

Headquarters

MAY 2024 #114 BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

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ICCA Interview

60-plus Year History of
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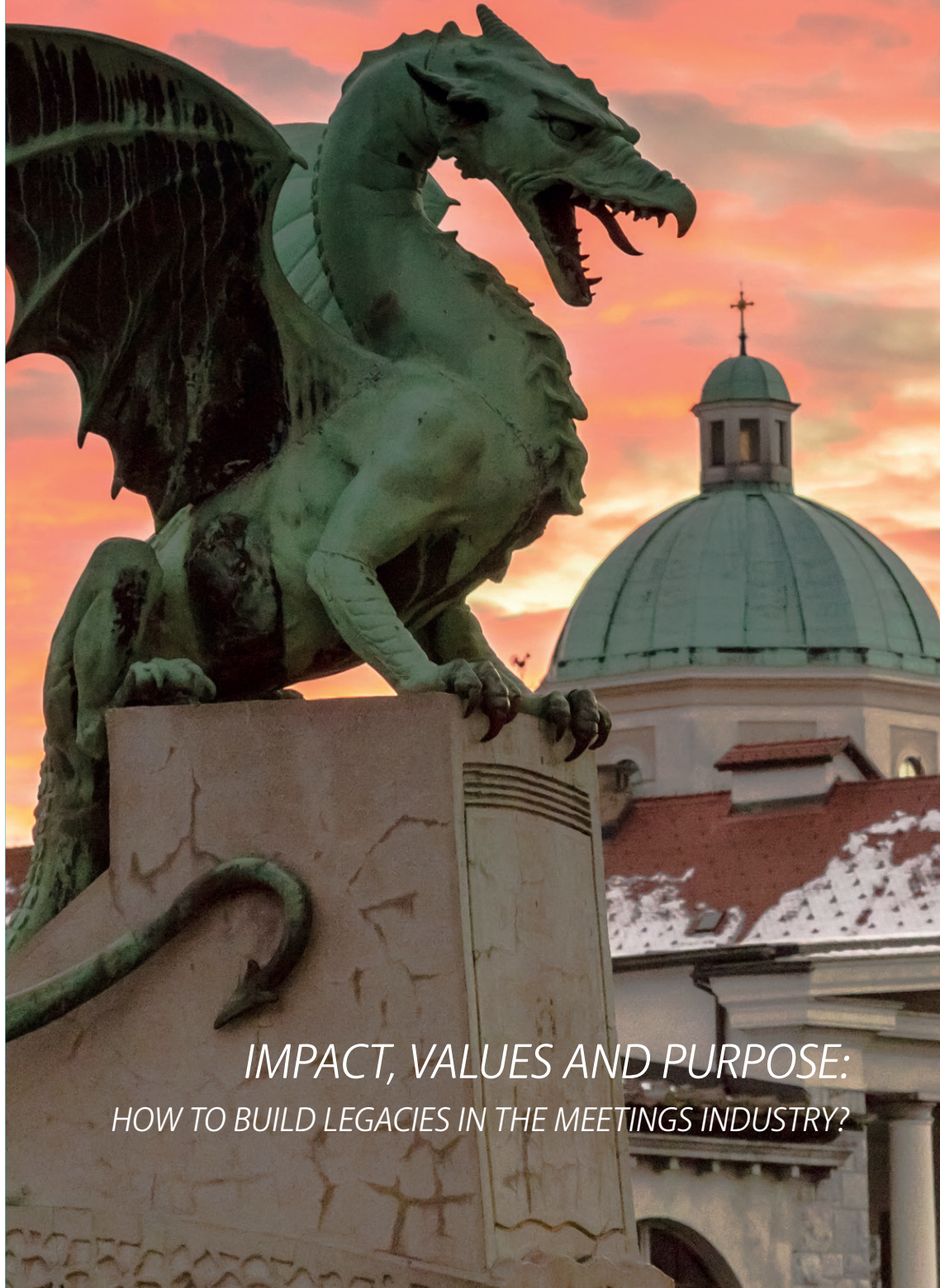
The International Papillomavirus Society

Conference & International HPV
Awareness Campaign

CONVENTA 2024

&

Ljubljana in the spotlight



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

*IMPACT, VALUES AND PURPOSE:
HOW TO BUILD LEGACIES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY?*



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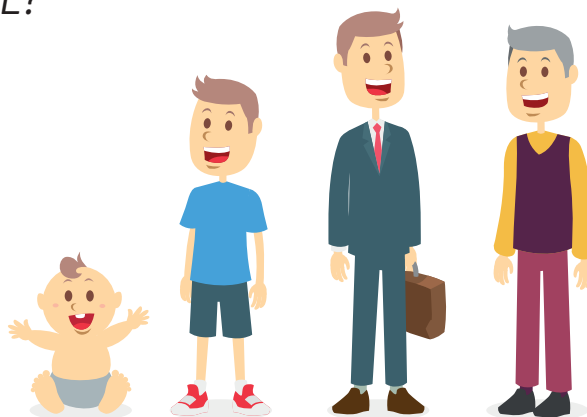
BOOMERS VS ZOOMERS

HOW ARE NEW GENERATIONS SHAPING THE WAY WE LOOK AT VALUE AND PURPOSE?

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES,
HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

Today, associations are commonly accepted as the great unifiers of society, and the role between their sectors, groups and members follows a logic of value and representation. On the other hand, outdated models for recruiting, retaining and involving members may not survive in an increasingly demanding and ever-changing operating environment. This is the conclusion that our interviewee, **Belinda Moore**, comes to in her white paper “*Membership is dead?*” by saying: “A series of powerful generational, cultural and economic forces are colliding to create a perfect storm that will make the next 5-20 years some of the most difficult ever faced by associations.” By instance, the rise of the gig economy has created a new class of workers that may not fit neatly into traditional association categories. According to a recent 2021 *Ernst & Young survey*, almost two-thirds of this demographic feel it is “very or extremely important” to work for employers who share their values, as they are passionate about solving social problems. This view is seconded by the **Head of Business Events at ChristchurchNZ, Megan Crum**, who we spoke to for this issue: “From a membership perspective, I believe associations are struggling to encourage participation from their younger members. Generational changes exist, and that’s something that we’ll have to analyse in order to make our industry more interesting for them (...)”

Associations clearly need to gain a broad understanding of the benefits and added value they bring to their members. Today’s challenge is that the conventional member typology of yesteryear has given way to a complex network of different profiles. As the baby boomers retire, the smartest organisations will spend more time understanding what motivates this range of generations – from Gen X to the Coronababies – how they connect, and how they see a digitalised world in this new social architecture (*As for the rise of Gen Z check out ICC Sydney’s six trends in our Australia supplement further on*). At the same time, their public image and brand will be key to external perception and forging positive links within the community. The truth is that many



smaller regional meetings have been replaced by webinars, while virtual rooms have attracted a whole new audience with overlapping interests and vocations. As such, online communities will be crucial for maintaining a year-round participation rate and preliminary discussions, leading up to your annual meeting. The rise of deep technology, AI and a hybrid setup will not only affect the way associations conduct their events in the future, but will also set the pace for the new labour frameworks that we felt in 2021. Reflecting the transformative impact of new technologies, hybrid platforms and even the very dimensionality of human interaction, AI and VR will soon have a crucial role to play in member engagement, association planning, and new marketing and communication strategies in a cloud computing world.

Much of this creative thinking will have to be applied to the way organisers run their conferences and shape them to new demographics, whether it’s through open public forums for young people, more affordable registration fees for international students, or even getting them to be keynote speakers. Finally, the relationship between the board and management will also be at the front of the mind when it comes to governance and leadership. While overly operational boards can be a problem for the strategic planning of many teams, finding a sweet spot between these two structures will be critical for their blueprint. So how can we make a rapid transition to other event models capable of unlocking this strategic potential? Remember, read the (conference) room! The answer may be there...

HQ

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MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES
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80€ in Belgium
95€ in the EU
110€ in the rest of the world

Cover Photo:
Dragon Bridge, Ljubljana, Slovenia



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IPVC 2024

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“In 2024, one of our main goals is to establish **new collaborative partnerships**”



The **International Papillomavirus Society (IPVS)** was created in 1975 to promote the worldwide exchange of ideas, knowledge and research among scientists, clinical specialists and other health professionals interested in the human papillomavirus (HPV) and its associated diseases. **Gergana Georgieva** (pictured above) and **Anita Wiseman** (pictured below), respectively, **Interim Executive Director of IPVS** and **Campaign Manager of the International HPV Awareness Campaign**, explained to us the organisation’s initiatives and projects for 2024.

What strategic plan has the IPVS adopted to increase its visibility and draw public attention to this disease?

Gergana Georgieva: The IPVS is primarily a group of scientists, academics and clinicians. To improve awareness and understanding of HPV, the society created the **International HPV Awareness Day Campaign**, back in 2018. We believe that raising public awareness and reducing the stigma of HPV is essential to the global effort to eliminate the virus and reduce the global burden of HPV-related cancer. When all HPV-related cancers become rare diseases, all cancers will fall by 5%. By normalising the conversation about HPV and providing people with the knowledge they need, the campaign empowers individuals and society to take effective action to reduce the harm caused by HPV.

AskAboutHPV.org is the website the public should visit to learn more about HPV, providing evidence-based facts about HPV from leading experts. In many countries, awareness of HPV and its link to cancer is alarmingly low. Getting messages across can be particularly difficult in some countries and regions due to cultural differences. Fortunately, a global network of more than 140 official campaign partner organisations in 57 countries helps make key messages effective in local contexts. Our partners use translated, peer-reviewed materials to raise awareness about HPV in their communities. Campaign materials are translated into different languages, adapted locally and shared through television, radio, news publications, social media platforms, in collaboration with public figures or well-established content creators, through face-to-face community sessions and public events, sporting events, and more.

The IPVS has created the LLMIC National Ambassador Programme, which offers opportunities in education, mentoring and grants for researchers, doctors, NGOs and public health specialists from under-resourced areas. Tell us more about this programme.

Anita Wiseman: IPVS recognises the challenges faced by HPV professionals in low-resource settings and wants to improve access to IPVS membership and educational resources for our colleagues. This commitment is aligned with the drive to eradicate HPV globally and reduce the burden of cancer, which is often disproportionately high in these same regions (compared to high-income countries). The **IPVS Country Ambassadors programme** is made up of an active and enthusiastic group of IPVS members in Low and Lower-Middle Income Countries (LLMICs). Whether through research, advocacy or both, they are determined to reduce the level of HPV-related cancer in their countries. These ambassadors promote the benefits of IPVS, recruit new members, and share educational resources and information about our opportunities with their local peers. Many of them take part in the International HPV Awareness Campaign and engage in regular virtual and in-person meetings. Some ambassadors organise face-to-face education activities on HPV topics. The group meets bimonthly to share knowledge and experience and further disseminate them to stakeholder communities.

