

Headquarters

MARCH 2023 #108 BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY



BestCities 2022

Fresh Perspectives on Legacy Impacts in Vancouver!

Visit Belfast

"We believe in the power of events!"

Euromic

"The number one criteria is human connection."

Mark Levin

"It is not a meeting... it is the legacy of your organisation!"

Cover Story

Melbourne & Perth: Jumping on their way towards significant events



ASSOCIATION LEGACIES:
HISTORY-MAKING EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA

Editor's Letter



WHAT'S LEFT OF AN EVENT WHEN IT'S OVER?

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

When I organise something, I usually do it to satisfy the participants. It has to be in order. And when it is over I like to receive feedback, compliments that it was good and that they will remember it for a long time. But now when we talk about Event Legacy, there is a bit more to it. Since the rise of event culture, different thought patterns have emerged that often tie into morale and sustainability. The aspects of partying, entertainment and fun are no longer at the front of the list. An event is now thought through before, during and after its course... and preferably with a long-term vision.

I was able to delve deeper into Legacy in a study commissioned by the **Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC)**, on “The broader importance of Business Events”. In it, much emphasis is placed on the fact that it has always been thought that the impact of congresses is primarily economic. Well, this view has now been overtaken! A congress can also make an important contribution from a social perspective, and these effects are often more indirect in the long term. The research also led to the creation of a clear definition of “legacy”. A legacy of a congress is a long-term positive contribution made for the national associations, for the community, for the host country or region where the congress takes place and for society as a whole.

Those interested in learning more about “legacy” as researched by the *Ecorys* study firm can request the full report from the NBTC. Very interesting in this is the “DESTEP analysis”, an analysis to map the macro environment. It pays off!



Are You Still **Acting Like Last Year?**

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

Resisting change on any plane of life is a natural human response. The level of uncertainty that the events industry has faced over these three years has meant that new metrics, strategies, testings and baselines have (with few exceptions) been placed in an application limbo. However, as we can see by the fierce competition in the global events market, embracing this disruption is a *sine qua non* condition of destination marketing that has tipped the balance towards more responsive and effective hosts. And the conversation does not stop at the supply chain: “For those who had a concern about climate change, I think this period served as a motivation to move forward, but for those who were oblivious to this reality where certain practices were no longer working, fear took over,” says **Gwendall Castellan of Destination Vancouver**.

This fear can take many forms and, yes, this is definitely a new world for meetings in 2023, but as Mark Levin tells us in his article, denying the accumulated experience, the background knowledge and our in-house expertise can lead us to stop seeing the forest for the trees: “I believe these next few years will be more challenging to the meetings industry than anything it has faced since 9/11, and it’s scary how many readers probably weren’t even in the meetings business when that happened.” It is against this backdrop – where new technologies reinvent the way planners design their events, mobile applications and digital innovations change the way people interact and steer up organisations, and sustainable demands guarantee large cash inflows – that new professionals walk through the front doors and life-long veterans leave boardrooms. How has this transition been managed?

What we have been trying to find out for our *HQ* readers since the beginning of this new cycle, is what distinguishes one destination from another, what defines its ecosystem and intellectual supply for the benefit of a conference! And there, the impacts of business event legacies have a big say in the grand scheme of things. “When we talk about storytelling it isn’t about the number of stories we get, it’s about the quality of the stories versus the data. It ranges from immediate conference outcomes to legacy stories, where the depth of the conference is the most impactful component of data collection,” **Kara Walker, researcher at Capilano University in Vancouver**, tells us. There’s no other way to put it: conferences in the post-Covid era will have a greater emphasis on sustainability, community ties and more active government action in attracting local experts and actors for reasons beyond tourism numbers. In the business acumen of bringing added value by external intervention; in the ability to chain scientific events with each other; in an environment of serendipity conducive to hidden discoveries.

People all over the world yearn for real leadership. Safety has always been the number one priority at meetings, but now we have to show that we’re prepared for just about anything. Especially when your 2023 conference may be the first major event many of your delegates will attend since the COVID outbreak. “One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that the power of human connection is more appreciated than ever,” **Julia Dawson of Melbourne Convention Bureau** says. Let’s see what 2023 brings us!

HQ

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THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES
IN THE MEETINGS
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CECE

“A smart
business leader
understands that
only diverse teams
lead to success.”



BestCities 2022
in Vancouver

Sustainability as an
event compass



Visit Belfast

“We believe in the
power of events
and the positive
impact they can
have.”





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Giving destination management companies a voice

BE Perth

“It’s both the destination and the journey in Western Australia!”



Washington, DC

A smart city that leads in sustainability



IAPCO

Annual Meeting and EDGE Seminar 2023





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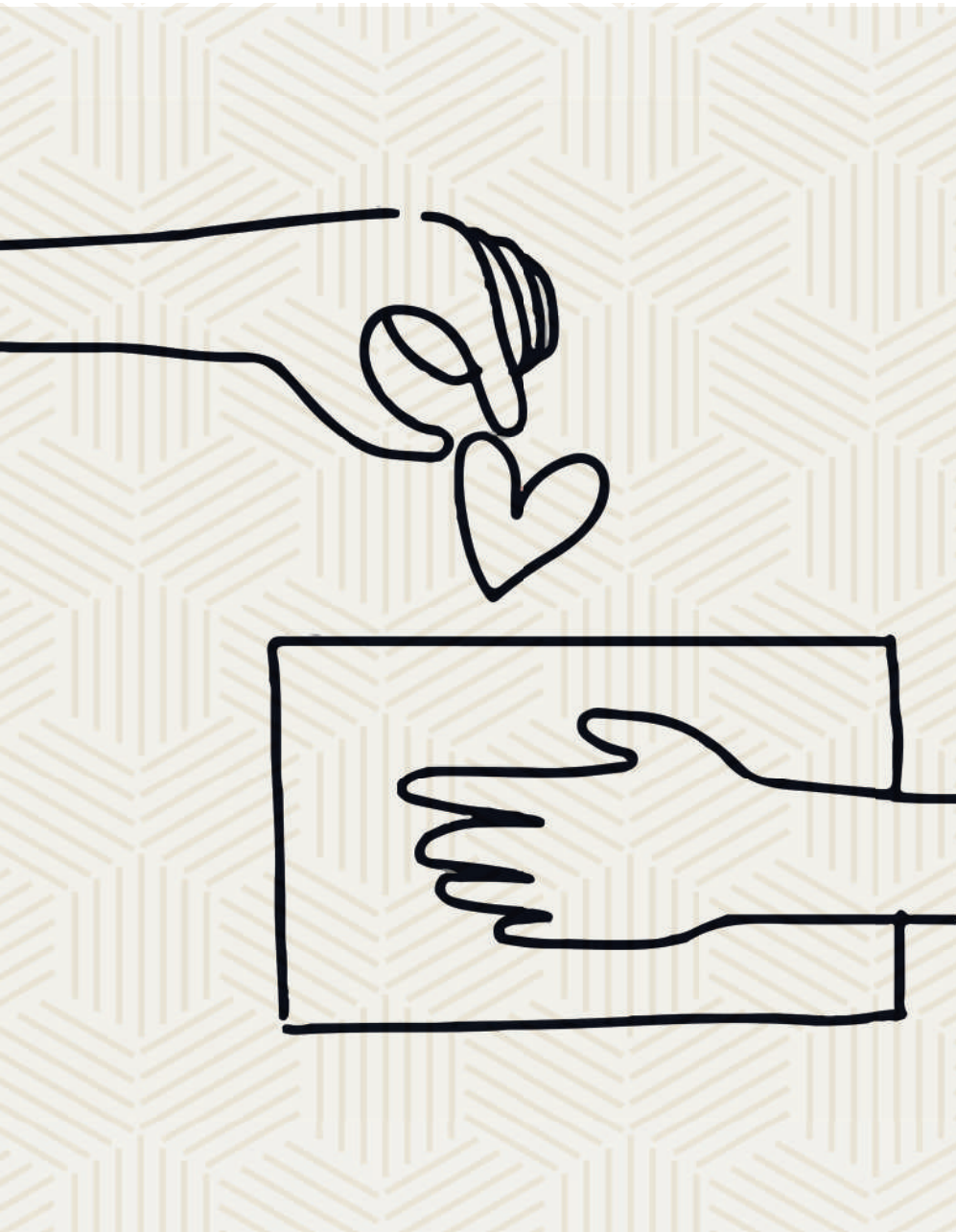
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“A smart business leader understands that only **diverse teams** lead to **success**.”

The two-way interaction between buildings and society is inseparable from the architecture of our lives, and has converged in recent years with rising cross-industrial trends. Founded in 1959, the **Committee for European Construction Equipment (CECE)** is a Europe-wide federation and the voice of construction equipment manufacturers in the EU political arena. Through its national member associations, it speaks on behalf of an industry made up of 1,200 companies, employing 300,000 people and creating a value of 40 billion euros annually. To address issues such as environmental impacts, digitalisation and diversity, we spoke with **general secretary Riccardo Viaggi**, and **communications manager Roma Guziak**.

How is your sector and the construction industry doing after the pandemic? Are there already signs of recovery in the industry?

Riccardo Viaggi: There have always been positive signs of resilience and vitality in the construction equipment sector, since the recovery at the end of 2020. The resilience of our industry – backed by stable business situation in most customer sectors – was notable in 2021 and 2022, when we got to absolute record number sales. This is also reflected by robust industry sentiment: the climate index surveyed by the CECE’s Business Barometer went down moderately over 2022, as the economic fallout of the war in Ukraine unfolded but bounced back in November after the bauma trade fair, the largest professional exhibition for construction equipment in the world. 2023 is expected to have a strong start, as a result of the high order backlog. However, the outlook for the rest of the year is uncertain – the rise in interest rates will weigh heavily on the building construction industry’s prospects.

What are the 2023 guidelines for sustainable business growth and development in the sector?

RV: Our industry needs a stable regulatory framework within the Single Market and open trade with our global partners. On regulation, 2023 will be the year of publication and implementation of the newly revised Machinery Regulation, bringing some changes to the way our member companies manufacture and certify the construction equipment. At the beginning of 2023, we will finally see the long-awaited EU legislation to harmonise the road-circulation requirements for our

machinery. With national regulation still applicable, there is no EU Single Market for heavy machinery going on the road, and this is a problem that we have long been wanting to solve with the European Commission. On the global stage, the key actions in 2023 concern the possible ratification of the EU-Mercosur trade agreement, the continued effort to lower trade barriers between the EU and the US, and the ratification of a new international protocol simplifying the selling and financing conditions of high-value equipment.

How are you guiding your environmental legislative framework and a citizen-oriented economy within sustainability objectives for the coming years?

RV: Our member companies have long been investing in lowering the environmental impact of construction machinery. This has been pushed by regulations in certain cases, but mostly by market pressures and dialogues between suppliers and users. This is exactly what is happening now in the decarbonisation and emissions-reduction dynamics. Indeed, there is no single regulatory obligation to decarbonise machinery, but the market has initiated a visible wave of design and engineering to develop heavy equipment that functions with alternative energies. This was particularly evident at the recent bauma trade fair, where CECE member companies premiered several new machines that operate on batteries or hydrogen and onboard



technologies, sensors and tools to minimise their impact and maximise their efficiency. This was of great impact to the EU officials that we have hosted for a few days at the fairgrounds and were able to see first-hand the sustainability journey of our sector.

“It’s time to embrace the changing society” was the motto that opened the last CECE Congress 2023 with a special focus on the topics of DE&I, recruitment and talent attraction. What forward-looking management solutions should you apply to keep your workforce standards in line with CSR policies?

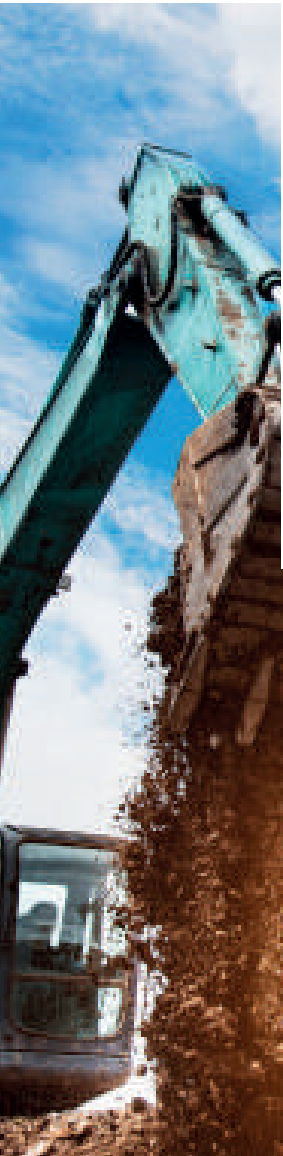
Roma Guziak: During the CECE Congress 2023, our panellists addressed the pain-points of a slow process towards including more women in construction, shared tips on talent recruitment strategies and showcased the appropriate approach towards the inevitable intercultural and intergenerational differences in the day-to-day business. One of our main goals is to point out the attractiveness of our industry, often wrongly perceived as the “dirty”, noisy and archetypal – this could not be further from the truth. The machinery that is produced by our members is equipped in state-of-the-art technologies and the career opportunities that the sector offers are immense. Forward looking employers should be able to value true talent, regardless of age or gender, treating potential candidates as clients, not self-sellers. A smart business leader, by appreciating different points of view, understands that only diverse teams lead to success. Employers of the future need to foster an ethical and professional workplace and be mindful of the economic and environmental impacts of what they do as a business.

