



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Headquarters

OCTOBER 2016

ASIA PACIFIC

Interview

SIONE TU'ITAHU

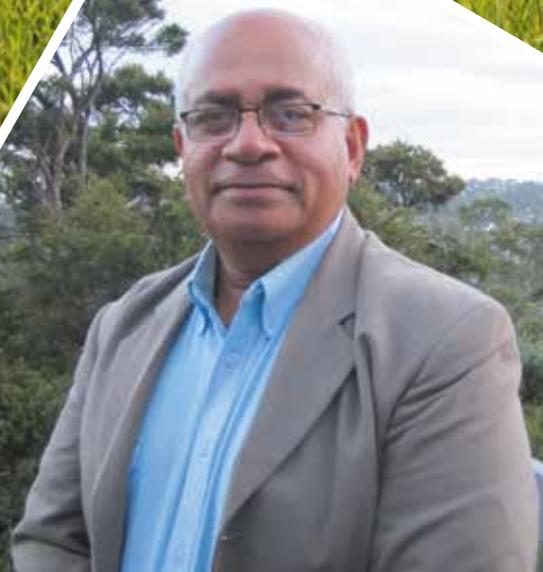
**HOLDING A CONFERENCE
IN NEW ZEALAND**

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RECRUIT RECRUIT RECRUIT

MARCEL A.M. VISSERS EDITOR IN CHIEF

Another September, and another IT&CMA. The MICE event has held up well, which is good news for Asia Pacific. And now that the event is combined with association days, it has only become even more interesting.

Then again, maybe not. Regardless of what people say – often for business reasons – progress is only coming in baby steps for associations. There is still a lot of work that remains to be done. Some countries are doing a good job, but most are lagging. Some have no national associations, let alone regional or intercontinental associations. The differences in terms of legislation and approach are quite significant between countries. Not to mention the freedom of movement and association, which only complicates matters even more.

The situation is very similar to that in Europe. In Europe, ESAE has not exactly got off to a flying start and yet there are no obstacles there, unlike in Asia Pacific. So what exactly is the problem? As always, an association needs members to be representative. And once you have members, the latter must also feel that the association acts on behalf of them. So there is only one solution: recruit, recruit, recruit. At the same time, this must be combined with education, bringing members to learn. This is the only chance of progress, there is no other way.

But you cannot increase the number of members by simply relying on a secretariat, which usually consists of one person, who only works half-time. Forget it. An association that wants to grow must have a number of good representatives who get out there and explain why the association is so important for a country, for a profession, for progress. A few association days every year will not remediate the situation. I consider this a case of treading water or variations on a theme.

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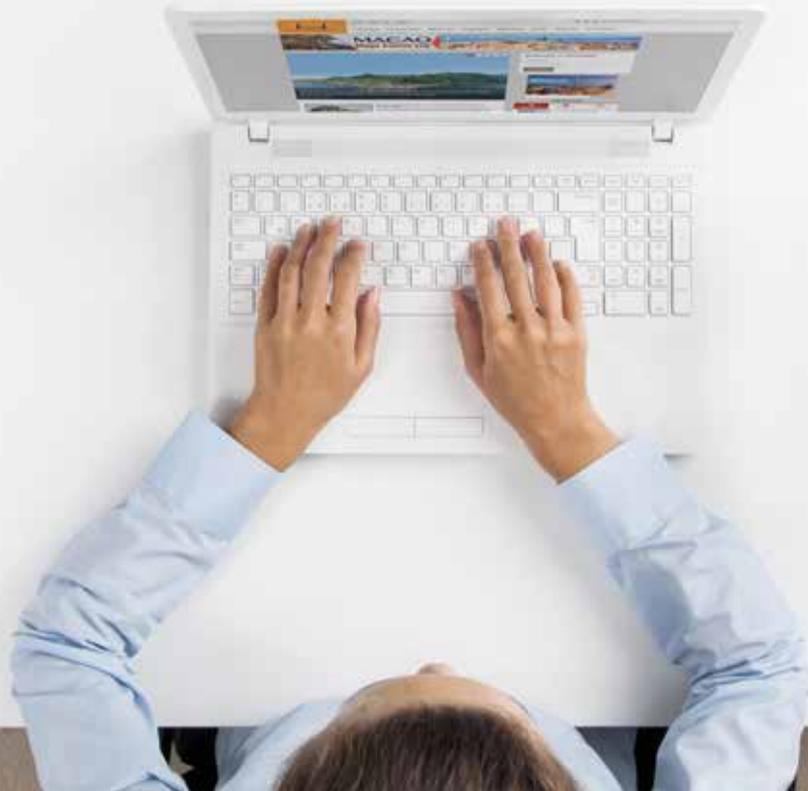
ASSOCIATION PROFILES

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT ISSUES

DESTINATION FOCUS

EVENTS & FAIRS

MEETING TRENDS



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1

RWANDA SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS AU SUMMIT AND CALLS FOR GREATER AFRICAN UNITY

A rousing call for pan-African unity, solidarity and equality rang throughout the 27th African Union (AU) summit, which took place at the newly launched Kigali Convention Centre on July 10-18, 2016, and echoed the shared ambitions of its 54 member states to work together for greater trade, interaction and long-term prosperity in Africa. Tagged as "a global strategy to optimise the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans," the Agenda 2063 programme was also specified, aiming for unity, prosperity and peace throughout the continent over the next half century by learning from lessons of its past, building on the progress it now has under way, and strategically exploiting all possible opportunities available to it.