“ *Celebrated on 4th March, the International HPV Awareness Day is the one day of the year when HPV is put into the global health spotlight.* ”



What are the key points IPVS has marked on the drawing board for the calendar year 2024?

GG: In 2024, one of our main goals is to establish new collaborative partnerships with key international and regional organisations with whom IPVS has shared objectives. This should help amplify our efforts and increase our impact on a global scale. Through working together, we are stronger. **IPVC 2024** in Edinburgh, from 12th to 15th November, is a key week on our calendar. In collaboration with leading experts in various HPV-related fields and disciplines, we are preparing an extensive **Awareness & Advocacy Programme** at IPVC 2024. In the past, IPVS conferences used to be 97% scientific, but during last year's IPVC 2023, this changed. Science and advocacy are two major streams of activity heading in the same direction toward a shared ultimate objective. Through connecting experts and stakeholders from both streams, we catalyse meaningful discussions, share best practices, and inspire collaborative action to address the challenges posed by HPV-related diseases.

IPVS was recently awarded the ICCA Seed Fund Grant, which will enable IPVS and its 2024 conference to carry its legacy programme into Edinburgh. How does the organisation intend to invest this grant in pursuit of its impact objectives for the conference?

AW: IPVS was indeed honoured to be the recipient of the Seed Grant and with the support of our colleagues from the **Edinburgh International Conference Centre**, we are formulating plans to further the legacy programme of IPVC 2024, leaving a noticeable positive impact on the local/regional community. For example, plans include visiting a number of Edinburgh high schools to raise awareness of HPV among students and to encourage HPV vaccination to protect against HPV-related cancer in both girls and boys. We have more to share, but for now we are keeping some secrets until the conference gets closer.

In 2023, IPVS membership reached a record high of more than 1,500 members from 111 countries – an increase of more than 100% from the previous year. What benefits and service packages have you made available to bring in such a large influx of members?

GG: IPVS not only provides valuable resources and information on the latest research, but also opportunities to get involved and recognised within the global HPV community. Members have access to a **'Members Area'** on IPVSoc.org, to connect with other members from

around the world; an **Education Portal** giving access to new webinars and other content every month; and the **HPV Hub**, an online platform to support communication, knowledge sharing and collaboration between campaign partners and IPVS members with an interest in raising public awareness about HPV and advocacy campaigns. In 2022, IPVS introduced a **Mentorship Programme** connecting early-career researchers with established global experts that is very popular with our members. Furthermore, the **IPVS Travel Grants Scholarship Programme** enabled more than 45 scholars from LLMICs to attend IPVC 2023 in Washington, D.C., complemented by other grants and awards to support attendance and recognition for members’ research. The **Country Ambassadors Programme**, launched in 2023, also stimulated membership, especially in LLMICs, extending the reach of IPVS in these regions, some of which suffer disproportionately from HPV-related diseases. Looking ahead to the rest of 2024, we will further develop these programmes, incorporating more in-person elements to stimulate interaction among our members taking part in the programmes during IPVC 2024. Special sessions and workshops will be organised for Travel Grants scholars, early career members and awardees, to acknowledge their contributions, provide networking opportunities and connect them with international experts in the field.

What other events and campaigns do you have planned on this year’s agenda?

AW: One of the most important events of the year for IPVS, as we mentioned earlier, is the **36th International Papillomavirus Conference (IPVC 2024)**, under the theme **‘Equitable, Evidence-Based Approaches to HPV Disease’**. IPVC 2024 offers workshops organised by leading experts covering state of the art developments in basic science, public health, and clinical research, as well as a whole dedicated early careers track for young scientists to network and showcase their work. This year’s conference features several new additions to the programme, including a course for clinicians (**Human Papillomavirus Related Anogenital Diseases Course for Clinicians**), and an extended HPV Awareness & Advocacy Programme involving some of our most active International HPV Awareness Campaign partners, and other leaders from European and international organisations in the field of HPV. Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital city, famous for its rich history and vibrant culture, will be the setting where IPVS unites the global HPV community to work collaboratively towards eliminating the burden of HPV-associated disease, including and beyond the cervix, and we look forward to that in November.



“ *The participation of representatives from organisations such as the WHO, European Cancer Organization, HPV Coalition, the American Cancer Society, and many others, contribute to the success of the IPVS conferences.* ”



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In March, ICCA published *Beyond Borders - How Associations Business Events Bring the World Together*, a digital report that set out to explore the significant global impact of business events over more than 60 years. In a world that has changed radically since 2018, *Beyond Borders* presented expert opinions and analyses from inside and outside the international association meetings sector, forcing a radical overhaul of the way we plan and deliver events. ICCA predicts that by 2024, the number of face-to-face events will be higher than in 2019, demonstrating that the meetings and events sector has not only seen healthy growth in recent years, but is continuing to flourish.

HQ went over all the points raised in this study with **ICCA CEO Senthil Gopinath:**

How can we strike a balance between the global reach of the events sector and its proximity to regional business centres and local industries?

The events industry has proven to be extremely resilient. Events and meetings professionals are flexible, adaptable problem-solvers who are trained to search for solutions when obstacles threaten to derail carefully planned events. The last couple of years have seen greater investment on the part of industry players in upgrading ways to conduct events, and we've also seen a great uptick in positive feedback and participation rates. In a post-COVID world, with new economic constraints and a conservative approach to travel by corporations, the industry has developed strategies to communicate with policymakers and advocate to facilitate partnerships that transcend borders and barriers. This kind of innovation and out-of-the-box thinking has allowed international events to return to the world stage, with participants and host locations more committed than ever

to facilitating connections and new ways of doing business. ICCA is dedicated to continuing to adapt to the ongoing evolution of the meetings and events industry and support members as they navigate the global post-COVID landscape.

If there are already stories, resources and industrial support, what is missing to increase the impact of the events in the international arena and raise their political profile?

One of ICCA's key pillars is Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI), and this concept is a driver of the innovation and ingenuity that propels our industry forward. It's necessary for emerging economies seeking to attract business to their areas, to adopt the same flexible, forward-thinking attitude toward inclusivity and innovation that is shared by our members and colleagues. In this way, impact and purpose are incredibly important for political visibility. Advocacy on the political stage is also a key component in effecting positive change for communities. We need to meet political and social leaders and show them that we're all on the same page, regarding economic development,

the environment, and social issues. We need to show them that the positive impact our industry brings to communities can be instrumental for them in achieving their political objectives. However, we also need to prove to political leaders that meetings and events have an impact on social wellbeing, and that they don't have to be driven solely by economic interests. This can be seen in the spending on in-person events: by 2024, associations are expected to spend more than 12.1 million dollars, which represents huge opportunities for job creation, community development and social promotion.

How can we convince different generations of professionals and new talent that conferences and events are the right industry for them?

There is work to be done around promoting new talent and recruiting the next generation of events professionals – including members of the support and production staff, who are so critical to the successful development of events. We must establish robust outreach initiatives that reflect DEI values that are so important in ensuring the strength and adaptability of the industry. Data gathered at our last annual Congress indicated that there are a lot of misconceptions about our industry among younger people. To that end, ICCA recently launched **ICCAUni**, a programme designed to foster collaboration between academia and the events industry and provide access to the world of global events to college students. Colleges and universities can play a key role, informing and educating students about the vast array of options and the many opportunities available in the events industry. It's up to us to actively pursue and attract talent from the next generations to continue our tradition of building connections, expanding horizons, and developing relationships among and between business, government, and emerging thought leaders.

What kind of meeting space are we creating in this post-pandemic phase?

The coronavirus pandemic showed us that there is real value in the act of coming together in person to meet, connect, and exchange ideas in real-time. Technology is always evolving, but nothing can take the place of real-life human interaction, no matter how advancements in AI and connectivity change the way we interact online. People are social animals, and we want to engage and learn with one another in a way that sparks the imagination and inspires innovation. The feeling of being in a room with others who share a common goal and vision just can't be replicated through a computer screen. In this sense, knowledge and wisdom mean much more than just the exchange of information, which can indeed be accomplished remotely. These are gained through experience – the collective exhilaration of being a part of something bigger than oneself,

and to grow as a person or as a community member. After all, the real value offered by our industry is the opportunity to contribute and grow as part of a group that supports and facilitates collective success.

Do you think there is a convergence between the associations' sustainability efforts and the development of the destination supply chain?

Sustainability is a guiding principle of our organisation, and is an evolving part of the strategic planning that goes into association meetings worldwide. The **Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative** provides guidelines, resources, and reporting tools to aid in the efforts of organisations to come on-board and reduce emissions throughout the event planning process and during the event itself. As more associations adopt sustainability as a key part of their operations, venues, supply chain components and municipalities will have to evolve and adapt to these standards to remain competitive. In that sense, the idea that we are always thinking about “what happens next” is correct – there's always room to level up when it comes to adopting sustainable practices and partnering with other organisations who share our vision for net-zero carbon events. Therefore, we endorse the efforts of governments to promote steps toward sustainability for associations and suppliers as part of an industry-wide movement toward the goal of net-zero carbon events.

ICCA's statistical forecast for the main topics of in-person events in recent decades places Medical Sciences, Science, Technology, Industry, and Education at the top – all key areas for innovation and accelerating new social developments. Are these five categories priority launch pads for realising impactful legacies in the future?

These five top categories can definitely serve as examples to the rest of the associations industry of the incredibly positive impact their conventions can have on their chosen destination locations. Each year, in partnership with the **BestCities Global Alliance**, we honour an organisation with the **Incredible Impacts Award**, which recognises an association whose legacy has made a positive impact. We believe that associations have an opportunity in all fields – not just science, technology and education – to capitalise on the economic incentives offered by places seeking to attract business and tourism, and to leave an uplifting legacy of positive impact on host communities. The growing interest we have seen since the end of the pandemic can serve as a motivator for associations of all kinds to invest in the development and production of destination meetings to nurture the growth, evolution and improvement of their members.

“The **true value** lies in feeling **part of something bigger**”

The concept of association has coexisted among us for hundreds of years, serving as the primary idea of congregation, collectivisation of community efforts and defence of common interests. However, at January’s **BestCities Global Forum** in Melbourne, **Belinda Moore** seemed to be describing a scenario in which the visibility, tangibility and delivery of associations could be seriously compromised by a world that many of them have yet to get to know or adopt.



Belinda Moore is **Head of Strategic Membership Solutions, Advisory Board Chair of the Answers for Associations**, and has worked in the sector for over 30 years. Her expertise lies in rapidly changing operational scenarios in the association ecosystem, innovations to advance legacy objectives, and aligning membership programmes with these objectives. “I spend a significant amount of time each week presenting to Board members with the sole purpose being to inspire them to action,” she says.