What are your thoughts on the EU Data Act and its impact on the EU open market?

RV: We share the belief that data sharing is economically and industrially important in creating the conditions that allow for improved workflow and efficiencies. It should help lower the negative environmental impact of machines, project costs, the cost of running machines, etc. The proposed Data Act may cause unforeseen impacts on EU businesses and have possible unintended economic consequences across data value chains. The joint statement – that CECE co-signed – aimed to warn legislators about industries’ concerns on the risks related to progressing on this important piece of legislation at such speed. We call on the EU policymakers to create a legislation that ensures effective safeguards to prevent data misuse and unfair competition, guarantees legal certainty on the information to be shared, warrants longer transition period of at least 36 months and ensures international data flows, among others.

Finally, what are the big institutional events you are preparing at the moment.

RG: The big event of 2023 will be our Summit which will take place on 26 October in Brussels. CECE organises this biennial event in Brussels, to facilitate a dialogue between our industry and the relevant politicians, decision makers and other stakeholders of the so called “Brussels bubble”. The overall theme of this year’s event is cyber security, one of the priority topics for our members. The highlight of the Summit will be an inspirational intervention by Greg van der Gaast, infamous hacker turned undercover FBI operative, who will inspire our audience to think differently about organisations’ cyber security measures. Moreover, 2023 will be filled by online events that have turned out to be essential for us in recent years.





BestCities Global Forum 2022: Fresh Perspectives on Legacy Impacts

The BestCities Global Alliance is a network of cities focused on leveraging positive impacts and paradigm shifting legacies through conferences. In turn, **Destination Vancouver** sought to reap the benefits of this knowledge capital for an audience of international associations, in yet another chapter of this rotating global meeting. *Manuel Fernandes Reports*

When the BestCities annual meeting ended last year with the signing of the notorious **Madrid Challenge**, one was left with the exciting feeling that the commitment to legacy events would not stop there. This pledge introduced by BestCities at the Global Forum 2021 pushed representatives of destinations and associations present in the Spanish capital to collaborate closely, share knowledge and advocate for delivering value beyond tourism through their events for a more impact-driven industry. Even before, the Copenhagen Convention Bureau had unveiled at the 2019 forum its **Legacy Lab**: a strategic approach to create a long-term positive impact from international congresses with local stakeholders, business and scientific communities as major beneficiaries of this systematic development. Tough task?

This is what the **BestCities Global Forum** is helping to create within its mission-related goals linked to the sustainable future of the meetings industry, by supporting the essential axis of the partnership between destinations and international associations with new strategies and tools to crystallize the success of social legacies. This time, the forum moved to Vancouver for the 2022 chapter, where this conversation continued on the various internal projects towards principles such as sustainability (mainly) and other liaison programmes, following the incorporation of legacy into RFPs and assistance to associations for their international events on the ground. In an era of “relevance”, it is essential to convey the testimony of best practices and methods that allow us to provide sustainable and double-reach experiences, full of positive and lasting impacts that lead to a path of global success.

Sustainability as an event compass

Vancouver has a long history of climate action leading a worldwide circular economy, and this has inspired much of the local experience in the journey between workshops, site inspections and thematic presentations. Venue for many of these, the **Vancouver Convention Centre** – a double LEED® Platinum certified facility

located on the city’s waterfront – has managed to converge the latest green technologies with eco-friendly operating practices, attested to in its six-acre roof with over 400,000 indigenous plants, a sophisticated black water treatment plant and an innovative marine heating and cooling system for the building. The recognition as one of the most livable cities in the world is also due to the application of these changes and the general awareness of the community on policies as urgent as urban transport or the energy transition.

One of the organisations working with the Vancouver City Council to implement these measures and certifications is **Ocean Wise Seafood** – a non-profit whose mission is to empower communities to take action to protect and restore our world’s oceans. In a series of coffee talks, we were able to reflect on a range of environmental threats, including overfishing, climate change and pollution, which this global conservation organisation advises on and tackles through its process of engagement, research, and education at corporate and public levels. Ocean Wise holds a seafood recommendation programme that helps to protect ocean life by certifying companies when sourcing products, educating audiences and helping customers make the right choice when stocking for an event – something associations will be able to capitalise on when delegating their catering, for example.

We often think that carrying out these sustainability projects is merely a matter of reputation, but without being backed up by facts and figures, it may be insufficient to unlock legislation and call for political decision-making. That was the tone that shaped the conversation with Destination Vancouver’s sustainability development manager Gwendal Castellan (*see his interview on the following pages*), where the operative phrase was “social procurement” – i.e. collateral changes for society and the environment that the procurement of goods and services can generate from an event’s legacy plan in a destination. Designing your Social Buying Journey in Vancouver means buying and selling with impact by leveraging existing purchasing power





to simultaneously achieve economic growth and social outcomes to include conscious practices, real impact and community spirit. “We are just finishing our 2021 emissions report, and will be doing a comparison soon after to see how things have changed. Numbers are just the basis of records over time, so we need quality narratives to get people on board,” Castellan told us.

Legacy Impact Study: Where to begin?

Vancouver is a respected global destination for conferences and meeting events located midway between the Western and Asia-Pacific markets. In 2022, Vancouver hosted 18 citywide conferences that attracted 50,000 attendees from around the world. Considering the economic development and the support for key industries in the region, it was felt that the short and long-term impacts emerging from these events were not being studied in depth. The City then commissioned a **Conference Legacy Impact Study to Capilano University** which collected data from five face-to-face conferences held at the Vancouver Convention Centre to identify and measure conference legacies and outcomes. “When we talk about stories this isn’t about the number of stories we get, it’s about the quality of the stories versus the data. It ranges from conference results, where the numbers really matter, to legacy stories, where conference depth is the most impactful component of data collection,” says Kara Walker, co-author of the study (*see our interview further on*).



Perhaps the best example to retain of these synergies was that of the **International Hepato Pancreato Biliary Association**, who after participating in the 2021 forum in Madrid had an ongoing conversation about legacy in their RFP that led to the inclusion of this element in the strategic plan for their upcoming conferences in Cape Town, Singapore, and finally Vancouver – all members of the alliance – a clear example of how associations have so much to gain from participating in this global conversation on social, scientific and environmental impacts in a collaborative environment. “The impact that meetings have on local communities is invaluable, and encompasses knowledge exchange, talent acquisition, academic research, and new business opportunities,” said **Lesley Williams, managing director of BestCities**.



The next BestCities Global Forum will take place in Melbourne, Australia in December under the theme of “Creating connections with purpose” and the outlook is great. The Australian city is looking forward to welcoming 60 events this year, including eleven large association events across the year. Let’s see what’s in store for us there!



Destination Vancouver has signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, and are committed to the Paris Agreement goals of reducing emissions by 2030 and achieving Net Zero by 2050. As a community, they are also stipulating city-wide targets similar to the above with very specific objectives around emissions from the built environment and energy transition, turning the page on pandemic with events that comply with these premises. **Gwendal Castellan**, the destination's **sustainability manager**, is one of the architects of this project and a guru on energy conservation for tourism businesses. After cycling across the Americas from Patagonia to the Northwest Territories, his passion for nature and geography led him to reorient his career as a certified energy consultant being hired by Tourism Vancouver to build a conservation programme for tourism businesses. "I think there is a great deal of collaboration with the municipal economic development office here!"



“When it comes to reputation, there is a strong **Vancouver connection to nature**”



After the first contact in Vancouver a conversation was promised later, where the Canadian spoke about what remains to be developed in sustainable tourism, the movement that is driving the industry forward in a smart way, and the responsibilities DMOs face in this department.

Do you think COVID-19 acted as a driver for sustainable policies in Vancouver?

There have certainly been conversations in this regard. One of the examples during the COVID-19 period was that public transit use declined dramatically. We saw private car use going up something that from an environmental and city-building perspective required a natural response. With the restrictions now removed, we see that Vancouver is recovering much faster than other North American cities and part of that is due to the investment in maintaining the transport system at almost the same capacity as before. Right now, we are in the process of figuring out what the preferences and different behaviours are, testing future options in post-pandemic event planning. I think the events industry is still in a buffer zone that can serve as an evaluation period. We have to take into account the malleability of the new times, keeping what good has been done and being able to change at any moment without being so rigid.

How much is the recognition as one of the most liveable cities in the world due to the application of these changes and the general awareness of its population?

When it comes to reputation, there is a strong Vancouver connection to Nature. We have a long history of environmental activism, for example with **Greenpeace** – founded in Vancouver – or through the **David Suzuki Foundation**, a non-profit organisation aimed at protecting nature from an educational perspective. This is the awareness baseline for these causes proving that there is a community level of engagement. In terms of geography, the unique and cohesive urban form has also helped contain the proliferation of motorways and unbridled traffic. This has helped generate new environmentally friendly policies to continue building on this legacy. Many cities are dealing with issues such as affordability and housing costs, trying to understand what is driving that. Since we are squeezed between mountains, ocean, and farmland, we try to find a



“ *If we replace an inefficient building with an efficient one, we will be closer to Net Zero at that location.* ”

balanced economy of space. For example, Vancouver has a downtown core with a housing density of almost 20000 people per km² living in flats, way ahead of other North American cities.

With the advances and progress that Vancouver has undergone in these years, how do you plan to redesign business events around the circular economy?

Much of this has to do with lifting the foundations of the destination across the board. As our community and City Council are looking for change, all the companies and suppliers that serve corporate events are actually keeping up with these transformations. When you make the decision to hold an event in Vancouver, it can be the last big decision when it comes to sustainability as we strive to have everything covered on our side. After that, every choice is aligned in that circularity making events automatically more sustainable. It's not about navigating our environment to find the most responsible supplier because both choices will fit the sustainability measures – thus leaving room for other factors. That will be the ultimate goal. Implementing the right regulations in order to lift the baseline practices for all suppliers.

Are your green policies and sustainable standards also influencing the events you bring to Vancouver? With all this certification work going on, how would you react if you had to bid on a major oil or natural gas conference?

That's a pretty interesting one. [laughs] These are industries that exist and we're not going to make them disappear through our work. One argument would be that these kinds of conferences are not scheduled for the city and so we shouldn't try to bid for them. Another argument is that by taking advantage of this opportunity, we could market Vancouver as a hotbed for discussions on sustainability even if this industry is not. So, by hosting an oil conference, one could prompt a transformative change in its event programme and lessen its negative impact. You also need to explain the context of the event within the public strategy, because if the community doesn't understand it can end up being a PR nightmare. By instance, if congressmen are not at all interested in having that conversation, they will come



When you make the decision to hold an event in Vancouver, it can be the last big decision when it comes to sustainability, as we strive to have everything covered on our side.

here just to get numbers. However, I believe that many of these industries bring in great researchers, experts and academics and that can be quite interesting for the local scientific communities. If you communicate that conference in a constructive way according to our green positioning, why not have it here! You can find out during the bidding cycle what they really want so that the right decisions can be made.

Is there any joint work between hotels and small venues to draw up a sustainable accommodation roadmap for business visitors?

In Vancouver, we have three watersheds that are fed by snowmelt and supply the entire city – the dams allow us to know exactly how much water we have during the year and to measure our supply. As we see water patterns change, water consumption and budgets will also follow suit with corresponding restrictions. With the various investments in infrastructure and technology, hotels will have to be really careful with their water consumption over time reopening the discussion about low-flow showers. Certain properties are conducting blind tests, installing an entire floor of low-flow showers to try to understand what the customer response is. I am convinced that more and more congresses will take responsibility for carbon emissions per room night in the contract. This will become a normal and obvious practice. We will soon have also mandatory building energy and carbon emissions reporting which means that if hotel A emits half the carbon of hotel B, this may offer a competitive edge in the choice of accommodation. Over the course of normal redevelopment cycles, with the city implementing planned policies to limit embodied carbon and mandatory net-zero performance requirements in new construction, we will see a shift to Net Zero buildings in Vancouver. We also have policies

and targets around the reduction of embodied emissions by adopting mass timber construction to replace concrete, and will require mandatory disclosure of energy and carbon emissions for buildings in the future.