WWW.RWANDAConventionBUREAU.RW

4

BCEC PERFORMS STRONGLY SECURING 140 NEW CONVENTIONS FOR BRISBANE

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre continues to perform strongly, securing 140 new conventions for Brisbane. International specialists in immunology, world trauma, wound management, drug resistant infections and vertebrate palaeontology are among those who will head to Brisbane as a result of the strong line-up of conference wins by BCEC and its convention partners over the last 12 months. More than 71,235 delegates from Australia and across the globe will deliver some 256,000 hotel room nights for the city generating \$143 million in economic benefit to Brisbane and Queensland. The scientific, medical and healthcare sectors along with education, engineering and aviation dominate a stellar list of conventions which demonstrate Brisbane's strengths in these key sectors.

WWW.BCEC.COM.AU

2

INTRODUCING STAVANGER

With 127,000 inhabitants and about 10,000 conference chairs, Stavanger is one of Norway's largest cities. The centre of the Norwegian oil, gas and energy industry, it is also a university city, and home to a number of institutions of higher education and research such as the International Research Institute of Stavanger. Stavanger has around 30 conference centres and hotels, and one of Norway's main conference and exhibition centres is located here. The maximum capacity is 5,000. One of the most famous natural attractions in the region is the impressive cliff Preikestolen (the Pulpit Rock), which towers 604 metres over the Lysefjord, the perfect outing for a pre- or post-conference tour.

WWW.RegionSTAVANGER.COM/EN/STAVANGER-CONVENTION-BUREAU

5

UNEDESTINOS UNITES BRAZILIAN CONVENTION BUREAUX

Although the immense size of Brazil might suggest that its states adopt an independent stance and become involved with strategic actions that only serve regional peculiarities, Unedestinos (National Union of Convention Bureaux and Destination Entities) took advantage of the very diversity of cultures and business possibilities to encourage union and a shared vision of how to market destinations and come up with initiatives that can be replicated, encouraged and expanded to include other markets. Unedestinos currently comprises 40 CVBs that last year alone supported and secured more than five thousand events for its destinations, representing approximately 3,000 associate companies that are responsible for 110,000 direct jobs in the tourism, travel and events' production chain.

WWW.UNEDESTINOS.COM.BR

3

IMEX AMERICA REVAMPS ITS ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME

IMEX America has completely reimaged the 2016 programme and format of Association Focus, its education and networking event for association professionals. John H. Graham, CEO and president of ASAE, chairs the new Leadership Stream, which is set to tackle the long-term strategic issues currently dominating the minds and plans of the association C-suite. Topics will include: the impact of strategic governance on profitability and planning; how to ready a membership organisation for possible cyber-attack, and how to engage with a generationally and geographically diverse membership base. Additionally, Martin Sirk, CEO of ICCA, will lead the new Association Meetings and Events stream, where the spotlight falls on the tactical and managerial challenges facing association meeting and event planners.

WWW.IMEXAMERICA.COM

6

THAILAND STRENGTHENS ITS MICE LEADERSHIP POSITION

Thailand Convention Bureau & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has taken a step forward in strengthening its position as a hub for business events in Asia by prominently featuring Chiang Rai – the Northernmost Province of Thailand, the origin of Lanna Culture and gateway to greater Mekong sub-region. The Province is strategically located in the Golden Triangle area, enabling business events' travelers to conveniently connect to the neighboring countries of Laos, Myanmar and China. Some of the Royal facilities in Chiang Rai have become the perfect venues for MICE activities, giving unique insight into the history of the destination and the local grassroots Thai communities.

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Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre



Chang Rai

ASIA-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF THREAT ASSESSMENT PROFESSIONALS (APATAP) ON A STEEP TRAJECTORY

The Asia Pacific Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (APATAP) is the region’s key body in promoting and developing the cross-disciplinary study and management of threatening individuals and behaviours such as stalking, harassment, and threats. Besides holding a conference on threat management, the association is also dedicated to developing a range of professional education seminars and support to academic research in the fields of its expertise. Damian McMeekin, President of APATP, gives us more insights on the association that brings together members from different disciplines. Interview Katie Lau



**DAMIAN
MCMEEKIN**

How would you introduce your association to our readers?

APATAP was established in 2013 from an earlier Australasian incarnation, which was set up in 2011. Its ultimate purpose and that of its international partners is to enhance best practices and defensible decision-making in the primary prevention and response to disruptive and dangerous behaviours, which include stalking, harassment, threats, violence, from the very personal through to broad movements such as violent extremism (one focus of our 2017 conference).

How would you describe the background of your members?

Our members tend to be forensic psychiatrists and psychologists working in specialised mental health disciplines, academics and students from related disciplines, police specialists, and corporate security executives. Mostly they are from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong along with a number from elsewhere in the region as well as Europe and North America.