Reflecting the transformative impact of new technologies, generational transitions, and the multiplicity of market trends, our conversation made clear the fundamental role of associations in further engagement with members, in an evolving business model, in the leadership ladder, and in marketing and communicating with the outside world. So, what’s in store for associations, their members, and their sectors? Read on for some clues...

How do you see this sector in ten years’ time in terms of competition, mergers and consolidations?

The need for humans to come together collectively exists prior to associations and will exist long after associations are gone – that drive will not disappear. If associations don’t adapt, new mechanisms may emerge. Yet, many of them are already on the road to change. We can already see that associations will undergo significant transformations over the next decade as macro trends, such as changes in technology, will force associations to adapt. The pace of change will only accelerate, and associations must permanently adapt to rapid changes. I remain optimistic that associations can maintain their original legacy and purpose, provided they adapt to the digital landscape and changing member expectations. However, for some, their purpose may need to adapt and shift as the world around them evolves. Embracing technology, focusing on creating an impact, and innovative engagement strategies will be key to staying relevant.

Do you think this is where the fork in the road lies between the associations of the future and those that will perish at the hands of the traditional fading models?

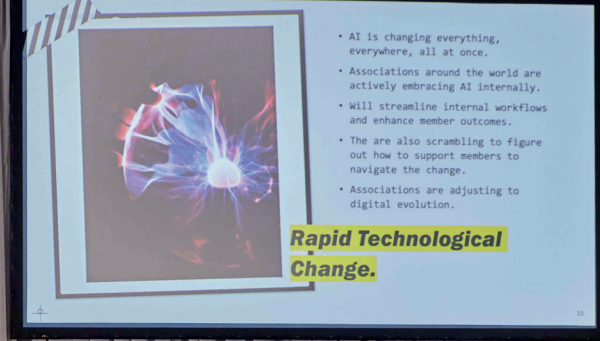
There’s no one-size-fits-all path for how associations evolve their business models going forward. While some may aim to become the ‘LinkedIn’ for their industry by facilitating connections and curating content, others could go the ‘Netflix’ route by providing amazing educational experiences. Or they could embrace an ‘Amazon’ style marketplace model for professional resources.

Associations will likely develop a range of approaches tailored to their unique purpose and members, rather than conforming to a single model. The unifying thread will be delivering genuine value to their communities, whether that’s through networking, learning, or comprehensive solutions. Creativity and innovation will be the hallmark of the associations that thrive.

What kind of workforce transformation is underway when you talk about “a series of powerful generational, cultural and economic forces” in collusion?

The rise of the gig economy, a diverse workforce, the emergence of brand new roles and professions, and the decline of others, signals a profound transformation in the way we work globally. Associations must evolve their offering to meet the challenges that these shifts will bring. When you overlay those changes with the needs, expectations and engagement preferences of newer generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, you can see that this will require a transformational shift in not just the offering, but the way offerings are delivered. Associations will need more flexible, inclusive, and technologically savvy approaches to membership. Creating powerful impact against purpose, delivering compelling value, and using integrated communication to engage all generations will be crucial for associations to unlock their strategic potential.

“Associations are one of many mechanisms that enable people to come together to advance a common cause.”



How can associations turn sentimental belonging into transactional membership by aligning it with values and maintaining relevance?

Joining an association starts with a transaction, but the true value lies in feeling part of something bigger. It's about moving from "I joined" to "I belong". Guiding members through this transition is crucial. Without it, many new members drift away in their first couple of years of membership. It's one of the reasons retention rates for new members are often lower. Every member should feel connected and valued from the start. Associations can ensure that happens with strong new member onboarding programmes. The strength of an association isn't just in the products, services, and events it offers, but in the sense of community it builds. Belonging is the key to keeping members engaged and invested over the long term.

How can associations converge the depth of the event experience and the breadth of attendee engagement in their communities going forward?

Most associations aren't made up of one homogenous "community," but rather of different "tribes" that have their own interests and needs. The most successful associations use data, technology, and a broad range of engagement tools to connect individual members to the tribe appropriate for them. Association events provide a mechanism to connect these tribes – whether online or face-to-face, large or small. Associations should not look at events in isolation but understand how each event contributes to the engagement journey of the different tribes within its community. For a conference, this may mean creating dedicated tracks, sessions and hangout spaces tailored to each group's specific interests. Event technology can then be used to enhance those tribal

experiences further before, during, and after the event, with virtual lounges, forums, and other activities that keep people connected.

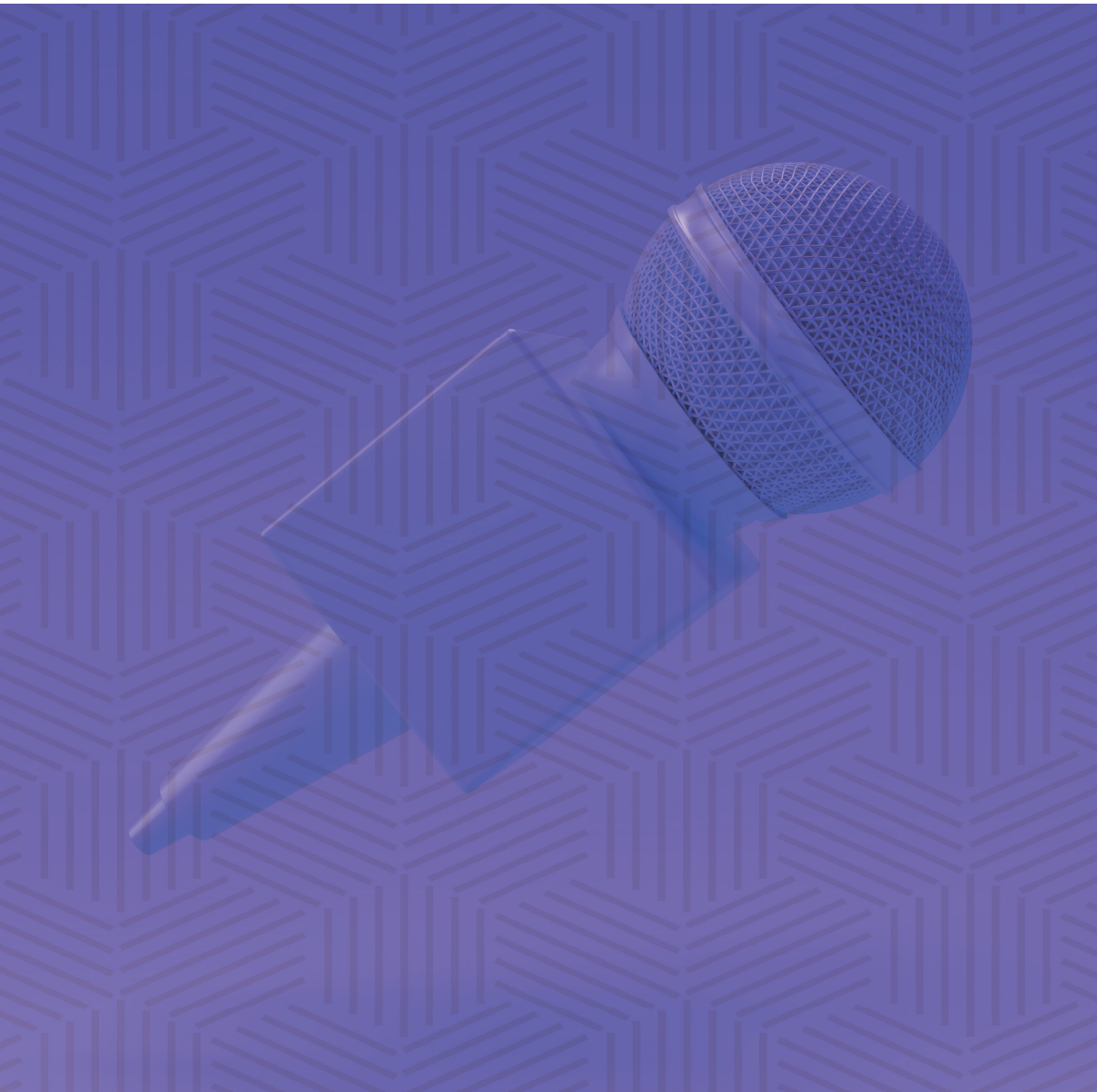
How can association teams and management point the way to creating legacy and impact strategies if they have overly operational boards by their side?

Having an overly operational board or a challenging board/CEO relationship is an unfortunate reality that many association professionals face. It can certainly negatively impact an association's ability to drive meaningful legacy and impact. When the board lacks vision, and doesn't fully grasp the significance of an association's purpose and social impact, it creates a major roadblock for management and staff seeking to break new ground. The best pathway forward is to bring the board along through education. The senior staff team have to take the initiative to consistently communicate the bigger picture vision and lay out tangible impact strategies. Use hard data, member feedback, and industry examples to consistently make the case.

It also may require cultivating reform-minded board champions over time who can influence from within. Identify forward-thinkers able to sway resistant colleagues and get them onto leadership pathways. Consider bringing in outside voices respected by the board to drive key points home. Ultimately, realigning a board is a long game. It takes relentless reinforcement of the vision and purpose, reframing perceptions, and planting seeds of understanding. If done skillfully and patiently, even stubbornly traditional boards can evolve to see their organisation's potential for greater legacy and impact. The challenge? Getting it down with enough time left to drive the change required to survive what's coming.

HO DESTINATION

INTERVIEWS & EVENTS



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Ōtautahi Christchurch

A City in Pursuit of Balance! (Part 2)

About a year ago, HQ began a dialogue with Christchurch about its **Corporate Events Advocacy Programme**, the destination's strategy for social sustainability and pillars of growth across different professional sectors. In January this year, HQ travelled to Aotearoa to speak directly with the **ChristchurchNZ** team about community engagement, legacy planning and change for good, extending a second chapter to this brilliant story.

As some of you probably know, Christchurch suffered a devastating earthquake 13 years ago, which destroyed around 90% of the central business district. This forced the political authorities to rethink the future, not only to rebuild the city, but also to revisit a circular environment with a focus on people's lives and a much smaller footprint. "Following the earthquake, we had a large number of migrants who came here to support us in the reconstruction. In recent years, a large wave of people who lost their homes have decided to return to their communities. The way everyone rallied around our city became an incredibly moving story of regeneration,"

Loren Aberhart, ChristchurchNZ's General Manager of Destination and Attraction, told us. Due to the devastation of the earthquake, each new building had to be designed and restructured with much tighter safety standards. A large part of that journey consisted of lifting the visitor economy to reinvigorate community pride, economic prosperity and urbanisation, including a series of anchor projects. One of these projects, the **Avon River Precinct**, reformed the damaged road network and riverside reserve areas into a high-quality shared walkway for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, integrating green spaces, marine life and Māori heritage. "In this build-up momentum, we have invested in **Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre**, opened in 2022, where we hold our key conventions and business events; **Te Kaha**, our multi-use arena for major sporting events, which will be completed in 2026; **Parakiore Recreation and Sport Centre**, a multi-sports facility that will be completed next year; our new **Lyttelton cruise berth**; and **Tūranga**, a multi-purpose community centre that is also the city's largest public library."

