

INTERNATIONAL

## SLOW JOURNALISM MOVEMENT

# BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORT

**#04, NOV 2016**  
€19 / SEK 199

**FOR THE MEETINGS AND EVENTS INDUSTRY**

## 01

## LEADERSHIP

Good leadership puts the interests of the community as a whole before those of any specific group. Credibility of leadership can only be established through action and not words.

## 03

**KNOWLEDGE  
ECONOMY**

Focus on all sectors that are key to the development of the economy, be it business events, trade, hospitality, real estate, financial services or SMEs.



## 02

## STRATEGY

**The Dubai Way.** Crystallizing the vision, setting the goals, drawing the plan, setting a reasonable time for implementation, mobilizing resources, giving the signal for implementation of the project.

## 04

## PUSHING SUSTAINABILITY

Everything built is in compliance with the very latest environmental standards. The goal is to become the city with the smallest carbon footprint in the world by 2050.



## Smart City

Dubai seeks to distinguish itself as the global leader delivering Smart Economy and Smart Living opportunities for all.



## Developing Talent

Keep changing. Let us look at things a bit differently. Open discussions. Create a vibrant knowledge community



## Government Focus

Up to Rwanda: health care, technology, sustainable energy, water, space, education and transportation.



## Hub for Minds

Knowledge of the meetings industry is a new kind of function-based cluster, in the space between all branches.



## Business Intelligence

When the business intelligence radar is switched on, you might find yourself going from business intelligent to intelligent business.





A dramatic landscape of a Faroe island. A winding road or path cuts through a rugged, layered rock formation. A body of water, possibly a fjord or a bay, is visible in the middle ground, reflecting the light from a cloudy sky. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, with a bright patch of light breaking through near the horizon. The overall mood is majestic and serene.

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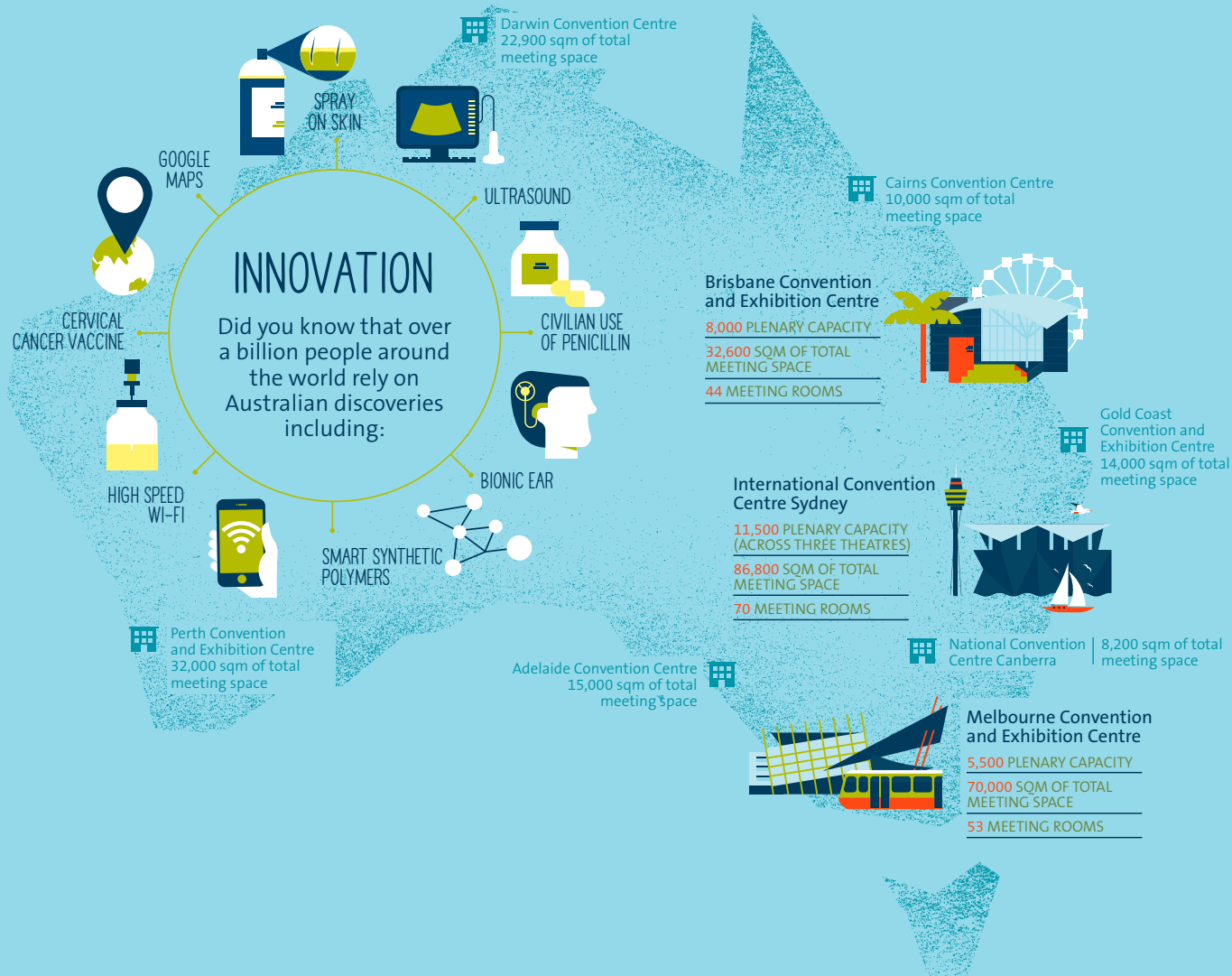
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# AUSTRALIA – HOME TO THE WORLD'S BEST CONVENTION CENTRE

Brisbane, Australia's third largest city and the closest Australian capital city to the Asia Pacific region, is officially home to "The World's Best Convention Centre", Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC).

**N**amed The World's Best Convention Centre by the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC) APEX Award 2016 – 2018, BCEC was the top performer in six out of the eight key performance areas including Food & Beverage, Event Services, Building & Amenities and Overall Value and Overall Experience.

The venue, which hosted the 2014 G20 Summit, received the accolade after an international client survey conducted by the global research organisation, Ipsos. An overwhelming 90 per cent of respondents rated their overall experience as excellent, with specific reference to the services offered by BCEC.

As one of Australia's largest convention centres, BCEC hosts an average of 135 conferences and 1,200 events each year. And with a philosophy based on collaborative relationships with their clients, and with the local scientific community, BCEC enjoys a repeat business rate of 65 per cent.

BCEC also benefits from Brisbane's growing reputation as a centre of excellence in several health sciences.

## NEW WORLD CITY

Home to three of Australia's top universities and Australia's largest medical research centre, Brisbane continues to deliver outcomes that benefit the world. Leveraging this strong scientific community, BCEC works in partnership with Brisbane's top scientists, researchers, academics and innovators as part of the BCEC Convention Advocates Partnership. This group are key drivers of convention bid wins for Brisbane and BCEC.

One such Advocate, Professor Ian Frazer, of the University of Queensland, says attracting international conferences to Brisbane means focussing on the city's strengths – world-class science and research.

The city is acknowledged as a leader in several fields, including biomedical, biopharmaceutical and human therapeutics, diagnostics and clinical trials. Brisbane also has a string of leading research institutes, including Australia's largest medical research institute and the country's first initiative of 'bench to bedside' medical research – the Translational Research Institute, of which Professor Frazer is Director of Research – along with the world-leading QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute.

Professor Frazer, whose work led to the development of cervical cancer vaccines, (now marketed as Gardasil and Cervarix) says, "In my experience, BCEC's work with the universities here is absolutely necessary to attracting international conferences to Brisbane, now and in the future".

This wealth of medical expertise is increasingly seeing Brisbane, and BCEC, chosen as the location for major medical conferences. In 2015,



*Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre*

the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists World Congress, the Asia Pacific International Academy of Pathology Congress, and the World Congress of Gastroenterology were all held in Brisbane. Several other events will follow in 2016/17, including the 12th Congress of the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses, the 19th International Congress for Tropical Medicine and Malaria and the World Melanoma Congress 2017.

Accessing these important knowledge hubs is also assisted by the city's "Team Brisbane" approach to attracting business events, providing contacts and links to local researchers and innovation experts to boost conference program content, attract specialist presenters and help organisers and delegates expand their networks.

With all this on offer as well as a friendly, welcoming riverside city to discover, it's no wonder Brisbane and BCEC are increasingly on the radar for international business events.

For more information on holding your next meeting in Brisbane contact:

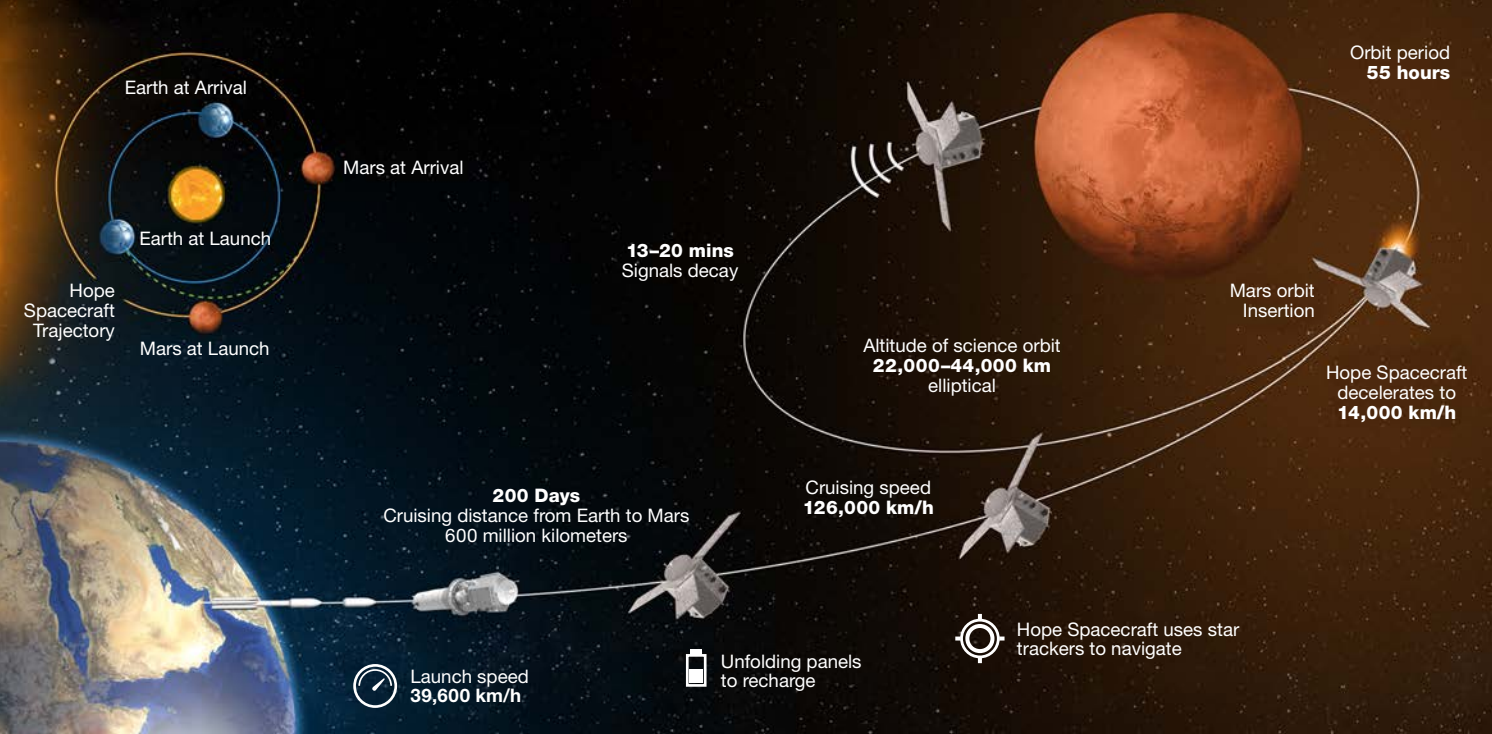
### **Brisbane Marketing**

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# UAE takes first step to Mars mission

## Aims to be among the top countries in space industry

The United Arab Emirates's mission is expected to reach Mars in 2021, the programme is the first by an Arab, Islamic country, and it will be executed by the UAE Space Agency with support from international partners.

The UAE entered the global race to explore outer space in July 2014 when The President, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, unveiled the space agency and announced plans to launch a scientific voyage of discovery to the red planet by 2021. These announcements mark a turning point in the country's development establishing space technology as a new drive for diversified economic growth.

The Mars mission will enrich Emirati capabilities as well as increasing human knowledge about space exploration and distant planets. The probe will take nine months to make the journey to Mars. By this the UAE will be one of only nine countries with ambitions for Mars. The mission is scheduled to arrive in 2021 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the UAE.

The UAE Space Agency reports to the Cabinet and enjoys financial and administrative independence. It is responsible for organising, supervising and managing the nation's space sector as well as

supporting its contribution to the national economy. The agency works to raise awareness about the importance of space technologies, enhance national capabilities and encourage peaceful application of space research.

UAE's investments in space technologies has already exceeded Dh20billion, including satellite data and TV broadcast company Al Yah Satellite Communications, mobile satellite communication company Thuraya Satellite Telecommunications and Earth mapping and observation system Dubai Sat.

Globally, space technologies are becoming increasingly important to the security and economy of nations, in many cases backed by massive national programmes and establishments. The sector forms an integral part of telecommunications, navigation, broadcasting and climatology.

In the UAE Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, Space is identified as one of seven key industry sectors transforming Dubai and the UAE into a world class knowledge society.

Find out more on [www.dubaibusinesssevents.com](http://www.dubaibusinesssevents.com)



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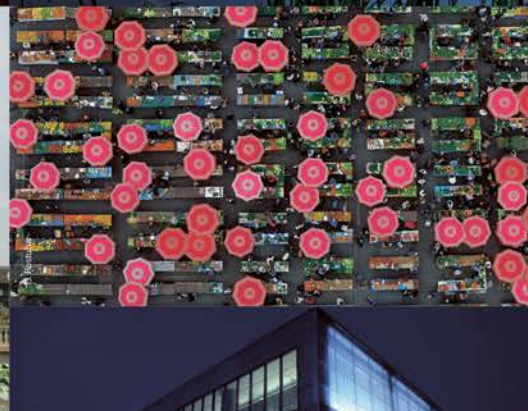


# ZG

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# Zagreb a Smart Place to Meet

**Z**agreb is the capital of the Republic of Croatia, one of the oldest European cities with its history running back to the 11th century and is yet one of Europe's youngest metropolises.

Geographically close, Zagreb is conveniently accessible by road and air: it is only one hour flying time from Vienna or Munich, one and a half hours from Frankfurt and two hours from London and Paris. The International Zagreb Airport is a busy port connecting the city with all parts of Europe and beyond.

## Points of interest

Zagreb is a little treasure trove of European culture and civilization. It has many surprises in store:

- Great historical and cultural sites, numerous museums, galleries and art collections. Items of particular rarity are the Zagreb Mummy with the world's longest text in Etruscan, and the remains of Neanderthal prehistoric man (homo Krapinensis).
- A variety of events and musical performances, which from April to late September take place outdoors in the streets, squares and beautiful city parks.
- Famous spring and summer festivals; Promenade concerts, Dance Evenings, Folklore Festival, Flower Festival, Film Festivals in the open, Cest is d'best street performers' festival and many others.
- The famous Advent in Zagreb, the best European Christmas festival featuring lights, good food, carols, local and international Christmas tradition taking place during Christmas season at downtown city squares and parks.
- Exciting nightlife and clubbing all over the city, especially in summer months, such as the famous Tkalciceva street with relaxed atmosphere and numerous restaurants becoming lively with music and fun as musicians perform jazz, blues, evergreens.
- Great variety of excellent gastronomy offer with superb food and local wines.

- Shopping and sports facilities.
- Diverse half and whole day trip possibilities, either to the wine bearing region packed with fantastically preserved nature, castles, legends and great local cuisine, or to the Adriatic coast for the total Mediterranean flair.

The secret recipe for a successful Zagreb meeting or a conference, memorable incentive, or a fascinating event, includes a rich variety of carefully selected historic and modern venues, world class hotels, exciting gastronomic adventures, top quality PCOs and DMCs, highly professional staff and excellent service. Combine them together according to your preferences and wishes and you will get a unique tailor made Zagreb experience.

Spice it up with a great number of cultural and historic attractions, all centrally located and within walking distance. Take a break and stroll through a string of green parks and promenades right in the city centre or just enjoy a delicious cup of coffee in one of the open terraces on the many squares downtown.

The pulse of this charming capital of Croatia will follow you everywhere you go, from the Gothic churches, Baroque palaces, Art Deco buildings, beautiful city parks, picturesque open-air markets to many interesting places in its beautiful surroundings. In less than two hour drive you can enjoy the Adriatic coast or any other beautiful part of the country which makes it a great starting point for a memorable incentive, pre or post tour. One of such suggestions would certainly be the famous Plitvice Lakes National Park included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Zagreb is a city with a special charm and the unique hospitable feel generated by its proverbially open hearted inhabitants. It boosts energy, motivates and brings out the best in every event and its participants. Welcome!

For more information, please visit [www.meetinzagreb.hr](http://www.meetinzagreb.hr)





# St. Petersburg aiming to make Top 10

**S**aint Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia and located on the shores of the Baltic Sea, is well-known as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe – a treasure house, an open-air museum, a place where you can enjoy the White Nights and draw bridges.

It is easy to reach by plane (3–4 hours from European countries), train (3 hours from Helsinki and Moscow) and ferry (72 hour visa-free stay for passengers coming by sea.) It has more than 200 museums and over 700 hotels. Its status as the centre of tourism is confirmed by place #14 at the Top World Destinations Ranking in 2016 by TripAdvisor.