Could you describe the events held by your association?

APATAP’s conferences comprise a themed one-day expert seminar followed by two days of tightly managed presentations addressing issues across the disciplines within our field of professional interest. Presenters are drawn internationally, and content is required to meet established academic and professional standards. Formal sessions are complemented by informal events structured to strengthen engagement across our multi-disciplinary community.

How do you pick the destination for your events?

Our earlier conferences were held in Australia, reflecting our establishment by professionals there. We’ve become better able to support our regional colleagues and growth, so have been able to move our focus to Asia, with the previous conference in Bangkok and the next being held in Singapore. In addition to supporting a local community of colleagues our priorities include international connectivity, capable and reputable conferencing facilities, and pricing suitable to our diverse membership.

What are your criteria for choosing venues and destinations?

APATAP’s conferences are relatively small but highly communal and very international, so we need a venue that can manage our size and expectations respectfully and within conservative price bands appropriate to our various constituencies. We ask a number of people to travel a good distance so, as well as a supportive conference venue, there needs

to be an interesting environment with options for social events and free time.

What is the most memorable event you have attended as a participant or an organiser?

Our 2014 conference in Brisbane suffered a memorable storm with hail striking fiercely enough to drown even amplified sound, and winds strong enough to shake us 30 floors above street level. More broadly, APATAP has a very diverse and distributed membership for a professional association, so our executive committee has experienced an incredible breadth of events. My own started in Papua New Guinea at the Goroka Show in the late 1950s, and that simply cannot be beaten for spectacle and difference. I believe every peak professional association conference can be memorable, because they all carry the passion of colleagues almost regardless of size or location. With professional support from providers, though, that passion carries into truly memorable professional and personal occasions.

Do you have a favourite country or destination for your events

APATAP remains a relatively young association and is still on a steep trajectory, from our origins in a small and informal meeting of colleagues in Microsoft's Melbourne office to where we are now, with experiences of very different meetings too in Brisbane and Bangkok and with a conference coming up in Singapore. Each has been incredibly important to our development, and each has had its own wonderful personality, so it would be unfair to favour the memory of any one particular occasion.

You are the Global Head of Security for ANZ. How does your experience at APATAP enrich your personal and professional life?

The disciplines contained within APATAP's fields of work are important and professionally fascinating, but the members themselves are also extraordinary in their own right, and wonderfully enthusiastic. They show in the association their recognition of each oth-

er's work, and the importance to our communities' wellbeing of successful cross-disciplinary collaboration and of professional excellence. Building on this cohesion and sense of purpose is stimulating and rewarding.

What trends have you noticed in the association industry?

Globalisation has made life more complex for everyone. It's created extraordinary mobility and inter-dependencies while opening niches and demanding collaboration. APATAP is a prime example of where that has taken us, and what needs to be serviced: a relatively small international gathering of diverse but highly professional colleagues who are engaged intensely with each other's thinking but meet only intermittently, and need to make the most of the opportunity and occasion. The association industry has been responding to that, and will benefit from continuing to recognise customers' diversity of need against more uniform standards of awareness and expectation.

What lies ahead for your association?

The Associations of Threat Assessment Professionals here in the region, in North America and Europe, and soon in Africa are developing strongly and working already towards the establishment of an international association that will develop global professional standards. This regional and global development is of great importance to the fields in which we work, and of commensurate benefit to our communities. APATAP is still a relatively small body requiring stringent financial management, and a carefully balanced professional and ethical approach to publicity, but we are known increasingly well within our various professions and have been receiving support from understanding sponsors. Microsoft, for example, have been with us from our beginning, as had a number of practices in our fields. This has made it possible to conduct professionally valuable and enjoyable events, which will only strengthen as we grow our regional programmes. 

WWW.APATAP.ORG



HOLDING A CONFERENCE IN NEW ZEALAND A UNIFIED EFFORT

New Zealand will host the world health promotion conference of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) in 2019. Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director of The Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand - Runanga Whakapiki Ake I Te Hauora o Aotearoa (HPF), explains why New Zealand is the perfect host for a conference based on planetary health and sustainable development.



SIONE TU'ITAHU

Why is this conference so important? How did you get involved in bidding for it?

IUHPE's conference is the biggest health promotion event in the world. Health does not begin at the hospital. By the time a person reaches there it's too late. Health promotion works with communities and peoples where their health begins: where they live, learn, love, work, play and pray. The evidence-based knowledge and professional experience shared will be immense and is urgently needed, to address the global health challenges and socio-economic issues faced by humanity today. The HPF is a member of

New Zealand is accessible in terms of travel, and offers many unique experiences in a country that is safe, clean and healthy

IUHPE and I am a member of the Global Executive Board of IUHPE. We have had ambitions to host the conference for some time now and are delighted that our plans are now coming to fruition.

Can you tell us a bit about the conference?

We hope to attract at least 2,000 participants. It will take place April 7-12, 2019 in Rotorua. We have devised a Rotorua 'Conference Village' with the Energy Events Centre as the main hub, and three other neighbouring centres for sub-plenaries and break outs; all within a healthy walking distance. The theme of the 2019 event will be *Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development For All*. Leaders from across the spectrum - from health to climate change and socio-economic development - will meet and share knowledge that can contribute to making the world a healthier place to live.