Over the past seven years, ChristchurchNZ has focused on putting its business events community back on the map from a brand perspective. "We started to form better partnerships in the last decade with *mana whenua* (the land's original people), incorporating them into the city's narrative and urban design," adds Aberhart. The whole country is bound by the *Treaty of Waitangi* signed in 1840 between the Māori tribes and the British Crown, which has seen a significant evolution in the co-creation and co-governance of local projects from the grassroots to large-scale endeavours. In this regard, ChristchurchNZ has partnered with **Whitiora**, a compulsory

skills and employment centre that aims to lead *whānau* (family ties) into high-value skills-based opportunities focused on supporting and increasing high-value work and employment in its role as an economic development agency for Ōtautahi. "A good example of this is **SailGP**, an international sailing regatta organised in Lyttelton Harbour, which is contractually integrated into Māori culture. This is extremely important to us from a cultural and ecological point of view by protecting the hector dolphins that are revered as sacred by our Māori people, among various rituals of welcome and good fortune."

On the other hand, *manaakitanga* is something you'll hear a lot in New Zealand on arrival at your event. This Māori expression of a warm welcome has become the event community's baseline of trust and familiarity. "In the middle of last year, we launched our purposeful business events campaign, centred around impacts that go beyond tourism. We're looking for events that can provide a perfect match-making with our key industries, in line with social benefits, DEI as well as environmental and sustainable impacts," says **Megan Crum** (pictured above), **Head of Business Events at ChristchurchNZ**. Christchurch supports a wider regional and rural economy that aims to align with future sustainable industries. These sectors are designed to create legacy outcomes for organisations and events that will, in turn, develop these regional and rural economies. "Before the earthquake, we had the second-largest market share for business events in New Zealand with 24%. However, we dropped to 3% because we were left without infrastructure and visitation. There was a feeling that when the infrastructure started to come back, we would fill the city again. But in this new reality, we have new levers to pull. We want events that really have a positive impact for us," said Crum. Unveiled at AIME 2024, ChristchurchNZ has sponsored an innovative three-year project – the **Conference Legacy Project** – to assess the legacy impacts of events on Christchurch. In partnership with **Tourism New Zealand**, this pioneering project will look at the impact of organising business events on scientific advancement, industry innovation, regenerative





circularity, attracting global talent, and improving social and cultural policies, trade and investment. “We know that these impacts exist, but we need more data, more evidence-based information, and a return on investment plan to quantify the social value of our industry beyond the economic.”

The growth of the aerospace sector was due to its large flat areas that can be used for take-off and landing tests, and also to its long spans of dark night skies with few light pollution. Christchurch is also New Zealand’s gateway to Antarctica, one of five in the world, supporting scientific programmes and international research to meet the challenges posed by climate change. The city brought together more than 500 international astronomers in March for the **Extreme Solar Systems V** conference, which focused on the study of exoplanets with a visit to New Zealand’s leading astronomical research centre, the **University of Canterbury’s Mount John Observatory**, located in the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. The future is also in food, as the South Island is the New Zealand farm. In November last year, the Te Pae Convention Centre welcomed 1,100 delegates from 44 countries to the **28th Asian Seed Congress**, which presented the latest developments and technologies in the future fibres sector. Health technology, meanwhile, emerged in response to the humanitarian crisis to improve emergency services and healthcare for the severely injured. “A lot of this technology has been developed to help people walk again or to streamline robotic technology for arms and legs,” says Aberhart. This month, for example, the **Royal Australasian College of Surgeons** held its **Annual Scientific Congress** at Te Pae for more than 1,500 doctors, including 1,300 international visitors. Lastly, the University of Canterbury has won the rights to host the **8th Adaptation Futures Conference** in 2025, which will focus on climate responsible cities, youth activism, biodiversity

and agricultural innovation, and how these issues affect Indigenous Peoples. The conference, which is part of the **UN’s World Adaptation Science Programme**, will host 1,500 people, including international scientists, Indigenous academics and policymakers.

As long-haul travel to New Zealand has a significant impact on the environment, the destination is looking at ways to offset carbon locally rather than offshore. “The impact of travel means we want to showcase a destination where visitors can stay longer, dive deeper into the community, and provide greater benefits with a social licence to operate,” says Crum. Following the success of these conferences, the **New Zealand CVB** launched a new **Business Events Advocate Programme** called **Tūwhana**. Tūwhana’s advocates include a rich community of business leaders, academics and sector specialists working to promote Christchurch as an international business events destination worldwide. One of them is **Graeme Ayres**, Antarctic generalist and lecturer, who is a passionate advocate of climate action awarded for collaborative rescue operations on the icy continent. “We’re looking for quality. People who have *mana* or influence in the various sectors of interest to Christchurch. More mature destinations are realising that they have a much bigger lever for change and insider knowledge than just the tourism component or visitor spending. What we need is balance. Then the economic impact will come,” says Crum. “We have adopted a holistic approach to achieve a more balanced portfolio due to the various visitation options in New Zealand. However, it is in business events that we want to achieve significant legacy outcomes as visitor spending is almost guaranteed. Being targeted and chasing selective outcomes can create those legacy benefits,” concludes Aberhart.



Amsterdam: Meetings that Strive for Impact and Diversity!

Amsterdam needs no introduction as a top-quality European destination for international conferences, but here at *HQ*, we always go one level deeper. Between world-class venues, excellent connectivity and a privileged collaborative business network, the **Amsterdam Convention Bureau** is also paying close attention to home-grown events that bridge the gap to its major industries. Check out the story below.

In 2021, the **Amsterdam Convention Bureau (ACB)** was re-established as a department of **amsterdam&partners**, a public-private foundation that aims to strengthen the reputation of the Dutch capital among residents, visitors and businesses. Providing meeting organisers with a reliable partner, the ACB is a valuable one-stop shop and promoter of meeting industry attractions, venues and knowledge institutions.

“Although offering hybrid solutions for meetings is the new norm in the sector, we have seen that many planners prefer to meet in person over the last three years. Offering a smooth customer journey has been a top priority for ACB and our partners, which is why we have intensified our collaboration with the municipality, the city’s knowledge institutes and Metropole’s partners,” says **Dennis Speet, ACB Managing Director**. As a result, the city now has a unique, quality offer for supplier certification: the ‘**I amsterdam approved**’ label. A guarantee for large international conferences that the city has enough hotel rooms for its delegates with certification of quality, reliability and good value for money.

This prominent destination has a strong event infrastructure adapted to the different needs and demands of meeting planners, and while they continue to value their heritage, the focus is now firmly on the future: “We are prioritising innovation and sustainability, concentrating on organisations aligned with that vision in sectors such as healthcare, artificial intelligence, energy, mobility and the food transition.” Since

that reinstatement, the DMO’s priority has been to create a social legacy through events. “We’re learning ‘on the go,’ so we don’t have a solid framework yet. That’s why we’re still trying to better understand the municipality’s ambitions by mapping existing projects and anchoring our legacy efforts in Amsterdam.” According to Speet, the strategic focus is not only on the city’s status as a leading meeting destination, but also on its position as a driver of innovative solutions with a positive impact. “When bidding for events, we focus on organisations, partnerships and initiatives that not only contribute to the growth of our city’s key ecosystems, but also align with our commitment to a more sustainable events landscape,” says Speet.

“*We seek to be the connecting link between planners’ objectives, our industry’s offerings, community demands and government policies.*”

In 2025, Amsterdam will celebrate its 750th anniversary. Everything about the city’s history, planning and journey reflects the innovation and visionary heritage that guides its values and purpose. Apparently, this attitude hasn’t changed: “We are always keen to explore the impact that events can have on our city. Our focus is not only





The key is to establish the right connections, explore opportunities together in a more circular way and contribute to the community, since one-size-fits-all or unidirectional approaches no longer work.



to add knowledge to our associated institutes, but also to support concrete and sustainable projects.” Last year, on the occasion of the **European Society of Cardiology Congress**, ACB worked with its local partners, **RAI Amsterdam** (the convention centre) which hosted the event, and the bike rental service **Yellow Bike**, to make it possible for delegates to hire affordable, healthy and sustainable transport. Back in April this year, they supported a home-grown event called **Plant FWD**, with the aim of facilitating the food transition to a plant-based diet. During Plant FWD Week, around 40 restaurants and meeting industry partners raised awareness of alternatives in catering services by offering a plant-based menu.

Together with **Amsterdam in Business**, a department with Economic Affairs, one of the goals is also to leverage the main strategic ecosystems, from energy transition, agritech and food, to mobility, healthcare and technology. “We have identified many international associations that organise events on these topics and we are working proactively to attract events that are in line with this mission, connecting them with local experts. At the same time, we realise that some of the topics are still finding their place in the industry, so there are no dedicated associations yet,” adds Speet. For this reason, the ACB is strongly committed to the growth and internationalisation of home-grown events, so that Amsterdam can become a hub for these markets. “We collaborate closely with destinations where previous editions of meetings have been held, ensuring that the impact generated locally is replicated and that the experiences and content unlocked previously evolve. We are

also open to sharing this knowledge which allows this impact to progress over time.”

In 2023, ACB joined the **GDS Movement** and, with the help of all partners, began scanning all the sustainable projects they are working on. To this end, ACB has developed its recent “**Inspiration for Good**” campaign, responding to this growing demand for tangible sustainability solutions in the meetings landscape. Known for its progressive and liberal spirit, Amsterdam prides itself on safeguarding its various communities within the principles of freedom, tolerance, diversity and inclusion that were evident in its winning bid to host **WorldPride 2026**. The partnership with the **Global Diversity Alliance** brought this dialogue to the forefront, helping them to navigate a complex *modus operandi* for organising this type of conferences. Fortunately, the municipality of Amsterdam has acknowledged the importance of congresses in setting up certain ecosystems, when experts, companies and talents come together in one room. “Delegates not only contribute to the knowledge economy and the cultural environment here, but they have always been a fundamental pillar of new policies relating to a sustainable visitor economy,” says Speet. Finally, while ACB has initiated several collaborations with technology providers, RAI Amsterdam has become the first convention centre in Europe to have its own private 5G network. Venues and hotels are undergoing a process of hybridisation, and public transport now offers flexible payment methods such as bank cards. “We are now looking at several pilot projects in the city around AI, such as crowd management, accessibility and optimising energy use during large events,” Speet concludes.