We also saw that many event destinations are reconverting their destination marketing to include more action areas like sustainability. What are Vancouver's benchmarks when bidding for events?

When we look at the bidding as a whole, we pay attention to what are the core industries in Vancouver in terms of attracting investment. How does that align with the industries that we have here and other industries that are starting to grow? We were talking earlier about the green building sector: one of your strategies is to help develop local skills in the sector and the technologies that go with it, like heat pumps or structural mass timber. If there are events and conferences that tie into that sector in some way, then there is room for collaboration. This shows that events are catalysts and can also be linked to local economies in order to establish regional and national offices or even an association headquarters. That has to do with the economic sphere but it also speaks to the much less siloed realm of a professional conference which is usually impervious to civil society. What's really exciting is that people want to have this fluid exchange where what happens in a conference centre has some kind of return in their lives. It could be for a university or students, for the purpose of mentoring or scientific engagement, or as we speak for an industry or development trade show. So that the sum of the knowledge discussed at these conferences leaves the convention centre and reaches the core of the community.





All destinations and associations already have methodologies that measure the outcomes of their conferences. These processes should start by identifying what is to be achieved, comparing the data extracted in order to obtain outcomes that may lead to potential long-term legacies - both for the destination and the association. During the Vancouver chapter, **Capilano University** released the latest open source tool from the **BestCities Global Alliance: The Conference Legacy Impact Study** focused on identifying and measuring the legacies and outcomes of five face-to-face conferences held at the Vancouver Convention Centre in 2022 within a 4-step sequential research process.

“Measuring **data** is really important because this is a **people business**”

What are the short and long term impacts of conferences? How do the impacts of first-time and repeat conferences compare? **Kara Walker**, co-author of the study and lecturer at the University, answered these and more questions for us.

According to the examination of these five conferences that took place in Vancouver, is there already a clear picture of the tools to be used and the results to be achieved?

These tools should help not only the conference participants to be successful in identifying their results, but also to communicate them for the benefit of the city. The interesting thing is that many of these outcomes already existed without being identified, leading the conference organisers to realise that they were already doing many of these things. If we identify them and

make a small effort to promote them by sharing with our stakeholders, guests or clients, we will know how far we are moving the dial, rather than diluting them in what we are already doing. If we don't sit down and analyse the data collection, we will never have evidence that this was a crucial piece to the vision of the event. That's our legacy construct: a key outcome that can be developed and identified over time. So, legacies can be internal to the association - if it reaps the benefits of a global rotating conference - or a legacy for the destination - focusing on the rewards that were left in that location. The potential of this broad spectrum of outcomes is



that conferences and destinations can align them with their strategic objectives. We want to prove that this is beneficial for both the organisation and the destination.

How can we categorise these objectives and measures in a comprehensive way for an association?

All these conferences already have objectives and outcomes, the question is how to categorise these objectives and measure the relevance of the outcomes. When the destination already has measures in place – such as the UN SDGs – we can channel them with the organisation to show the level of that success. The numbers are a pretty important piece for destinations as buy-in for these conferences. Associations need to work with those who are buying into this concept, and that means early adoption. It means that the dialogue around conferences should start at least six months in advance, incorporating statistics, numbers and studies into the associations' data collection. There are ways to collect more information and stories during an event, but the hard data numbers will come from early surveys. From BestCities' perspective, including this in the RFP process could be a valuable addition because it would help get more valid and accurate results. From the destination's perspective, this is a way to sell this concept to associations leading to potential legacies based on what is important to both parties.

In your Meeting Legacy Strategic Pathway, we noticed that the research process used both a quantitative and qualitative approach. How important was that?

Measuring quantitative and qualitative data is really important because this is a people business. A lot of the outcomes are about engaging people, so we won't be able to tell the stories if they don't resonate with our target audience in some way. We know that, for funding reasons or scientific issues, we need these numbers not only to prove what we are doing but also to make people care about our actions. These measures are essential to convince associations that this legacy process is relevant for the future. Obviously our 4-step process worked for us, but as an event professional I think any addition of measurement is valuable. What can you find out about your visitors, customers or guests that can't necessarily be collected with a data survey. From an arithmetic perspective, numbers do not always share with us the extent of legacy. Therefore, it is a must to follow up the next 6 to 18 months with reports of these stories to show the depth of legacy. We might take an outcome and follow it every six months to see if it breaks down



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into other potential outcomes, or future legacies that might be involved in our data collection.

One aspect that also caught my attention was the comparison between the Repeat Conferences and the First Conference. Could these two experiential relationships complement each other and guide the delegates towards the legacy mission?

This speaks more to the outcomes that each organiser expects from their conference. From the perspective of a global rotating conference, those who are returning to a community may have a slightly different sense of commitment. This is because they have likely already begun to build relationships with clear directions for their annual programming, and so legacy development will potentially become much more result-oriented. In these conferences, there are legacy development opportunities that may differ depending on whether the target is the destination or the association. I may be using that legacy within my stakeholder group if it's running globally so we can apply it to different destinations. Or we may have some kind of follow-up with the destinations we have visited to provide other points based on the legacy we hope to build there.

Does this mean that a legacy methodology could also help DMOs and associations consolidate their arc of operations at different event scales?

I believe that DMOs and associations will also improve the development of these strategies from this study. We cannot measure everything, and so we should start with the steps already identified. The value and goals of what we are already doing together will then inform the next steps in developing a pathway. Destinations may measure the impact on their community, whereas the association may be looking at a broader scale focusing more on global impacts. These different directions will become clearer as we get the data and include the stakeholder engagement pieces of that roadmap. Integrating some of it into our event planning as we consider the legacies and objectives we have in mind. When we talked about



destination Vancouver, the idea was to include DMOs in this journey – they are aware of these conversations and expect to be more involved in measuring outcomes. When the numbers substantiate the value to the community it can then lead to a trickle-down effect, getting more resources to continue the measurement. When COVID-19 hit us and tourism disappeared, including international conferences, our nation realised the impact of tourism from the smallest community to our largest cities. At a national level, DMOs have had to change their stance in order to do a better job when global meetings and travel disappeared. How could we help each other during these tough times but also reap the benefits when we recover? Certainly, our great cities in Canada realised that we need to tell a more compelling story about how tourism was affecting our communities.

Do you think this new landscape of remote working, virtual meetings and travel breaks could affect the impact of social enterprises and local stakeholders on the legacy of hybrid conferencing?

I'm very much of the mindset that if we identify just one outcome that can lead to a potential legacy, we're already further ahead than we were before. That's why I encourage associations and destinations to start somewhere. Sharing stories will make people understand the opportunities they have by being together, leading to potential virtual legacies. You can identify outcomes and ideas from face-to-face meetings and assemble the building blocks from a virtual standpoint, whether it's mentoring programmes or educational seminars. Perhaps the number of face-to-face meetings is decreasing but you will still need physical meetings based on the important outcomes that can only be achieved face-to-face. This can also shift the focus to meetings that can be handled virtually so that when we are in person, we can fast-track a ton of engagements – story sharing, brainstorming, networking – rather than sitting in a room listening to someone talk for hours. From a virtual perspective, the process is still the same since we still have goals and purposes, measurement tools and subsequent outcomes. Maybe the stories are different in legacy tracking but you can still measure those outcomes.



Covering the Dialogue Between **UITP** and **Hamburg** on **Public Transport!**

Hamburg will become the centre of the mobility world in 2025 and 2027 as it secured the nod to host the Global Summits of the *Union Internationale des Transports Publics (UITP)* a non-profit advocacy organisation for public transport professionals. Over the years, the Hanseatic city has become a global spotlight in diversified public transport with smart urban mobility, technological breakthroughs and zero carbon emission goals. By integrating both events as important pillars in Hamburg's strategy for the mobility transition, UITP and local partners will ensure that the impact of the Summits will last beyond 2027, bringing benefits to global transportation as well as directly to the Hamburg region. To talk about this multi-year cooperation, *HQ* spoke with **Laetitia Delzenne, Head of Events at UITP**, and **Michael Otremba CEO of Hamburg Tourist Board**, on how they plan to spread their related impacts and goals from this event partnership.



What factors and criteria stood out in the selection process?

Hamburg has convinced with an ambitious mobility strategy, which is also reflected in the applicant consortium. Under the motto “How do we change mobility for the world to come? – Only together”, Hamburg was able to make it clear in its application that sustainable mobility can only be achieved together with all sustainable mobility offers. At the same time, great support from our industry, research community and associations, as well as broad political backing, came to bear. An attractive and innovative concept as well as flexibility and creative will for the organisation of the event, convinced the UITP selection committee. The decision in favour of Hamburg is also a desire of breaking new ground and involving the public in professional exchange at the summits.

How do you plan to expand the conference programme and experiences to meet the city's tangible goals in the sector?

The choice as venue for the world's largest public transport congress confirms Hamburg's pioneering role in innovative mobility solutions. This is also an important impulse for the transport and traffic industry in Germany. German mechanical engineers can show the world they have their fingers on the pulse when it comes to intelligent on-demand transport, alternative

drives, or energy-efficient technologies. Public passenger transport also plays a key role in climate-friendly mobility. This makes international exchange and mutual learning even more important. Together with the City of Hamburg, we want to use the full potential of the UITP Summit 2025 and 2027 to advance climate protection worldwide.

How urgent is it to get back to conference rooms and networking in Hamburg around these sector clusters?

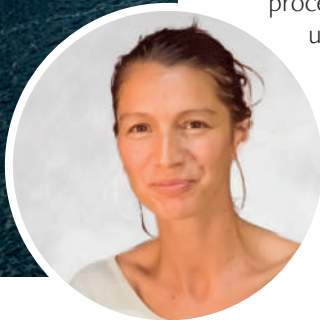
In Hamburg, we feel an enormous longing for personal encounters and real inspiration after the pandemic. This is also shown by the guest numbers in 2022: Hamburg is very well positioned and has already reached more than 95 per cent of its pre-crisis level. The well-booked calendar of events underlines our confidence that Hamburg's importance as a conference and congress location will continue to grow. The congress will give us additional tailwind for our innovative public transport strategy by providing us with an important additional argument for investing in transport in Hamburg. This applies, for example, to our strategy for integrating up to 10,000 autonomously driving vehicles into public transport.



Michael Otremba, CEO of Hamburg Tourist Board

What were the key features and benchmarks within your RFP that tipped you towards Hamburg?

UITP has been looking to strengthen the role and its relationship with the host destination as part of its bidding process, particularly for this 2+1 bidding process, part of UITP new events strategy. To us, the destination is part of the promise and value proposal for our attendees, and it should illustrate and align with some of our strategic objectives to become a strong partner in advancing further public transport messages. Our RFP is a set of various criteria along three main categories: logistics, association objectives and finance. The Hamburg proposal covered all these aspects, featuring an entire ecosystem of local, regional and national stakeholders who supported the bid proposal, and who we will be able to rely on.



Laetitia Delzenne, Head of Events Management at UITP

What legacy do you intend to leave for Hamburg and how do you think this collaboration could enhance your outreach and framework?