What makes Rotorua such a fitting host?

Rotorua has all the resources and facilities needed for a world conference of this calibre and size, and can deliver it on budget. It is also New Zealand's cultural heartland, with our indigenous Maori peoples leading from the front in terms of governance, education, health, commerce, and community and iwi (tribal) development.

In fact, our conference theme was initially inspired by discussions with indigenous leaders in Rotorua. New Zealand is recognised as a world leader in terms of knowledge, research, and practice of indigenous health promotion, and this will be a central theme of the content. Our fellow indigenous health promoters from around the world tell us they look forward to joining us in 2019 and learning from our experience.



Te Puia, Rotorua

© Eric Lindberg

Rotorua is an outstanding tourist city, imbued with the heart-felt hospitality of its local indigenous peoples – Te Arawa. Activities include Maori cultural experiences, soaking in the natural geothermal hot pools, and admiring the impressive views from the gondola; or it's only a short trip to the Hobbiton Movie Set. Rotorua is also a healthy city that is moving towards having all aspects of its development sustainable. Our colleagues are very health-conscious professionals and we are confident they will love the ability to walk and cycle around the city, with its world-class facilities and beautiful natural environment.

What are the challenges and opportunities of holding a conference in New Zealand?

Our distance might be seen as a challenge but transport and communication is so advanced and

our country such a popular destination that this is easily managed. New Zealand is accessible in terms of travel, and offers many unique experiences in a country that is safe, clean and healthy. Some of the logistics such as organizing transport and accommodation for more than 2,000 participants from around the world can be challenging, but we are confident that this will be very effectively managed.

Experience shows us that our fellow health professionals are willing to travel to attend this triennial conference because of the unmatched opportunity to witness successful health promotion initiatives in other countries. Many of the health promotion colleagues from around the world that we met at the last conference in Brazil are keenly looking forward to the conference hosted here. We are confident New Zealand will have the added

attraction of its natural beauty, beautiful weather, friendly people and its reputation as a small nation that punches above its weight in many fields.

What are you hoping hosting this event will achieve?

An obvious benefit will be the raised profile worldwide for our organization and New Zealand's health promotion and public health sectors. Similarly, New Zealand as a tourist destination and as a member of the international community will be further elevated and promoted.

Hosting the conference also demonstrates our leadership and experience at regional and global levels. HPF co-hosts the regional office of IUHPE for the South West Pacific alongside the esteemed Health Promotion & Research Unit (HePPRU), of >

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the School of Public Health, University of Otago. By bringing the world to New Zealand, HPF's members and colleagues have the chance to gain knowledge and network with their peers around the world. Equally, we have a great deal to offer the rest of the world in terms of our unique experience. An example of this is the work to make New Zealand smokefree by 2025.

Part of the event's longer legacy might be the establishment of a durable health initiative. We are hoping to focus on establishing the World Health Organization's 'healthy city' initiative in Rotorua; providing a model for the rest of the country, and the world.

What support did you have to win this conference for New Zealand?

Tourism New Zealand has been a wonderful, professional and generous partner in this journey

and we believe their support has been pivotal to the success of our bid. Not only did they financially support us to prepare the bid, to travel and present, but they also continue to provide advice and support; identifying other key stakeholders to work with to ensure the success of the bid and the conference.

Equally important was the support and guidance from our national leaders. The judging panel was impressed by the calibre of the leaders who have supported - and are still supporting - us. We have the support of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Key, and the Minister of Health, the Honourable Jonathan Coleman. We also have the support of our country's indigenous and health leaders. All health promotion/public health schools from our universities, one Wananga and other tertiary institutions have also provided support and practical help. On the local level from Rotorua, we have the support of Te Arawa Trust, the Mayor of Rotorua, and many other partners.

And of course Helen Clark - former Prime Minister of New Zealand and the current head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - has expressed her enthusiasm for UNDP involvement in the conference.

The panel was very impressed that it is a whole nation supporting us, not just a lone and isolated effort by HPF. A marketing plan is now being put in place to make sure that Rotorua in April 2019 is the destination of choice for all those in health promotion. This conference is a win-win opportunity and we are very excited about it. 

MORE ON NEW ZEALAND
AS A BUSINESS EVENTS
DESTINATION ON
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Geothermal Field, Rotorua



Sky Tower, Auckland



Te Puia, Rotorua



Aoraki/ Mount Cook

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LOOKING UP TO THE ‘STARS’ FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

My organization, ADFIAP¹, has organized annual conferences, meetings and training events in many countries for 40 years now. However, I, together with my colleagues in the management staff, am still looking up to the ‘stars’ for guidance in organizing these events. The ‘STARS’ that ‘guide and lead’ us to a successful event is actually an acronym: **S for site, **T** for topics, **A** for activities, **R** for resource persons/speakers and **S** for secretariat support.**

Text Octavio B. Peralta, Secretary General, ADFIAP & Focal Person, APFAO



**OCTAVIO ‘BOBBY’
PERALTA**

Such are the five key elements of successful event planning based on ADFIAP’s experience. The STARS ‘framework’ is elaborated on, as follows:

SITE –There are three considerations here. The first is city/country site. Because ADFIAP has a representation of 104 member-banks in 40 countries in Asia-Pacific, it gives an opportunity for every member to host the event and showcase its country. The decision where to hold the event is usually from two sides – from a member-bank’s offer to host the event itself or from other members that request a member in a country that has not hosted yet to do so. This ‘rotation’ of venue affords member-delegates a chance to see as many countries and experience the local hospitality in these places.