Conventa Doesn't Want to Grow old... or Too Big!

In a market dominated by global fairs and national business exhibitions, it's always worth highlighting industry gatherings that reveal an inclusive narrative focused on regional thinking and collective progress. Considered by the organisers to be a bold industry rebel, Conventa was also a mature standard to follow in the discussion of AI, sustainability, and urbanism.

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

This year's Slovenian show welcomed around 120 exhibitors and more than 160 hosted buyers, bringing together planners from 42 different countries. To date, Conventa has welcomed almost 4,000 hosted buyers who have met with more than 2,000 exhibitors, holding almost 50,000 meetings in these 16 years. More than 500 event professionals turned Ljubljana into the place to be in the meetings industry, with several new exhibitors answering the call – three new Polish destinations, a host of new hotels and several regional industry heavyweights from Eastern Europe. Putting sustainability and innovation in the local meetings industry top of mind, this tradeshow held in Ljubljana from 20th to 22nd February raised the bar by promoting several new initiatives such as a revamped Experience Zone, a Special Venues Corner for one-to-one meetings, and the Conventa Trend Bar educational platform. On Wednesday, 21st February, attendees flocked to one of the city's multifunctional venues, the **Cankarjev dom**, to watch the **Meetings Star 2024** awards. The gala, which aims to be the “Michelin” guide to the meetings industry, recognised the best destinations, venues and individuals in 15 categories that opened up to new geographies, markets and classifications, such as “new” Europe.

Those in charge in conversation

At the Ljubljana Talks press conference, **Gorazd Čad**, co-founder of the show, was joined by **Jan Orsic** and **Petra Stuček**, respectively **Head of Conventions** and **CEO of Ljubljana Tourism**, **Karmen Novarlic**, **Head of Department Business Communication at Slovenian Tourist Board** and **Fredi Fontanot**, **Director of the Slovenian Convention Bureau**, strategic partners of this event and co-creators of a space that has been making a name for itself on the European scene. The two-day business meetings took place at the **GR – Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre**, with the event spreading across different venues in the city – all 20 strategic partners, including catering companies, almost all the hotels in Ljubljana, DMC agencies, private transport

companies, also show the cooperative ecosystem of the event. “Growing up alongside a teenager like Conventa was, from Ljubljana's perspective, a journey full of challenges and joys. It was one of the rare events that took place in 2020 and remained in force in the years since. However, as the event grew, it also made a beautiful crossover that resulted in Crossroads,” said Stuček.

Organised by the Slovenian Convention Bureau in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport, the **Conventa Crossroads** political forum brought together 37 decision-makers, including ten representatives of the main regional destinations, to discuss the importance and opportunities unlocked by business events from a social, economic and tourist point of view for this small European country. In fact, the meetings industry has previously been defined as one of the four leading products in Slovenia's tourism strategy by 2028, and is considered one of the products with the greatest potential for future growth. “At the event, we wanted to connect and empower stakeholders on the economic, social and regenerative effects of our industry, as well as demonstrate why the best meetings destinations are successful worldwide,” said Fontanot, the seminar's organiser. Alongside the event, a bilateral meeting took place between the Minister of Economy and Tourism of Montenegro, Goran Đurovič, and the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Sport of Slovenia, Matjaž Han.

Slovenia's figures and strategies

When we look at recent history, 2023 was the first year that business opened up fully, which also means that competition has grown worldwide. Ljubljana not only remained stable in the context of the meetings industry, but strengthened its position in the visitor economy by receiving approximately 1,110,000 arrivals totalling more than 2 million overnight stays. As a reference for 2019, this meant 1.3% fewer arrivals and 2.3% more overnight stays, which illustrates a shift in the convention bureau's strategy towards extending visitors' stays, whether in a leisure or





business context. These figures reinforce the rapid recovery of Slovenian tourism in 2023 with 72% of overnight stays generated by foreign travellers, and an extensive investment cycle (accommodation, ski centres, public infrastructure) over the last two years, worth almost 360 million euros.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Slovenian Convention Bureau currently has 73 members (including hotels, venues, service companies, DMCs and tourist boards) and aims to connect this interregional network and tap into the potential of other MICE hubs such as **Bled** or **Maribor** for the circular offer of large conventions, incentive groups and corporates. “In addition to the existing political strategy, it’s important to emphasise the points concerning talent development and education, which are crucial for the next generations, technology and innovation, investing in the great technological race of the 21st century, and betting on the right data systems to help us have efficient decision-making for our future tourism development,” said Mrs Novarlic. Among Conventa’s most important partners is the Austrian company **B2match**, a pioneering company that has developed an AI network platform to improve corporate matchmaking and host in-person, virtual, or hybrid communities.

Planet Positive Event

As you walked through the centre’s corridors and halls, it was impossible to ignore Conventa’s sustainable record, visible in the recycling of materials, the reuse of resources and the organic decoration of the stands, a tradition maintained year after year. The event was the first to be evaluated by **Planet Positive Event**, an innovative tool developed by **Toleranca Marketing** and

Arctur that impressed the audience with its excellent user experience, ease of use, technological advancement and complexity. Planet Positive Event is a holistic web app enabling event organisers to see whether their event complies with European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), measure their event’s carbon footprint and learn how to organise events sustainably. The creators were among the first to combine a state-of-the-art carbon footprint calculator, precise criteria for sustainable events, a certification system and external evaluation following the ESRS standards for sustainable reporting, in order to classify the regenerative character of a given event – a holistic approach to all the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations. “To sustainably transform Conventa, we tested numerous tools, calculators, and methodologies – but something was always amiss or didn’t function properly. That is how we decided to develop our own solution. Planet Positive Event is the brainchild of Slovenian know-how, innovation and technology, developed by event organisers for event organisers,” said Gorazd Čad.

Five main sources of Conventa’s carbon footprint

- 72.16% Mobility
- 12.40% Energy
- 10.47% Hotel accommodation
- 2.48% Catering
- 1.13% Waste and water

“ *At the event, we wanted to connect and empower stakeholders about the economic, social and regenerative effects on our industry, as well as demonstrate why the best meetings destinations are successful worldwide.* ”



“The **locals** are the worst critics but the **best ambassadors**”

Ljubljana is constantly adapting to its values, introducing new offers and products every year that cater for both the association sector and incentives or corporate meetings. As a result, the city hosted 82 international events last year which lifted them to the 40th place globally in the ICCA rankings. This reflects the success of a regenerative strategy in place with a balanced vision of the supply chain, an extension of visitor stays and a bold objective by 2027: to be one of the world's leading and most creative urban destinations for a sustainable lifestyle.



HQ sat down with **Petra Stuček, Managing Director of the Ljubljana Tourism and President of the Board at City Destinations Alliance (CityDNA)**, for a brief chat:

Many of Conventa’s novelties have been lined up “so that it doesn’t grow too fast and remains creatively young”. Do you think that a sharp growth in the fair could betray Ljubljana’s size and scale?

I don’t think the size or scale of the city are a concern. The problem is that if something grows too fast business-wise, it ends up not covering all the basics and eventually fails. That’s why it’s sensible to grow gradually and choose your steps wisely. It took us 16 years to create the Crossroads political forum, for example, because we needed to be mature enough to collect measurements at various levels and to know exactly where we stood. If we can’t measure that, we won’t understand what direction to take. This applies to destination management but also to any event, and this one, in particular, has a much bigger and wider effect than just in brackets for this region. So, size isn’t even the issue, since new hotels and spaces are being built that will allow us to accommodate meetings for up to 4,000 people in Ljubljana. It’s all about content and quality. That’s why we have to nurture our ecosystem gradually and as carefully as possible, which takes time.

You’ll soon be stepping down as President of the CityDNA, so how could you summarise these turbulent years and all the changes you’ve led?

I was elected in June 2019, so we only had a few quiet months before the pandemic. Honestly, there’s a big difference between being on the board and being president. Because, as chairman, we are also, in a way, CEO. I have a few regrets, which were that five years wasn’t enough to change our structure and expand the secretariat, but we have implemented many other measures and forums. I would like to encourage the next president to take steps to expand the team for the benefit of the whole industry. Not just the meetings sector, but all the other destination segments: the leisure sector, and the development of urban tourism in Europe. We have put together very strong campaigns to convey how the locals can benefit from tourism. We firmly believe that if locals understand how we develop tourism, they can be the biggest beneficiaries and ambassadors. Typically, locals are the worst critics and the best ambassadors.

The fact is that Europe is the cradle of tourism, and cities are the extensions of those arrivals, of knowledge, of the economy, of universities, etc. This is a powerful basis on which to work over the next decade, as Europe has great potential in these areas. However, we have to stay true to Europe’s DNA, applying technological



Want to meet CityDNA’s new President? Turn to page 41



measures at a pace commensurate with their adoption: not trying to outdo all the innovations being launched in Asia, or maintaining the same approach to how business is done in the United States. Each continent has its own DNA. Europe has a long tradition with many stories to tell and continues to be a strong catalyst for a healthy planet. So, we remain very strong on that front by always considering the right changes.

How did you cope with the cultural differences that the position required?

Although it was very challenging at first, it turned out to be very rewarding in the end. Since I'm the CEO of a fairly large team in Ljubljana (communicating quickly about the destination and the partners) it was also a very quick learning process. We all know, in theory, that cultural differences exist, but it's only in practice that we really feel their impact on a multicultural level. Especially when, just a few months before meeting the board of directors, we had to do so in a completely different (virtual) environment for everyone. All these factors contributed to the need to adapt in a very short period of time. In general, we started organising virtually once a month, by the time we met almost three years later – between the face-to-face conference in Ljubljana before COVID, and the first post-pandemic conference in Hamburg, in 2022 – we already knew each other well enough to resume the work and the dynamic between destinations. So, although we are on the same continent and have common civilisational

traits, if we ignore the cultural differences that define us as people, our goals become much more difficult to achieve.

I remember, that at the CityDNA Conference in Valencia, when the best sustainable cities in Europe were honoured, the overwhelming majority were located in the north of the continent. Will the next presidency have to level out efforts and missions between the various regions of Europe in order to achieve the same results?

I'm not sure about equal methodologies, but I think we definitely need to harmonise the same sustainability efforts so that they achieve positive results. This sustainability topic runs deeper. Concepts of sustainability start with our education at home and go all the way to the political level. When I was growing up in Yugoslavia, nobody knew what it meant to sort and recycle waste. Now, in less than a generation, children in kindergarten make this a priority and influence their parents. It all starts within societies themselves, which is why political forums are so – they have a responsibility to read society and encourage deeper progress. In short, yes, the South needs to get closer to the North's approach to sustainability and regeneration. However, the North also needs to get closer to the hospitality and humanity approach to meetings that the South prides itself on.