Now the city has a new goal – to enter the European Top 10 business meetings destinations. It has every chance. It was founded as a window between Russia and Europe. Still today it is the most cosmopolitan and friendly city in Russia. Moreover, it is well known for its high investment potential and innovative environment.

Being a metropolis of the Russian Empire for almost 200 years, it has a solid industrial basis and a strong academic and research landscape. Major fields include the port, shipbuilding, energy and gas, power plant, automotive, pharma and medicine, aerospace, culture and HoReCa.

The city already has experience in providing the highest level of services and security measures during the important international events, such as the G20 and G8 summits, and Ice Hockey World Championship.

The city sees the meetings industry as one of the strategic segments for further development and invests in its improvement. Some important steps have already been made in establishing the Convention Bureau as well as the opening of a new terminal at Pulkovo International Airport and the opening of Expoforum Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Expoforum is one of the largest and most modern venues not only in Russia but in eastern Europe. The venue is located in the southern part of the city, which is recognized as the most rapidly developing one. It takes only ten minutes to get to the airport and 30 minutes to reach the historical city centre.

Flexibility and its comprehensive nature were two key themes while planning Expoforum. Architects and engineers were travelling around Europe and the globe to collect the best practices in venue management. That groundwork resulted in a complex of buildings located on 56 hectares:

- 3 pillar-free exhibition halls (13,000 m<sup>2</sup> each.)
- Congress facilities for up to 10,000 pax total (3 main halls: 4,000 / 3,000 / 2,000 pax.)
- 2 hotels (Hilton and Hampton by Hilton.)
- Parking (4,700 lots) and helipads.
- Customs terminal and warehouses.

Expoforum is ready to welcome exhibitions, conventions and congresses, governmental and corporate meetings, shows and concerts, banquets, sport competitions and other events of all sizes and formats.

Since opening in October 2014, Expoforum has hosted around 200 events with over a million visitors. Expoforum has set ambitious goals, and a number of international events are already confirmed for the coming years:

- European Congress on Perinatal Medicine (ECPM) 2018 (2,000 pax.)
- Congress of the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) 2019 (3,000 pax.)
- World Congress of the World Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons (WSCTS) 2020 (4,000 pax.)
- LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) International Conference & Exhibition 2022 (5,000 pax.)



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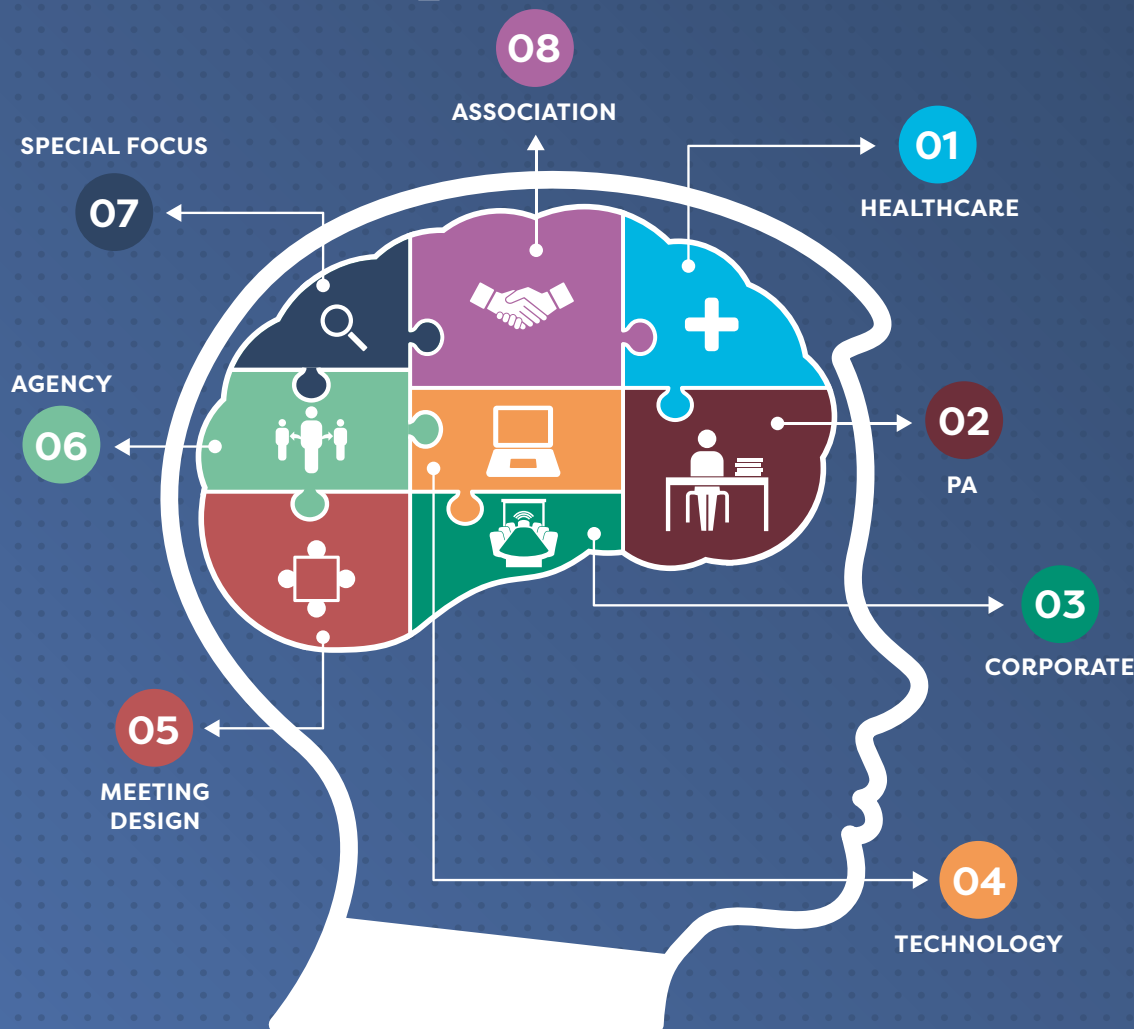
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# The Virtues **OF SLOW**

**THE BRITISH** newspaper *Independent* reports that Helen Boaden, one of the UK's most distinguished journalists, has resigned after 34 years at the BBC. She was head of BBC News for ten years before taking the helm at BBC Radio. Why did she resign? Because she lost faith in modern journalism.

A great many people criticise the media, often with an underlying tone that things were better before – and naturally the internet is to blame for the increase in shallow reporting. But Helen Boaden has a different perspective. In her long resignation email she praised digital technology for the improvements it has brought about.

Today, journalists can report from all corners of the world. Information is easy, quick and cheap to come by. Few people yearn to go back to the pre-internet world.

The problem, says Helen Boaden, is that modern news reporting describes events in fragments. We don't get to see the big picture, only shards, especially in TV news. This gives us a poorer understanding of events.

"Everything is reported, but very little is explained," she writes. "Do

we, the media, do enough today to explain and explore? Or are we too busy moving on to the next thing, in thrall to the pace of news?"

We perhaps *think* we can handle information from the constant news flow, we imagine that we can absorb it all. However, studies show that this type of fragmentation hinders deeper thinking and creative powers.

Helen Boaden's conclusion is that journalists not only have to think quickly, in today's fast-paced world they need more than ever to remember to think slowly. Or, as she puts it: "In a world of Fast, I am unapologetically speaking up for the virtues of Slow."

Thirty years ago in Italy, Carlo Petrini founded the *Slow Food* movement as a counterforce to the fast food industry. For decades, people have been encouraged to eat micro-waved semi-finished products. But exactly how nutritious is fast food? Investigations have shown that the fast way has a fatal downside. That insight needs to be spread, and not only to journalists.



PHOTO Magnus Malmberg

Swedish-Indonesian **ATTI SOENARSO** has worked as a journalist for close to 40 years. She has worked for Scandinavia's largest daily newspaper, was TV4's first travel editor, has written for many Swedish travel magazines and has had several international clients. She has travelled the length and breadth of the world and written about destinations, people and meetings.





PHOTO Sari Lindvall

# A New Take **ON TALENT**

## TEXT

Atti Soenarso

**“MOST OF US** have heard things like this at some point in our lives: ‘success is for the chosen few’ or ‘It’s an innate talent’. We’re tired of that kind of talk. We’d like a rethink on the approach to talent and training. With the right training and attitude, anyone can become almost anything. Using our model, anyone can develop a talent.

There’s an incredible potential to develop in all sorts of ways, so why only look at the limitations?”

These assertions come from Kristian Persson and Peter Svensson, coauthors of the book *Skapa*

*talang – konsten att bygga en mästare (Creating Talent – the art of building a champion)*. Based on elite sport and the latest research in the field, they present a comprehensive approach to training and development that can be used whether you want to become a world-beater or achieve your goals in the workplace.

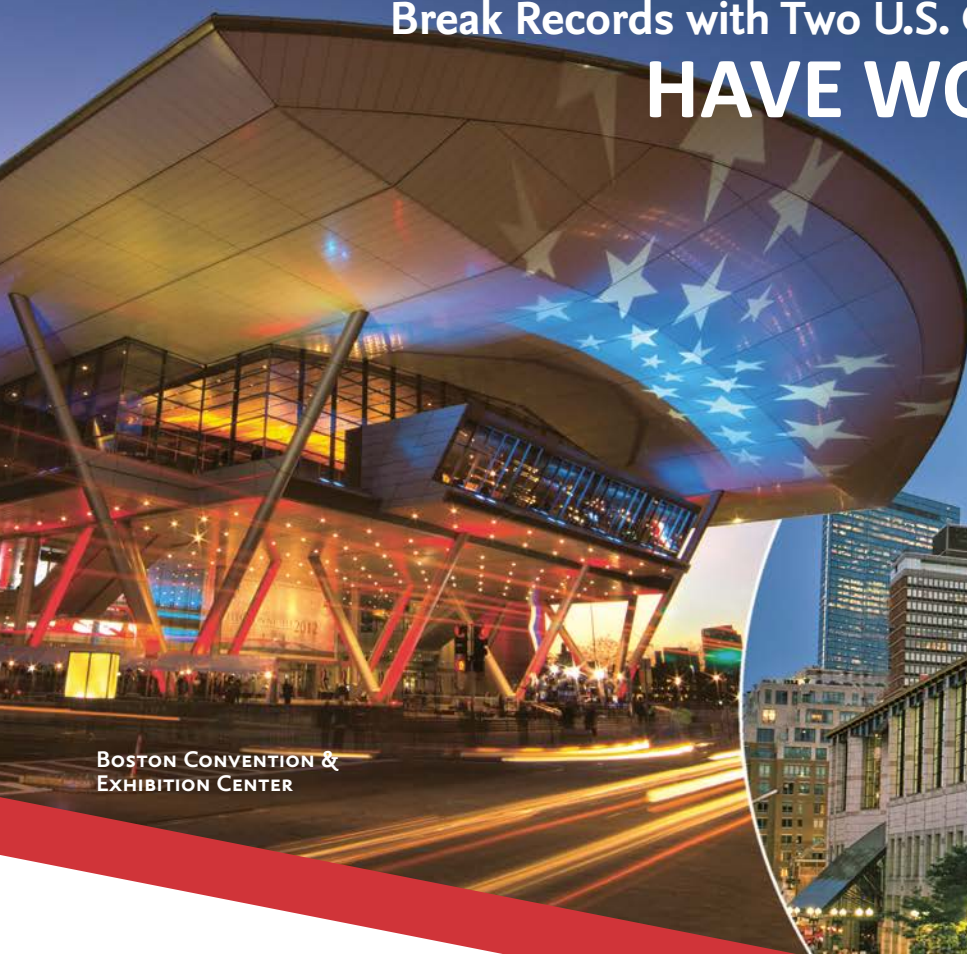
“Many people see talent as something you’re born with. We say it’s something you create. It’s the mental refocusing that’s important, and that’s what we look for. We want to show that by changing focus we can

stop looking for talents and begin to create them instead.”

The authors have extensive experience and expertise in training and education at all levels of children’s and youth sports, competitive sports and within the Swedish National Police Operations Department. The book combines practical advice with the latest research in effective training, stress management and leadership. *Business Intelligence Report* brings you an exclusive translation of the book’s *Mindset* chapter.

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# Mindset

TEXT PHOTOS

Kristian Persson Anna Ramstedt  
Peter Svensson Sari Lindvall

**ONE OF THE** most common topics of conversation when two coaches meet in a grandstand, at a lecture or in a gym is *who's got what it takes to go the whole way*. Both of us have had lengthy discussions on the subject and said things like: "He/she could be worth the effort." We saw it as part of our role to pigeonhole people, usually young people, with labels like "Worth the effort" or "Here for the fun." That is what we heard ourselves when we were young. Kristian had a real talent for ball games, Peter had always been strong. And they were right. Kristian became a full-time tennis coach and Peter became a longstanding international judo player. Everything is predestined. Then we heard about the Dan Plan. If we were not fully convinced before by all the novices who have surprised us over the years, the story about Dan was conclusive evidence that nothing is predestined. Dan McLaughlin's girlfriend naturally thought that the crisis would

pass. Dan had just turned 30 and his decision to stop working seemed rather hasty. His job as a commercial photographer paid well and his career was on an upward curve.

The relationship ended instead. Dan had namely decided to conduct an experiment to determine whether he could become an expert in something after 10,000 hours of deliberate practice. This meant that he did not have much time over for anything else. He chose to dedicate his new life to playing golf. Not because he had any aptitude for, or interest in, the sport. Quite the opposite in fact. He wanted to start from scratch. Ten thousand hours later, corresponding to six hours a day, six days a week for almost six years, he would qualify for the PGA Tour. None of the golfers he spoke to gave him much chance of success, but Dan needed to know. Ignoring things like innate talent, parental influence, drilling during the tender years and other factors that



often come into play when explaining a person's success, how far is it possible to go?

We call Dan McLaughlin. He had, at this stage in his project, chalked off more than 5,000 golfing hours. The tour is still a long way off. The years pass by. Dan keeps plugging away.

"Motivation comes from within," he says. "I feel a deep passion to push myself further every day. Nobody forces me to get up early to train, but I do every day."

On his website [www.thedanplan.com](http://www.thedanplan.com) Dan keeps a diary of his progress. He wrote the following on day one: "Went out and putted for two hours. Don't have any proper clubs yet, but it's a start. Only 9,998 hours left." Methodically and strictly in accordance with deliberate practice, he would improve his game bit by bit. As he only had a putter at this stage, he began closest to the hole and worked his way outwards. After five months he was sufficiently satisfied with his putting to begin using club number two. Dan kept steadfastly to his plan. It took him almost two years to complete a round. An ordinary golfer would find it far from inspiring to endlessly focus on small details and never really enjoy the game.

However, the project has never really been about golf, but to discover his potential. Instead of playing safe with what he already masters, he concentrates on his weaknesses. Seeing his weaknesses becoming his strengths is what drives Dan to continue.

"Anyone can succeed if they're prepared to put in the work required," he says. "Talent is a myth used to hold people back. Everything comes down to hard work and we're all capable of doing wonderful things."

His handicap is now down to 3.2. A highly respectable figure. But will he succeed in going the whole way?

"Up to now I've achieved nearly all my goals. I will succeed without a doubt."

We will soon be presenting something new. But first we'd like to make something very clear. We don't believe in *it* anymore. As leaders at different levels we have lost count of the number of times we have heard variations on "he/she has *it*." It could refer to anything that is "that little extra" or "something that is difficult to put your finger on."

The spirit is often that those who have it should go for it because, unlike the others, they have a chance to become really good at it. This fixation on *it* seems to be a deeply human mannerism. When we judge a fellow human, and we all do whether we want to or not, we do so by pointing at the person's most distinctive characteristics. We let a person's external qualities form our picture of their inner self. Qualities that just *are*. "John has a real talent for ball games", could be said of a lad who throws the ball straighter than others of his age. "Maria is good at painting; she's got that from home." Or: "Daniel is so good at speaking in front of people, he always has been." John, Maria and Daniel have *it*.

The qualities become fixed attributes that you either have or you lack. Typically, this mainly concerns qualities that require a subjective assessment. A person with large feet will never hear that they have *it*. Unless, of course, the feet can juggle a football for any length of time. Other subjective attributes that our fellow humans can be categorised with include things like beautiful, sensible, spirited, unreliable and shy. Or good ball skills, creative and charismatic. Sometimes *it* can be verified using figures. Intelligence, for example. Some people get 83 in an IQ test, others get

nearer the average of 100 while a few get over 131 on Wechsler's IQ scale, opening the door to become members of Mensa, an exclusive club for the top two per cent among Sweden's smartest people. The test result tells you whether you have *it* or not.

But when a sports coach, teacher or parent gives an *it* assessment, it says more about them than the person they're giving it to, it reveals their mental attitude, or *mindset*. According to Professor of Psychology Carol Dweck, there are two kinds of mindset: *Fixed* and *Growth*. Depending on which type you are, you will see radically different human characteristics, development and potential. Your mindset influences the way you see yourself.

A person with a fixed mindset sees strong links between what they are and what they do. Attributes are fixed on the person. Heredity and environment have a great influence on the qualities that the person possesses. Results, grades and assessment become important, because they confirm the person's self-image. Those with a growth mindset do not see the link between performance and person. They look to their possibility of developing. Attributes can be changed, they can grow. Training and new experiences become important, because they lead to development.