The second aspect of this is the event’s hotel venue. Because ADFIAP holds its biggest event – the annual conference – in the month of May, which is usually peak season for travel, it pays to plan early, at least one year in advance, when looking for a hotel venue.

The association leaves it up to the member-host to finally select the conference hotel after it has briefed the host on its hotel selection criteria. The essential points to consider in hotel venue selection include: (a) location (b) facilities (c) service staff and (d) pricing – normally in this sequential order of importance.

Regarding location, the two main considerations would be accessibility as well as security and safety arrangements. It adds up plus points if the hotel is conveniently located near the headquarters of the host-bank and to local VIPs invited to the event.

A very important consideration in selecting a hotel is its service staff, not only in terms of technical assistance they provide but equally in the staff’s pleasantness and friendliness to deal with. Because of the many functions during the annual convention (meetings,

meals, expos, awards show, etc.), involvement of the hotel staff from the sales office down to the waiters is critical to the success of the event.

The last aspect regarding site is *touring* choices and arrangements. As the last day of each convention is allotted for leisure, it is essential that the venue has something special to offer to the visiting delegates who have to ‘switch gears’ from business persons during the conference into ‘tourists’ on the last day.

TOPIC – Because a conference is a learning event, the key ingredients to an attractive programme is the design and development of the conference *theme* and the *session topics*. The main consideration here is that the content (of both the theme and the topics) must be current, relevant and useful to the attending delegates.

Based on ADFIAP’s experience, its members put premium in attending the conference if the event offers something that could help their business: (a) add value (b) save money and (c) solve problems. In short, the event is all about business after all.

¹ The Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia & the Pacific (ADFIAP) is the focal point of all development banks and other financial institutions engaged in the financing of development in the Asia-Pacific region. ADFIAP is also a founding member of the World Federation of Development Financing Institutions composed of regional associations in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East. The permanent Secretariat of ADFIAP is based in Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

The theme and topics are first conceptualized based on the present business environment that has an impact to the association and its members. A concept paper is first prepared by the association secretariat and discussed internally with a small group of experts. The paper is then passed on to the member-host for comments and inputs. Once approved, the theme and topics are finalized and circulated to all members. The selection of the resource persons/speakers is then begun.

ACTIVITIES - The event, to be successful, must be a 'balanced and delightful' experience for the delegates. The main components under this aspect consist, in general, of four activity areas: (a) learning (b) networking (c) awards and (d) leisure.

Even after 40 years, an Asia-Pacific development bankers' association still looks up to the 'stars' for guidance to successful events

Regarding networking, pre-conference meeting appointments are arranged between member delegates who wish to explore and develop business opportunities. In such a case, the event planners will have to put into the conference program such meetings and, in addition, organize rooms where these meetings will be held. Other networking possibilities should be 'structured' by the organizers so that delegates can meet during coffee breaks, meals, tours and golf games. The idea here is for the

event managers to keep in mind that networking is not always spontaneous (especially in Asia) and has to be 'built in' into the event agenda.