Paris Je T'aime

Under the Spotlight of Olympics 2024

HQ was invited on a unique journey to Paris in early March to witness how the city was being transformed to welcome the Olympic Games. This third edition of **Paris What's Up Day** was organised by **Paris je t'aime – Convention Bureau**, with the support of **Choose Paris Region**. The two-day event demonstrated the city's determination to build a powerful legacy for future professional events.

AUTHOR: VIVIAN XU, HQ MANAGING DIRECTOR

City's Transformation

Aiming to host the greenest Olympic Games in history, Paris is in full force and effort. Paris and the Paris region will be making use of 95% of existing infrastructure to reduce impact on the environment. One of the renovated venues is the **Grand Palais**, which will be hosting the fencing and taekwondo events as well as the Paralympic version of these two sports. The **Stade de France** (also known as the Olympic Stadium) joined forces with the **Olympic Village** and the **Olympic Aquatic Centre**, to make the north of Paris the most redeveloped area of the city by 2024. The **Adidas Arena** opened at the end of February and has already hosted sports events. This will also be the venue for badminton and gymnastics competitions during the Olympics. Furthermore, a brand-new large-scale hotel and conference centre – **H4 Hotel Wyndham Paris Pleyel Resort** is set to open in June. Equipped with 697 guest rooms with natural light, two floors of meeting spaces (up to sixteen meeting rooms), and a sky bar on the 40th floor with a pool offering a panoramic view of the city, the hotel will be the sweet spot for event planners.

Sustainable Games

Paris 2024 is working closely with the **Paris City Council** and all its partners to halve the greenhouse gas emissions generated by organising the games and to offset more emissions than it creates. “We will connect all the temporary sport venues to classical electricity. There will be no generators anymore. Because in terms of legacy, it will continue after a long time,” said **Marie Barsacq, Executive Director of Impact and Legacy Paris 2024 Organising Committee**. “For example, the concert of the Eiffel Tower every summer will no longer use generators after this initiative. And with our sponsors in this project, we also opened up the opportunity to finance such an experience with other 300 cities in France. If we can do it for the Olympic Games, we can do it for every event in Paris and the whole country.”

Moreover, engaging sponsors in sustainability actions is a key point. Reusable bottles will be permitted in the event venue. To reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bottles, 300 water fountains will be available at the Olympic venues and social promotional campaigns are planned to encourage visitors to use the water fountains.

Social Responsible Games

“Another iconic legacy we'll have is the improving quality of the water in river La Seine and the possibility of making the competition official,” said **Pierre Rabadan, Deputy Mayor of Paris in charge of Sport, the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Seine, President of Paris je t'aime**. “We hope to have a swimming area on the river during the summer starting in 2025. By doing so, we are trying to involve the population in the concept of the Olympic Games. The most important thing is to create a long-term legacy for the locals.”

“In general, we work more on the impact in the city outside of sports venues, because we would like to create an impact on the everyday lives of our people. For example, we would like to increase cycle lanes, as well as an Olympic lane dedicated to co-driving during the Games,” added Rabadan.

A couple of years ago, **Accor Group** started working with Paris je t'aime to ensure all of their hotels within Paris have infrastructures to welcome and host guests with disabilities. Hosting of the Olympic Games stimulated this process and offered an opportunity to improve at both the management and staff training levels. In total, 40,000 employees of Accor Group were trained online to better assist guests in need. Furthermore, the partnership with **Tourism & Handicap** offers a platform for employees to self-evaluate and improve. Moreover, an **Accessible Hotel Certificate** will be given to the hotels to be built. The group set a target of 300 hotels to be certified for the Games.





Meaningful Events in Paris

Planning an event during the Olympics might seem hectic for most event planners. Paris je t'aime made it easier with the City of Paris. The **bienVenue 2024 platform** has been specially designed to meet the needs of professional events. *Scan the QR code to find out more.*

Local stakeholders are key players to make an event successful. Technology is one of the crucial factors when talking about the reduction of emissions and power consumption during the Olympics. **Laurent Degré, VP & General Manager at Cisco France**, says: "Through the technology and the optimisation of what we're doing, our aim is to reduce by around 25% what the IT, cyber security, connectivity, and everything else will consume, compared to previous Olympic Games."

Paris is known as a hub for science and medical conferences. The **Universcience** was created in 2010 when the **Cité des sciences et l'industrie** joined forces with the **Palais de la découverte**. It aims to make the sciences of today known and loved and to promote scientific and technical culture. "Our job is to engage people with science, technology, and innovation to give them ideas and tools, and to awaken their curiosity. Professional events, especially scientific ones, come to Paris because we got this immersion into the science industry," Degré concluded.



“ I think Paris is an inspiring place. It's a place where things are rapidly happening between the general public and science and technology. We're not only a passive showcase, but we also create the relationship between society, innovation, and the future. – Laurent Degré, VP & General Manager at Cisco France



Travel Green

Eurostar, formerly known as **Thalys**, made the travel from Brussels to Paris is easier than ever. A smooth ride from city centre to city centre in just 1h 22m.

All photos courtesy of Paris je t'aime

HQ INSIGHTS



ASSOCIATION
& P CO

DON'T ALL CONFERENCES
**COME WITH
KANGAROOS?**
**THERE'S NOTHING
LIKE AUSTRALIA**



An Open Exhibition to Honour the **Father of Modern Neuroscience** and his **Legacy**

BY ESTEFANÍA ZÁRATE ANGARITA, MARCOM MANAGER AT KENES GROUP



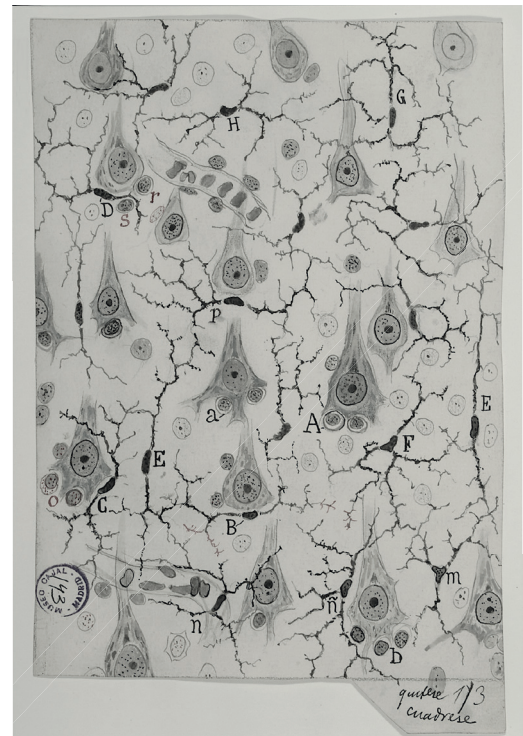
"Butterflies of the Soul: The Drawings of Santiago Ramon y Cajal," a cultural and artistic exhibition parallel to the **11th IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience**, exemplifies the collaboration between the international society, the local committee, the venue, the CVB, the PCO, and other partners with a legacy purpose in mind.

Legacy is at the heart of our operations at **Kenés Group**. Working with over 20 medical and scientific associations and organising more than 85 conferences per year, improving patient outcomes is the ultimate goal of enabling platforms for knowledge exchange in top-tier fields of study for humanity, such as brain research.

Specifically, this field of neuroscience is perceived as quite complex, far away from the non-medical public, and disconnected from people's daily lives – even though our brain is the most fascinating and determining physiological system of the human body.

To bring the wonders of neuroscience closer to the general audience, the **International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO)** and the **Spanish Neuroscience Society**, in collaboration with the **Zapata Briceño Humanism and Science Foundation**, and the **University of Granada**, set up an open exhibition to honour the legacy of Nobel Prize in Medicine, **Santiago Ramón y Cajal** (1852 – 1934), considered the father of modern neuroscience – *check out the story told by the Granada Convention Bureau in HQ #111 of September 2023.*

Neuroscientist, pathologist, and histologist specialised in neuroanatomy and the central nervous system, Santiago Ramón y Cajal was responsible for the discovery of neural structures and their connectivity, and for illustrating by hand the arborisations of brain cells. His drawings are still in use for educational and training purposes today.



It is estimated that the Cajal Legacy houses a total of 30,218 items of a widely varied nature. These items have been divided into 26 groups for cataloguing purposes and to facilitate their study. The biggest groups are the Photographic Archive Books (7,000), Newspapers and Journals (2,384), Correspondence (2,584), and Scientific drawings (1,976).

A selection of items and drawings made up the free exhibition “*Butterflies of the Soul: The Drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal*,” which Granada residents and visitors were able to see in person for three months within the framework of the **11th World Congress of Neuroscience**, which took place in this Spanish city from September 9th to 13th, 2023.

The exhibition, held from June 13th until September 24th at the historic venue **Palacio de la Madraza**, employed multimedia elements such as photographs, laboratory materials, and audio recordings of Cajal’s voice. This immersive approach enriched visitors’ understanding and emotional connection to the Cajal Legacy, transcending traditional museum exhibits.

The original drawings and photographs from the Cajal Legacy are invaluable contributions to neuroscience, depicting the human brain and its neural activity as well as the functioning of the nervous system. They are both artistic pieces and the outcome of groundbreaking medical research of the 20th century.

As the local committee of the 11th IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience, the Spanish Neuroscience Society led the initiative of creating this side event to foster interest in brain research and inspire young neuroscientists, showcasing the artistic talent and dedication of Santiago Ramón y Cajal to the advancement of the field, still relevant more than a hundred years after he received his Nobel Prize in 1906.

Spain has a strong neuroscience tradition with the legacy of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, and is now home to many internationally acclaimed brain research institutions including the **Cajal Institute** in Madrid, the **Institute of Neuroscience** in Alicante, the **Institute of Neuroscience** at the University of Barcelona, and the **Achucarro Basque Center for Neuroscience**, to name only a few. The Spanish Neuroscience Society strengthens this extensive research network with its numerous activities and more than 1,000 members.

The 11th IBRO World Congress of Neuroscience gathered 2,769 participants from 83 different countries during five days, with the highest percentage coming from Western Europe, East Asia & Pacific, and Central & South America, respectively. The **Granada Convention Bureau** was committed to delivering the highest quality experience to neuroscientists from all

over the world and was deeply engaged in maintaining and strengthening the Spanish long history and legacy of contribution to brain research.