Those with a growth mindset see good ball skills, artistic ability and rhetorical capacity as a sign that the person in question has practiced hard. Even an IQ ratio can be improved by studying logical problem-solving. That is logical. Just because John entered the stock market with an initial capital of 1,000,000 and Maria 20,000 is no guarantee that John will do better business in the future. We hope, in the not too distant future, to be sitting in a conference, a meeting or a grandstand and all the





coaches, players and parents around us are showing a growth mindset. Think of all the constructive things we could say!

Which brings us to the good news. It is possible for people who have had a fixed mindset all their lives to change to a growth mindset. We have living proof of that. We previously assessed people according to their “talents.” If they could become something or not. If they had it or not. That was before we understood how developable we people really are. Before we met Dan with the golf clubs. Before we realised that being able to juggle a ball had more to do with being out every day as a child playing football.

**Fixed mindset** *The view that our basic qualities are fixed and innate, and difficult or impossible to change, add to or train away. You either have it or you don't.*

**Growth mindset** *The view that our basic qualities are changeable and can be improved by effort and determination. Anyone can do almost anything.*

The basis of growth mindset is that nothing is etched in stone. Anybody can form a growth mindset. Golfer Dan may seem rather eccentric, but he has one of the clearest growth mindsets we have come across. Dan, if anyone, is living proof that the first things you need to begin fulfilling your true potential are an open mind and plenty of practice.

**There are significant** differences between fixed and growth. Carol Dweck illustrated this by asking a group of children to solve a puzzle. On completion they were given feedback. One of the groups, we can call it Team

Fixed, were told they must have been very clever to have solved the task the way they did. The other group, Team Growth, were told that they must have put everything into solving the task the way they did. The slight difference between praising a child's efforts and playing up their intelligence had a major effect in the next part of the test. The children would do the puzzle again, but this time they had the option of choosing a harder puzzle if they wished or to continue at the same level as before. Two thirds of the children in Team Fixed, whose intelligence was praised, chose to stay at the same level where they felt certain of success. They were praised for their intelligence, so did not want to risk looking stupid if they failed with a more difficult puzzle. Team Growth, who were praised for their efforts, were keen to test their powers. Over ninety per cent chose the more difficult of the two. They had noticed that it was the work they had put into it that mattered, not the puzzle getting finished. The more difficult the task, the more evident the effort put into it.

**“Those who are praised for their efforts gladly choose difficult tasks, because the effort they put into it is more important than completing the task.”**

Carol Dweck concluded from her study that children are highly sensitive to the reactions of their surroundings. We are good at adapting

to situations and gladly repeat an action for which we receive a positive response. If it is the personality, appearance or result that counts then that is what the child will show.

Carol Dweck got to the core of her studies into mindset at the third stage. The children were given the first puzzle to do again. As expected, the Growth Team improved their result from the first attempt. But Team Fixed were worse this time even though they had done the exact same puzzle just a minute or so before. Dweck explained that as a fixed mindset breeds anxiety, the children thought more about the praise they would get than putting the pieces together. The growth mindset, on the other hand, enabled the children to develop their puzzle skills.

It does not stop with children; we grown-ups are also sensitive. Most of us have elements of both fixed and growth mindsets in us. It is not unusual for some things to appeal more to a growth mindset than others. The growth mindset is more common at school and during physical exercise. We probably all agree that exercise and training is the only way to get fit. We all had to learn to conjugate irregular verbs, however difficult it was. But somebody who runs the mile three times a week could well be averse to singing lessons with the justification that their vocal resources have never drawn any applause. Can we be sure that mindset really is that important? Yes. Brain scans show that the Team Fixed brains are most active the moment they get the result of a performance. Questions like “What grade did I get?” and “How did it go for me?” take up a great deal of the brain's capacity.

The brains of Team Growth, on the other hand, are most active when they receive advice on what they can improve on for next time. These

people focus on learning and think that effort makes them cleverer, unlike those who focus on grades and results who think that effort is for those who lack talent. There are also clear differences when people have setbacks. Team Growth view setbacks as something natural and instructive. Setbacks are good, because they lead to development. For Team Fixed, mistakes indicate wrong actions and undesirable traits. This leads to the person finishing rather than continuing because “it’s not really their thing anyway.” It is easy to think that members of Team Fixed lack motivation, but it is more about the fear of damaging their reputation and self-image. The members of Team Fixed fear being assessed, because for them assessment is a marker of how clever they are. “If I win I’m a winner, if I lose I’m a loser.” This kind of outlook weakens the willingness to challenge oneself. As in the example of the children and the puzzle, the members of Team Fixed chose the easy task for fear of embarrassing themselves.

Carol Dweck has another, more extreme, expression for the mindset of Team Fixed: The Tyranny of Now. You can get stuck in the present and never see your potential realised. Those who are stuck in the Tyranny of Now flee difficulties and would rather see others fail than strive to improve themselves. In Team Growth, ideas are carried forward to the next level. The members think: “Give me a challenge and we’ll see how I manage!” Team Growth set their sights higher and dream bigger. According to Dweck, people in that group know deep down what they really want and go for it.

We often see how a fixed mindset affects a sportsperson when they reach a decisive moment. When the winning putt has to be holed, when things come to a head, people with

a fixed mindset often find it difficult to live up to their abilities. Those who focus on the result fall at the last hurdle, because they are scared of being a loser. The body reacts to this mental state by “choking.” The muscles seize up and the ball misses the hole. Sadly, we see all too often how children and adolescents fall victim to the fixed mindset of their surroundings. They are pigeonholed very early on into either “promising” or “should be doing something else” – and it is not the actual potential that is being assessed but the largely irrelevant age level.

**Previously we explained** why the Swedish Football Association only look at age when searching for talent. This all too common practice is known as *Relative Age Effect*. You have probably seen a team or class photo that barely accommodates the children due to their enormous variations in height. A ten-year-old born in January has lived ten per cent longer than a teammate born in December. The advantage is clear to see and can be even greater if the January child is an early developer. Those who select ability according to age in that way could easily become members of Team Fixed.

**“All too many children are classified early on as either ‘promising’ or ‘should be doing something else.’”**

Jean Côté, who has researched into innate abilities, sees a strong connection between the birth month and success during adolescence. The

boy who weighs 32 kilos wins a dual easily on the football pitch against the boy who weighs 22. This is why Côté is totally opposed to all types of early specialisations. It really makes no difference at the end of the day, because the advantage is only fleeting. To succeed you need motivation and perseverance. It is also worth questioning from a moral standpoint why those at the front should be given the best conditions. Should it not, in all fairness, be the other way around?

**“To succeed you need motivation and perseverance.”**

Many sports clubs operate a month of birth bias when selecting their teams, but the combination of a fixed mindset and the relative age effect does not end on the sports field. It will affect the child’s future educational achievements, prosperity, choice of career ... A British study looked into the selection process for various talent programmes in schools and the children who were given extra support. You would assume that the most ambitious children were selected and the school-weary ones were given support. But on the contrary, the children born in the first quarter of the year were seen as worth giving an extra push. Those born later in the year were seen as problem children to a larger extent than their older classmates. In the United States the birth dates are distributed somewhat more evenly between the months, yet it turned out that relatively few corporate CEOs were born in June or July. Why? The relative age effect again. The US cut-off date for selecting school classes is different to that of Sweden and the June and July



children are the youngest in the first selection. The summer children fall victim to Team Fixed.

## **“Relative Age Effect is the connection between the birth month and success during adolescence. Earlier maturity gives early advantages over classmates.”**

Côté also mentions a similar phenomenon: birthplace effect. Where you were born has an influence on what you become. The internationally successful Swedish alpine skiers Anja Pärson, Ingemar Stenmark, Stig Strand and Jens Byggmark were all born in the small mountain village of Tärnaby, a place with around 500 inhabitants. In wealthier neighbourhoods a large proportion of children go on to become lawyers, doctors and economists. In poorer neighbourhoods they are recruited to criminal gangs. This is an example of how a fixed mindset can encompass an entire community and not just individuals. You can see quite clearly who gets the plaudits where you live. Think about it: Which occupations and qualities are most valued by the people around you? What is it possible to become where you live?

In his book *The Talent Code*, best-selling writer Daniel Coyle travels the world visiting “hot spots”, places where many individuals succeed doing the same thing. Tärnaby is a typical example of a hot spot. Is the success due to the coaches and

facilities being that much better? Possibly, but an equally important factor is that in Tärnaby, slalom skiing is valued above all else. It is Anja Pärson who is celebrated in the town square, not the girl who became a lawyer and moved to Stockholm. This rather narrow view of success makes the surroundings a perfect member of Team Fixed.

A growth mindset is in many ways more beneficial. Research has shown that the plasticity of the brain's cell tissues facilitates learning. The myelin and synapses will keep growing as long as they thrive in a rich environment with plenty of new experiences. The harder the brain works, the more it develops. A growth mindset is not only positive for the feel-good factor, it also makes learning a lot easier.

### **Practical advice**

Not yet. If somebody says something that sounds like fixed mindset: reply with growth and add: “Not yet! You're a beginner, you're not expected to yet.” If a child sighs loudly and says she can't tie her shoelaces, the reply “not yet” is much more helpful than getting down on one knee and doing it for her. The principle is simple: When I've trained for a while I'll be able to do it. The uber-word “yet” creates a growth mindset in the same way as it creates grit.

Performance appraisal meetings. These discussions usually centre around work or school-related issues and the here and now. In a performance appraisal meeting that creates a growth mindset, the leader would ask the person what they think could be improved and how they would go about doing it. Questions like: What would you like to be better at? How will you go about achieving it? What can you do today and what can you do in the long-term?

The RAE test. This test is as simple as it is revealing for anyone who is a children's leader. Sort the children in order of age and then compare them using an absolute value. The number could be school grades from a certain teacher, number of matches and goals for a certain coach, the number of solos for a certain bandleader. Does RAE determine your assessment of the children? If so, what can you do to counteract this effect in the future? You have probably already found a solution: Take an example where you managed to create an environment or an event on which RAE had no effect. Use that as the blueprint for the next time.

## **“The brain's plasticity facilitates learning. The harder the brain works, the more it develops. A growth mindset helps you feel better and you learn more.”**

**For us it is** a mystery. A growth mindset sounds better and nicer in all respects. Yet we still come across so much fixed mindset. We have sat in countless meetings with parents, teachers and national team coaches where the views about talent sounded more like the views of 19th century scientist Francis Galton. Coaches who were serious about the importance of attracting the best talent to their sport and their club. Parents who wondered if their kids had the qualities required. Apart from the obvious genetic heritage like height and shoe

PHOTOS Sari Lindvall



size, there is virtually no human quality that cannot be coached up.

It is never too late to become better. Carol Dweck talks about building a bridge from fixed to growth mindset. A bridge from the *tyranny of now* into the power of yet. She has, in her studies, seen several ways to build this bridge. One way is to praise processes and not end results. Another is to reward effort and progress instead of the number or “correct” answers. She asked a video game developer to come up with a new type of maths game that would award points for the time and effort the players put into solving the problem rather than for the correct answer. The more difficult the problem, the more praise the players would be given, regardless of whether they solved it or not. Shifting focus from what people cannot manage *now* to what they cannot manage *yet* provides an insight into the importance of personal development for performance levels. Those who realise this become more resilient and a growth mindset leads to more grit.

## “With very few exceptions, they are hardly any human qualities that cannot be coached up.”

Carol Dweck mentions another advantage of a growth mindset. Children who grow up in less affluent surroundings have walls built around them. Walls in the shape of inferior schools, fewer routes to good jobs and less room for failure. Dweck sees the growth mindset as a way forward for all children. “Let’s not waste any more lives,” she said during a *TED Talk*. “Because once we know that abilities are capable of such growth, it becomes a basic human right for children, all children, to live in places that create that growth, to live in places filled with *yet*.” This is exactly what we want to see more of. The club leader who begins to believe that everyone can train and not just those

who are best at the moment. Parents who focus on their children’s development and not just their current abilities. Children who see that anything is possible.

To dare to challenge yourself is necessary for effective development. With progressive feedback more and more will want to face the challenges. Carol Dweck has seen it, we have seen it. Now we would like to see more leaders, coaches, teachers, business leaders, everybody involved in developing people, who want to create talent in others. We are not there *yet*. We want to see you create your own talent by pursuing your dreams. Nobody thought that Dan McLaughlin’s idea of targeting the PGA Tour was anything more than a 30s life crisis. But Dan is in great shape and is progressing quicker than anyone would have thought. He loves what he does. Dan is living proof that a person is developable and it is never too late to start again. You could be the next living proof.



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## Which Country HAS MOST WOMEN MPS?

**RWANDA** was the first country in the world with a majority-female parliament. And with a parliament made up of 45 women and 35 men, Rwanda continues to head the world rankings of national legislative assemblies with the highest percentage of female MPs. The large majority of the Rwandan population are Christian. Roughly 50

per cent are Catholics and over 25 per cent belong to traditional Protestant communions (Anglicans, Methodists and Lutherans, among others). A little over ten per cent are Seventh-Day Adventists and around five per cent are Muslims.





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resilient cities and regions, develop new knowledge, and adapt and spread existing knowledge about the resilience of our cities and regions.

In a Resilient Regions Community, people, organisations, companies and government agencies meet around the common interest of making cities or regions better equipped to survive pressures in important operations and flows.

Actors (municipalities, businesses and others) in a city or region cooperate and obtain a shared view of how important societal functions and

flows work and interconnect. They also develop knowledge about how important or critical these flows and dependencies are under various conditions. This shared knowledge forms the basis for decisions and actions to improve the city's or region's resilience. Decisions and actions can entail the start of research and development projects, the testing or implementation of new technology, or the generation of new solutions.

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# The So-Called singularity

## IS PROBABLY LESS THAN 10 YEARS AWAY

TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**FUTURIST** and author Gerd Leonhard, born in Germany, resident in Switzerland, breaks new ground by bringing together mankind's urge to upgrade and automate everything – including human biology itself – with our timeless quest for freedom and happiness.

Before it is too late, we must stop and ask the big question: How do we embrace technology without becoming it? When it happens – gradually, then suddenly – the machine era will create the greatest watershed in history. Technology vs. Humanity is a vital moral debate we must have before we reach the tipping point of singularity – AI-driven runaway technological growth.

Singularity, artificial intelligence, cognitive computing, digital obesity, 3D printed food, the internet of things, the death of privacy, the end of work-as-we-know-it, radical longevity: The imminent clash between technology and humanity is already rushing towards us. What moral values are you prepared to stand up for before the meaning of being human alters forever?

Gerd Leonhard is a new kind of futurist schooled in both the humanities and technology. In his most provocative book to date, he explores the exponential changes sweeping society, providing valuable insights for business leaders, professionals and anyone with decisions to make in this new era.

“Technology is always created by humans and in turn redefining what we can and will do,” said Gerd Leonhard, the author of *Technology vs. Humanity: The coming clash between man and machine*, in an interview with Forbes earlier this year.

“Every single technological change is now impacting humanity in a much deeper way than ever before, because technology will soon impact our own biology, primarily via the rise of genome editing and artificial intelligence. Technology is no longer just a tool we use to achieve something – we are actually (as McLuhan predicted) becoming tools (i.e. technology) ourselves. Some of my futurist colleagues call this transhumanism – something I personally think we should examine with great caution.

Yet, exponential technological development in sectors such as computing and deep learning, nanoscience, material sciences, energy (batteries!) etc. means that beyond a doubt we are quickly heading towards that point where computers/robots/AI will have the same processing power as the human brain (10 quadrillion CPS – connections per second), the so-called singularity, in probably less than ten years. When this happens we will need to decide if we want to ‘merge’ with the machines or not, and the stance I am taking in this book is clear on that discussion: we should embrace technology, but not

become it, because technology is not what we seek, it's how we seek!”

*Meetings International* is privileged to publish an introduction to *Technology vs. Humanity*, written by Gerd Leonhard himself. This is an important book. Read it and you will understand a lot more about what the future holds concerning technology versus humanity, and how you can make it work for you and not against you.

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**“We should embrace technology, but not become it”**





PHOTO Stuart Thomas

# Introduction to **TECHNOLOGY VS. HUMANITY**

## TEXT

Gerd Leonhard

Our world is entering a period of truly transformative change where many of us will be surprised by the scale and pace of developments we simply hadn't anticipated. These exponential technological advances offer tremendous potential, and with these opportunities come tremendous new responsibilities.

**Humanity's biggest challenge** I believe the scale of change caused

by recent, unforeseen events such as Brexit (the UK's June 2016 referendum decision to leave the European Union) will be miniscule compared to the impact of an avalanche of technological change that could reshape the very essence of humanity and every aspect of life on our planet.

In the past, each radical shift in human society has been driven primarily by one key enabling shift factor – from wood, stone, bronze

and iron to steam, electricity, factory automation and the internet. Today, however, I see a set of science and technology-enabled Megashifts coming together that will redraw not only commerce, culture and society, but also our biology and our ethics.

**A manifesto for furthering human flourishing** Let me be clear: Technology vs. Humanity is neither a celebration of the rapidly onrushing

technology revolution nor a lament on the fall of civilization. If, like me, you're a film buff, then you've probably already had more than enough of Hollywood's utopian visions and dystopian warnings. The future cannot be created based on blind optimism or paralysing fear!

My goal with this book is to amplify and accelerate the debate about how to ensure that we guide,

book through my future talks, online contributions and films.

I believe we need to step back from an expert-led debate about what's possible and how to achieve it. Instead, I think we must start with a more fundamental exploration of what role we want these transformative technologies to play in serving humanity: Just because we can, it doesn't mean we should.

I have structured my thoughts into 12 key chapters:

### **Chapter 1: A Prologue to the Future**

Halfway through the century's second decade we are at a critical pivot point in technology evolution, a hinge moment when change will not only become combinatory and exponential but inevitable and irreversible. Here I argue that now is our last chance to question the nature of these coming challenges, from artificial intelligence to human genome editing. Striking a balance will be the key.