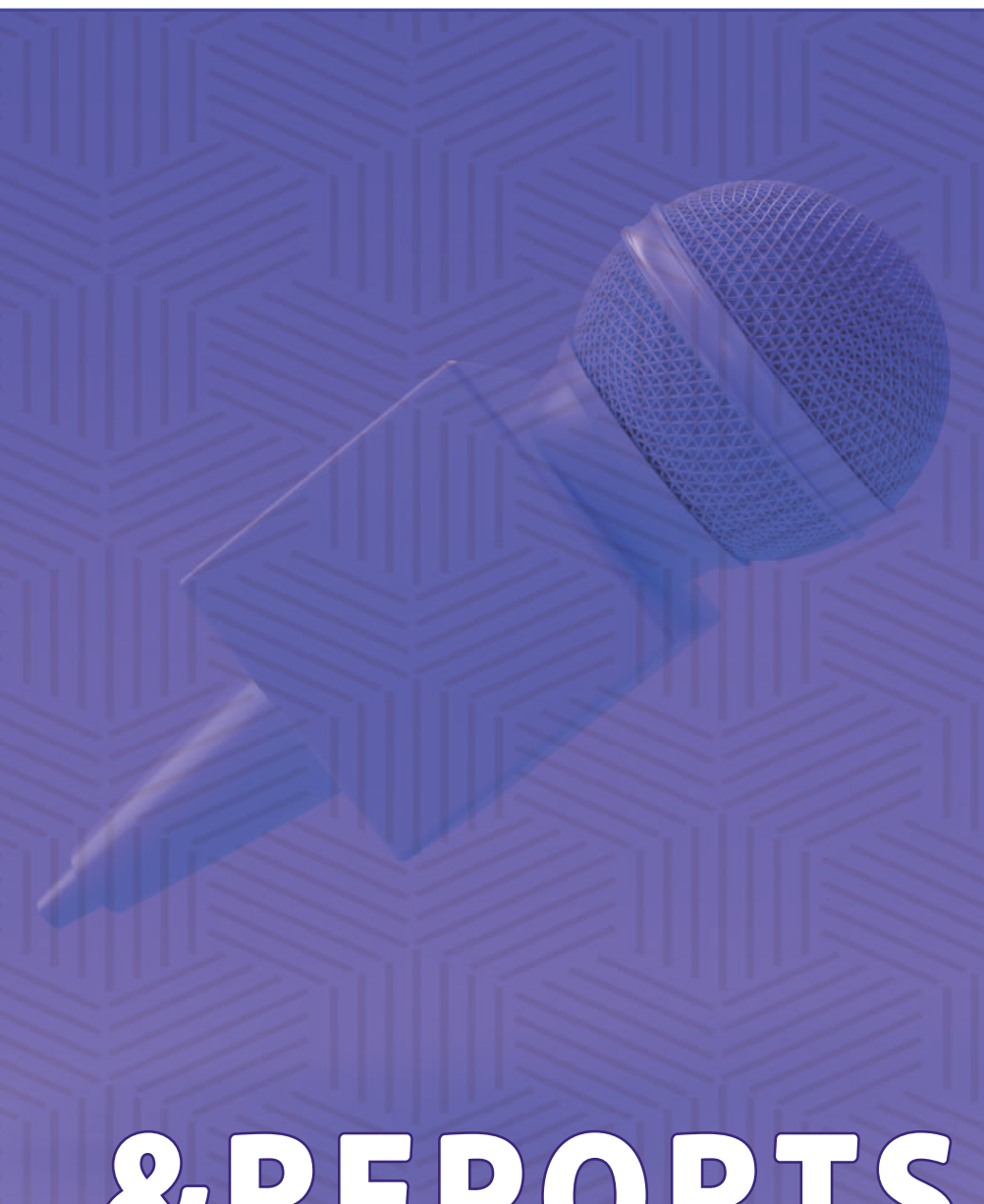
We wanted to assess the proposed legacy each candidate wanted to achieve by hosting the Summit. Side by side with Hamburg, the 2025 & 2027 editions will play a key role in Hamburg's strategy and act as important focal points and accelerators for the implementation of the Hamburg-Takt (the city's plan for the mobility transition) and the mobility transition as a whole. An important area will be to attract younger and more diverse target groups to the UITP Summits, while strengthening Hamburg's regional start-up ecosystem. Another objective is to

make the Summits accessible to non-specialists through a set of specific parallel actions. With strong support from Hamburg's stakeholder ecosystem, the Hamburg Summits should be seen as platforms and showcases for the advancement of public transport, not only by the German federal and local governments, but also by the German states and the European Commission.

In the wake of a pandemic that turned event planning upside down, what changed in your calendar and what criteria affected the organisation of your events?

Prior to 2020, UITP had already started an analysis of its events model – the pandemic only accelerated the need to be agile, to change, as well as to serve our membership as best as possible. By the end of 2021, UITP decided to implement a new event strategy, which will see our Summit become annual from 2025, but also the association's only remaining paying event where the sector meets. In parallel, UITP will strengthen its free services to members through small or mid-sized events based on local, regional or project-based needs, as well as developing its webinar offering, supporting other member-related events, and strongly developing the capacity building of its Academy programme. UITP has developed many of its medium-sized events and many structural activities in 2022 in a hybrid format, but we have to admit that this is not the way we want to go with our medium and large-sized events. Those events have served a certain purpose for which direct contact is primarily important. Our next UITP Global Public Transport Summit will be held in person, 4-7 June in Barcelona, and we look forward to continue this ongoing dynamic where our members and our industry meet again.

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Belfast: Meetings that Change Lives!



The need to meet, network and collaborate in Belfast did not disappear during the pandemic - rather it became greater than ever. **Visit Belfast** will continue to channel live events leading on its industry strengths, and converting business opportunities in a sector that will have to justify the carbon and financial costs of events.

On our last visit to the Northern Ireland capital in 2019, we referred to Belfast as “a rising star in the MICE industry, quietly moving towards the top of Europe’s meeting destinations.” Three years on, Visit Belfast, its industry partners and clients, have successfully navigated a complex environment affected by late registrations and uncertain delegate numbers, flight disruptions, supplier crisis, rising hospitality costs as well as staff shortages across the industry. “We used that challenging period to up our game on tech & hybrid, accelerate our work on sustainability, and set up pioneering sector advisory panels so that we align our business events strategy with the economic development, research and education goals of Belfast and Northern Ireland,” says **Rachael McGuickin** (pictured above), **Director of Business Development, Sustainability and Transformation at Visit Belfast**. Despite these challenges, Northern Ireland has launched two new financial support schemes for conference organisers to help clients return “live” and have secured £20.1m of new business in Belfast in 21-22, a 34% increase on the previous year. Belfast has been

recognised as one of the top sustainable destinations for tourism and events ranking 8th in the World, as the wider local industry has joined the **Green Tourism and Green Meetings** initiative, launched by Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council. “By 2023, sustainability and impact will underpin everything we do to increase the social and legacy benefits of events, while reducing carbon impact and taking a much more regenerative and circular approach,” says McGuickin. To do this, they rely on strategic partnerships with local and central governments, economic development agency (**Invest NI**), world-class universities and a network of 1,200 business, medical and academic leaders to develop legacy and impactful plans with their clients.

Despite historically difficult geopolitical conditions, economic development and tourism in the region has flourished over the past two decades. “We will be focused on ambitious but sustainable growth, securing £42m of new business events for the city.” From a tourism perspective, this will deliver key mid-week, high value visitors identified in the event bid strategy,





“ We believe in the power of events and the positive impact they can have.”

prioritising the vision of Northern Ireland’s Department for Economy in **Life Sciences and Health, Cyber Security, Financial Services and Fintech, Advanced Manufacturing and Agri-Food sectors**. “Through a pilot approach undertaken in 2022, we have also started to identify some common sustainable outcomes that Visit Belfast can measure and influence for events, such as funds and in-kind donations, local projects and social initiatives, health activities, carbon impacted, etc.,” says McGuickin. Northern Ireland has long been feted as a resilient destination – the hosting of the **One Young World Summit in Belfast** in 2023, in line with the **25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement**, adds credibility to this. “While it is difficult to predict the long-term impact of changing conditions on the macro environment, we recognise the need for greater flexibility from event organisers and collaboration with all our clients. The health and safety of all visitors remains our priority, so a range of measures remain in place at ICC Belfast to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” says **Julia Corkey** (pictured on the next page), **Chief Executive at ICC Belfast**.

As with any commercial business, ICC Belfast was not immune to the effects of the pandemic and became a COVID-safe nightingale site for nine months of 2021. However, the swift action taken at the start of the pandemic safeguarded the economic impact for the future, says our respondent: “Multi-disciplinary teams

were assembled to address client concerns with tailor-made “Survival Kits”. As a result, over 95% of booked business was retained and leveraged to secure multi-year deals with mutually beneficial commercial outcomes.” One of Northern Ireland’s unique propositions is how stakeholders can work together from venues to DMOs. This was no different during the pandemic when ICC Belfast, Visit Belfast and others secured £0.7M as part of the MICE Task and Finish Group, working under the direction of the Department for the Economy as part of the wider Tourism Recovery Group. This funding ensured that the momentum built before the pandemic was not lost and the destination remained front of mind for target audiences. There is also an open support scheme for not-for-profit organisations that can be used for events taking place between 2023-2030. “Our Sustainability and Impact Manager also offers practical advice in the form of a sustainability framework and toolkit to maximise the impact and legacy of your event,” says McGuickin. In response to the pandemic, ICC Belfast went hybrid by design and won several awards as an industry disruptor including the **Event Technology Awards’** “most innovative and tech-friendly venue”. By championing digital transformation and a data-driven approach, ICC Belfast has laid solid foundations to remain at the forefront of the MICE industry. “Over the past year, our team has trialed new methods to improve the performance of our members and our customers’ experience, adopting digital tools



and processes wherever possible to cut repetitive tasks, reduce duplication and introduce automation.” Over 100 broadcast conferences, product launches and ceremonies have taken place since the venue emerged from the extended closure period.

Improving the sustainability credentials of Belfast’s tourism and hospitality industry has been key to the city’s success, helping it climb into the GDS-Index world top ten in just two years. In June 2021, Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council launched the world’s largest green tourism city partnership – around 70% of the city’s hotel stock is now sustainability certified and this will increase to 90% by 2024. “As well as working with industry partners, we have been driving best practice through local initiatives, such as cutting waste and reusing materials, which are leading to greater circularity in the industry,” says McGuickin. In 2020, Belfast launched the 10-year resilience strategy which set out 30 transformation programmes of which “Sustainable Tourism and Events” is one of them. As a result, Visit Belfast has embedded sustainability into all areas of the business focusing on three pillars – environmental, social and economic. “In the final breath of our 3-year plan we will be developing a number of projects such as carbon measurement of Visit Belfast activities, and we are also helping our visitors to reduce their carbon impact,” says McGuickin. In late 2022, Visit Belfast officially launched its social impact flagship project “**Changing**

The Menu. For Good”, which aims to tackle food poverty in Belfast. The project will enlist local venues, caterers and event organisers to raise funds directly for local food banks, and comes at a critical time following the cost of living crisis.



“We believe in the power of events and the positive impact they can have. Our mission is that by 2024, every conference coming to Belfast will have a legacy and an impact plan,” says McGuickin. In 2023, they will launch a generic impact & legacy programme for all business events that will initially focus on themes such as Social Impact, Circular Economy, Love Local, Innovation/Education/Business, while also working with a range of strategic events on bespoke plans including **One Young World 2023**, **UK Space 2023** and **Cyber UK**. Finally, the Ambassador Circle – an extensive network of academic, medical and business professionals to support the recovery from post-pandemic events – is already the largest sales channel, providing 79% of all business events for Belfast. “Visit Belfast will double down on its sectoral approach to build compelling propositions and the business case for each opportunity by harnessing the power of our government’s 10X strategy and taking a highly strategic approach to bids and sector research,” McGuickin concludes.

“It's both the destination and the journey in **Western Australia!**”

Across Western Australia, the business events calendar is vibrant and healthy with multiple examples of winning bids and events up to 2026 and beyond. An opportunity that **Business Events Perth (BE Perth)** is optimising by working alongside Aboriginal Tourism Operators to activate a shared vision for cultural experiences in business events.

Western Australia (WA) provides diverse and unique locations to create a bespoke delegate engagement – the State's size and climate provides value opportunities at any time of year with meaningful and unforgettable experiences. A number of clients visiting Australia, particularly from high density cities, seek to experience the vastness and natural beauty that is synonymous with the Australian life. Its capital, Perth, is conveniently located close to Asia and shares the same time zone as a quarter of the world. “From aquatic playgrounds and outback oases to lively urban areas, delegates and planners can tick new experiences off their bucket list,” says **Gareth Martin, Chief Executive Officer of BE Perth**. Since the beginning of July 2022, BE Perth has already conducted over 30 client site inspections and 5 familiarisation trips aiming to ensure a mutually beneficial connection between local partners and business event organisers through face-to-face meetings. In the coming months, their business development team will have many more site activations on the agenda, in addition to a mega famil titled re-aWaken – where BE Perth will invite clients from around the world for an immersive programme.

Announced in 2021, the Western Australian Government has also made a significant contribution to supporting business events in Perth and the rest of the region, with an incentive of AUD\$15 million within the \$185 million **Reconnect WA package** to safely re-engage with the world.

Last month, BE Perth attended the Asia Pacific Incentives & Meetings Event (AIME) in Melbourne, representing WA alongside 18 WA member venues and suppliers, promoting the states diversity and offering to global decision makers on the international stage. On that note, the WA stand at AIME featured a signature artwork by an Aboriginal artist highlighting the importance of Indigenous Cultural experiences across the state. The artist, Kevin Wilson said: “The design focuses on native flora and fauna, the vibrant colours within our landscapes and nods to our Aboriginal people and communities who have cared for the land for tens of thousands of years.” This activation is part of efforts to support the delivery of the **Jina: Western Australia Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2021-2025**, which was developed by the Western Australian Government to strategically improve the engagement and opportunities for Aboriginal people to secure sustainable economic, social and job outcomes.

Beyond ancient Aboriginal storytelling, the city is also leveraging some trailblazing mediums such as virtual reality to showcase iconic experiences in the region. “In an Australian first, we produced an extensive 3D tour library allowing customers to explore a wide range of venues for their events while their travel was restricted,” says Martin.