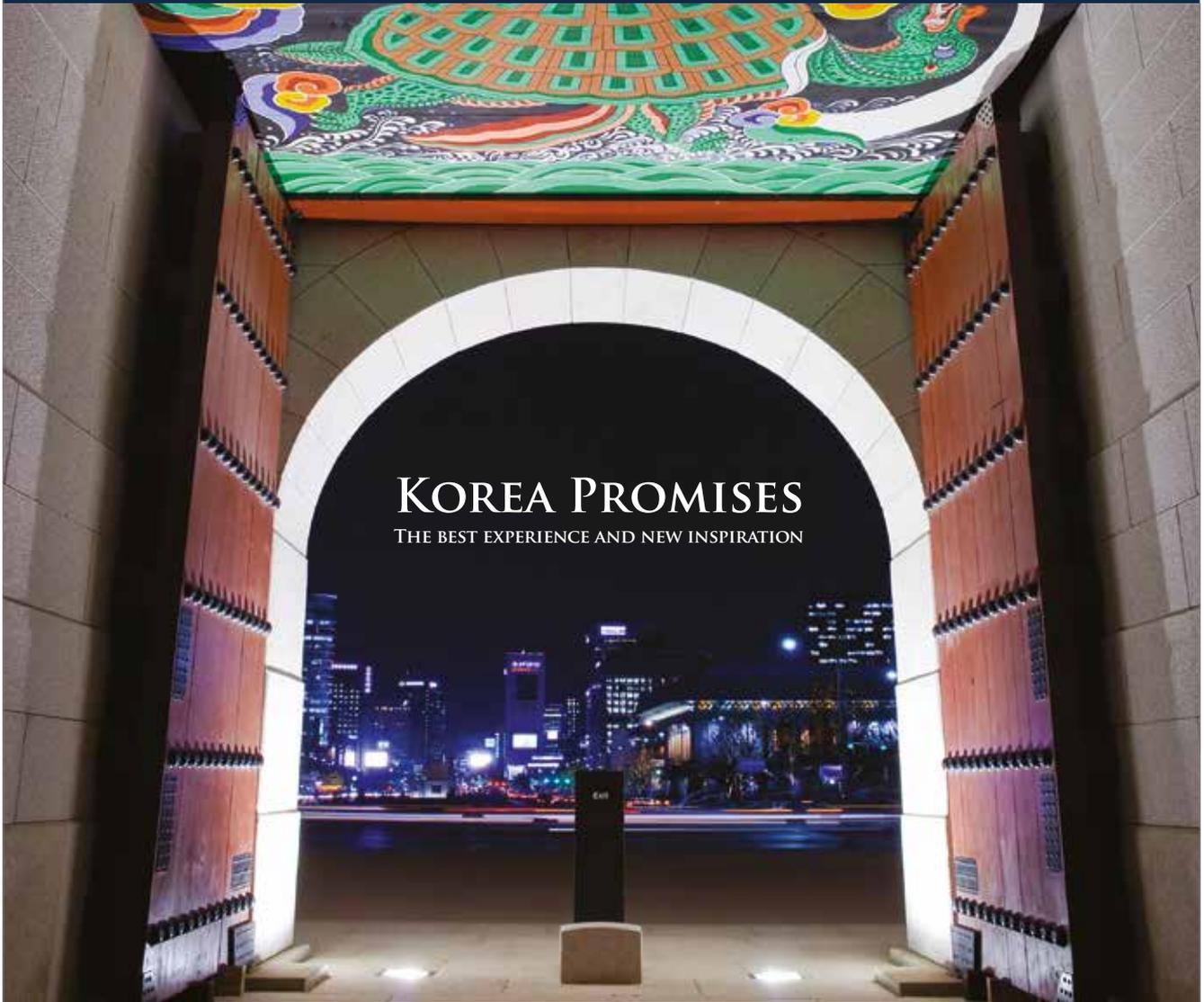
An awards program has also become an important part of ADFIAP's annual convention. Started years ago, the *ADFIAP Awards* has been an 'institution' in itself, providing members and their officers, recognition of their achievements during the year. This has also been an event attendance booster for the association. ▶



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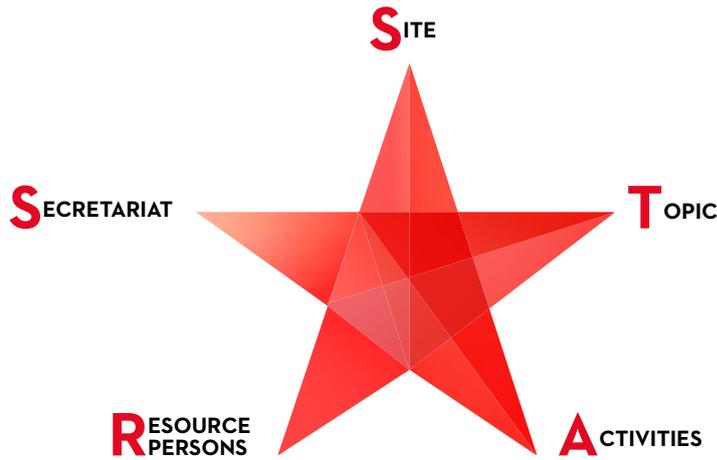
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TIPS OF THE STAR



Another event perk is the leisure activity that the convention will offer. Activities like tours, sports and shopping are an integral part of each ADFIAP conference not only for the delegates but for their accompanying persons as well.

RESOURCE PERSONS/SPEAKERS – These are the experts who will deliver the learning content of the conference. As with the design and development of the event’s theme and topic, the speakers are keys to a successful event. In fact, delegates look at the speaker line-up with keen interest.

In the choice of resource persons, ADFIAP looks at three considerations: (a) area of expertise (b) experience as a speaker and (c) willingness to stay and mingle with the delegates (not the ‘come-and-go’ types). It also helps if the speaker endeavors to write the text of the presentation and not only prepare the Powerpoint slides, to enable ADFIAP to publish their speeches in the association’s magazine.

The speaker and the topic assigned should match. This is where the area of expertise fits in. Because of its international network and its database of consultants and experts, ADFIAP has the capability to source out conference speakers with relative ease and dispatch.

The other qualification is the speaker’s experience as a ‘presenter’ – a person who can hold together the audience’s attention as long as possible. ADFIAP has developed a list of “do’s & don’ts” on public speaking as well as tips for speakers in a multi-lingual society as Asia.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT – The final element of the STARS ‘framework’ is the people running the event from behind the ‘stage curtains’. These are, in real terms, the ‘stars of the show’, for without the event management staff, there is no event to speak of in the first place.