### **Chapter 2: Tech vs. Us**

In this chapter, I explain why technology may increasingly simulate and replace – but can never become, or be, us. Technology has no ethics, and therefore its imminent entry into our most private lives and biological processes must be negotiated as a top civic and corporate priority. I examine the nature of ethics as a human signifier and differentiator, transcending differences of religion and culture.

### **Chapter 3: The Megashifts**

Digital transformation is being touted as the paradigm shift *du jour* across enterprises and the public sector – when in fact it is just one of 10 Megashifts that will interact and alter the face of human life forever. I explore these Megashifts – from mobilisation and automation to robotisation. These are not slow evolutionary processes that we will have time to integrate and adapt to. Rather, they will trigger a tsunami of disruption and change, potentially equating to a mass extinction event for much of the existing global commerce infrastructure.

## **“My goal is to amplify and accelerate the debate”**

harness and control science and technology developments so that they fulfil their primary purpose, which should be serving humanity and furthering human flourishing.

My ambition is to take the discussion beyond the realms of the exuberant technologists, serious academics and thoughtful analysts to express a set of concerns that are nowhere near to being addressed or even recognised by the population at large. As a futurist – and increasingly more of a nowist – I am also hoping to give real presence and current urgency to a future that seems beyond comprehension and unworthy of attention for many.

As such, this book is deliberately designed to be a passionate discussion starter for what I consider to be the world's most important conversation. I believe my role here is to open up and catalyse the debate; hence, I have set out to create a spirited manifesto rather than a blueprint or “how to” guidebook. To help stimulate and further that debate, I will expand on the themes outlined in the

To help guide this exploration, I have set out what I believe to be the driving forces of change, and presented an assessment of their potential impacts and implications. I have highlighted many fundamental questions raised by the accelerated – and in many cases exponential – pace of development across multiple fields of science and technology.

I argue that we must place human happiness and wellbeing at the heart of the decision-making and governance processes that will shape future investments in scientific and technological research, development and commercialisation because, in the end, technology is not what we seek, but how we seek.

I go on to present a range of different scenarios on how things might play out depending on the development path we take to the future. I conclude with a starter set of straw man ideas to kick-start discussions on how to choose the best path for humanity, and how to make good decisions along the way.

To open up this ambitious conversation and help guide the discussion,




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## “Just because we can, it doesn’t mean we should”

### Chapter 4: Automating Society

This chapter challenges the pervasive and seriously misleading myth that automation will only disrupt blue-collar – or even white-collar – labour. The coming wave of automation will move way beyond the factory or public infrastructure and into our very biological processes such as aging and even giving birth. Used as we are to the gradual societal shifts brought about by previous change waves, often allowing decades to adjust and respond, I ask if we as a tribe are ready to abdicate our human sovereignty to the faceless forces of technology? Are you ready for the biggest loss of free will and individual human control in history?

### Chapter 5: The Internet of Inhuman Things

This chapter explores the potential challenges posed by the internet of things – the current dominant narrative within digital transformation, with thousands of corporate strategies riding on its tailwinds. Have we paused to ask ourselves the difference between algorithms and what makes us essentially human – what I call the androrithms? Will the internet of inhuman things gradually and then suddenly require us to forgo

our humanity and become ever more mechanistic just to remain relevant? As computing becomes mobile, then wearable, and soon ingestible or implantable, will our distinct planetary advantage as a species be sacrificed for a spurious digital hit?

### Chapter 6: Magic to Manic to Toxic

Here I examine how our love affair with tech often follows a predictable curve from magic to manic to – ultimately – toxic. As we allow ourselves to experience life as an ever more mediated and processed sequence of encounters, we may think we are enjoying ourselves, but in reality we are simply being hot-wired by our hormones – hormones increasingly targeted by the gentle purveyors of “big tech.” As we rave through the all-night honeymoon party that is technological progress, it’s salutary to think about the hangover – the price to be paid tomorrow, and forever.

### Chapter 7: Digital Obesity: Our Latest Pandemic

This chapter discusses how digital obesity may not be as currently familiar as the physical kind, but is rapidly developing into a pandemic of unprecedented proportions. As we wallow and pig out on a glut of news,

updates and algorithmically engineered information, we also entertain ourselves in a burgeoning tech-bubble of questionable entertainment. Taking into account the coming tidal wave of new technologies and digital engagement platforms, it’s high time to think about digital nutrition just as we already do about our body’s nutrition.

### Chapter 8: Precaution vs. Proaction

The chapter sets out the argument that the safest – and still most promising – future is one where we do not postpone innovation, but neither do we dismiss the exponential risks it now involves and consider it as “somebody else’s problem.” The bill passed on to the next generation for today’s new technology gambles cannot be postponed – any downside will be immediate and unprecedented in scale. I argue that precaution and proaction, the two principles often deployed to date, are both insufficient to deal with a combinatorial, exponential scenario where waiting will be as dangerous as rushing ahead. Transhumanism – with its lemming-like rush to the edge of the unknown – represents the scariest of all present options.

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## “Technology is not what we seek, but how we seek”

### **Chapter 9: Taking the Happenstance out of Happiness**

Money talks, but happiness remains the bigger story. Happiness is not only considered the ultimate goal of human existence across philosophies and cultures, it also remains an elusive factor resistant to exact measurement or technological replication.

As big tech simulates the quick hits of hedonistic pleasure, how can we protect the deeper forms of happiness that involve empathy, compassion and consciousness? Happiness is also related to luck, to happenstance – but how will we use technology to limit the risks of human life and still preserve its mystery and spontaneity?

### **Chapter 10: Digital Ethics**

In this chapter, I argue that, as technology permeates every aspect of human life and activity, digital ethics will evolve into a burning, unignorable issue for every individual and organisation. At present we do not even have a common global language to discuss the issue, let alone agreement on accepted rights and responsibilities. Environmental sustainability is often brushed aside by the developing economies as a first world problem and is always side-tracked during economic recessions.

In contrast, digital ethics will force its way to a permanent position at the front and centre of our political and economic lives. It's time to have the ethical conversation about digital technology – a potentially greater threat to continued human flourishing than nuclear proliferation.

### **Chapter 11: Earth 2030: Heaven or Hell?**

As we move imaginatively into the near and medium future, we can easily visualise some of the gigantic changes altering work and life out of all recognition – these are explored here. Many of these seismic changes are to be welcomed per se – like working for a passion rather than for a living. However, many of the most basic privileges we once took for granted, like freedom of choice in consumption and independent free will in lifestyle, could become vestigial echoes or the preserves of ultra high-net-worth individuals. Heaven or hell? Make your choice, but do it now.

### **Chapter 12: Decision Time**

In this closing chapter I argue that it's crunch time for tech adoption – not the application of technology itself, but the deeper integration and

delineation of technology in human life. Numerous ethical, economic, social and biological issues will simply not wait for another forum or the next generation. It's time to regulate mass technology application just as we would any other transformational force such as nuclear power. It is not the conclusion of a rich dialogue, but the beginning of a conversation that needs to become mainstream in our media, our schools, our government and – most immediately – our boardrooms. The time for technologists and technocrats to simply hand the ethical buck over to someone else has passed.

I hope that this book inspires you to think deeply about the challenges we face, and I invite you to contribute to this conversation by becoming a member of the techvshuman/TVH community at [www.techvshuman.com](http://www.techvshuman.com).



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# Breaking **THE RULES**

## TEXT

Per Naroskin

**WE LIVE** in a time of astonishing events where things change shape and game rules change faster than we can comprehend. Therefore, it is no coincidence that this year's Nobel Prize in Physics is about phase transitions, a field that is on the rise according to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The Committee waxed lyrical in their justification:

*This year's Laureates opened the door on an unknown world where matter can assume strange states. The three Laureates' use of topological concepts in physics was decisive for their discoveries. Topology is a branch of mathematics that describes properties that only change step-wise. Using topology as a tool, they were able to astound the experts. Thanks to their pioneering work, the hunt is now on for new and exotic phases of matter.*

So beautiful, so secular and so abstract. I would love to be able to express myself like that! To make it more intelligible, Professor Thors Hans Hansson illustrated topology using three pastries: a cinnamon bun,

a bagel with one hole and a pretzel with two holes. All that mattered were the number of holes. And it was either/or. You cannot have a pastry with a half hole. You can reshape a cinnamon bun, but if you want it to be a bagel you will have to make radical changes to the game rules. And the game rules differ for different types of matter. The difference between a cinnamon bun and a cardamom bun is just a 'matter' of taste. But the difference between a cardamom bun and a bagel could be decisive.

"Where matter can assume strange states", writes the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. This not only concerns matter but society as a whole – and politics in particular. The game rules have changed. Not just a little, but radically. New rules have suddenly been introduced and the old ones scrapped. We are standing there gaping and wondering what has happened – outside the arena looking in. Brick by brick, step by step, the chess club premises have been turned into a martial arts arena

where everything is permitted. How pathetic we must look standing there with our chess sets under our arms in the middle of a boxing ring. With a mind as righteous as an old-fashioned liberal, the school monitor stands alone in the playground appealing to reason. That is how Hillary Clinton must have felt. Donald Trump breaks every conceivable rule in his assertions and blatant lies that he later denies ever saying, and in an outrageously audacious way he glosses over any threat or insult as sarcasm.

Comparing a political figure to Adolf Hitler is always well off the mark. All the lights flash red. Possibly the only one to have done it himself is Rodrigo Duterte, outspoken president of the Philippines. He compared himself with Hitler, with some justification; he was actually elected president precisely because he broke all the rules surrounding the rule of law and law enforcement. Donald Trump is no Hitler, but when you read the descriptions of Hitler's early rallies, the similarities between

the grotesque derision and the scary rhetoric are uncanny. The transition is similar to that of topology: definitive.

Sebastian Haffner (pseudonym of Raimund Pretzel) would have turned 110 next year if he had lived. He is the author of *Defying Hitler: A Memoir* (*Geschichte eines Deutschen – Die Erinnerungen 1914–1933*), which he

buffoon and becoming a monster does not shift gradually, but step-wise. It switches over. Never underestimate the joker in the pack. You stand there gawping, thinking what a lunatic he is. Then before you know it, he is chairman of the Student's Union, the Chancellor of Germany or the US President. You sometimes hear that Trump should be more statesman-

you go from being a pitiful type to a tyrant. There was no impact when psychologists under the leadership of William Doherty signed a statement declaring Trump to be unsuitable as a presidential candidate, because it is not about that; there are other mechanisms that are more telling. Trump is no Hitler, but there is a similarity in the way they set their own rules and the allure that many seem to find in the revolt against the establishment without any concern for the future.

The world may have begun to see through Trump, but there are still plenty of people who support him. New apostles pop up all the time. Anti-gay extremist Andrew Bieszad has declared hurricane Matthew as God's wrath, a punishment for pride parades in Orlando and other places. Today we shake our heads at such craziness, but tomorrow we may have to remain passive in the face of this type of madness and irrational hunt for scapegoats. So learn from this year's Nobel Prize in Physics and from topology: do not be taken in by a crazy cinnamon bun. It could be a brutal bagel with a hole and then, to the surprise of all the experts, a Swiss cheese! And so it carries on until only the holes are left.

*Per Naroskin is a psychologist, psychotherapist and author. He has written several books and plays, and is a popular speaker on subjects relating to human meetings, relationships and technology. He is also one of the panellists on the popular Swedish Radio show Spanarna, which provides insights into current trends.*

## “Never underestimate the joker in the pack”

wrote in Germany in the mid-1930s. Sebastian Haffner explains how Hitler's personality worked against him in the early years:

*“... the pimp's forelock, the hoodlum's elegance, the Viennese suburban accent, the interminable speechifying, the epileptic behaviour with its wild gesticulations, foam at the mouth, and the alternately shifty and staring eyes. [...] Most of those who began to acclaim Hitler at the Sportpalast in 1930 would probably have avoided asking him for a light if they had met him in the street. No one would have been surprised if a policeman had taken him by the scruff of the neck in the middle of his first speech and removed him to some place from which he would never have emerged again, and where he doubtless belonged. As nothing of the sort happened and, on the contrary, the man surpassed himself, becoming ever more deranged and monstrous, and also ever more notorious, more impossible to ignore, the effect was reversed. It was then that the real mystery of the Hitler phenomenon began to show itself[...].”*

This is where topology comes in. The borderline between being a

like and play by the rules to gain more credibility. From his perspective it would be the stupidest thing he could do. If you are sufficiently odd you will no longer be compared with the conventional, the normal, the establishment. Nothing sticks to Trump, everything sticks to Clinton. If you are just a *little* bit different then you will stand out as a loser compared to the one who follows the rules. But if you break enough rules they will be replaced by new ones. It is like when you played games as a kid and someone was caught cheating and got thrown out of the game and humiliated. However, if a domineering friend defied the rules and shamelessly changed them to suit themselves they might have got away with it. Haffner describes how the audience could not deal with Hitler's crushing of the game rules. He writes:

*“... the strange befuddlement and numbness of his opponents, who could not cope with his behaviour and found themselves transfixed by the gaze of the basilisk, unable to see that it was hell personified that challenged them.”*

Hell personified or not, if you break enough of the rules consistently



# Happiness IS A SERIOUS JOB FOR GOVERNMENTS

TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**DUBAI** is a forward-looking city in continuous and controlled transition. The current vision for the future – Dubai Plan 2021 – is now being pursued and the emphasis this time is more on people's needs than infrastructure requirements.

As one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai chose 2021 as the target year for the plan to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UAE in 1971.

Dubai Plan 2021 was officially launched in December 2014 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who described it as “embarking on a journey towards achieving further happiness and comfort to our people.” It replaced Dubai Strategic Plan 2015, the emirate's first long-term strategy, which focused mainly on economic and social development, and reaching infrastructure goals.

The development objectives for the city in 2021 have been divided into six interconnected themes such as “the Society” – creating “an inclusive and cohesive society” for Dubai's diverse population, which includes 200 nationalities and “the Experience” – making Dubai “the preferred place to live, work and visit”

Other themes, such as “the Place”, “the Economy” and “the Government” concentrate on “hard values” – infrastructure, Dubai's position as a leading business centre and excellence in city governance and

services. However, the first theme and starting point for the vision is “the People” – “the cornerstone for Dubai's development across all fields” and the ultimate aim is to create a “city of happy, creative and empowered people.”

Unlike many broad strategic plans, Dubai Plan 2021 sets precise sub-aims to be implemented and ways to measure success. Each of the themes is intended to provide strategic guidance for government policies and activities, and carries a set of key performance indicators to gauge progress. For instance, the KIPs for people's happiness cover areas such as life expectancy, educational achievement, sufficient income and cultural awareness and pride.

The increasing focus on people's contentment in the UAE was highlighted earlier this year when the establishment of a new Ministry for Happiness attracted worldwide media attention. In her first official speech, The UAE's Minister of Happiness, Her Excellency Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi said, “Happiness is a serious job for governments. The main job for the government is to create happiness.”

Ms. Al-Roumi oversees multiple strategic projects and initiatives starting with UAE Vision 2021, The National Agenda, the UAE Government Strategy, The Government Summit, Government Performance Management System “Adaa”, Mohammed Bin Rashid Centre For Government Innovation, Sheikh

Khalifa Government Excellence Program, Mohammed Bin Rashid Government Excellence Award, UAE Government Leaders Programme, Emirates Government Service Excellence Program, Global Star Rating System for Services, Best M-Government Service and Mohammed Bin Rashid Policy Majlis Ms. Al-Roumi is a management and economics professional with vast experience in government policy, strategy and reform, in addition to government initiatives and leadership of complex projects in government innovation. She has formally occupied several positions within the Government of Dubai and Federal Government. She was Head of the Economic Policy at The Executive Office of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, and prior to that, Manager of the Business Research at Dubai Chamber of Commerce. She led several task forces for developing Dubai Strategic Plan “Economic Sector”, the Federal Government Strategy and The National Innovation Strategy. The United Nations Foundation has recently announced the selection of Ms. Al-Roumi for membership of the Global Entrepreneurship Council (GEC), making her the first Arab member in the council.

The UN's *World Happiness Report* in 2015 ranked UAE as the 28th happiest country in the world and the happiest country in the region.



# Convention Bureaus DRIVE GROWTH IN AFRICA

## TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**THE CONVENTION** bureau trend is gaining momentum in Africa. One of the key figures in this development is Rick Taylor, a well-known name in the global meetings and event industry.

Rick was the strategic architect of the *Cape Town Convention Bureau* and headed the *South African National Convention Bureau*. He is CEO of the South Africa-based Business Tourism Company, which acted as a consultant for the Rwandan government in establishing the *Rwanda Convention Bureau*.

“Last year was a remarkable year for Rwanda – a watershed year when the destination started to settle into the sector,” says Rick. “It must be remembered that the cabinet approved the concept of the bureau in March 2014, just over two short years ago.”

“From that spark the strategy was unpacked, talent sourced and the institution ignited. 2015 saw meeting and events receipts total \$38 million, up from \$29 million in 2014. The goal for 2016 is \$55 million.”

Rwanda has made exceptional progress since the bureau was formed. A few years ago the *International Conference and Congress Association* (ICCA) ranked Rwanda as 21st in Africa. The Rwanda Convention Bureau aimed to push the country into Africa’s top 10 destinations for meetings and events by 2016. Rwanda had climbed to seventh place by 2015.

“Is Rwanda a top-five contender? Absolutely. This is great progress considering that in 2013, when we at the Business Tourism Company first

## “Last year was a remarkable year for Rwanda”

engaged with this client, Rwanda was just a distant blip on the radar.”