Leaving a Legacy of **Accomplishments:** Be Sure to **Measure the Impact** of Your Efforts

Each issue of *HQ Magazine* is dedicated to providing its readers with some practical ways to make their organisation more successful in the current hospitality marketplace. In addition to introducing readers to some of the most beautiful and welcoming meeting sites in the world, the magazine also helps organisation leaders identify the ideas and resources available to make *their* meetings enjoyable for delegates and impactful for the organisation.

As we have said before in this column, your organisation's meetings and trade shows are probably the best "showcases" for your group. These meetings give your organisation a platform for creating and solidifying relationships; a large source of financial support; and a chance to make an impact on growing your organisation and enhancing your "brand" with key stakeholders.

But how do you know when your meetings are providing all of these benefits? How can you tell when a relationship has been solidified? How do you determine how successful your meetings will be financially? How do you know when your organisation's brand has improved?

In order for your meetings to be part of the legacy you want your organisation to leave with your members, your industry stakeholders, and the public, you need to be able to *measure* all of the key indicators that you can define. Here are a few suggestions for what to measure, and how to monitor improvement.

First of all, for each key indicator you are going to measure you must identify a starting point. It could be last year's levels at the time of your meeting. If it is an indicator you have not been measuring, then you will need to use this year's meeting to establish a base number for measuring future growth and impact.



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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Key Success Indicators

1. **Association Growth:** Let's not kid ourselves – membership growth is always going to be one of the ways our leaders, and our stakeholders, measure/evaluate our organisations. Your organisation's renewal rate is your customer satisfaction measurement. New members joining is one of the ways to measure the effectiveness of your marketing efforts.

2. **Member Engagement:** Do not equate meeting attendance with member engagement. You need to *track* member engagement in order to impact it – Every time a member participates, purchases online publications, responds to a survey, contacts the organisation's headquarters, attends an in-person or virtual meeting, contributes to your foundation, etc. Those actions should be recorded in the member's profile/record. This information allows you to manage member engagement by identifying members who are NOT engaged in any way except getting your newsletter. Use this lack of engagement to develop targeted campaigns to increase your percentage of engaged members (engaged members = renewing members).

3. **Advocacy Effectiveness:** This is an area many groups like to avoid when measuring success. Advocacy can mean working to change worldwide issues or getting governments to change policies. Those are ongoing, mission-centric activities. How can success be measured?

The key here is to identify outcomes and milestones. For example, how many more partner organisations have signed on to your policy statement(s)? How many new organisations have joined your coalition? How many additional lawmakers have co-sponsored legislation you supported? How many standards groups have adopted your recommendations? While you may not accomplish mission-defining results, you can identify measurable goals each year that show you are making progress.

4. **Organisation Meetings:** This is one area where measuring success is a normal activity. What was the attendance vs. previous years? Did the attendee evaluations reflect improvement in things like

speaker quality, take-away ideas, facility satisfaction, hotel evaluations, etc.? Was the trade show a success, financially and in exhibitor evaluations?

5. **Brand Recognition:** Was media coverage of our event greater than in previous years? Did social media response/follow numbers improve over the last year? Were any new partner organisations identified? Did attendance from partner organisations increase at our meetings and functions?

These lists could go on, of course. The point of all this is obvious. It is one thing to say, "We are the leading organisation in the _____ field; or "We are the most respected association in our industry." It is another thing to be able to support those statements with actual facts.

Measuring your accomplishments is more than just gathering numbers:

- It gives you the ability to benchmark your efforts and effectiveness;
- It makes your strategic plan a living document;
- It allows you to prioritise the allocation of your organisation's resources;
- It establishes staff and volunteer leadership accountability;
- It creates another opportunity for organisational transparency;
- It can increase teamwork and creativity;
- It provides multitudes of opportunities to recognise both staff and volunteers for their efforts and successes.

We all want our organisation to leave a legacy in our industry, profession, community, and/or country. It is not a matter of setting goals and meeting those goals. It is a matter of continuous improvement and constant progress toward building a better organisation and creating greater value for our members, contributors, and other stakeholders.

Navigating the **Future** of the **Meetings Industry**

CityDNA Summer School in Brno

From 27th to 31st August, Brno, in the Czech Republic, will host the prestigious **38th CityDNA Summer School**. This City Destinations Alliance (DNA)'s event marks a significant milestone for professionals in the meetings, conventions, and tourism industry, offering an unparalleled learning experience.

The CityDNA Summer School has carved out a reputation as a flagship event for meetings professionals, having welcomed over 2,100 alumni across its previous editions. This year's programme is meticulously designed for industry newcomers, aiming to lay a solid foundation for their careers while navigating current industry trends and challenges. Participants from diverse sectors such as DMOs, CVBs, hotels, airlines, DMCs, and PCOs will find the programme tailored to their needs.

Under the expert guidance of **Dennis Speet, Managing Director of the Amsterdam Convention Bureau**, and a distinguished faculty, attendees will delve into various critical areas. These include bidding processes, client engagement strategies, sustainability, legacy planning, EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity), and the revolutionary impact of artificial intelligence on the industry. This blend of theoretical knowledge, practical workshops, and interactive sessions is designed to empower participants with a holistic understanding of the meetings industry.

The programme highlights include engaging panel discussions, deep dives into the roles of Convention and Visitors Bureaux (CVBs), storytelling techniques for destination marketing, and strategies for leveraging the ICCA database. Special sessions will focus on sustainability in meetings, the importance of EDI, and the concept of legacy in the context of events. Additionally, practical workshops will offer hands-on experiences in these areas, complemented by insightful presentations on bidding strategies and the utilisation of AI.

This year's CityDNA Summer School is not just an educational platform; it's a gateway to forming lasting connections within the industry. It promises an enriching experience that blends knowledge acquisition with the exploration of Brno's rich cultural tapestry. As we look forward to this exciting event, we invite professionals from across the meetings and tourism industry to join us in Brno for a transformative learning journey.

Converging at the CVB Café: Innovations and Insights



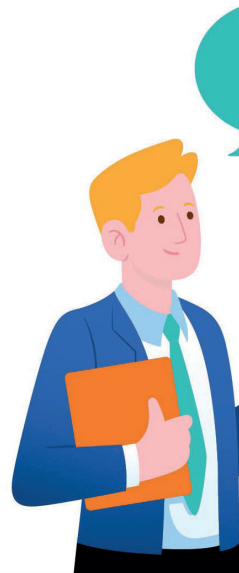
The **CVB Café**, organised twice a year by **CityDNA's Meetings Industry Knowledge Group**, represents a unique platform for CVB professionals to converge and discuss the evolving landscape of CVBs. This event is strategically placed before the major industry events, **IMEX** in Frankfurt and **IBTM World** in Barcelona, offering attendees a chance to explore pertinent topics and network before these significant gatherings.

The most recent session of the CVB Café, which was held in Barcelona on 27th November 2023, underscored several key insights and emerging trends within the meetings and events industry. One of the primary focuses was the adaptation to new market conditions, reflecting a post-pandemic environment where flexibility and innovation have become crucial. The discussions delved into how destinations can enhance their appeal and functionality in a rapidly changing global market.

Networking remains a cornerstone of the CVB Café, with a

specially arranged dinner that provides a relaxed setting for professionals to share ideas, strategies, and form potential collaborations. This informal yet constructive atmosphere is particularly valued by participants, as it fosters deeper connections and understanding among industry peers.

The timing of the CVB Café allows participants to gather insights and perspectives that are immediately relevant and applicable, making it an invaluable session for any CVB professional looking to stay at the forefront of industry trends and challenges.



CITY DNA

38TH SUMMER SCHOOL

AUGUST 27-31, 2024

BRNO - CZECH REPUBLIC

Introducing CityDNA's New President: *Barbara Jamison-Woods*

During the **CityDNA's General Assembly** on 24th April, **Barbara Jamison-Woods** was elected as the association's President for a mandate of three years.



Barbara Jamison-Woods is a highly skilled professional with over 25 years of experience in global tourism and destination promotion. As the current **Head of Europe for London & Partners**, Barbara plays a pivotal role in enhancing London's business tourism and events sector, and attracting foreign direct investment.

Barbara's extensive industry knowledge covers various sectors, including youth and educational tourism, consumer travel and tour operating, as well as business and events, and city wide DMO management.

Barbara has been part of the board for six years prior to her appointment to President, with three of the last years spent as Vice-President dedicated to city marketing of CityDNA, where she utilised deep knowledge to drive

CityDNA's promotional efforts. Her leadership in this role and her commitment to the association's mission – which is to collaborate, share knowledge, and support member growth – has made her a key asset to the organisation.

In recognition of her advocacy and investment in the meetings industry, Barbara received the **IMEX Paul Flackett Lifetime Achievement Award**. She also worked on the implementation of the **CityDNA Mentor Programme** aimed at supporting newcomers to the industry.

Barbara is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of leaders in tourism and city development, actively participating in initiatives like the newly formed **CityDNA Advisory Council**. Her experience, leadership, and industry connections continue to benefit the organisations she serves, making her a distinguished figure in her field.

"I am honoured to take on the role of President at CityDNA, and I am excited to lead the organisation in promoting Europe's strengths in attracting diverse visitors, the best talent, and future-proof investment. During my term, I will work on enhancing our collective efforts, building upon the amazing achievements of the Alliance to date. Alongside the board and the CityDNA team, our goal will be to continuously advocate for the importance and relevance of our members," said Barbara.

In the next issue, we will discuss with Barbara about her first few months as president, and explore future projects and challenges facing the association.



Legacy: A Driving Advocacy for Association Events

Association events are linked to a very vital piece of the meetings industry’s puzzle, one that brings together creative minds, talents, wisdom, and thought leadership. These compelling words underscore the primary motivations behind the existence and purpose of association events, which will keep on thriving in any format, no matter what happens in this world.



AUTHOR: SISSY LIGNOU - PRESIDENT & CEO, AFEA CONGRESS, AND PRESIDENT-ELECT OF IAPCO

The power of connecting people drives us, the professionals of this industry, to daily perform successful events for our clients and our organisations. There is no greater pleasure for a meeting planner than the delivery of a prosperous, record-breaking event, that leaves its mark on the organisation’s history and milestones.

There is no greater reward than the establishment of a lasting legacy for both the community and the destination through the activities and outcomes of events. And yes, legacy can have a very powerful role in showcasing the value of the global meetings industry, as it relates to the long-lasting impact of our sector.

But first, let’s have a look at the broader role of our business.

The voice of global as well as national associations active in the meetings industry is united in many aspects, but very much aligned on one fundamental fact: the power and huge impact of our sector in the global economy. This can be considered the primary driver of advocacy within our field.

On 11th April, 2024, in celebration of **Global Meetings Industry Day**, **IAPCO** unveiled its *annual 2023 IAPCO member survey*, highlighting the industry’s value and the activities of leading global PCOs. The survey revealed an increase in economic impact from pre-pandemic results of €12.8 billion in 2019 to €13.47 billion in 2022, as well as a significant growth in number of events and professionals employed in the members’ companies.