The **new Business Event Planners Guide** has gone completely virtual, expanding its scope to better represent



members and offerings across a range of strategic industry partnerships across the state. BE Perth offers generous funding to help maximise delegate numbers and ensure the success of your event, through site inspection funding – covering airfare, accommodation and transport – event support – to develop innovative ways to showcase the destination – and destination sponsorship – to address promotional materials and local expenditure on the ground. A first-of-its-kind funding incentive, keynote speaker funding, has also been introduced, purposefully created to generate long-term strategic leads and support the immediate continuation of business events.

Each year, BE Perth runs a scholarship programme known as the **Aspire Awards Program** designed to support Western Australian researchers, academics and practitioners through sponsorship of participation in an international business event. “In 2022, we had 11 awards up for grabs, each pertaining to a different major education and research institution in WA. This is a very important programme to recognise and foster the careers of those who are doing amazing research with us.”

Events in WA are much more than networking opportunities and knowledge hubs; they also leverage the uniqueness, expertise and diversity of the destination. Targeting pre-pandemic levels, face-to-face attendance will remain crucial but integrating hybrid models and the use of an “on demand” viewing platform will continue.

At this stage, BE Perth has been exploring a number of local initiatives to start incorporating sustainable outcomes into the **BE Perth 2023 Business Plan**, which aims to align sustainability agenda, with the impact of delegates travelling to WA and related social outcomes. BE Perth has an in-house sustainability representative to help identify key areas within the organisation, and gaps in the community for sustainable investment. “Economically, funding from our key stakeholders assists us to support the recovery

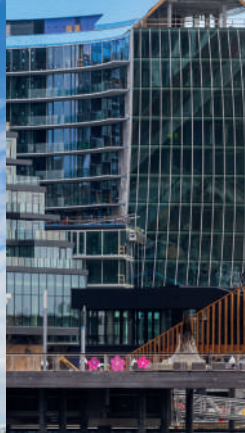
and sustainability of the larger business event industry.” WA has been at the forefront of eliminating single-use plastics by establishing a plan to tackle this issue in two phases: “we are committed to adopting green practices, in turn influencing industry and delegates to be more aware of their impact,” says Martin. Fostering stronger collaboration with industry around data collection and analysis means catalysing growth in the sector and supporting WA’s economic strategy. “Our legacy objectives continue to focus on the visitor experience and key economic sectors, while driving a platform for knowledge exchange and positive social outcomes.”

Lastly, the State Government’s economic framework: **Diversify WA**, outlines eight key sectors within WA’s expanding economy, and through an increased “Reconnect WA” funding, BE Perth aims to align a business development strategy reflected in conferences aligned to these growth areas. “This has already secured key conferences in sectors of energy, hydrogen, lithium and battery minerals, biotechnology, medical health, agriculture, and even the **World Indigenous Tourism Summit** all taking place soon,” Martin closes.

Events in the pipeline

- World Drowning Prevention Conference 2023
- 15th annual ICEF Australia and New Zealand conference 2023
- Campylobacter, Helicobacter and Related Organisms Conference 2024
- World Environmental Education Congress 2024
- Asia-Pacific Association for International Education Conference and Exhibition 2024





Cherry Blossoms – The V

Washington, DC: Connecting Businesses

Washington, DC is much more than the federal capital of the US in the minds of many event planners across the world. It is primarily a connected capital seeking event-driven social impacts with cutting-edge industries churning the city's economy, a vigorous start-up community, and an academic hotbed in the development of business conferences.

Over the past year, **Destination DC (DDC)** has reinforced its “Connected” positioning, an umbrella marketing strategy on what sets DC apart in successful meetings and events. A cornerstone of the campaign is DC’s intellectual capital and its thriving industries that attract conferences in specific sectors, such as technology, biotech/pharma, medicine, education, sustainability, transportation and government advocacy. The city’s innovation and unique industry assets, including global leaders, experts and policymakers, has also led to blooming events that attract thousands of attendees. “We know that leveraging the Connected Capital is especially important when it comes to international meetings. **Destination DC’s Ambassador Circle** is made up of regional experts in their respective professional fields to showcase industry potential and bring economic benefits from international bids,” says **Elliott L. Ferguson, II, president and CEO, Destination DC.**

Business event strategists draw on Washington, DC’s world-class events, LEED-certified architecture, and exceptional culture to attract high-caliber industry players, significant partnerships or legacy projects. In the aftermath of the pandemic, the city continues to add value by taking advantage of its unique locations and a revamped supply chain. DC now has more than 26 new hotels or renovations in the pipeline, adding more than 5,892 rooms across eight neighborhoods. The \$9.3 billion investment in development and innovation also

continues with the new **Metrorail Silver Line** connecting **Washington Dulles International Airport** to downtown. Phase two of **the Wharf** opened in October 2022, expanding the sustainable waterfront by a mile. It has public green spaces and a new hotel, and a portion of the Southwest waterfront designated as the first-ever **Mobility Innovation District (MID)**. In addition to the 15 citywides in 2022, seven international meetings brought 19,000 room nights and 10,000 attendees to the city. “In this recovery phase, association meetings want to go to geopolitically stable, established settings to ensure peak attendance and revenue. Washington, DC has seen increased interest in our destination for 2024-2026,” Ferguson states.

The city has been flexible in pivoting around short-term deals while seizing opportunities for typically non-meeting seasons. With a shorter booking window, DDC is growing corporate business opportunities to help fill hotels during need periods. “Like many destinations, we’re experiencing industry issues impacting where people will meet, including long visa wait times, airlift and the rising cost of transportation.” According to the DDC president, local industry progress will come with greater advocacy with **U.S. Travel Association and Brand USA**. “President Biden announced a new Assistant Secretary of Travel and Tourism at the U.S. Department of Commerce that





Wharf



Walter E. Washington Convention Center

will have a seat at the policy table and advocate for the industry.” DDC has recently secured new funding that will market the destination leaving a lasting impact on the local economy. “Our measurable goals are metrics related to the amount of room nights contracted and leads generated, however, we are evaluating new metrics...” says Ferguson. The state-of-the-art **Walter E. Washington Convention Center** remains highly appealing to international clients and businesses and is an important priority in the DC recovery landscape. In May 2022, the convention centre received a **WELL Health-Safety Rating** from the International WELL Building Institute for its enhanced safety and wellness measures. Washington, DC’s strategy is to attract association meetings through highly-targeted solicitation based on industry sectors, meeting timeframes in need periods, and business that is considered brand new for its ecosystem. Associations have always been an important part of the DDC strategic outlook as they work in tandem with major cities on the **Global Association Hubs Partnership**. In January, PCMA announced a new strategic partnership with the **American Geophysical Union**, a DC-based global earth and space science association with approximately 65,000 members, many of whom are climate scientists. The partnership will focus on designing sustainable events and calling for discussions around climate change.

Washington, DC is a smart city that continues to lead in sustainability (through green developments like the Wharf), innovation (like the newly designated MID) and equity by being recognised as the #1 city by the **Trust for Public Land** for its park systems. DDC engaged city partners on this journey, such as the DC Department of Energy and Environment, as well as experts from local universities. Here, sustainability has a dedicated task force that reports on city initiatives, sustainable locations and best practices. One of these, **Connected Community**, assists associations on meaningful legacy projects that align with their mission and give back to the local community. The **American Experience**

Foundation offers educational programmes, internship opportunities and scholarships to local students involved in national hospitality and tourism academies. The **DEI District** is a content hub providing resources for meeting planners, and the development of the **11th Street Bridge Park**, combining environmental, social and economic impact, is on the books. “Association Events present an opportunity to tap into the culture of the destination, support local businesses and gain a better understanding of various communities that serve the travel industry,” says Ferguson. Finally, **Washington, DC’s Mayor Muriel Bowser** recently introduced “**DC’s Comeback Plan**” and Economic Development Strategy for 2023-2027 that has both economic and social impact for the local communities. “Destination DC strives to promote and support local businesses that reflect diversity, equity and inclusion. Meetings support the local economy by connecting with the community that benefits in countless ways and can leave a lasting social impact as minority-owned businesses,” concludes Ferguson.

Events in the pipeline

Greenbuild International Conference and Expo (Sep 26-29, 2023)

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

35th International Papillomavirus Conference (Apr 17-21, 2023)

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

International Conference on Eating Disorders (Jun 1-3, 2023)

Omni Shoreham Hotel

8th World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery (Aug 27 – Sep 1, 2023)

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

**All photos courtesy of Destination DC*

Melbourne: Ushering in a New Era of Events!

Melbourne has an enviable city-wide collaborative reputation supported by an innovative and sustainable event supply chain, quality accommodation and WOW experiences unique to Melbourne. But what is the city's status and merits as a meetings and convention destination right now? Check out our conversation with the city's convention bureau.

Melbourne, Australia's second most populous city, boasts the country's largest concentration of conference facilities, conveniently located in the heart of Victoria. The convention district offers over 197,000m² of conference space, the pinnacle of which is **Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre**. It also has more than 17,000 accommodation rooms, ranging from luxurious to budget options for groups of any size. "Our infrastructure paves the way for highly successful international association events. The city is easy to navigate and invites delegates to discover its creative culture, expressed in its food, fashion, events, arts and music scene," says **Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) Chief Executive, Julia Swanson**. With an exciting range of new hotel openings this year, it is projected the state will offer 45,145 hotel rooms by the end of 2023. The city is also moving forward with more dynamic projects, including **TFE Hotel's** \$340 million which will include a 1,000-capacity conference centre where delegates can enjoy spectacular 360-degree views of the city. Another exciting addition projected to open on 2026 is the new **Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre**, which will feature a 200-room luxury hotel and retail spaces, with a 1,000-seat venue and 3,700m² of multi-purpose space. The B2B benefits of business events are well recognised, with exhibitions creating trade opportunities and cash flow for businesses.

Post-pandemic

Melbourne quickly stepped out of the starting gates in 2022 with greater clarity and confidence, hosting the first international trade show in Australia – the **Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME)**

– to mark the renaissance of the business events industry nationally and across the Asia Pacific region. From there they moved from 0 to 100 with the return of international association events including the **International Conference on Emergency Medicine (ICEM)**, **World Congress on Hair Research**, and **IATA Slot Conference**. "For me, a personal favourite was seeing the highly-anticipated **2022 World Barista Championships** and **World Brewers Cup** as part of the **Melbourne International Coffee Expo 2022**, attracting a record 15,056 delegates across the four days. Overall, we saw delegates' confidence in attending the events and a strong desire to meet in person," reveals Dawson. Throughout the COVID chapter, MCB has kept its international offices open to preserve client relationships, which has paid off for its business events calendar throughout 2023 expected to attract over 67,000 delegates across the 99 events confirmed to date – including 10 hero association events throughout the year. And just like the **Australian Open** is the first tennis grand slam of the year, **AIME** – the leading MICE trade show in the Asia Pacific region – has kicked off the international business event calendar for 2023 and celebrated a 30-year milestone anniversary. This is a significant testament to the longevity and importance of this major event to the global industry.

The association pipeline





May 2023 is in full swing with 23 events scheduled across the city, including the **Rotary International Convention; the International Conference on Software Engineering** and **SpineWeek**, with around 17,500 delegates anticipated to attend these events alone. “Melbourne continues to be a major drawcard for many international associations. Currently, we have 141 international and national business events confirmed from now until 2028, worth more than \$895 million and expected to attract close to 170,000 delegates...” enough to fill the city 19 times over. Delivering value to Melbourne’s stakeholders and partners remains paramount, while driving an annual bidding cycle from highly respected international associations for Victoria. This has secured events such as the **World Chambers Congress 2025** and supporting clients with the delivery of their events such as the **International Congress on Genetics** in July 2023 and the **Lions Clubs International Convention** in June 2024. “Our forward pipeline is healthy. International client sentiment is positive, and the outlook is very optimistic,” says Dawson. The MCB team is also ready to provide a suite of services to event planners in the lead up to, during and after international business events. This could take the form of introduction to various government, commercial and investment bodies of the Government of Victoria on international soil, a local organising committee, a dedicated convention services department, and/or strong support from local industry and academia in the access to the MCB Knowledge Partner network. “To make events accessible for all delegates, MCB can also offer a number of benefits including travel grants, discounted airfares, accommodation together with free public transport in the city’s CBD.”



To make events accessible for all delegates, MCB can also offer a number of benefits including travel grants, discounted airfares, accommodation together with free public transport in the city’s CBD.





Building legacies...