Rick says his company's role is to help steer Rwanda and other African countries towards a brighter future.

“We are helping fill the continent's reservoirs with ambitious goals. Africa is a long-term play – the vision is way beyond a short-term strategy. We are providing the African road-map that is marketing and selling to a growing and changing continent and delivering the economic results.”

Daring to be different has paid dividends in marketing Rwanda.

“Survival and success depend on innovation, so the strategy has been about being alert to change, selling opportunities to offer meeting planners something new in terms of insights, dreaming up ways of doing things differently with more imagination and doing it consistently to the highest possible standards.”

Summing up the approach, he says: “We set the stage for an awesome delegate experience – and the recipe is working.”

Investment in new international conference facilities like Kigali Convention Centre and infrastructure initiatives such as the development of transport links to Kigali International Airport have also helped to

support growth in the meetings and event sector. There are also plans for a new airport – Bugesera International Airport.

“As destinations grow with globalisation, economies grow in tandem. Rwanda is an example of how countries should be managed. The most indispensable business tool we have shared with the tourism industry is inspiration,” says Rick.

The growing meetings and event sector in Rwanda has in turn stimulated construction of new hotels with convention capabilities. The Marriott Hotel (252 rooms) opened in October and the Radisson Blu (292 rooms) has the Kigali Convention Centre management contract. There is also the recently opened Ubumwe Grande Hotel (155 rooms) and the Golden Tulip Hotel (182 rooms) with meeting facilities. Other facilities opening soon include the Ramada, Park Inn, Nobilis and Dove Hotel with meeting facilities for up to 5,000 people.

The hotels are now benefitting from the busy calendar of events in Kigali. The city recently hosted the *World Economic Forum* (2,500 delegates), *African Union Summit* (3,650 delegates), *Global Africa Investment Forum*, *Africa Hotel Investment*

*Forum* and *Aviation Development Forum*.

At the end of October, Kigali hosted the 535-delegate *Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol*. It is the first time this prestigious international meeting has been held in Africa.

The convention bureau concept has proved to be a success for Rwanda and Rick sees increasing interest elsewhere in Africa.

“There is a definite shift in awareness of the need for destinations in Africa to invest in convention bureaus. We have had discussions with a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, I think we will see a lot more focus on development in this arena in the near future.”

Overall, he is pleased to see a gradual shift in attitudes towards Africa.

“We are slowly convincing a world trapped in Afro-pessimism that Africa has enormous potential. It really is time that the meetings industry stepped out of their comfort zone – it is a beautiful place, with beautiful people. Africa is open for business.”



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The latest addition to the BMW Group Event Forum is **BMW Group Classic**, whose new premises enable an intriguingly original and decorative approach to subject presentation. BMW Group Classic celebrated the centenary of BMW by “coming home” to its old factory. The halls here are steeped in history and allow you to hold presentations and seminars in the company of some quite exceptional vehicles from BMW’s collection. The atmosphere of the former Aircraft Engine Hall has been rekindled to brilliant effect.

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# Convention Centres FROM CAPE TO CAIRO

**AFRICAN** countries are spending millions of dollars with the aim of being your next destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions. There is major investment in convention centres from Cape to Cairo. State-of-the-art venues are being constructed – and existing ones are being expanded and refurbished – to entice international companies to invest.

There is a good chance business events travellers to Africa – whether in finance, management, oil and gas, mining or media – will spend time at one of these convention centres, which are designed to show off the best of their country's tourism, culture and economic opportunities.

Here is a selection of established and upcoming venues in Africa that are geared up for doing business, sharing knowledge and advancing economic development.

## **The Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali**

The hotel is located five kilometres from the city centre and Kigali International Airport (KGL) in an office park close to the 5,000-capacity Kigali Convention Centre. It is less than two kilometres away from several embassies, the British High Commission, parliament and the supreme court.

There are 18 meeting rooms including a state-of-the-art auditorium, which accommodates over 2,000 people. The hotel's 292 rooms and suites provide amenities such as private balconies and free high-speed wireless internet. Facilities include two on-site restaurants, a fitness centre and outdoor swimming pool.

## **Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa**

Located in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, the convention centre

is a popular destination for conferences, hosting events such as *Africa Energy Indaba*, *Retail World Africa* and the *Whiskey Live Festival*. The centre has 13 meeting rooms and seating capacity for 4,500 people. Two exhibition levels provide a combined space of 11,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

## **Calabar International Convention Centre, Calabar, Nigeria**

Scheduled opening dates have come and gone for this venue, which has been billed as one of the largest and most modern conference venues in Africa. The floor space of 35,000 m<sup>2</sup> will include 21 meeting rooms and three lounges, creating capacity for 5,000 guests.

## **Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

As the permanent headquarters of the *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*, this venue could be considered as the most important of the

large centres in Africa. Although it is generally not used for business meetings, it is an impressive structure with 205,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space spread over seven floors.

**Bomas International Conference and Exhibition Centre, Kenya**

Kenya's Ministry of Tourism, Samuel Onyango Ayodo, has announced

*Meeting*. It has 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space and meeting rooms to accommodate 10,000 people.

**Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi, Kenya**

The tallest building on this list, the Kenyatta International Conference Centre is a 28-story building – the third-highest in Kenya – in the

**Arusha International Conference Centre, Arusha, Tanzania**

Arusha – the country's leading conference venue – is wholly owned by the government of Tanzania. Past and present tenants include the *U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda* and the East African Community. There are ten meeting rooms and a 1,300-capacity auditorium at the centre, which has 5,420 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space.

## “There is major investment in convention centres to entice international companies to invest”

plans to build Africa's biggest convention centre. The facility, to be called *Bomas International Conference and Exhibition Centre*, will occupy an 82-acre site on the current Bomas of Kenya grounds. This strategic location is 11 kilometres from the city centre and just a stone's throw away from Nairobi National Park.

The centre will include a 15,000-capacity exhibition space, 10,000-capacity conference centre, five luxurious hotels with a total of 2,000 beds, presidential pavilions, VIP pavilions, fully furnished apartments, coffee shops and business centres. The hotels will range from two-star to seven-star and will cater for all categories of exhibitors and conference delegates.

**Durban International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa**

Also known as the *Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre*, this venue has hosted several major conferences such as the *International AIDS Conference* and the *Commonwealth Heads of Government*

central business district of Nairobi. It has 225,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space and the largest conference chamber of its kind in East Africa with capacity for 5,000 people.

**Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

Located in the country's largest city and business centre, the convention centre hosts many conferences relating to the southern tourist circuit of Tanzania. The centre has 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space and an auditorium that can seat more than 1,000 people.

**Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa**

Opened in 2003, the convention centre has hosted numerous high-profile events such as the final draw for the *2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa*. It also presents jazz festivals and is considered to have world-class facilities. The floor space amounts to 121,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The centre is expanding to create an additional 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of convention space, which is scheduled for completion in 2017.

**Cairo International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Cairo, Egypt**

Egypt's largest convention centre is located in Cairo's central business district. The main auditorium can accommodate up to 2,500 people and there are five exhibition halls with a total floor space of 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Expo Centre Johannesburg, South Africa**

The largest purpose-built convention centre in South Africa and one of Johannesburg's best-known landmarks. Expo Centre Johannesburg hosts several big shows such as the *Rand Show*, *Automechanika* and the *Joburg Motor Show*. The multipurpose exhibition halls offer more than 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space with an arena that can accommodate up to 20,000 people.

**Agadir, Morocco**

Morocco has approved a MAD14 billion (\$1.43 billion) investment for the construction of a convention centre in Agadir, a project that also includes a new exhibition centre scheduled to open by 2020, reports *Morocco World News*.





# Intra-Africa Travel NEEDS TO BE EASIER

TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**AFRICANS** travelling within the continent are required to fill out multiple documents when crossing borders. The visa problem is being increasingly highlighted as a hindrance to cross-border business development and investment in Africa.

Nigerian Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest man, is among the leading business figures facing travel headaches when moving from one country to another in search of investment opportunities.

"I need 38 visas to move around Africa. I have heard they are going to do an African passport, but you can see that there is still a little bit of resistance from other African leaders," he says.

Dangote has publicly urged African leaders to make it easier for Africans to travel around their own continent. He points out that not only do you need a lot of visas to travel across Africa, it is sometimes difficult to obtain them.

"You go to a country that is looking for investment; that particular country will give you a runaround just to get a visa."

At the recent fourth annual *Africa Hotel Expansion Summit* and

Hospitality Round Table held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, hotel and hospitality industry executives noted the need for intra-Africa travel packages to promote cross-border tourism.

"Africa needs to encourage intra-Africa travel programs that would

## "I need 38 visas to move around Africa"

attract more people to travel from one country to another within the continent," said Amaechi Ndili, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Lionstone Group and Golden Tulip West Africa Hospitality Group in Nigeria.

"We need to stimulate intra-Africa tourism and business travel while governments across the continent take serious steps and develop policies to create more open skies for Africans," adds Ndili.

South Africans often complain about the difficulties of getting visas for other African states, but in fact,

their country is part of the problem. According to the African Development Bank, 75 per cent of the most visa-friendly countries in Africa are in East Africa.

In Southern Africa, the visa-friendly nations are Mauritius, Madagascar, Zambia and Mozambique. West Africa fares better with six countries regarded as visa-friendly. Nigeria is not among them, even though its citizens are the keenest intra-Africa travellers. It is the leading African country for generating outbound tourists to other countries within the continent, mostly to other West African states.

Dangote's comments are timely, as tourism and travel executives are set to meet in Rwanda's capital, Kigali, in November, to discuss the way forward for tourism within the continent. With the title, *Destination Africa: The Future of African Tourism*, the African Travel Association's 41st congress will be the first event organised jointly with the *Corporate Council on Africa*. The event will bring together delegates from Africa, the United States, Europe and other parts of the world.





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# Accelerating the Growth OF MORE SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS



**Guy Bigwood**  
Group Sustainability Director  
of MCI HQ PHOTO © MCI

**WITH THE** ever-increasing pace of globalisation, cities have become the hubs and drivers of today's global economy. According to a *World Bank report* surveying 750 cities worldwide, 72 per cent of cities outperformed their countries in terms of economic growth. Increased economic activity however does not come without challenges, such as growing social inequality, environmental pollution and increased competition. Leading cities now understand that their competitiveness and future outlook is directly linked to their capacity to bring social, economic and environmental wellbeing. In other words, cities are now the battlegrounds for sustainability.

Recognising this challenge, a new groundbreaking initiative was introduced into the meetings and events

world in March 2016 – the *Global Destination Sustainability Index* (GDS-Index). Launched by IMEX, ICCA and MCI, the index's goal is to help destinations drive the adoption, promotion and recognition of sustainable practices in business tourism and the meetings and events industry.

It all started in 2010, when leading destinations from Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden converged to create a common vision and roadmap for making a sustainable Scandinavian meetings region. Lennart Johansson, Director of the *Gothenburg Convention Bureau* commented: "In our second workshop we realised that we needed a system to evaluate if a destination was sustainable and compare performance between the ICCA members." From there, MCI Sustainability Services worked with 20 Scandinavian convention bureaus to create the Scandinavian Destination Sustainability Index, which was launched in 2012.

Using benchmarking as a way to understand and compare sustainability performance, the project stimulated a large volume of sustainability initiatives across the Nordic region that continues to this day. From

2012–2014, nearly half of convention bureaus in the region developed a sustainability strategy (originally 20 per cent), sustainability communication improved by 50 per cent, and eco-certifications across the region rose to include 60 per cent of event industry suppliers, more than any other region in the world.

Given the success and industry recognition of this initiative, the program was redeveloped, rebranded and launched globally at IMEX in 2016. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the first-ever sustainability ranking for event destinations worldwide, created specifically to help destinations, event planners and suppliers to evaluate the sustainability strategies of destinations and their events industry. Since April, over 35 cities including Barcelona, Copenhagen, the Hague, Helsinki, Houston, Geneva, Gothenburg, Frankfurt, Kyoto, Reykjavik, Sapporo, Stuttgart and Sydney have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The project goal is to have over 100 destinations comparing and sharing strategies within the next three years.

The GDS-Index methodology measures and compares the social

and environmental sustainability strategies, policies and performance of the participating cities.

After signing on to the index, the destination Convention Bureau (CB) or Destination Management Organisation (DMO) completes a questionnaire, gathering answers and providing 40 key performance indicators grouped into four categories:

Sustainability Services assess and validate the answers, requesting corrections and/or further information as required. Each performance indicator is assigned a maximum number of points, rewarded according to how well the destination fulfils each indicator. These values are then aggregated to provide the final “performance score”, and the website

that can be supported by organisers in their city.

An analysis of what destinations are (or are not) doing regarding sustainability has provided multiple valuable insights into the main qualities that the top 10 sustainable destinations in the GDS-Index all have in common. Here is a summary of the top five actions that these leaders are undertaking around the world:

## “Cities are now the battlegrounds for sustainability”

**Environmental performance** includes a city’s performance pertaining to its policies and infrastructure, such as climate change commitment, recycling availability, public transport options and air pollution levels.

**Social performance** indicates the development and corruption levels associated with the city’s country.

**Supplier performance** addresses the sustainability commitment and performance of the local meetings industry supply chain, including hotels, venues, and restaurants.

**Convention bureau performance** indicates the sustainability commitment of the convention bureau itself, including questions pertaining to the existence of a sustainability policy and manager, communication of sustainability initiatives to support client planners, and the rigorousness of their reporting on sustainability operations.

After completing the data collection process, consultants from MCI

is updated to reflect the destination’s ranking and performance in each category.

Since its launch, the GDS-Index is already proving to be an effective catalyst for destinations looking to enhance their sustainability initiatives. Firstly, the questionnaire is already a “to do list” of actions that a destination can implement. Secondly, the research is identifying key patterns and trends that can help a destination to develop its strategy, identifying priority areas and also areas where they can develop their own positioning or USP.

By giving participants a framework to start identifying weaknesses and strengths, several cities have already managed to improve their performance, such as Houston, which has now officially established a sustainability team; and Kyoto, which has significantly improved its communication and engagement efforts. The new sustainability section on their website provides clients with clear information about their vision and objectives, a list of sustainable suppliers and sustainable activities

### 1. Establish a multi-year strategy

Embarking on a sustainability journey is challenging, and destinations may often feel that they are walking blind. To stay on track, leading destinations have typically established a bold vision and plan for the strong, inclusive and sustainable growth of their local MICE & tourism industry. It may sound intuitive, but sustainability incorporates many different aspects, stakeholders and interests, so convention bureaus working without a plan may find themselves struggling over ad-hoc initiatives or one-off projects. Developing a multi-year strategy and long-term roadmap helps to balance out the objectives of economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusion, making the task of measuring progress and identifying priorities much easier. From the GDS-Index database, 60 per cent of the top 10 destinations have implemented a robust sustainability strategy with a strong vision, commitment statement, smart objectives and focus.

### 2. Invest in education and capacity building

In addition to having a strategy, leading destinations are heavily involved in engaging, informing and training their customers, staff and industry professionals about sustainability. After all, a destination strategy can only work if the skills, quality and

## “The first-ever sustainability ranking for event destinations worldwide”

competitiveness of their professionals are consistent with the strategy's objectives. This quality has been striking amongst the GDS-Index top 10 destinations, where more than 70 per cent have implemented learning and development programmes about sustainability as compared to an average of 40 per cent. Part of capacity building also includes policies and incentives that help people make more sustainable choices and decisions. In this area, 100 per cent of top 10 performing destinations include sustainability information in their requests for proposals, and 73 per cent of them provide incentives for organisations wanting to gain a certificate in sustainability or issue a sustainability report (while only 45 per cent of all destinations across the GDS-Index do this). Sapporo, one of Japan's leading cities in embracing green practices, has particularly stood out with its *Green MICE Initiative* which provides a subsidy and an award to conference organisers that meet specific criteria for Green MICE. In addition to such incentives, Sapporo also promotes education and awareness by organising the Sapporo Green Week, where a series of

environment-related conferences are held with the aim of promoting the host city as a world leader in environmental issues.

### 3. Promote standards and certification

Another strong indicator of leadership in sustainability is the promotion of standards and eco-certifications amongst the local MICE industry. A destination with high sustainability performance will typically have a high rate of eco-certification and standards amongst its suppliers, such as one of the index's leading cities – Gothenburg. In an effort to drive sustainability performance in the late 1990s, first-mover Gothenburg & Co. worked with the city's environmental department to develop a standard for environmental certification for meetings and events. Called the *Environmental Event Certificate*, the standard was based on the key elements of ISO 14001 and EMAS, and has now become a national standard for green meetings and events. Today, Gothenburg's rate of eco-certification covers an impressive 100 per cent of event venues, 92 per cent of hotels, 50 per cent of taxis and 30 per cent of restaurants. Another special mention

goes to Karlstad, with 100 per cent of their hotel rooms having achieved 3rd party sustainability certification. Amongst the top 10 performing destinations, the average for eco-certified hotel rooms is 67 per cent. In addition, many destinations, such as Sydney, the Hague, Sapporo, Melbourne, Gothenburg, Helsinki and Glasgow, boast a 100 per cent certification rate for their congress and convention centres.

### 4. Develop and engage the local community

MICE destination leaders embrace their role and responsibility to develop the local community, and also recognise that a thriving and inclusive community is often correlated with attracting MICE businesses. After all, sustainability is not just about saving trees or recycling – social wellbeing and financial viability all factor in as well. To this end, leading destinations in sustainability often have programs that promote social innovation and support local small-to-medium sized businesses and development of the local community.