In ADFIAP’s case, the event management team is a joint unit of the member-host’s staff and the association’s personnel in Manila. Through email exchanges and phone calls, the event is planned, led,

organized and controlled. Supporting the process is an extensive ‘to do list’ developed by ADFIAP over the years and a host of other supporters – the hotel staff, the travel agencies, tour operators, service providers and many others

Octavio ‘Bobby’ Peralta is concurrently the secretary general of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), the president of the Philippine Council of Associations and Association Executives (PCAAE) and the focal person of the Asia-Pacific Federation of Association Organizations (APFAO). Email at obp@adfiap.org



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ASSOCIATION AND CONGRESS MANAGEMENT

It's an intrepid international organisation that steps into Asia to teach international congress management style to a region that is the fastest growing market for international association meetings. However, when planning negotiations start it quickly becomes clear that things certainly happen and decisions are made in a very different way.

Jenny Salsbury reports in the first installment of a two-part article.

The challenge for the international organiser is to maintain the integrity of the event whilst incorporating cultural features of the region and being certain things will happen according to plan in the Asian context – there is a need to ensure the appeal to the regional audience converts to delegate registrations. Meanwhile, the challenge for the Asian based organiser is the management of expectations across the cultural divide.

PLUSES AND MINUSES

Clearly, the reason international associations want to host their congress in Asia is to penetrate the Asian market, to boost attendance at their global meeting and bring Asians into their fold. International associations have a tendency to develop their in-house congress management with a set of established rules and requirements that are

taken around the world as a template, come what may. Commenting on this trend veteran PCO Roslyn McLeod of Australia based Arinex cites two main reasons for following this model:

- Protection of the integrity of the program quality
- Making money as a direct return to the headquarters

There are pluses and minuses. *"The advantage is that it does drive a higher quality of program which will attract global participants, however, it does tend to diminish the exposure of local speakers unless there is smart management"* Roslyn points out.

With this "globalizing" of the congress comes the risk of sanitizing local culture which should run through the whole event, the pride of hosting to showcase "Asian style" can be diluted as a result,

often meaning a reduction in drive to increase interest in the international meeting. *"There is a gross under-estimation of the benefit of investing in local expertise via its members and suppliers when this type of template is applied"* continues Phillipa Seeto of Arinex *"Every destination is NOT the same. Invariably the headquarters secretariat is disappointed with the co-operation it does not receive."*

Putting it another way Bangkok based Marcel Ewals of MCI Group states: *"Managing expectations of all stakeholders is the biggest problem."* He mentions specific challenges in three main areas:

- **Decision making** – The appointed PCO might be responsible for decision making in certain areas which can create huge frictions when the Local Organising Committee (LOC) wants oversight placing the PCO firmly in the middle as "the bad guy" despite following directions from the International Society.

- **Pricing** – It is a common feeling amongst Asian LOC's that they often feel the need to pay back or honour various contacts for past favours during the build up to the event. *"This often leads to the LOC feeling they have a right to subsidize whoever they like"* states Marcel, continuing with the point *"The belief that "low rates = more delegates" is a common one in the region, this comes at a cost to the event and therefore a loss of income for the society."*





• **The scope of work of the PCO “Scope Creep”**

– often the LOC’s consider a PCO is purely there to do their bidding and should do anything they want rather than managing a professionally budgeted event.

There is also a matter of staffing levels, in general there are many more staff involved in the running of an Asian congress but it is hard to find the actual decision maker. An Asian client typically feels that the PCO team is understaffed if they only see one person, even though there may be many specialist divisions in the organization working on the project behind the scenes. In this case, most Asian PCO’s work with a key Project Coordinator and a relatively large team of supportive help who have little decision making capacity.

Summing up, Marcel comments: *“Only with a strong and experienced Project Manager who can anticipate the differences early on and start managing the expectations can these challenges be properly steered. In particular, managing “scope creep” requires a personality that can diplomatically address the client, say “no” and explain why.”*

BEHIND THE SCENES

Speaking for Asian PCO’s Kitty Wong of K&A Conferences in Taiwan states that the business in key Asian cities like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore is pretty much run along western international standard lines but international organisers coming

The reason international associations want to host their congress in Asia is to penetrate the Asian market, to boost attendance at their global meeting and bring Asians into their fold

into the region don’t immediately see that behind the scenes things are happening in a different way.

“Coming in to Asia is takes a while to realise how important it is to make friends and build relationships and that the Copy/Paste option is not an option” she states continuing to outline the network of consultants available through the World PCO Alliance (WPCOA). She feels that sometimes the CVB’s can be quite naive in their approach to inviting international business without spelling out this fact.

In North Asia Japan based Kaoru Shibuta, Managing Director, Congress Corporation sees two main challenges:

• **The language issue** – whilst the PCO staff may have high level of English proficiency the suppliers of technical services or food & beverage may only speak Japanese thus meaning the international organiser needs to have someone from the local PCO with them at all times to handle last minute on-site requirements.

• **The growth of regional Asian attendance** – due to more regional involvement in international congresses it is increasingly likely that delegates from China, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and others find Japan’s proximity convenient. This means a wider more diverse range of services to meet cultural needs of participants from Asia.