MCB's **Knowledge Partnership Program** has been a powerful tool for sharing the knowledge capital that an event can unlock, and has contributed significantly to shaping the future of local industry with legacy building. Its collaborators include the **Doherty Institute, AusBiotech, the Burnet Institute, Bio21 Institute, Swinburne University, RMIT** and **Melbourne Connect**. "Many international associations that chose Melbourne for their conferences highlighted the access to the city's research institutes and the links to its academics," says Swanson. To add to the success of Melbourne's Biomedical precinct – one of the world's leading research centres for health, technology, life sciences and education – the city is also investing in two new precincts to bolster events in the knowledge sector: The **Fishermans Bend Innovation Project** aims to put Melbourne at the forefront of global innovation in advanced manufacturing, engineering and design in a joint cooperation between industry and academia – the University of Melbourne leads the way by opening its new engineering and design campus on site from 2025; another infrastructure development will be the **Arden Precinct**, further transforming Melbourne into a globally recognised destination for innovation and industry collaboration, by leveraging the work of the city's existing **Biomedical Precinct**. "Our continued focus is on delivering an event calendar with high yield events aligned with Victorian government priority sectors." MCB has now introduced a **Social Outcomes Strategy**, encouraging event owners to incorporate specialist legacy concepts focused on delivering wider social and economic outcomes when hosting their events in Melbourne.

...and sustainable events to come!

On the technology side, MCB offers a state-of-the-art interactive experience that allows association planners, organisers and delegates to choose their own Melbourne adventure as they embark on a visual event planning journey. "The new **Ready.Set.Melbourne** interactive video is somewhere between a video show reel and a choose-your-own-adventure book," explains Dawson. This multimedia tool thus provides thorough local knowledge to host, plan and participate in a conference or association meeting through an immersive inspection tour. Updated throughout the year, the **Melbourne e-guide** also connects event planners and delegates with inspiring experiences in Melbourne, mapping out travel itineraries and providing a seamless event planning. Furthermore, Melbourne is ranked the #1 sustainable city in Australia according to the GDS-Index and offers plenty of needs a dash in between sustainable-oriented suppliers and venues to choose from across all touchpoints of a business event. Many international associations wish to organise their events by tailoring them to sustainability standards, and this has been a must-have in bidding and operations across the board. "The resources available on our website and in our sustainability toolkit will help event organisers to minimise their carbon footprint." MCB has recently implemented its Sustainability Strategy looking at how they can encourage key stakeholders to make changes to limit their environmental impact. Victoria's circular economy plan, **Recycling Victoria: A New Economy**, meets this systemic shift to reduce waste (banning single-use plastics) and drive eco-friendly recycling and reuse of resources for a more sustainable and prosperous economy.



Predictions on Top Trends to Watch Over 2023

2023 looms full of possibilities and opportunities after three lengthy years that have accentuated a growing awareness around sustainability, diversity and inclusion, as well as a focus on creating valuable in-person experiences. Consequently, several topics have taken association executives and event planners by storm with tight budgets, the work-life balance brought about by teleworking, data privacy, webinar placement and the Pandora's box of supply chains and inflation. We asked **Julia Swanson, MCB Chief Executive**, what the top trends are in 2023 for seamless events and personalised experiences:

1. The power of human connection

One silver-lining of the pandemic is that the power of human connection is appreciated more than ever. We've seen a strong return to face-to-face events and those that focus on the in-person experience for delegates are thriving. Event organisers are designing their programmes to create meaningful, planned networking opportunities as well as creating an environment for serendipity. We have seen this trend emerge across the latter half of 2022 when **CODA Conference** came to Melbourne and it is set to continue. Using human-centered design, putting delegates first at their event. The Organising Committee's goal was to deliver a memorable delegate experience catered to their expressed needs and expectations, using audience survey data collected at previous event to inform meeting design.

2. Ethics-led decision making

We are seeing a lot of decision makers thinking about 'what they do' as well as 'how should they do it' in line with the growth of ESG focus. Decision makers are considering geo-political factors, human rights considerations and overall value of a destination when selecting where to hold their event. This also extends to the event itself, where sponsorships are being examined for values alignment as well as commercial factors. Furthermore, selection of brand ambassadors and speakers are crucial for authenticity and integrity of the event.

3. Cultural immersion

Event organisers are looking to create authentic and memorable experiences for their delegates, and what better way than to connect at a deeper level with their destination. The days of flying into a destination and staying in the convention precinct are over. Delegates want meaningful, enriching experiences from their travel. A big focus for event planners is to connect with the local community and create learning experiences with the First Nations community.

4. Resurgence of Asia

Asia Pacific is the fastest growing region in the world, yet has been slower to emerge from the pandemic. With China on the road to recovery, this will spur significant economic growth across the region and tourism and events travel will rise significantly. Aviation is growing considerably, enabling new markets to open up. Further afield, we are seeing strong growth out of India with new and existing travellers looking for new experiences.

5. Flexible event models

We will see short lead times remain, with agile decision making, demand for technology solutions and flexibility in contracting remain. Event planners are keen to explore new models, such as shared risk and multi-year deals with venues. Relationships have been crucial during the pandemic, and trusted partnerships are key to this.



IMEX Frankfurt 2023:

A Trade Show With Heart for an Industry with Muscle

“At the heart of each IMEX show is a living, breathing marketplace – the fundamental and effective way of doing business that powers our industry,” explains **Carina Bauer, CEO of the IMEX Group**. “We’ve carefully curated all elements of this year’s IMEX Frankfurt show – from the layout, the education and the experiential – to complement and enhance these in-person business conversations.”

Trends-wise the show will reflect many of the big shifts and changes in the meetings and events industry globally. As a buying force, the Chinese market is back and Asia in general is flourishing, driving event demand, locally and internationally. The big tech companies in Korea are one of several factors behind this growth.

International hotel groups plus smaller boutique hotels will be making their presence felt on the show floor, many of them introducing new service offerings or properties. Frankfurt itself has added to its hotel portfolio with several new openings including the impressive Scandic Hafepark and B’Mine, the first WorldHotels Crafted Collection hotel in Germany, and NH hotels signature Nhow brand which IMEX is showcasing as hosted buyer accommodation in the city.

Destinations, venues and suppliers span the world and include Croatia, Malaysia, Peru, Portugal, Ras Al Khaimah (UAE) and Spain. Hotel groups Hilton, IHG Hotels & Resorts and Radisson are among the exhibitors expanding their presence onsite as well as Los Cabos and Morocco. Sarawak, the largest of Malaysia’s 13 states, will have its own stand for the first time.

Experts from Google, Microsoft & Pinterest

An extensive programme of over 150 educational and networking events begins with dedicated learning sessions the day before the show, on Monday 22 May.

Monday’s programme is tailored to specific sections of the event professional community:

- The complexities of delivering events in a hybrid world will be explored in detail at Association Focus, delivered in association with ICCA, AC Forum, AMC

Institute, ASAE, ESAE and Global Association Hubs;

- A stellar line-up of experts from world-renowned companies spearhead **Exclusively Corporate**, IMEX’s high-level, invite-only event for corporate event specialists. This includes Microsoft’s Bob Bejan and Salesforce’s Charlotte Pedersen who will go head-to-head in **The tale of two titans** – the evolution of event strategy and experience design;
- Year on year **IMEX’s Agency Directors Forum** is redesigned to meet the prevailing business needs of senior agency professionals. Hot topics are set to include people and talent management; succession planning; business drivers, trends and technology and new business strategies, plus new revenue generation models;
- New co-located events for 2023 include **MICE Impact Academy**, an exclusive invite-only education event for German planners, and **Event Leaders Exchange**, a meeting for this two-year old community of senior event corporate event leaders from 3,000+ headcount organisations.

Human Nature underpins learning programme

The IMEX 2023 Talking Point – **Human Nature** – provides a steer for education and interaction. Carina explains: “Our industry is in the business of human gatherings, face-to-face connections and building communities – from driving business growth to developing relationships that span the world. This need to come together and meet is innate to our human nature.

The result is a set of education tracks reflecting the way people live and work now. **Event Marketing** is a new addition, while **Technology** and **Innovation; Trends and Research** and **Experience Design** are tried and tested and always in demand. A new **Business Practices** track will include the ever-popular Event Planner Toolkit while a **People and Planet** track will specifically address Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Professional and Personal Development, Leadership, Culture and Engagement, Wellbeing and Sustainability.





Children as crisis management teachers

New headline sessions will feature contributions from values and human behaviour expert, David Allison. From deep inside the data, David brings a clear and powerful truth to transform the way we work and the world we live in. “Our values unite us,” he says. “They can light the way for purpose-driven brands and lead us to a more values-driven world.”

International crisis leader Thomas Lahnthaler will talk about building successful remote teams. He’ll also join Eszter Mattiassich-Aszody, Head of Global Events at Siemens Healthineers, to explore leadership and life lessons from children. Thomas explains: “Observing my children is looking at crisis managers in action. The skills that children execute daily are what we as adults have somehow unlearned because of our experience.”

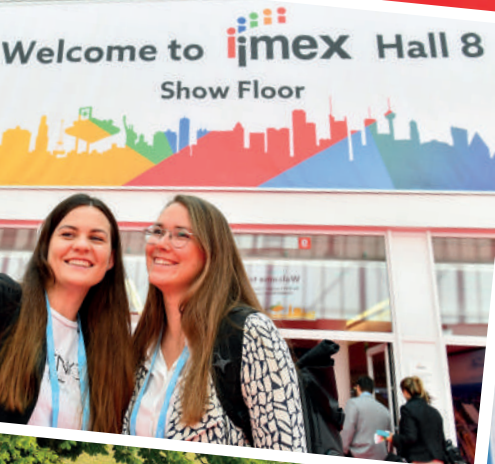
The **Listening Lab** returns with both education sessions and bookable one-to-one coaching. Sessions will explore how people’s individual nature’s influence their professional personas as Dawn Wray, coach and co-founder of The Listening Collective, explains: “We’re learning that people may say to us ‘I want to work on my presentation skills’, but once they start talking, they talk more about how they feel when they’re presenting.”

New, single IMEX account

IMEX has also redesigned the online registration process for its shows. With a focus on improved marketing tools and business insights for exhibitors, to more and better connection opportunities for all attendee types, the new process means every participant has a single IMEX account for both shows. Pre-scheduled appointment functionality has been enhanced while the IMEX app has also been improved. The result is a faster customer journey intended to connect buyers and exhibitors to each other in a way that boosts business and networking return.

IMEX Frankfurt evolves every year and May’s 2023 edition will be no exception. The event will take place 23 – 25 May this year. Attendees can expect a few surprises – the IMEX Group is set to evolve even further, with more details to be revealed onsite.

For further press information, please contact Emma Blake: emmablake@clareville.co.uk



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ASSOCIATION & PCO



WSO & The World Stroke Congress 2022

How an Association brings a world together!

AUTHOR: ANDREA PEYCHEVA – KENES GROUP, MARKETING COORDINATOR

The World Stroke Organization is the only global body focused solely on the research, treatment, and challenges of stroke. The WSO's efforts culminate each year in the World Stroke Congress (WSC) – an annual meeting where specialists gather to discuss the latest scientific advancements in the field. The Congress last year took place in Singapore – WSC 2022 – and aimed at ensuring that people in the South and Southeast Asian regions with lived experience of stroke and health professionals alike were visible.

Legacy – Outcomes & Impacts

The motto of last year's Congress was "One Voice for Stroke". The tangible legacy that the meeting left for all congresses to come was the importance of being together and speaking in "One Voice" – as the only way to move forward and overcome challenges.

Association and members alike, the outcomes of the meeting were clear and achieved – important challenges were discussed, experience was exchanged, people met in-person. This was the first onsite meeting after two years of virtual events and a clear outcome was the success of bringing back people together.

Professional & Community Benefits

It is not only that WSC 2022 brought the stroke world to Singapore – the event had big community and professional benefits for the Southeast Asian Region. It brought delegates from **India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand**. A number of side events took place that facilitated knowledge exchange and important discussions on latest developments:

- The **Stroke Exchange Forum** facilitated exchange between stroke advocates in South and Southeast Asia. The event included panel discussions on collaboration and meaningful involvement and status of stroke care in the region;
- **World Stroke Day** (29 October) in Singapore provided a public focal point for stroke awareness.

Key landmarks around the city including, Helix Bridge, Singapore Flyer, the Marine Bay Sands Hotel and Gardens by the Bay were lit blue – the color of stroke awareness, highlighting the message #PreciousTime;

- A **stroke awareness walk** (Annual Walkathon) with the Singapore Stroke Association was launched by the Minister of Social and Family Development;
- A new **WSO Stroke Certification programme** in India was launched aiming to drive access to quality stroke care.

Delegates Expectations & Objectives

Delegates were looking forward to meeting in-person once again after two years of virtual events. Most participants signed up to attend onsite. Full session halls and lively discussions clearly portrayed the excitement and buzz of the meeting. In the meantime, everyone enjoyed the side events to the fullest.

Long-term results and the road ahead

The stroke community is already looking forward to WSC 2023. The activities of the 2022's brought many people to Singapore thus enhancing the city's economic, scientific, cultural and touristic appeal. The combination of the four was perfectly illustrated by the lighting up of key Singaporean sites.