One particularly innovative case study is *Kyoto's Carbon Offset*



program created specifically for the meetings and events industry. The initiative was developed in partnership with the Kyoto city government to provide education and incentives for local businesses to reduce their carbon output. The carbon credits generated by small businesses are bought by the city, which then resells the credits to large meetings and

initiative is a wonderful example of communicating creatively. Using the bee as a mascot and logo, their convention bureau has managed to create a unified campaign for their environmentally-friendly meetings – making the project fun and easily recognisable, while enhancing brand value.

In terms of providing information online, around 91 per cent of the top

Congress in November. Although no city is a leader in each and every one of these traits, the benchmarking process has clearly proved an inspirational catalyst for the participating global cities. From maximising and engaging with existing local government policy, to allowing DMOS and convention bureaus to better understand what they need to do and what they are doing well already, to building brand reputation within MICE for the cities on five continents, the benefits are clear and wide-reaching. Ultimately both leisure and business travellers around the world are looking for authentic experiences and looking for destinations and suppliers that match their personal and brand values. To this end, the GDS-Index has provided the impetus and the framework to elevate action on the ground, inspiring innovation and better practice.

The road ahead towards a sustainable planet is long and challenging, but the spirit of collaboration and healthy competition will play a key role in driving action.

For more information: [www.gds-index.com](http://www.gds-index.com)

## “When implementing sustainable initiatives, communication is key”

events to help them offset their carbon footprint. In this manner, large conferences can contribute to helping local businesses run themselves in a sustainable manner.

Another example is Reykjavik, where, in an effort to reduce waste, the destination's convention bureau created partnerships with organisations such as Subvention for Mothers and the Good Shepherd in order to donate leftover food and event materials.

Within the GDS-Index, approximately 90 per cent of the top 10 performing destinations work with local NGOs and organisations in order to support the local community.

### 5. Communicate effectively

When implementing sustainable initiatives, communication is key. Only through effective communication can we successfully engage, inspire and educate others to care and take action. Part of this involves providing enough information in an engaging manner that allows a destination's green commitments to be *visible* and *credible*. Copenhagen's #BeeSustain

10 destinations will include sustainability features on their website, featuring guides and manuals, supplier lists and best practice examples.

In addition to visibility, a leading destination needs to be able to provide accountability and transparency. This is why serious leaders will take it upon themselves to communicate their vision, strategy and progress through consistent reporting and verification. Although this is often a challenge, the reporting process helps to measure progress, while the transparency brings about benefits such as increased consumer trust and confidence. Approximately 64 per cent of the top 10 GDS-Index destinations regularly report and measure on sustainable destination progress. The biggest challenge in this area is to report in a way that adds integrity and rigour to the challenge, for example, through using globally verified frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative or having reports externally verified.

The full 2016 Insight Report and Index will be launched at the ICCA

*“The unique feature of the GDS-Index is that this is a bottom-up phenomenon, driven by the destinations themselves. The ICCA members in Scandinavia have invented a powerful engine to improve their destinations’ sustainability and business competitiveness. We believe this is an excellent platform for leaders in sustainability from every region to showcase their policies and good practices, and for any destination to swiftly improve their competitiveness.”*

**Martin Sirk**, CEO of ICCA

*“Kyoto has a long history of social stability and environmental awareness, but the GDS-Index has given us a wonderful opportunity to incorporate sustainability into meetings in a much more concrete way. We are proud to show leadership in Asia as the first city to join the index, and it has helped to open our eyes as to how we can improve.”*

*The Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau*

*“We are extremely pleased that Houston is the first North American destination to be included on the GDS-Index. In joining this community, HFC seeks to exchange sustainability practices with its global counterparts to improve performance, competitiveness and continuously meet higher standards. That reflects our commitment to embrace stronger sustainability programs that benefit clients, suppliers and the local industry.”*

**Dawn Ullrich**, President and CEO of Houston First Corporation

*“Sustainability is a challenge I’m passionate about, and so is Business Events Sydney. We joined the Global Destination Sustainability Index to demonstrate our commitment to*

*this challenge, and to broaden the conversation and commitment of our stakeholders to better environmental and social performance within Sydney. To date, our work with the index has helped us to identify areas of excellence in our city and industry, while also identifying opportunities for improvement. Participating in the index has provided us with practical ideas and an action list on how as a city and industry we can continue to progress with further sustainability initiatives.”*

**Lyn Lewis-Smith**, CEO of Business Events Sydney

*“Being involved in this project has been a great inspiration to Gothenburg. Through the benchmarking and sharing of best practices we have improved and elaborated our services towards our clients and congress delegates, and made sustainability a key part of what Gothenburg stands for.”*

**Lennart Johansson**, Vice President Gothenburg & Co

*“The index has helped Stockholm become better as a destination. It’s easy to say you care about sustainability, but when you dive down into the index, you learn about your own destination and it all becomes clear where and how we should focus to improve ourselves and the service we offer our clients.”*

**Karin Mäntymäki**, Director of the Stockholm Convention Bureau

*“IMEX is proud to support the development of our industry and this ground-breaking initiative to pioneer sustainability globally for meeting and incentive destinations.”*

**Carina Bauer**, CEO of the IMEX Group



Copenhagen’s #BeeSustain initiative uses a mascot to create a unified campaign for their environmentally friendly meetings

PHOTO © Wonderful Copenhagen



Gothenburg has one of the highest rate of eco-certifications amongst its meetings industry suppliers PHOTO © Göteborg & Co



Sydney’s premier convention centre ICC Sydney is set to achieve Gold Certification in the internationally recognised Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program

PHOTO © ICC Sydney







# AIPC Academy 2017

## CELEBRATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**THE AIPC** Academy is the only comprehensive professional development program specifically serving the needs of international convention centre managers.

Designed to address the critical need for centres to maintain fully qualified staff in a highly competitive industry, the academy provides a targeted, cost-effective form of training and development along with the means to establish the kind of industry networks that facilitate future professional growth.

Using a diverse international faculty and range of guest presenters, it offers a full curriculum and a comprehensive industry overview with ongoing updates of all key areas of centre management, operations, finances and marketing. Since its inception, program graduate surveys have consistently rated the program as a “must do”, and it continues to evolve its content to ensure an effective and comprehensive learning experience.

The evolving program format has also been designed to encourage attendees to return to the academy on a regular basis in order to further upgrade their knowledge and grow their understanding of rapidly changing issues specific to convention centre management.

The AIPC Academy is aimed at staff who are seeking to broaden their knowledge of the industry and prepare for more senior management responsibilities as well as previous

graduates and others who already have significant management experience and who are looking for a forum in which they can work with academy faculty and colleagues on developing strategies to meet today's most pressing management challenges.

This would include:

- centre managers with several years of industry experience who are expected to grow their responsibilities
- those who have recently moved into this sector and require an overall orientation to the industry, and
- previous attendees who wish to continue to upgrade their knowledge, credentials and networks by returning as participants in the new issue-oriented format.

The program consists of a full five-day curriculum that addresses all key centre management areas whilst taking a highly practical approach to its comprehensive curriculum under the overall theme of “Addressing today's centre management challenges” with topics such as:

- Delivering, measuring and communicating performance
- Addressing current market challenges
- Managing the product: optimising facilities and services
- Organisational structure and leadership in a convention centre

Specialised subject areas will include:

- Our changing world; today's key issues and challenges How to do business in a global marketplace
- Financial management and performance measures for centres Benchmarking for success
- Communicating value to owners and stakeholders
- Addressing changing client expectations
- How suppliers are responding to today's new market realities
- Winning strategies in a competitive market Delivering on the sales promise: from contract to execution
- Best practices in today's centre operations
- Buildings in context: the evolution of centre design
- Alternative models for a strong operation
- Best practices in managing your teams

The subject matter is presented and discussed in a highly interactive forum that encourages exchange and knowledge sharing amongst faculty and attendees. A case study exercise ensures that attendees demonstrate their accomplishments in a tangible form.



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# Connections mean everything



## Why ibtm world? What's in it for me?

Barcelona is one of the most visited cities in Europe and some say, the world. It's trendy, modern and also traditional and it's home to ibtm world. Every year some **15,500 meeting professionals** make it their home for the week, so we asked Graeme Barnett, Senior Exhibition Director ibtm world, what's new and **what's in it for you in 2016.**

## How can I attend ibtm world?

Depending on whether you want to apply to be a Hosted Buyer or register as a trade visitor, both are easy to do via [www.ibtmworld.com](http://www.ibtmworld.com).

Once again the Hosted Buyer programme is tailored to your needs. As a Corporate Buyer you will have **access to a variety of invitation only events**, and for those from an Agency we are working to your agenda too, with flexible attendance options, access to VIP lounges onsite and networking opportunities. Unique to the industry, for Association Buyers we also have **My Association | My Club**, which offers a range of benefits that **include your own hub hotel**, and the exclusive **Associations Connect** event.

For those wanting to attend on their own, follow their own agenda and make their own plans, then choose the trade visitor option. Simply register online and take advantage of all the travel and accommodation deals.

## What's new this year?

With innovative technology, a packed Innovation Zone with new exhibitors showcasing the **next generation of technology** for events, plus real hands-on demonstrations and networking, it's not just the sheer diversity of thousands of international exhibitors inspiring the meetings professional. The Knowledge Programme is bursting with education, and this year it's been created by the industry for the industry so topics and themes are what you want to hear about, current and on trend. Check it out at [www.ibtmworld.com](http://www.ibtmworld.com) and see for yourself. We have a special surprise for you... the design of the ACS Knowledge Village will be themed like a circus – yes we are in the business of creating impact at our events as well!

## What's in it for you?

We will get you from the airport to the venue in the quickest time yet due to the new Metro Station opening at the Fira Gran Via. The journey from the airport to ibtm world is just 19 minutes, making **your connections as fast as the onsite wi-fi!**

We have a **full diary of events** starting on 29th November with the Welcome Reception, celebrating Catalonia's European Year of Gastronomy and enticingly called "Deliciously Barcelona". It's all about the region's wines, food, and culture, from the sea, land and countryside. The following night exhibitors will hold events on their stands from 18.00 to 19.00, giving you even more networking and fun. For those who want to continue on, Club Night becomes Rendezvous, hosted in partnership with the MPI Foundation and Holland, **creating the party of all parties**. New this year, attendees are asked to purchase entry tickets to this exclusive party. Entry includes open bars, entertainment and dancing while connecting with industry friends and it's all for a good cause, the MPI Foundation.



“We could meet suppliers from 5 continents in less than 3 days... you can't beat that!”

Bouchra El Bacha,  
Omni Destination Management,  
United States, Hosted Buyer



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PHOTO © Tourismus Salzburg GmbH

# Enited Launches ASSOCIATION ACADEMY

**THE FIRST** Association Academy will take place in Salzburg, Austria, in early December. This educational platform is intended for all kind of associations, but particularly addresses the needs of staff and middle-management at smaller and mid-sized associations.

Ivo Franschitz, the owner of Enited Business Events and a long-time supporter of associations, explains why he initiated the workshop:

“The fact is that our environment is in a constant state of change. One of the consequences is that the expectations of the clients of any association, their own members, are rapidly changing.”

The Association Academy will bring together representatives from European associations to share issues, problems and experiences in a two-day workshop.

“We are living in a knowledge and information-driven society. Since the advent of Google, the availability of information is no longer an argument to stick with an association. Associations have to act, react and adapt to these new conditions. This is what the Association Academy is all about.”

There has been a conscious decision not to provide a ready-made program, as the participants themselves will determine the workshop content. This ensures that only vital topics will be dealt with, an approach

that, in comparison to traditional lectures, enhances the learning effect.

The first Association Academy is coorganised by Green Hat People, a European active learning company, and supported by Destination Salzburg and its Salzburg Convention Bureau.





# China's New Hotels **AIM TO IMPRESS**



## **The Sunrise Kempinski Hotel, Yanqi Lake**

This recently opened 306-room hotel with views of Yanshan Mountain and the Mutianyu Great Wall is one hour's drive from the centre of Beijing and aims to offer a haven of tranquillity close to the big city bustle of the capital.

Designed by Shanghai Huadu Architect Design Co., the hotel is intended to symbolise harmony, unity and infinity. From the side angle view, the building is shaped like a scallop, which represents 'Fortune' in Chinese culture. The front of the building represents the 'Rising Sun', symbolic of the fast developing economy of China.



## **Dalian International Conference Centre**

The international conference centre in Dalian, which opened four years ago, provides facilities for up to 7,000 visitors on a 117,650 m<sup>2</sup> site. Dalian, a seaport in the north-eastern province of Liaoning was declared a special economic zone in 1984 and numerous foreign companies have established themselves in the city.

Dalian offers other alternatives for conferences such as the Dalian International Finance Conference Centre, the Airchina Hotel Conference Centre, and the Dalian Xinghai Convention and Exhibition Centre.

## “Continuing to explore spectacular themes and locations to gain a competitive edge”



### **Inter-Continental Shimao Quarry Hotel, Shanghai**

This five-star hotel is being built inside a quarry 90 metres below ground level. Work is under way on the \$430 million complex in the Songjiang district of Shanghai. Designed by British-based firm Atkins, the hotel will have 370 guest rooms over 19 floors. Two floors will be underwater and feature a glass-walled aquarium, restaurant and guest rooms. Due to be completed next year, the structure will blend into the landscape with a wooded eco-friendly green roof.



### **Dawang Mountain Resort, Changsha**

The Deep Pit Ice and Snow World is located in the Dawang Mountain Resort Area near the city of Changsha. This project, covering 120,000 m<sup>2</sup>, includes ice and snow-based activities, indoor ski slope, water park, restaurant and shopping facilities. The resort's major landmark will be the 100-metre-high hotel tower at the south end of the site. The five-star hotel will have over 300 suites, all with views of Tongxi Lake, Dawang Mountain and the Ice and Snow World.



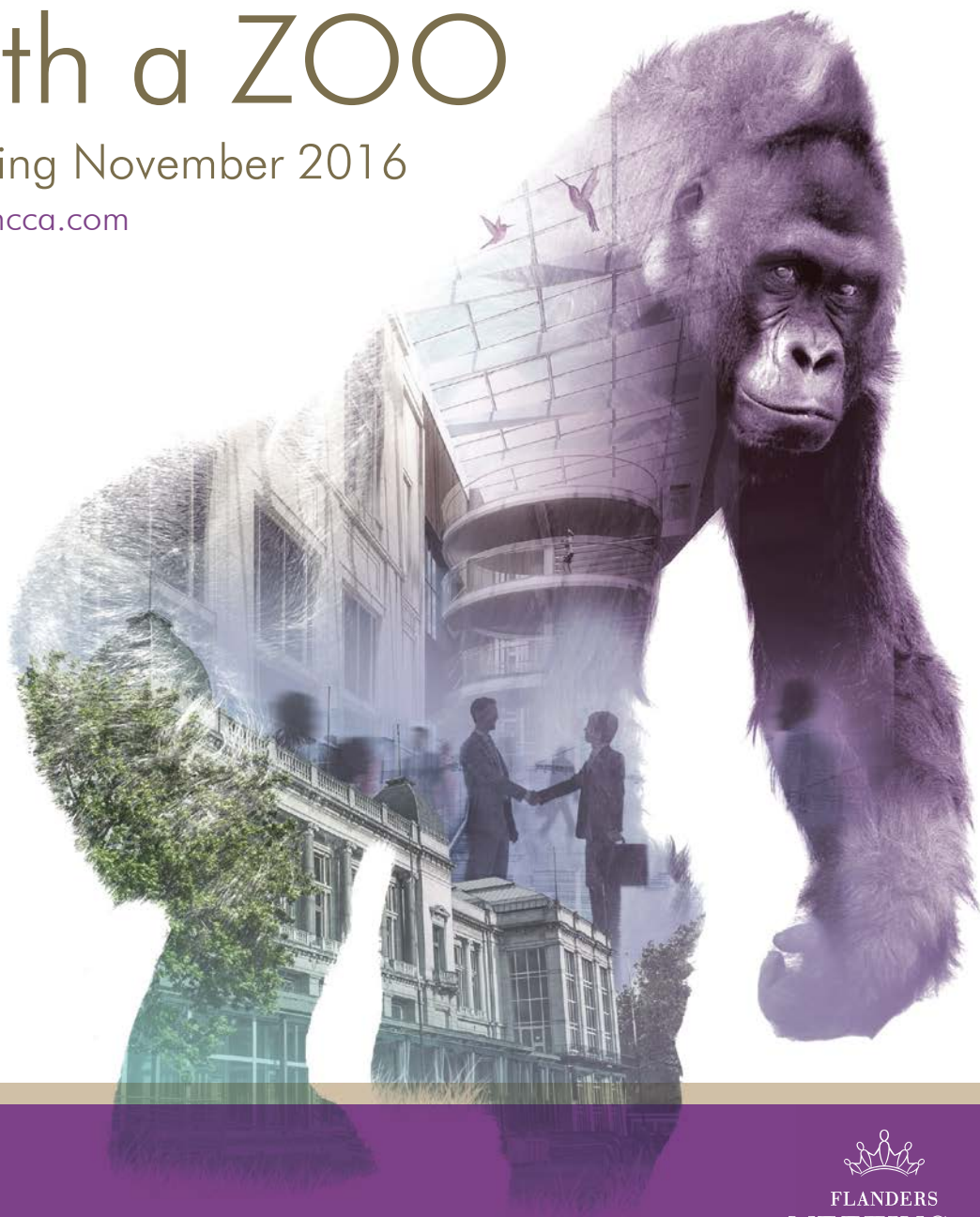
### **Atlantis Resort Hotel, Sanya**

Atlantis Sanya will be the world's third, and China's first, Atlantis Resort Hotel. The 226-metre-high hotel, operated and managed by Kerzner International, will occupy an 800 m<sup>2</sup> site and provide 1,314 guest rooms with panoramic sea views. One prominent feature will be China's largest natural saltwater aquarium, which can hold 47,000 tons of seawater and display over 60,000 sea creatures. The hotel is expected to open in the second half of 2017.

