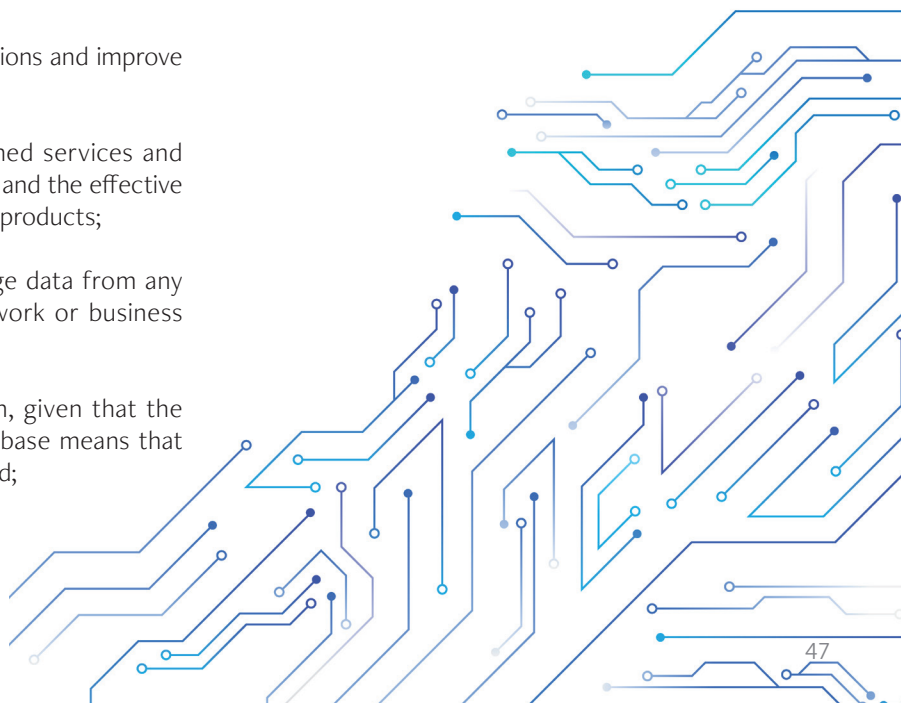
Needless to say, effective data collection and management can allow an association to gain greater insight into their processes and how effectively they are reaching members. It is not an endeavour that can be done alone, but with the right experts at your side, your association can be well on its way to reaping the benefits of data – and enhancing value for your staff, partners and members.



World PCO Alliance

 WPCOALLIANCE@CONGRE.CO.JP

 WORLDPCO.ORG



Seoul: A City of Sustainable Transformation



Virtual Seoul

Online Meeting Platform



Seoul MICE World

Virtual Exhibition Booth



Seoul 360 VR Video

48 Virtual Inspection Series



Virtual Seoul Playground

Online Teambuilding Program



Seoul and its Alliances



Contact info.



Website
miceseoul.com/index



Facebook
[@miceseoul](https://www.facebook.com/miceseoul)



Instagram
[@seoul_convention_bureau](https://www.instagram.com/seoul_convention_bureau)



LinkedIn
Seoul Convention Bureau