Continuing this angle Jason Yeh, CEO of Taiwan’s GIS Group goes on to state *“A main challenge is the need to think beyond just conference organizing. This is faced by not only the Asian based PCO companies but also by PCO companies worldwide. In other words, the new expectations from clients’ are focused not only on services, logistic management and financial results but also on attendees’ unique experiences of learning and networking. Therefore the companies, in this particular industry, need to change their mind set.”*

The second part of this article will be published in Headquarters Asia-Pacific – December 2016. Stay tuned!

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The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre) is Malaysia's premier award-winning purpose-built facility and Asia's only AIPC (International Association of Congress Centres) Gold Standard venue. The Centre's strategic location in the heart of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) integrated precinct combined with its flexible mind-set, innovative value-add solutions and customised offerings make it the perfect business events partner of choice.

The Centre is also one of the most technologically-advanced venues in Malaysia and continues to invest in information technology (IT) and audio-visual (AV) upgrades in order to maintain a competitive advantage and increase its capabilities to meet the rapidly changing needs of business events clients.

Recent upgrades undertaken to enrich the delegates and visitors experience include the installation of LAN (Local Area Network) ports with a bandwidth of 1Gbps and a 20Gbps distribution backbone utilising single mode fibre optic cables, as well as the RM3.1 million (US\$770,000) investment to enhance the venue's 21 meeting rooms.

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According to the Centre's General Manager, Alan Pryor, "IT and AV infrastructure is a primary qualifier in the venue selection process. We therefore continuously invest in our IT and AV facilities and services to deliver customised solutions that enable clients to seamlessly incorporate technology, such as web conferencing, into their events, providing them with an expanded audience reach and virtual participation resulting in added value."



Kuala Lumpur
Convention Centre



Alan Pryor



In line with this, the Centre recently became the first venue in Malaysia to install a Cisco HDX Wi-Fi system to improve its coverage range and help manage the venue's Wi-Fi network, which offers complimentary internet service, up to 240Mbps in total, to delegates and visitors in public and designated areas in the Centre. With the installation of the Cisco HDX Wi-Fi system, the Centre's Wi-Fi is able to cope with higher user density and provide more bandwidth, which enhances the user experience and allows the venue to offer a customised bandwidth allocation should additional support be required.

"Fast and reliable internet connectivity is critical for business events. With ever increasing Wi-Fi traffic due to the proliferation of devices, as well as client requirements for multiple live 4K video and audio streams, live interactive systems and large file transfers it is crucial to plan and cater for huge bandwidth consumption. These recent upgrades ensure that we can meet these demands now and into the future," concluded Pryor. 

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INTRODUCING JEJU

A MEETING ISLAND GEM

As the largest island off the coast of South Korea, Jeju, a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site, offers optimal meeting venues as would be expected in such an international tourist destination.

In Jeju, hotels and conference centres to suit a variety of budgets and requirements can be found all across the island, offering services to suit both large and small events. State-of-the-art facilities amid unbeatable natural surroundings are also on offer. Altogether, events in Jeju can be of any size, from small, one-day conferences for local businesses, to week-long international conventions that attract world-renowned academics and professionals.

KEY ATTRACTIONS

Whatever the occasion, events are sure to incorporate Jeju's greatest attractions, from its rich history to its cultural assets. As the island's hotels often come well-equipped with conference facilities, you don't have to leave the hotel grounds to get all you need from your business trip. But when you do decide to leave, guided tours are of course available!

The island boasts a selection of key attractions that make it a truly unique MICE destination in the Korean peninsula. The recent opening of several new hotels has contributed enormously to customer satisfaction: last year, Jeju Booyoung Hotel and Resort was inaugurated, offering 449 rooms, its own 1,000-seat conference hall and several breakout rooms just metres away from International Convention Centre Jeju (ICC). The Ramada hotel brand has also opened several new facilities on the island.

Jeju Convention & Visitors Bureau (Jeju CVB) provides unique services that cater to business travelers, including MICE event booths, where guests



ICC JEJU & Booyoung Hotel

can receive general information about Jeju and its tourist attractions, and more hands-on experiences, such as trying traditional Jeju cuisine and costume. In addition, the Jeju MICE card was launched last year: this card is for MICE visitors staying on the island, allowing them to use public transport at a discounted price whenever they visit associated stores, restaurants or tourism sites.

INCENTIVES & JEJU MICE EXPO

Incentive tours in Jeju are quite popular: a must-do is clearly the 'A Day Away Awesome Jeju' tour along the Olle walking trail. This trail – with 'olle' meaning 'narrow path from home broadening into a road' in the Jeju language – goes around the entire island, allowing travelers to experience hidden locations

and share regional dishes with locals and trail experts. In the future though, the Jeju CVB is also expecting to see growth in the conventions industry as more national and international conferences will be organised on the island.

As one of Asia's most exceptional MICE locations, the island was able to launch Jeju MICE Expo last year, the first MICE expo in Korea to be organised and implemented by a local bureau. The event was tremendously successful, with local MICE companies and Jeju CVB partners enjoying face-to-face meetings and networking with national and international buyers. This year, Jeju MICE Expo is expected to take place at ICC Jeju in November. 



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