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# Airbnb **WAITING IN THE WINGS**

TEXT

Atti Soenarso

**THE SHARING** economy has attracted huge amounts of venture capital and, according to some sources, the phenomenon has given birth to 17 billion-dollar companies, half of which are based in California. In other words, the large profits from everything we share go to the already wealthy venture capitalists.

The most fascinating thing about the sharing economy is not that we share our cars and apartments, but that local behaviour has become a global phenomenon. Apartment rentals via Airbnb and private taxis mediated through Uber are invariably the first things discussed when the sharing economy is mentioned.

San Francisco is the first city in the world to come up with a contract requiring Airbnb, which has its headquarters there, to pay taxes on its earnings in the city. *San Francisco Travel* has been a leading advocate for Airbnb among American convention bureaus. Joe D'Alessandro, President and CEO of San Francisco Travel, believes that, despite the tax requirement, Airbnb will continue to expand in the city as an alternative for leisure and business travellers.

San Francisco Travel formed a partnership with Airbnb some time ago. When hotel rooms are scarce in San Francisco, Airbnb offers an alternative that helps to reduce the demand on hotel booking levels, but equally important, they are able to offer a price level for people who may not be able to afford a hotel room for a week during a congress, which is not uncommon. Naturally, all cities that host congresses, meetings and events have basically the same need. The more accommodation alternatives there are, the more people will attend congresses.

Most hotel rooms in San Francisco are in the central business district near the congress centre and attractions like Union Square and Fisherman's Wharf. But the majority of apartment hosts are in housing complexes outside the central business district where the number of hotels is limited. The new contract has persuaded many travellers to choose accommodation in districts away from the city centre. This has opened their eyes to new districts with restaurants and shops at a significantly lower price, meaning more money comes into circulation in

those areas. It is a win-win for everyone. The fact that delegates can also share an apartment, with perhaps two, four or more people, offers a better social life than everyone sitting in a hotel room by themselves.

Last summer San Francisco introduced a new ordinance requiring Airbnb rentals to have a registration number for short rentals, a sort of local authority stamp of approval. Websites not fulfilling this requirement could face a fine of up to \$1,000 a day for each non registered booking. What does this entail for San Francisco Travel's business relationship with Airbnb? Joe D'Alessandro says it should not impact their partnership at all. One of the main conditions for the travel company to cooperate with Airbnb is equal conditions for all the hotels in the community. It was necessary for Airbnb to begin paying taxes just like hotels have to. Today, everybody staying in Airbnb accommodation in San Francisco must pay hotel tax.

Another requirement by the local authority was the registration of all Airbnb hosts, just like companies are required to do. Which direction

things will take is down to the meeting planner and Airbnb. Some companies, organisations and associations will not allow bookings via Airbnb if there is no contract to regulate taxes, insurance and security. But when hotels are actually fully booked, the service will provide a vital alternative for people who have to attend a congress or event.

development because most planners and meetings organisers have been unwilling to include Airbnb and other sharing economy companies, usually due to concern over invoicing, payment procedures, insurance and security.

While Airbnb has always been considered the secondary choice for groups when there has been a lack

But how do providers get a Business Travel Ready symbol next to their profile? The main requirements to be met are:

- At least 60 per cent of the room/apartment reviews will have had 5 stars, including cleanliness. You must also have at least three positive reviews.
- The accommodation will be an entire home, not individual rooms, and must have an owner.
- The apartment must be non smoking and have no pets living there.
- All normal business travel services must be included, such as Wi-Fi, a laptop and a good workspace. It will have an iron, proper clothes hangers, a hairdryer, shampoo and smoke detectors.

*(This year, Airbnb are giving away 25,000 smoke and CO2 detectors for free to their hosts for them to further raise the standard of their homes.)*

- Business travellers should be able to check in at any time.
- Hosts may not cancel a reservation if they have confirmed it less than a week before the check-in date.
- The place you seek to rent must answer 90 per cent of the reservation requests and questions within 24 hours.

Experient, Maritz Travel's global meetings planning and event management company, is one of the major travel companies to have included Airbnb in its room listings. They have greatly improved their offering for business travel customers.

"We collaborate with Airbnb to help our customers, particularly in the large markets, with apartments near congress centres," says Gary Schirmacher, Senior Vice President for strategic development, in an interview with *Skift*.

## "Local behaviour has become a global phenomenon"

What does the future hold for Airbnb in the world beyond San Francisco? The company has undergone extensive growth in nearly all markets. It did not exist five years ago, but now the company can call itself the largest hotel chain in the world calculated on the number of rooms they have listed for rental. The quicker Airbnb comes up with a system that also gives meeting planners and travel companies secure provisions or some form of incentive, the quicker they will become a large player within meetings, congresses and events. They have arrived at the global meetings industry to stay.

Naturally, Airbnb sees an opening to offer a viable alternative to expensive hotel rooms during the most important congresses, rooms that for years have suddenly doubled or even tripled in price when a medical congress comes to town. Most likely, Airbnb and meetings industry organisations will formalise products and partnerships to enable planners to incorporate the rental company's rooms and apartments in its programmes. This is a significant

of hotel rooms, the company is now positioning itself as the first alternative and is also experiencing some success in the way it is marketing itself. Today we often see their rooms and apartments on conference and congress websites and Airbnb among delegates' congress material. The company highlights a number of reasons why it is an alternative for groups attending fairs, congresses and conferences:

- It gives delegates an exciting new alternative, and thus a personal travel experience.
- Airbnb is often regarded as the most suitable for young travellers, but many others are also using the service. Thirty-three per cent of business travellers who use it are 36–50 years of age.
- Traditional hotels often have higher prices than the listed prices for a convention.
- *Airbnb Business Travel Ready* programme, which was launched in November last year, uses the symbol to identify the apartments suitable for business travellers.



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# Spacebase

## FINDING SPACES OUTSIDE THE BOX

### TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**WHILE THE** B2C market for accommodation has taken major steps forward in the sharing economy – above all through Airbnb – the same cannot really be said for booking meeting venues over and above the standard range. Until now, finding unique and unusual meeting spaces has been a time-consuming and costly task.

Spacebase is a room-booking service that lists over 2,000 lofts, photo studios, restaurants, retail stores, coworking spaces and company meeting rooms across Europe and in cities such as Tel Aviv, Hong Kong, London, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Founders Stephan Ekbergh, Jan Hoffman-Keining and Julian Jost have managed to raise more capital to position the company with its online solution and to broaden the range.

“Spacebase is a global booking platform for workshop space and meeting rooms. Tenants have access to selected places to implement their event, places that are off the beaten track and not easy to find on the market. With our motto ‘every space is a workshop space’ we have made the booking procedure so much easier for the customer,” explains Jan Hoffman-Keining.

This means that even the simple things like coffee, projectors and flip charts can be ordered through the platform. Owners of unique and unusual spaces can add them free of charge to the on-line service, and customers can rate the venue and give future users some idea of what it offers.

“Our venues range from unexplored places that have never been booked before to international buildings and arenas owned by established companies. When all is said and done, the space is everything. Booking a space through us is a game changer for how you and your company or organisation meet.”

Spacebase uses local scouts to find the best meeting spaces.

“They find exciting spaces and places that not only improve creativity, but are better for your budget because, despite being off the beaten track, they are perfect for your particular needs. With us you can book meeting spaces in more than ten countries without needing to pick up the phone.”

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**“When all is said and done, the space is everything”**



# Vizeat **AIRBNB FOR DINNERS**

## TEXT

Bryan Ralph

**AIRBNB** has made a strategic move into the meetings and events industry by offering entire homes to congresses and larger events. The *Vizeat* service has decided to do the same thing with dinners. The largest assignment so far was last November in Paris when 10,000 people ate dinner in the homes of people they had never met before and, in all likelihood, would never meet again.

Vizeat calls itself 'Airbnb for food'. It was started two years ago and is now in 110 countries. The service enables the user to book mealtimes, cooking courses and other food-related activities. Today there are 20,000 approved Vizeat hosts and the service is now targeting conferences, congresses and other events. If the group is between 50 and 100 people, they are sent to kitchens in local

homes. At some point all destinations will find themselves unable to provide enough restaurants to cater for large groups.

Vizeat founder Jean-Michel Petit got the idea while travelling around Lake Titicaca in Peru with his son.

"We got the chance to share a meal with a native Peruvian family, and the experience was the highlight of the trip for both of us. When we returned home we invited people to a similar experience."

In September Vizeat raised a further €3.8 million as part of its ambition to launch in even more countries, including the UK and Germany. Despite stiff competition from US-based *Feastly* and *Eat With*, an almost identical app and website in 50 countries, Vizeat still gets the most international recognition. Other

competitors for dinner guests include *Cookening* and *Kitchensurfing*, which is more like Uber as users have the opportunity to get professional chefs into their own kitchens. The latter has had a fairly large international impact, but is not considered a viable threat to restaurants.

Alex Stephany, entrepreneur and author of the book *The Business of Sharing* is not convinced that Vizeat will revolutionise the industry in the same way as Airbnb.

"Collaborative consumption works because there is excess capacity, namely guest rooms become hotel rooms and empty parking spaces get filled. But is a dinner in somebody's kitchen really the same simple concept?"



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# Organizational play AND WORKPLACE MEETINGS

TEXT PHOTOS

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*Koncept Kompagniet's Playbox* is a toolkit of carefully selected toys and games that are used to encourage playfulness during workplace meetings. The included Play Guide suggests how the toys can be used to add a playful dimension to various common meeting objectives such as enhancing creativity, communication and decision making.

The main aim of this report is to explore the scientific evidence for the benefits of inducing play in workplace. This report presents an overview of the research on the benefits of organizational play and provides evidence that playing at work is a promising means by which to improve workplace meetings. Play has been linked to improved creativity, communication, engagement, learning, performance, and enhancing relationships. As the Playbox is developed as a tool for improving workplace meetings this report will

attempt to highlight play in the context of organizational meetings. But first, let's start with some historical context:

*"When we are at work we ought to be at work. When we are at play we ought to be at play. There is no use trying to mix the two. The sole object ought to be to get the work done and to get paid for it. When the work is done, then the play can come, but not before." Henry Ford*

Play was unwelcome in Henry Ford's factories. His employees were there to work, not to play and it is clear that there should be no mixing of the two. This anti-play approach to work has outlived the industrial revolution and the notion that work and play are opposites still lingers in many workplaces. As we move away from the factories of the industrial revolution and find ourselves in the knowledge-based economy, play



seems to be increasingly welcomed in the workplace, and there is growing evidence of the benefits of play in the workplace.

A recent conceptualization defines play as an absorbing and intrinsically motivated activity that is apparently purposeless and provides enjoyment and a suspension of self-conscious-

### Creativity

Research in organizational psychology has established play as a powerful enhancer of creativity. Playfulness has been identified as an essential aspect of a creative organizational climate and an encourager of a creative and innovative work environment. (Ekvall, 1996; Starbuck & Webster,

- Tinkering with art supplies and plastic building blocks (Schulz, Geithner, Woelfel, & Krzywinski, 2015; Nisula, Kallio, Oikarinen, & Kianto 2015).

Research has suggested a number of theoretical mechanisms by which play increases creativity. Playing stimulates mental flexibility by expanding perspectives and practicing the use of imagination. Imagining new information, situations and relationships that are not true in the real world is possible in the imaginary world created by play. (Brown, 2009; Russ, 2011). The frivolousness of play, and the excuse to be spontaneous and silly allows individuals to temporarily let go of prestige and correctness which are obstacles to creativity. (West, 2013). Play allows us to temporarily suspend organizational objectives, encouraging experimentation and exploration. A playful climate also fosters risk-taking mistake-making (Dodgson, Gann & Salter, 2005; West, 2015)

Neuropsychologists have found that play develops novelty and behavioral flexibility in both animals and humans (Bateson & Martin, 2013). Arguing that play is a source of behavioral variety, researchers within organizational psychology have suggested that play promotes creativity by giving employees a legitimate excuse to behave in new ways (March, 1991).

A playful work climate encourages employees to be open for the unexpected by generating a surplus of possibilities and allowing them to operate with indeterminate expectations (Roos, Victor & Statler, 2004). Play also exercises non-judgement and openness to others. In the safe boundaries of play, habitual beliefs can be questioned which facilitates a shift of perspectives (Barry

## “Explore the scientific evidence for the benefits of inducing play in workplace”

ness (Brown, 2009). Play is defined as a *state of mind* and as a behavioral approach to an activity. To be playful at work involves approaching a work task in such a way that it is more enjoyable for oneself and others. The five characterizing elements of play are that it be self-chosen, fun, frivolous, imaginative, and in some way bound by structure or rules (West, 2013).

Team meetings are ever-present in modern organizations (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015). The average employee spends more than six hours per week in scheduled meetings. Supervisors spend twice as much time in formal meetings, and in larger organizations managers spend more than 75 per cent of their time preparing and executing meetings. Many managers spend up to 80 per cent of their working time in meetings. The average employee has at least three meetings per week, but meeting quality is evaluated as poor in 41.9 per cent of these meetings (Allen et al, 2015). There is much room for improvement of workplace meetings!

1991; Deal & Key, 1998; Costea, Crump, & Holm, 2005; Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006; Statler, Roos, & Victor, 2009; Chang, 2011). Experimental research suggest that play triggers a shift towards a creative state of mind and directly benefits creative performance. The following are some examples of playful activities that have in peer-reviewed articles been reported to boost creativity:

- Playing silly meeting games. (West, Hoff & Carlsson, 2015)
- Temporarily imagining oneself as a child. (Zabelina & Robinson, 2010).
- Framing work tasks as playful (Glynn, 1994)
- Playing table-top role playing games. (Chung, 2012)
- Playing a physically active video games (Hutton & Sundar, 2010)
- Role play games (Karwowski & Soszynski, 2008)
- Lego blocks in the board room (Statler, Roos, & Victor, 2009; Statler, Heracleous, & Jacobs, 2011).
- Improvisational theater games (West, 2015)



& Meisiek, 2010). Research has also shown the introducing play in workplace meetings enhances the the experienced creative climate in organizational meetings (West, 2014).

Although not yet well-researched, one interesting theory suggests that the element of playful surprise in workplace meetings may partially

the workplace by making work tasks more fun and engaging (DeKoven, 2014). Advocates of organizational play have argued that play and having fun at work leads to enhanced productivity as playful activities allow employees to develop cognitive, social, and emotional capacities that are conducive to a productive

productivity, and even organizational success (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Wiltenbrock, 2012).

### **Engagement and intrinsic motivation**

One of the core characteristics of play is that it is fun and intrinsically motivated, and play is often social and physical. It should therefore not be surprising that play has been linked to an increase of energy levels and enhanced engagement (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006). Play engages us at work by tapping into our intrinsic motivation by being inherently enjoyable and creating scripts for people to engage in. Put another way: The fun of play increases participation and engagement. As an energizer, play activities provide both novel physical and mental challenges that stimulate body and mind (West, 2013). Laboratory experiments have found that playfully performing challenging work tasks increased intrinsic motivation (Glynn, 1994). Group intrinsic motivation also increases when the meeting chairperson or leader displays playful behavior (Jaussi, & Dionne, 2003).

### **Relationships and communication**

Play fosters joy and goodwill amongst team members (Roos & Roos, 2006). Research focusing on play in the work environment has suggested that play builds collaborative relationships. In the safe boundaries of play meeting participants are free to deviate from socially prescribed behaviors and ordinary conventions which allow them to relate to others in new ways (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006). Play promotes high-quality exchanges amongst team members (Muñoz-Doyague & Nieto, 2012), and is thought to serve as an effective shortcut to developing and maintaining the level of psychological safety needed for team work (West, 2016).

## **“There is much room for improvement of workplace meetings!”**

explain the how play benefits organizational creativity (Filipowicz, 2006). Also on a different note, unconventional leader behavior (such as standing on furniture, hanging ideas on clotheslines) has been shown to lead to increased creativity among subordinates (Jaussi, & Dionne, 2003).

### **Performance and productivity**

Workplace meetings are often experienced as being unproductive to the extent that ineffective meetings are dreaded by many employees (Allen et al., 2012). Unproductive meetings have also been associated with decreased job satisfaction and may affect employees' well-being (Rogelberg, Allen, Shanock, Scott & Shuffler, 2010). Due to the frivolous nature of play it is understandable that it is not always welcome in organizational contexts, such as meetings, where efficiency and a focus on results are relentlessly pursued. Seen as a waste of time, play becomes a threat to organizational productivity and must therefore be managed, minimized and controlled (West, 2014). However, play scholars have suggested that play may in fact enhance productivity in

work environment (Starbuck & Webster, 1991; Statler, Roos & Victor, 2009; Owler, Morrisson, & Plester, 2010). There is good evidence that humor and a fun work environment enhances team performance (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). Research exploring the effect of playfulness on the productivity of workplace meetings has found that adding playful elements to otherwise mundane work meetings leads to an increase of experienced productivity (West 2015).

Workplaces that require their employees to persist to solve complex problems can greatly benefit from creating a playful culture that encourages the use of humor. Exposure to humor and amusement increases persistence in challenging work tasks. (Cheng & Wang, 2014). Team collaboration requires the meeting participants interact with each other (Bonito & Sanders, 2010). Playful games and activities during meetings create a forum for positive social interaction that is vital for collaborative meetings. The frequency of interaction behaviors such as problem-solving, action planning lead to improved meeting satisfaction,



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## “Play has been linked to improved creativity, communication, engagement, learning, performance, and enhancing relationships”

The fun and silly aspects of play include a lot of humor. Research on humor in the workplace helps explain the benefits of play for building relationships in the workplace. Humor and laughter have likely evolved as group behaviors because they promote group cohesion (Gervais & Wilson, 2005; Van Vugt & Kameda, 2013). Playfulness and shared laughter reduces tension in problematic situations and enhance communication and collegiality. (Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009). Humor decreases tensions and facilitates communication (Meyer, 2000; Holmes & Marra, 2002) Researchers focusing on organizational meetings have found that playful humor triggers positive socioemotional communication (Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Allen, 2014).