Delegates turned into brand advocates thanks to social media – **digital conversations were flourishing**; a significant increase in social media activity was observed. A record was set with more than **5M hashtag impressions** (#WSC2022) – nearly **1M more** compared to WSC 2021! Pictures, selfies and videos were all around!

We can't wait to see what 2023 will bring. But one thing is for sure – if the community keeps building on the legacy, activities, and initiatives of WSC 2022, success will certainly follow.





IAPCO's Annual Meeting & General Assembly 2023:

Creating an Impact on the Industry with Inspiring Technology!

The 53rd edition of the Annual Meeting and General Assembly (AM&GA) of **The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO)** proved to be one of the best with over 160 in attendance from 31 countries gathered in Israel's capital, Jerusalem.

The CEOs, Owners and Operators representing events organisations from around the world got together for 3 days of quality education, engaging experiences and networking opportunities designed to equip them with ways to make an impact on their company culture.

Held in Jerusalem, one of the oldest cities in the world, which is known as the Start-Up Nation and a hot spot of entrepreneurship innovation, the city provided a great backdrop for delegates to gather for the event centred around the theme of **Inspiring Technology, Creating an Impact**.

The event was built around 11 keynote lectures and workshops on the themes of **Leadership and Management, Team Diversification, Social Listening and Engaging the Next Generation**, and included keynote lectures with topics including **The Inner Development Goals, Sustainable Events to The New World of Work and Empowering Future Leaders and Positive Change Makers**.

The event also included two panel discussion sessions with IAPCO Partners. The Destination Partners session tackled the increasingly important topic of sustainability. With IAPCO focusing its attention on four of the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, including Goal 17 – **Partnerships for the Goals**, this session brought together IAPCO's eight Destination Partners to address what they do as a collective group. Each Destination Partner selected two SDGs for their presentation to outline the awareness, challenges, and actions their destination is taking to encompass the three dimensions of sustainability – social, environmental, and economic.

The Strategic Partners panel session discussed the current state and future of our global industry with the six invited CEOs and Presidents of meetings and events industry associations. The session was facilitated by Master of Ceremonies, Loren Christie, who was joined onstage by Tina Wehmeir, CEO of AMC Institute, Sarah Markey-Hamm, President of IAPCO and Philippe Beille, President of IFES whilst Luis Ricardo Martinez Fajardo, President of COCAL, Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA and Sheriff Karamat, President and CEO of PCMA joined virtually from around the globe.

During the AM&GA, IAPCO signed new **Strategic Partnership MoUs** with **AMC Institute**, the **International Federation of Exhibition & Event Services (IFES)** and the **Latin American Meetings Industry Federation (COCAL)**. Approved by the IAPCO Council unanimously at their previous meeting in Dubai, these new collaborations will bring added value to IAPCO's memberships through engagement, education and combined advocacy initiatives, and see experts from both partner organisations share knowledge and educational content through industry events, seminars and webinars, providing visibility, online recognition and business development opportunities.

IAPCO AM&GA 2023 marked the start of a new presidency tenure for Sarah-Markey-Hamm, CEO of ICMS following her one-year tenure as President-Elect since her election at IAPCO's 2022 AM&GA in Rome. Sarah will be leading IAPCO for two years as President following which she will serve as the association's Immediate Past-President.

IAPCO members present at the AM&GA, as well as many joining online, voted through in-app and ballots to re-elect Sissi Lygnou, CEO of AFEA Travel Congress Services and elected Nicola Testai, CEO of OIC Group.

Additionally, the new **Jan Tonkin Next Generation Leadership Bursary programme** for APAC Region, in collaboration with New Zealand International Convention





Centre, was announced. This is the first programme of its kind and has been named in recognition of the longstanding contribution **Jan Tonkin, Managing Director at The Conference Company**, continues to make to IAPCO and our community. It will enable next-generation members of our community to apply for bursary support to attend future AM&GAs. Similar programmes will be launched in Europe and LATAM regions in the near future.



The Jerusalem AM&GA marks 2 years since the pandemic, which IAPCO sees off in a strong position with 100% membership retention, an increase in new membership applications and a heightened interest from industry suppliers to support IAPCO activities. The culmination of a successful 53rd AM&GA was the icing on the cake for IAPCO as the event received the 3rd highest ranking in 20 years as per the feedback from the attendees.

IAPCO EDGE Seminar 2023:

Another Meeting Point for Event Professionals

Reflect, Reconnect and Reimagine was the theme for this year's **European IAPCO EDGE seminar** which took place over 3 days on 17-19 January in the beautiful city of Geneva, Switzerland.

An EDGE seminar is a highly interactive programme for meeting professionals who wish to network with peers from PCOs, convention bureaus, convention centres, and associations from around the world and enhance their careers in a practical way. The sold-out EDGE Geneva was hosted by IAPCO-accredited PCO **Symporg** and drew a record 86 attendees from 20 nations, including Canada, UAE and Australia.

Education

Nicky McGrane (CPI), Mathias Posch (ICS), and Oscar Cerezales (MCI group), all recognised experts in the meetings and events industry, taught classes on bidding, international trends, people/project/time management, budgeting, and risk management.

Highlights

- **Sustainability in event management** – Mathias Posch, Chair of the IAPCO Training Academy, offered a fresh viewpoint on this pressing issue for

the sector. “Sustainability encompasses much more than just environmental preservation. By conserving resources, expenses can be greatly decreased so budget is not an obstacle for change”, Mathias said.

- **Mental health** – “We place a very high value on providing quality and customer service in our workplace and yet we frequently neglect to take care of ourselves in our daily lives.”
- **Guest panel discussion on collaborative bidding** – Conducted by Nicky McGrane and centred on what associations anticipate from the destination and the PCO.
- **Geneva Centre for Security Policy’s head of leadership, Peter Cunningham Keynote Address** – An illuminating session on leadership and personal development. Alvin Toffler’s prediction that “The





“I highly recommend the IAPCO EDGE seminar to anyone in the MICE industry, no matter what stage of your career you are in. The presentations are worthwhile, the speakers excellent and the contacts you make very valuable.”

– Vanessa Reis, Head of Zurich Convention Bureau Zürich Tourism



“IAPCO Edge Seminar blew me away. From the knowledge and experience of the speakers to their openness and honesty with fellow industry colleagues. It was a powerful few days that gave me a fresh perspective on my role and the industry. Everyone should attend the Edge Seminar at least once.”

– Emma Slattery, Senior Account Manager, Conference Partners International

illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn” served as his closing statement.

Socials

Participants enjoyed a fabulous social programme and got to know each other outside of the classroom thanks to the support of the Geneva Convention Bureau, Manotel, and Palexpo.

Highlights

- A typical cheese fondue dinner served in the setting of an authentic Swiss mountain chalet, complete with live music (accordion, cow bells, and Alphorn) set the stage for a light-hearted evening where people connected and shared stories on long trestle tables.
- A tour of Palexpo.
- Villa Sarasin – Newfound friends enjoyed an elegant meal and let loose on the dance floor in the opulent Florentine.
- Attending an IAPCO Edge Seminar is a memorable experience. EDGE Geneva provided attendees with plenty of ideas to reflect upon and reimagine as well as a network of 86 new industry peers with whom they made connections for life.

“The IAPCO EDGE seminar provided excellent industry insight, very well-thought-through content, and was easy to implement into daily work life. It was a great event for networking and bringing different parts of the industry together. I would highly recommend attending the EDGE seminar in the future.”

– Esra Güler, MICE Director, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency

Letz! Legacy in **Luxembourg!**

When you search the web for “legacy of events”, you will get 1,340 million results in less than a second. Doing the same search for “legacy of convention center”, you will get 49 million results. And yet, we believe that the buildings in which events take place can play a very important role when it comes to creating a legacy.

AUTHORS: PATRICK HOFFNUNG, CEO ECCL; SVEN BOSSU, CEO AIPC

Event legacy can take many shapes and forms, but one of the most common ones is that organisers want delegates to go back home feeling inspired, energised and with a set of “calls for action” which they can start working on the moment they are back home. Having great speakers, stimulating interaction and facilitated networking are all crucial to achieve this objective. However, without an inspiring environment which offers a unique user experience, it will be a lot harder.

That is why architects, such as the award-winning Luxembourg based Nico Steinmetz, focus on user experience and community building when designing venues. Delegates will no longer leave the comfort of their homes/offices, just to sit in a large ballroom and listen for hours to people giving lectures, an evolution which was accelerated as a result of COVID-19 and the increased use of digital for dissemination of knowledge. Events need to be carefully designed, offering different types of experiences in function of the goal to be achieved and using all the assets the venue can offer.

The **European Convention Center of Luxembourg (ECCL)** – re-opened 10 years ago – was designed to offer such a range of user experiences for a very specific audience: the **EU Council of Ministers**. As you can imagine, it is an audience with very diverse needs. There is the need to have formal meetings in an environment which feels “safe” and offers all the facilities needed. At the same time, there is the need for discrete bilateral discussions, often far less formal but not less important to make progress on the challenges the EU faces. And of course, not unlike any other event, there is the need for informal networking. The ECCL offers all the facilities to cover for these

needs and experience, but combines it with an architecture which brings in lots of natural light and with a use of colors and materials which create a sense of harmony. Similar features can be found in other venues such as **ICC Sydney** or the **BMO Centre** which will open its doors in 2024: a clear focus on user experience with lots of light, flexible use of spaces and a sober, streamlined design, offering organisers the ideal platform to achieve the objectives outlined above.

Creating the right atmosphere has indeed often proved crucial when it comes to legacy. A great historical example is the **Solvay Conference of 1911**, which brought 18 top scientists from across the world together for lectures, formal and informal discussions on science. The venue – the Metropole Hotel in Brussels – allowed to create an atmosphere in which the attendees felt comfortable in sharing their ideas (while not necessarily agreeing on everything), which was the key objective of the organiser. Now, this meeting is considered a turning point in science, when classical physics was about to give way to quantum theory, forever changing the field.

For any organiser, it is of key importance to have a lasting impact or legacy. This can take the shape of a scientific breakthrough, an agreement on measures to address climate change, technological innovations and so much more. We like to think that the convention centre design can play a crucial role in making this happen and invite you to discover for yourself at the **AIPC Annual Conference 2023**, taking place at the ECCL.



About AIPC

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





It's Not a Meeting, It's Not a Congress, It's Not an Event – It's the **Legacy of Your Organisation!**

So, here we are in 2023, and everyone is concerned about the “future” of non-profit meetings and events:

“Covid changed everything.”

“People have gotten used to not travelling.”

“The cost of everything is driving attendees away, or to virtual attendance.”

If you are waiting for me to deny any of these, keep waiting. Yes, to a large degree, these concerns about meeting and events are true. I've been in the association management/meeting planning profession for a very long time, and I believe these next few years will be more challenging to the meetings industry than anything it has faced since 9/11.

Side note: it's scary how many readers of this article probably weren't even in the meetings business when that happened.

We certainly have had to adjust to a lot of changes in the past few years, changes that will be with us for a very long time, if not permanently. However, that doesn't mean we have to start lowering expectations, cutting budgets, and making sure every moment of our events is available remotely!

We just have to get back to the basics. We have to remember what our meetings and events bring to our organisation and, more importantly, to the industries, professions, and communities we represent.

Step back for a moment and consider:

1. Your meetings and events are among your organisation's **most valuable member benefits**. Yes, your members and attendees have to pay additional fees to attend, but look at what many of these meetings provide...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



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- a one stop opportunity for educational programming which can lead to acquiring **accreditation and certification credits, and accompanying professional development skills;**
- an ability (as vendors and exhibitors) to literally have the organisation **bring potential customers and clients to them as well as providing opportunities for customer/client retention;**
- both organised and informal opportunities to meet fellow industry or professional members (yes, networking), **which can lead to career opportunities, new business partnerships and relationships, new personal friendships, the creation of new support groups.**

Remember the basics – we’re not promoting meetings – we’re promoting the **value of our meetings.**

2. Your meetings and events are, by far, your organisation’s best opportunities to **enhance visibility, credibility and influence in your industry, profession, or community.**

- our events are where the greatest number of not only our members but also our other stakeholders (public officials, industry partners, media, other associations/organisations, etc.) will be gathered together. **It’s THE place to make those stakeholders glad that that they are working with and supporting us.**
- our meetings are a chance to remind our attendees why our organisation exists. We can reflect on our

organisation’s mission, recount what we’ve done over the years to help members, remind members of our **value to their businesses or professional careers, and reinforce our impact on society in general via our public service, conservation, and/or humanitarian activities.**

3. Meetings and events are a **showcase for our organisation on the global stage.**

We don’t want to reduce our association’s essence down to a social media presence that drives everything to all-encompassing website.

Let me take that back – I don’t want that to be the essence of the association I manage. I’m afraid that’s exactly what is happening to too many organisations.