In addition, the **Events Industry Council** and **Oxford Economics** collaborated on an extended research

project on the economic significance of meetings, presenting a **1.6 trillion USD contribution from business events to GDP**, a number which could rank the sector as the 13th largest economy globally.

Meetings contribute to employment, seasonality and foster more than 40 professions related to the design, organisation, and delivery process of an event. They draw upscale and high-income attendees who typically spend five to seven times more than regular tourists in a given destination, and who could also act as ambassadors for the hosting country. Our business promotes destinations and their potential to host high-end meetings. It contributes to urban development and further improvement of facilities and infrastructure.

An influential industry deserving of preservation and advancement, it serves as a catalyst for forthcoming national strategies, global policies, and growth. It is a strength that should be utilised to the full by governments, local authorities, policy-makers, and key opinion leaders.

In the current period, various organisations representing our industry place advocacy at the top of their agenda, a fact showcasing their intention to spread the word about the positive impact of the sector within, but especially outside, our ‘meetings bubble’. Many voices, different approaches, and diverse advocacy strategies, but all aligned with one main vision.

This vision is also driving IAPCO, as advocacy is at the forefront of the association’s five-year strategic plan, with the goal of raising the profile and importance of IAPCO-accredited PCOs. In this sense, IAPCO launched

a global advocacy priority initiative, which was officially announced at the recent **Annual Meeting and General Assembly** in Ljubljana this year.

Now, association events can play a significant role in this process due to their characteristics, as they not only gather wisdom, knowledge and expertise in one place, not only they contribute to the development of science, medicine, and scientific excellence, but they also rotate among various destinations, which allows them to establish a strong legacy in various fields. Association events have the capability to highlight the cultural and historical heritage of destinations, foster innovation, promote sustainable development and enhance community development. They are delivered via collaboration and synergies among the professionals of the industry, the DMO, the local and state officials, the supplier chain, the volunteers, and the community. What could be better than showcasing the collaborative spirit of a destination, or for an international association to create a strong knowledge economy in the host country?

Legacy is a win-win long-term impact like no other, compared to other sectors, and it is a powerful argument for all meetings professionals to use when advocating on our business. It is a superpower that is very often unrecognised by policy-makers, but which should serve as a driving force in the advocacy for associations when they seek to gain recognition and support in the destinations that host their events.

Now is the time to unite our voices and agree on a global advocacy strategy for our meetings industry. If we succeed, magic can happen...

“ *The voice of global as well as national associations active in the meetings industry is (...) very much aligned on one fundamental fact: the power and huge impact of our sector in the global economy.* ”



IAPCO is a global not-for-profit membership organisation whose mission is to raise the standards of service amongst its members and other sectors of the meetings and events industry by means of continuing education, interaction with other professionals and research. IAPCO today represents 138 accredited businesses of professional congress organisers in 40 countries. IAPCO membership is achieved through the demonstration of a continual high level of service delivery and is retained through annual quality checks and reviews by the IAPCO Quality Committee.

The Solvay Conference 1927

Discussing the impact of a conference is often predictable. The association will mention the number of members who participated, the venue, the number of square metres sold, the destination, and the number of hotel nights booked. While these are all important elements, they do not touch upon the purpose of the event, which is the real key performance indicator.

AUTHORS: SVEN BOSSU, CEO AIPC

The Solvay Conference of 1927 is legendary. As one of the prestigious participants – Werner Heisenberg – commented: “Through the possibility of exchange between the representatives of different lines of research, this conference has contributed extraordinarily to the clarification of the physical foundations of the quantum theory. It forms, so to speak, the outward completion of the quantum theory.”

Admittedly, not every conference organised by an association will achieve such results. At the same time, it is important that associations are clear and precise about the purpose of their conferences and report on the results booked, especially if we want to attract the new generations that will soon take the helm at many of the member organisations.

As *Forbes* mentions, Gen Z is fueled by purpose. Having experienced a global pandemic, economic recessions, and major cultural shifts during formative periods in their lives, Gen Z sees the world differently. They’re passionate about solving societal problems, and they expect the places they work to have similar beliefs. So, if associations want this generation to attend their conferences, having a purpose and legacy will be extremely important.

Such a purpose can have many faces, benefiting different stakeholders. Obviously, there is the member community itself. As an example, this year’s theme of the **AIPC Annual Conference** is “Next Gen Venues”. The purpose is to provide the participants with insights into what next-generation venues will look like, allowing them to take the necessary action and adapt accordingly. At the same time, it will allow AIPC as an association to disseminate these learnings at a larger scale and to include them in our educational offerings.

Another stakeholder can be the local community. Associations can include a “giving back to the community” element in their programme, which goes

beyond the purely economic one. For example, **Sibos** – the financial industry event – launched **Art@Sibos** in 2014, integrating art from local artists into the event. For its first edition, more than half a dozen pieces of installation art were displayed in such a way that made it possible for delegates to interact with the art, walk around it, and even touch it. Delegates were also able to speak with the artists and, in some cases, actually purchased pieces of art. This initiative still continues today as one of several initiatives taken by Sibos to give back to the local community.

A third stakeholder can be the larger or even global community. An obvious example is the **2023 UN Water Conference**, which assessed progress made in the implementation of the UN’s International Decade objectives, while reaffirming the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. Although not at the same level as the UN, associations sometimes underestimate the impact they can have by bringing their community together and leveraging that collective brainpower to address societal challenges, directly or indirectly linked with the purpose of the association itself. Hackathons, for example, can be a great way of achieving tangible outcomes in a fun and interactive way, stimulating networking in the process.

As demonstrated above, having a clear and articulated purpose can elevate conferences to a higher level, benefit different stakeholders, and ultimately make the world a better place. It might be something different than the completion of the quantum theory, but it could still result in a (big) bang.



Event Legacy and Social Impact for Associations: What do They Look Like?



Fundraising Events

Many associations organise fundraising events such as charity-supported dinners and awards. The **American Cancer Society's Relay for Life** is a nationwide event where communities come together to raise funds for cancer research and support services. Similarly, the **British Heart Foundation (BHF)** hosts the **London to Brighton Cycle Ride**, which is one of the UK's largest cycling events. The event not only raises awareness for cardiovascular health but also funds research that leads to medical advancements and improved patient care. BHF events have a legacy of improved heart health outcomes and reduced heart disease mortality in the UK.

Educational Workshops and Conferences

Associations frequently host workshops, seminars and conferences focused on social issues relevant to their members and the broader community. These events provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, skill development and networking. For example, the **World Economic Forum** holds annual general meetings where global leaders come together to discuss social, economic and environmental challenges.

Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

Events can serve as platforms for advocating for social change and raising awareness about important issues. Associations often organise rallies, marches or awareness campaigns to mobilise support. Associations are often at the centre of social justice. The **Alzheimer's Society** organises memory walks to raise awareness for dementia research. The event brings people together suffering from dementia. The National Trust organises events such as conservation weekends where volunteers come together to help protect and maintain the UK's natural and cultural heritage, involving activities such as tree planting, habitat restoration, and historic building restoration.

Community Service Projects

Associations may engage in community service projects as part of their events, such as volunteer days, clean-up initiatives or humanitarian missions. For instance, **Habitat for Humanity** organises **Build Days**, during which volunteers construct homes for families in need.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Associations often collaborate with other organisations, including corporations and government agencies, to maximise their social impact. By pooling resources and expertise, they can amplify their efforts and reach a broader audience. One example is the partnership between the **Red Cross** and **Airbnb** which allows hosts to offer free temporary housing to people displaced by natural disasters.

Sustainability Initiatives

Associations increasingly prioritise sustainability in their events by implementing eco-friendly practices such as waste reduction, energy conservation and carbon offsetting. By promoting sustainable practices, they contribute to environmental conservation and raise awareness about the importance of environmental stewardship. The **Green Sports Alliance**, for instance, works with sports associations to reduce the environmental impact of sporting events.

Probably one of the best examples of a legacy impact from a major event was the **London 2012 Olympic Games**. The **Olympic Park** in London was transformed into a recreational area with facilities for sports, cultural events and green spaces, while the stadium was reused as the home to West Ham Football Club.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gordon Glenister is an international expert on influencer marketing and membership, having founded *Membership World*, a community of associations and membership bodies. Gordon also hosts *Influence*, the global podcast, and is an award-winning author of influencer marketing strategy.



How can **Event Tech** be Grasped as an **Opportunity?**

An AI-powered engagement strategy operating year-round can help an association grow its membership and produce better events.

AUTHOR: CONOR RIORDAN - DIGITAL CONTENT EDITOR AT EXPOPLATFORM

Implementing a 365-community approach around live shows allows your organisation to gain crucial insights into your members' interests and challenges. It opens avenues for a tech-fuelled tailoring of offerings, which can then turn into better engagement, reach, and ideas for your next event.

Personalisation of experiences was chosen as the top opportunity for digital solutions in the latest *Event Tech Forecast* from **ExpoPlatform**. The results found that 64% of respondents to the survey saw this as providing the greatest room to make gains. But how can it be done?

Associations must engage with members year-round, adding value to their offerings and helping with things such as career professional development. Two components to this are personalisation of content and matchmaking, both of which can use AI to power better results.

The first part of building a year-round engagement model is to create a sense of belonging around a common interest or common purpose – something these membership organisations already have.

Events remain a powerful tool to bring people together, but they are not the whole picture. Members also need to keep those relationships alive all year long, and digital platforms offer a way to do that.

A 365-approach can be a major source of competitive advantage, building trust around your association. You must find out what engages your community, using data-driven insights and creativity to refine the formula.

An existing association will have a good database of members to go to, but many industries also have an over-supply of news. The right event management platform can bring you enough information to answer this question: how can I add value to this already crowded competitive landscape?

Content is crucial when trying to do this with your community, delivering new and useful points of engagement to your members. It's what keeps social media channels active, it's what makes email newsletters get opened and it's what starts to pull in new audiences through search engines.

Machine learning is a branch of AI that focuses on using data and algorithms to improve accuracy. These algorithms can then be trained to take a huge library of stuff and make it personalised – no two people have the same experience.

AI is fundamental to the success of the world's biggest businesses and should be just as important for associations moving forward. It's an approach that needs to be applied to people, content, and organisations.

Using online platforms for your community allows you to use AI to analyse the interests of association members, which can help with your experimentation. By doing this, you are then able to match your members to content and peers who are more likely to suit their needs for growth within your organisation.

ExpoPlatform has published a completely free guide to building this year-round model for associations in its *Community Blueprint*, which you can find in the QR code.