An interesting “side-effect” of play related to improving relationships and communication is that play seems to counteract the negative effects of organizational hierarchy. By bringing fun into relationships play helps break hierarchical and social barriers so that people find a common connection point and move into meaningful collaborative

relationships (West, Hoff & Carlsson, 2013).

### **Promotes learning**

Organizational researchers have reported that ludic learning (playful learning) promotes deep learning (Kolb, & Kolb, 2010). A playful work or meeting environment experientially teaches team members to be aware that there is no right way to think and act (Bakken et al., 2012). Playing games has been successfully used to teach positive social interaction and interpersonal dynamics in organizations (Bogers & Sproedt, 2012). Playing with toys during workplace meetings may also foster learning by establishing a collective shared understanding. Getting a group of professionals from different backgrounds and with different stakeholder positions to collaborate is a formidable task for meeting organizers. A recent study reported that playing with art supplies and plastic building blocks enhances collaborative learning amongst diverse stakeholder groups (Schulz, Geithner, Woelfel, & Krzywinski, 2015). One means by which play aids learning in organizational groups is by increasing

a sense of psychological safety which fosters knowledge sharing (Kessel, Krater, & Schultz 2012).

A recent doctoral thesis studying the positive effects of playful teaching with adults in higher education highlighted the elements of high energy, fun, lightheartedness, and spontaneity as being beneficial to learning. Moreover, educators identified the unexpected, surprise or unplanned occurrence as being a vital aspect of a the playful classrooms that benefit a deeper more engaged learning (Tanis, 2012).

### **Playing for a healthy work environment**

Playfulness, especially the fun and silliness of playfulness, is associated with positive psychological functioning in adults (Proyer & Ruch, 2011). Organizational leaders often use playful joking as a coping strategy, which helps them to put a problem into perspective and examine various interpretations (Grugulis, 2002). Functioning as temporary diversion from work tasks, play may function as relief from stress or boredom (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006). A playful fun work climate may be especially

## “Research in organizational psychology has established play as a powerful enhancer of creativity”

important for modern organizations wishing to retain talent. Younger generations of employees expect work to be fun and creative, and providing opportunities for this is becoming a competitive advantage (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). In addition to fostering employee well-being, play can also be exploited to improve leadership skills and to contribute to leadership development (Kark, 2011).

### Qualitative interview study

A pilot study was done to explore the real-life experiences of using the Playbox as well as participants' observed benefits to workplace meetings.

**Participants and procedure** The Playbox was evaluated by seven different organizations in Denmark and Sweden. Each client tested the Playbox for about 2–3 weeks. A representative or contact person from each participating organization was then interviewed. There were four males and three females that varied in age from 33 to 52 years. The organizations represented a diverse spectrum of large and smaller businesses as well as governmental organizations. Four participants were from companies

from the private sector: facility management (Sweden), conference center (Sweden), organizational development consultants (Denmark), and a software engineering firm (Sweden). Three participating organizations were from the public sector: department of culture at a city municipality (Sweden), a medical healthcare center (Sweden), and a business college (Denmark).

The participating organizations were recruited as testers after expressing interest in the Playbox, being willing to test the box and committing to being interviewed about their experiences. As the study aimed to explore the practical use of the box in the field rather than be a basis for theory generation, the respondents were selected to represent a diverse variety of organizations and meeting environments. Participants were interviewed in person or by phone and eventual follow-up questions were answered by email. The interviews lasted about 20 minutes.

A semistructured interview guide was constructed to explore how the Playbox was used in various meeting contexts and how the box influenced the meetings (Patton, 2001). The interview guide provided direction

and structure, yet encouraged free on-topic discussion as well as any unanticipated points. Follow-up questions were actively posed to encourage the development of ideas (Kvale, 1997). The main themes of the interview guide were: general thoughts about the Playbox and initial expectations, and more importantly their experiences of using the box in different workplace meetings. Participants were requested to give concrete examples and descriptions of using the Playbox.

### Results

#### Initial thoughts and expectations

Many participants explained that their initial enthusiasm for the Playbox was that it is new and exciting, and that they were motivated to test the box out of curiosity. A common theme was that they expected the box to liven up and energize their meetings. They furthermore hoped that the box would make their meetings a little more fun and engaging as well as lead to increased creativity. As a manager of a conference facility said *our clients are always looking for new ways to improve their meetings and expect us to have suggestions for ways to do so, the Playbox seemed like*



*an easy and inexpensive way to generate interest in a fun engaging way.*

On a similar note, a project manager working with software development said *we have so many meetings every week and although we are mostly younger professionals at the company who enjoy a good laugh and enjoy having fun at work, our meetings*

*is primarily designed as a meeting tool. It is fun and silly but at the same time it is based on a serious ambition to improve meetings.* –project manager at a software development company.

The respondents found that the playguide helpful when explaining the how and why they should spend valuable meeting time playing games.

described how she chose to use Oogi (a funny looking flexible plastic figure) as a Talking Stick during their monthly meetings: *We try to keep these meetings brief as everyone just wants to get back to work, but some people end up talking waaaay too much. I instructed them that Oogi would be joining us and he [Oogi] would make sure everyone took turns taking and listening. It was lighthearted and unthreatening ... so simple and actually surprisingly fun.*

Some respondents described an initial hesitation to introducing the Playbox fearing that other meeting participants would not share their enthusiasm or that their co-workers would find the box to be too silly or childish. For example, a owner of a small business admitted *Even though I own the company and the people in the [meeting] room were my employees, I felt a little uncomfortable being a game leader so I simply placed the black box on the table before our Monday meeting started. Without any instructions from me, people immediately started picking up the toys and playing with them.* He then felt comfortable starting the meeting with a quick game from the Playguide.

**Stimulating play effects of play** The respondents reported that the box generated a lot of interest from curious co-workers. *We were like children unwrapping Christmas presents* said one respondent who works at a community medical center. She added that her colleagues started joking that she should keep the box locked in her room otherwise they would steal the toys.

At a conference facility the Playbox was offered to customers who booked meeting rooms. The manager of the conference facility described how she suggested that a small meeting group play the game Heart Attack

## “Play also exercises non-judgement and openness to others”

*sometimes tend to become routine and perhaps a little boring ... I wanted to shake things up a bit.*

There was also an expectation that increased playfulness would increase meeting engagement, for example a manager at a municipal office said: *We are the city's department of culture – if there is any workplace that should be creative and playful it is us. I wanted to see if adding a touch of playfulness to our meetings would make my team feel more engaged.*

*My colleagues and I here at the business college are very curious about the potential of using play to accelerate learning. I don't think novelty is enough, we need to try to engage our students ... and the box of toys helps people dare to play –* university teacher, who added that his decision to test the Playbox coincided nicely with the university leader's current initiative on improving teaching.

**Designed for meetings** Most of the respondents agreed that a crucial aspect of the Playbox concept is that it is specifically designed to be used in organizational contexts. *What I initially liked about the Playbox is that it*

*The games were used to make meetings more efficient: As a project manager, I am allergic to lengthy meetings, so I loved the hourglass and the buzzer [desk bell]. I used them to keep everyone focused on the meeting agenda. The hourglass made sure we didn't spend too much time on each issue and we loved ringing the bell to signal that we had strayed off topic.*

The Playbox testers experimented with the box in a variety of meetings, but the most common context was that it was during regular staff and project meetings. These meetings were generally not focused on collaboration or creativity. The most frequently observed effect of using the box was that it led to increased energy and engagement. An example from a software development company: *We started our project meeting with a game of Ping Pong. The box only has two rackets so the rest used books as rackets. The ball flew all over the room ... it was a simple. And so fun. All of us got a nice dose of energy that lasted well into our meeting.*

Other participants choose games to facilitate specific meeting processes. A healthcare professional

to energize an afternoon meeting. *They played the game in the lounge area outside the meeting room during a 'leg-stretcher break'. It was crazy ... they laughed and made so much noise that I had to ask them to continue playing in their meeting room.* She explained that many people attend a lot of meetings and thought they had

*seen the pile of paper on the floor under the net. We had tons of ideas for new types of conference fika (Swedish for coffee and a snack).*

Describing his experiences of using the Playbox to facilitate learning, an associate professor was very enthusiastic after testing the box with his students: *Play accelerates learn-*

The Playbox testers mentioned that they liked certain toys better than others. The two rubber figures Mox and Oogi would have easily won a popularity contest. One person said *My favorite is Oogi. I love to throw him at the whiteboard and try to get him to stick. Sometimes he actually crawls down with his suction cups. And the phone stealing ... haha ...* (Author note: Oogi loves to steal mobile phones when the owners are not watching). The blue rubber-ball-squishy-head with a big mouth also known as Mox was mentioned as especially versatile ... *you know that you can knock him on your head and he makes this stupid sound that echoes inside your head? It is so stupid ... and with a little imagination you can actually hear him saying something. But you can also just have fun throwing him around since it doesn't hurt even if you hit somebody with him.*

## “There is good evidence that humor and a fun work environment enhances team performance”

“seen it all” when it comes to meeting techniques and methods, and that the Playbox feels innovative and exciting.

Introducing the Playbox can stimulate interest and change the meeting atmosphere, a organizational consultant explained: *I like to place the box in the middle of the room. It makes people curious. I use the playbox to get people into a playful state of mind. I do this to facilitate change in organizations. Play breaks down barriers to change. In a state of play collaboration and co-creation become easier. it makes people more open-minded. In a way, we use play to transform theory into practice.*

When the box was tested in meetings aiming for more collaboration and co-creation the Playbox games were used to enhance ideation. A conference facility manager said *We are pretty good at brainstorming but it is always fun to try new methods. We tried the basketball net game where you write your ideas on a paper slip and then wad it together and throw it in the net. Everyone yelled out their ideas as they aimed for the net. There was only four of us but you should have*

*ing, we are social creatures and we are born to learn from play. Play stimulates your brain, fun and happiness relaxes the brain.*

**Choosing favorites and bending the rules** Although the respondents tested the box for a limited time, many began bending the suggested rules and changing the instructions. The testers adapted the Playguide instructions in their own way. *We tried the game Basketball 2.0. Everybody takes turns throwing a ball into the net but no-one can throw it the same way. Anytime someone missed the net they had to ring the bell before anyone else ringed it. We played this game as an energizer even though the instructions say it is for creativity.*

A organizational consultant firm reported that they easily adapted the Playbox to suit their objectives: *We have used the Playbox as a lot of our meetings have objectives to inspire and initiate discussions. But we didn't follow play guide very much. Our favorite toy is Cranky! [wind up toy] The unpredictable toys/objects are the ones that are the most interesting.*

### Discussion

Given the organizational benefits of play, it remains surprisingly uncommon in most organizations (Statler et al., 2009). Most organizational leaders are convinced that a fun work environment increases creativity and promotes group cohesiveness (Leeder, 2014), yet they also report that there is too little fun in their work environments (Ford, Newstrom, & McLaughlin, 2004). Research on promoting play in the workplace suggests the following as encouragers of play that can be applied to promote a playful meeting climate: (West 2015).

- Giving employees the permission to play
- Meeting leaders demonstrating playfulness
- Matching play activities to groups and meeting objectives
- Create safe boundaries with instructions and game rules
- Making play purposeful.

## **“Exposure to humor and amusement increases persistence in challenging work tasks”**

The most powerful encourager of play in the workplace is when the permission to play is explicitly given to employees. This is ideally done both with verbal instructions and by contextually cueing a playful attitude. This “giving employees the permission to play” can be accomplished by using contextual cues of playful props such as games or toys to informalize a meeting environment, which implicitly convey the permission to play. These play-cues aim to cue participants that new, more playful rules temporarily apply during the meeting. The Playbox with its playful design and toys is a good example of such a explicit cues that convey to meeting participants that they are free to engage in play. (Dodgson, Gran Phillips 2013; West, Hoff & Carlsson, 2013).

The permission to play can be enhanced when senior management model playfulness by serving as role models. When managers and meeting leaders are the first to lean into play and demonstrate their willingness to engage in playful activities group members also feel free to start playing. When a leaders takes the risks involved with being playful in a serious organizational setting they makes a visual statement to followers that

such risk taking is encouraged and perhaps even expected. (West, Hoff & Carlsson, 2013.) The Play Guide included in the Playbox gives meeting leaders the confidence to involve meeting participants in playful meeting games.

A third encourager of play in the workplace and in meetings is that the play or the games be matched to the group. This means that a meeting leader must be selective, and choose a type of play that is appropriate to their group and type of meeting. The nature of play and fun is highly individual; what is playful to one person or one group is not playful to another (Owler, et al., 2010). This issue is well-addressed by the Playbox including a variety of games and playful objects tailored to different meeting objectives. With the variety of meeting games, both verbal, non-verbal, competitive and non-competitive, silly and serious games the Playbox provide possibilities for various learning styles and group preferences.

A fourth aspect to consider when encouraging playfulness is that people are more likely to engage in play when they understand the structure and rules. Constraints and rules increase participation because

individuals feel more secure within the boundaries of a game, or structure of an activity. The guide helps meeting leaders and participants quickly begin to play as the basic structure and rules of the suggested games are clearly described. Once participants feel comfortable with the game rules they will feel free to negotiate and redesign the games as they wish.

Research has shown that unlike children, adults often need a sense of purpose before engaging in play in the workplace. The guide with its instructions on using play to improve various meeting processes helps meeting leaders introduce playfulness within a meaningful organizational context. The Play Guide in the Playbox gives meeting leaders and facilitators simple instructions on how to use the various toys and games to enhance meeting objectives of communication, networking, giving and receiving feedback, increasing attention, improving decision making, enhancing brainstorming and idea generation, encouraging reflection, and last but not least: Office Fun.





PHOTO Sara Appelgren

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## Multitasking **IS A MYTH**

**FOR SOME** years now we have been told that our brains are capable of multitasking, but can we actually do several things at the same time? Children are said to be living proof of multitasking because they manage simultaneously to play video games, watch TV and do their homework. Regrettably, it's not true.

How many meetings have you attended in which the majority of people are "multitasking" – staring at their smartphones, tablets or laptops? They are replying to emails, checking hotel prices, booking flights and writing shopping lists.

Existing research shows that our brains, unfortunately, have not developed a great deal – if at all – since the Neanderthal period. It is a no-brainer: we can only do one thing at a time properly, especially if the end result is to be satisfactory. You can't listen to an important lecture while checking the news alerts *pinging* on your smartphone screen.

Nobody is able to listen and learn while doing something else. We should be glad that we are able to focus on what the speaker has to say and learn something from their message. A smartphone is useful for recording a lecture so that you can listen to it again, reflect on it and, in the best-case scenario, develop new synapses from the associated "aha" effects.

Our brains are always looking for dopamine rushes – the more, the better. Sometimes during a live event, we can be so elated and exhilarated by what the speaker is saying that there is a direct connection to the brain, allowing new knowledge to stream in.

However, knowledge is not exactly plentiful if the progress made in some fields is anything to go by. There seems rather to be a knowledge vacuum that has been filled with a deluge of opinions based on ignorance. If someone is convincing enough, this seems to be all that's needed to make people believe any lie, no matter how big. It is a frightening prospect.

It is time to heed what research is telling us. The family of Steve Jobs, for instance, has fixed times and routines for when the children may use their computers, tablets and smartphones. Chris Andersson, the Chief Editor of *Wired*, has done the same with his family.

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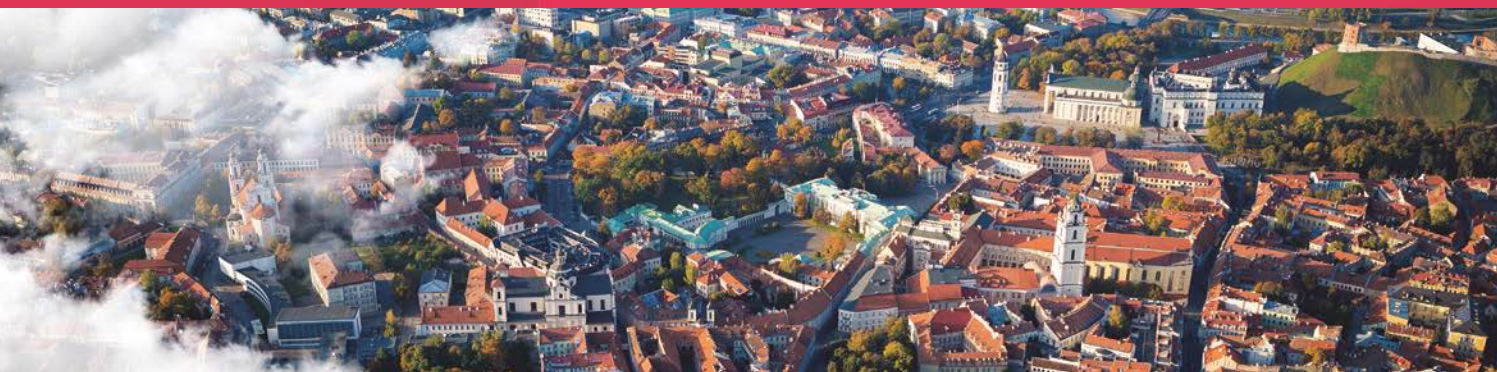
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