More than anything else, association management is a people profession. Our meetings are where the leaders of our organisations, industry, profession, and community gather. It’s where we learn more about them, as well as them learning more about us. It’s where our members hear and see and **meet** the people they know and respect in our industry or profession, and **that’s a “value” of our meeting that cannot be measured but will surely be remembered – especially at renewal time.**

Our organisational meeting and events are where we not only talk about the legacy our association has left to our stakeholders, **it’s also where those legacies are created.**

Destination selection depends heavily on the attractiveness of the venue, the social capital and its perceived value, but also on the partners on the ground who can offer a perfect experience. Destination management companies (DMCs) have always been great ambassadors for their cities and countries, upholding their features and merits when choosing the best destination for an event. **Euromic** is a member-owned not-for-profit association of DMCs with a proven track record of delivering exceptional events around the world. This year they celebrate their 50th anniversary, bringing decades of industry experience to the table with a portfolio of 51 handpicked and established members ready to help associations find their dream conferences.

“Demand for events and **human-level connection** is now a **high priority**”

On this special date, we spoke to **executive director, Huw Tuckett**, about the state of the industry and how his membership is coping with digital tools, environmental certifications, the rebound of business, and female empowerment.

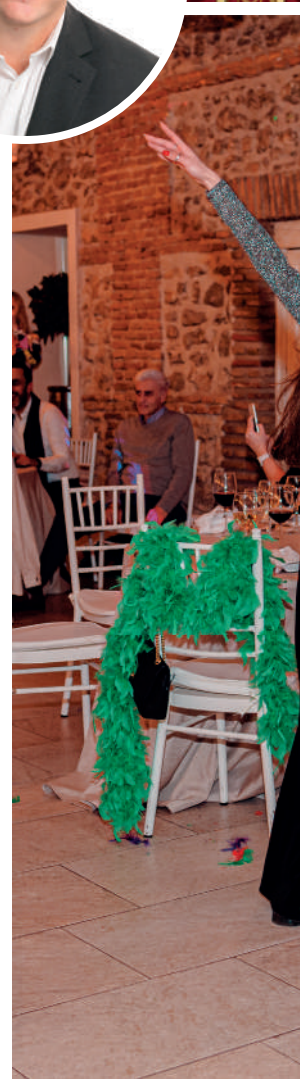
What does the world of destination management companies look like in 2023?


DMCs were in a tough place during the pandemic, having been caught in between client cancellations and supplier deposits. However, our members handled themselves very well and it was evident that those who established close relationships with clients and took better care of their deposits came out of the pandemic much stronger. They are seen today as strategic partners. In general, the perception of DMCs has changed a lot. In the early days, they were more order takers when clients merely booked services through them. During the pandemic, they started to take on negotiation terms, sharing cost containment strategies and adding value through their creativity and event services. Those first 18 months of re-bookings, cancellations and false starts, marked a difficult period working for very little revenue. As the world began to open up, they had to adapt to the circumstances, ensuring that all COVID-related protocols were developed and implemented in their frameworks. It was then that euromic came into play by helping our members to redefine force majeure contracts, sharing best practices and explaining how to implement COVID

protocols. Costs are a huge factor, but I think now the need for companies to reconnect with partners and employees and get back on the business circuit has been vital to the return of events.

What are the criteria and pre-requisites you ask from your members to join the circle?

One of the criteria we have is that our constituents are member-owned and operated DMCs, encouraging proximity to the company holder. We are incredibly protective of the euromic brand and therefore quite strict about who we allow into the association. The process is usually by invitation, so we are the ones who screen and select the pool of candidates. With our 50 years of existence, we have an excellent understanding of the whole supply chain and who is a DMC leader in a particular country. Even our members share affiliations with other industry-related associations. When we spot a potential target, we request a due diligence process with financial information, customer and supplier testimonials. This process is then forwarded to the euromic Board, which after analysing the data submits the final decision to all members. In fact, it is the members themselves who





have the final say on inbound admissions, considering the abilities, suitability and added value to the organisation.

What business visitors want when they travel to a destination today?

I would say the number one criteria is human connection. I think the pandemic and the webinars have done enormous damage to personal relationships. When you look at the work-from-home phenomenon, this may be one of the strongest reasons why so many organisations are losing their corporate culture. It is very difficult to communicate that culture from a distance. Coming together at live events can be an ideal opportunity to reinforce values and identity through new itineraries and programmes for people to reconnect. Not just in the boardroom, but on a coffee break where global partners and colleagues can exchange ideas and perspectives without pressure from the board. Simultaneously, we are also seeing the emergence of various exclusive activities, incentives, *bleisure* and *workations*. Another of the threats I see is that many organisations have been decimated in terms of talent and personnel and will necessarily have to recruit again. After the pandemic, it only took a few months for them to face a period of exceptional activity. For lack of a better word, the industry is pretty tired right now.

After the twists and turns that have affected the global travel industry these past three years, how are new travel trends affecting DMCs?



Demand for events, business travel and human-level connection for corporate companies is now a high priority. As far as the industry is concerned, sustainability is definitely a huge factor going forward for everyone but especially for the younger generations. We have just embarked on a great sustainability journey within euromic when we decided last year that all our members must have a sustainability certification. We were awarded by a company called **Biosphere** with a partnership that assigned us the role of global ambassadors in this environmental commitment. All of our members have also signed a diversity and inclusion policy, because that is also on the agenda to come. Of course, the impact of technology these days is huge with many digital developments in the way proposals are made. On the other hand, getting new blood into the industry is a challenge - many young leaders are not 100% sure they want to build a career in the events industry due to its turmoil and volatility. However, what we are seeing is a cross-generational collaboration hub with our veterans and older members, which has helped to build a younger leaders programme within euromic. It's about providing training, support and mentoring, while also highlighting the advantages of working in destination management.

How can this booming emergence of digital platforms such as zoom and webinars peacefully coexist with the work of its members on the ground?

When we talk about the MICE industry, it depends on which segment you are looking at. What we are already seeing is that technical or administrative meetings for governance or regulatory purposes are shifting to online. When it comes to incentive trips, product launches, scientific conferences, educational seminars, it only makes sense to engage the public at a personal and face-to-face level. When you're looking to inspire, motivate, or connect on another level, there's no substitute for physical meetings. The two virtual general meetings we held during the two years of the pandemic could not have been more different from the last one we held in person, in Madrid this year. We still had people zooming in and attending virtually, but the feeling in the room and the conversations we had took our work to a higher level. Virtual meetings are great, but what organisations are missing is the five minutes that happen before the meeting and the five minutes that happen after the meeting. Hybrid and webinars have their own place and are not going away, but I think nothing beats the power of human connection. However, we have to justify this, the objectives of the event must be very clear and with sustainability in mind.

What is the importance of CSR policies today to convince clients and advocate for destinations in such a competitive market?

Extremely important. It's a big deal for corporate clients, but other than that, it's also the right thing to do. One of our ethical values at euromic is to respect and consider everyone on the planet and the planet itself. The fact that we have more women with seats on the euromic Board this year is yet another stepping stone for female empowerment internally. Getting back to sustainability, unfortunately incentive trips and events by their nature are not sustainable. To put 100 of your best performers on a plane and flying them to an event on the other side of the world is not a good starting point. The industry has to change and move towards a more sustainable direction. By instance, we are very aware of the greenwashing event that is happening right now. That's why we decided to partner with Biosphere, looking with them at the 17 UN SDGs in their entirety and how we can apply them to our membership. We need to be more sustainable in our everyday lives in how we operate and hire people within the supply chain we use. In this sense, one of the initiatives we have in mind is the 50 Acts of Kindness that we will present later with all our members.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

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The **Elephant** in the Room...

City Destinations Alliance's International Conference & General Assembly will be held in Sofia, April 19-22, 2023. It will be the occasion to bring up the topics we don't discuss on an everyday basis – or that are difficult to talk about!

We all know it's there: The Elephant in The Room – that magnificent, big-eared presence that is too complex, too difficult, too sensitive, too uncomfortable to talk about in the open. It is hidden in plain sight, ever-present in most meeting rooms we enter, board rooms we are addressing, even in speaking to members, partners, colleagues, team members or in your communication with visitors – in what you highlight and what you don't, in those invited and those not invited...

There are of course different types of elephants in the tourism industry, some being more obvious than the others. They can involve:

... the real value of tourism to cities and how to measure it – When numbers of economic growth and bednights are no longer enough? What will be the trunk of future DMO funding?

... the Dumbos of Jumbos: Addressing the elephant in the room of DMOs working with route development, airlines and long-haul markets in a time where air travel is identified as challenging to reaching the world's net zero ambitions?

... the elephant of scalability in sustainable tourism

solutions – and how solutions become economically sustainable in themselves?



CityDNA Summer School: Hosting Meetings With Legacy

The next **CityDNA Summer School** will be held in Gdansk, August 26-30, 2023. And one of the new subjects that is discussed during the educational Meetings Industry programme is hosting meetings with legacy.

Ongoing education and professional training are crucial to face the continuing changes within the Meetings and Events Industry. Since 1987, the aim of the CityDNA Summer School is to provide incisive insights into the structure and functioning of the Meetings Industry, bringing delegates face-to-face with top industry practitioners.

The Summer School constantly evolves to fit the always changing world, and since the 2022 edition, three new subjects have joined the syllabus: “Regenerative destinations and sustainability strategies”, “Why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is the key to staying relevant and sustainable” and “Hosting meetings with legacy”.

More and more destinations wish to host successful conferences that have a legacy and a long-term positive

influence. A legacy is what you leave behind or what remains in a destination after your event is over. It benefits people, society and the destination.

Conferences and industry events are where people meet and often the society questions their use or relevance. In a world where sustainability and regeneration are on all the lips, how do you balance the effect of travelling to a conference in contrast to the goal of sustainability? That’s why conferences should generate added value for the participants, the residents, the professionals involved (hotel, caterers, transport, etc) and the place where it takes place.

Registrations for the 37th CityDNA Summer School will open in April.

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Omnichannel Marketing Strategy: The Business-critical Opportunity for Associations

AUTHOR: KAREN CARTER, DIRECTOR ENTERPRISE MARKETING EUROPE AT CVENT

Attracting new prospects and keeping existing members engaged are top priorities for associations, with events playing a central role in membership retention and growth. However, the association member journey spans various channels and tactics such as: email marketing, website, print, social channels, owned apps as well as PR, and even OOH (out-of-home) advertising. With the growing multitude of channels, it's vital that associations implement an **omnichannel marketing strategy** to compete in the incredibly noisy world of marketing and advertising. But what is omnichannel marketing? And why is it such a business-critical opportunity for associations?

Frost & Sullivan define omnichannel as “seamless and effortless, high-quality customer experiences that occur within and between contact channels.” Simply put, this means taking a holistic view of all online and offline touchpoints (or channels) that customers have, and utilising these to provide a consistent brand experience to enrich the connection between the brand and the customer. For associations, an effective omnichannel approach is a powerful strategy as it provides a much greater breadth of coverage and message penetration – making marketing efforts far more effective and helping to improve membership attraction and retention.

Let's explore four key elements of an omnichannel marketing strategy that association planners and marketers can use to create a stronger customer experience:

Make it personal

A crucial first step to developing an effective omnichannel strategy is to define and understand your target audiences. By leveraging the right technology, you'll have the tools to gather and segment your data based on a range of demographics, as well as build comprehensive audience personas to create more personalised, targeted messages at every touchpoint. Designing omnichannel campaigns around your audience's interests will boost engagement, drive new membership and encourage retention.

Be consistent

Consistent campaign messaging and brand identity is paramount to provide a seamless experience. Start by clearly defining your campaign's core messaging and objectives to use as a central point of reference. Seek input from key stakeholders managing the channels you want to use to better understand the best methods for communicating the message in each case.

Events

Events must be a part of the marketing mix to create stronger customer experiences. For associations, bringing members together to network and learn face-to-face builds a deep connection and fosters brand engagement and loyalty. For many prospects, an event represents a point in the journey that can often be the defining factor in purchase decisions such as joining a membership.

Data & insights

Understanding member/prospect behaviours is key to growing your omnichannel strategy because with the right data, you can analyse which channels are working and re-allocate resources accordingly to optimise results, enhance the event experience and measure return on event. Working with the right technology partner can ensure you have the technical expertise, as well as the digital engagement tools, and fully integrated solutions required to support not just the planning and marketing of your events but the robust reporting needs as well.

In short, events can be a key contributor to a successful omnichannel strategy, while the right omnichannel strategy can enhance your events. It's a win-win! Developing a comprehensive omnichannel framework that includes events allows association planners and marketers to achieve the best possible results.





Do you see **change** as a **positive force**?

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And when you start to see change as a positive force, nothing can faze you.

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