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To truly understand Sarawak you have to experience it for yourself

Sarawak Convention Bureau is the first CB to be set up in Malaysia. How is SCB different from other national, state or city CB? Comparing it nationally and internationally. What are the things that Sarawak CB has done differently?

Being Malaysia's first convention bureau with a wealth of experience under our belt, the countless testimonials from Business Events (BE) planners have isolated one factor which makes Sarawak an entirely refreshing meeting destination – and that's the people. Besides the world class BE facilities and services, it really does take the whole destination and its people to ensure the success of any business event.

With this in mind, they recently launched their latest campaign, Tribe Legacy Sarawak, which is about the essence of people. When Sarawak organises international business events such as the 55th ICCA Congress in 2016, it was never just the BE industry welcoming the congress but the entire Kuching. Everyone in Kuching from all sectors welcomed the Congress therefore, without the people's support, they wouldn't have been able to pull off something as great and impactful as this particular event. They call this tribe spirit (tribespirit) – embracing the spirit of togetherness to achieve a common goal through collaborations.

Words can describe this essence but the only way to truly understand Sarawak is to experience it for yourself.

Sarawak has recently also launched its Reactivation Guideline for Organising Business Events in Sarawak which goes hand-in-hand with the SOP.

The Reactivation Guideline is to be used with the General Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) issued by Sarawak State

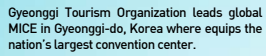
Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) for organising business events (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions).

The Reactivation Guideline is a recommended framework proposed to aid all business event organisers, venue providers and relevant parties in organising successful and safe events that adhere to the prescribed precautionary measures, during Covid-19 transition phase.

The guideline is made available for external distribution and may be adapted by relevant parties according to the nature and requirements of their events, as per self-discretion. It will also be available for download from online sources and will be updated from time to time, in accordance with the latest developments to Sarawak Government policies.'

The Sarawak Government is extremely supportive of pursuing legacies from BE. Recently, the government formed the Sarawak Economic Action Council (SEAC) whereby 1 of the 10 action points was to dive into 'beyond leisure' tourism, putting business events as the driving force behind this. To kickstart their advocacy, BESarawak crafted the BESLegacy Reward Programme for conventions and exhibitions (C&E). What this means for C&E planners is that a pathway has been made specially to yield a very different return on investment. Does this push aside the economic aspect of BE? No. It means that planners can gain far more than purely delegate attendance and make their association and activities much more visible to the world.

This is a big achievement for Sarawak CB. They have been advocating this idea since 2018, and finally, this idea has been accepted so they are ready to materialise it by 2021.



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Gyeonggi, Your Next MICE Destination

Easy access, superb infrastructure, and an abundance of cultural and natural attractions are propelling Gyeonggi – the province surrounding South Korea's capital city – Seoul-to international prominence. Gyeonggi is one of the leading MICE tourism destinations in the post-Corona era.

If you have traveled from Incheon Int'l Airport to the South Korean capital, Seoul, you would have traveled through the western part of Gyeonggi. About 17 times the size of Seoul, Gyeonggi Province is a city of state-of-the-art technology, transportation, nature, and urban life. Home to many historical and cultural sites, Gyeonggi is also blessed with a splendid natural environment that features beautiful mountains and rivers.

Gyeonggi Province offers an ideal geographical location with its close proximity to Seoul. It is home to large corporations such as Samsung Electronics, Hyundai-Kia Motors Group. The province is ideal for MICE events with its well established MICE infrastructures including KINTEX (Korea International Exhibition & Convention Center) and Suwon Convention Center, and it has a variety of venues for holding various team building programs.

The Gyeonggi Tourism Organization MICE team has striven to foster MICE tourism in the province, supporting the attraction of MICE events, carrying out MICE marketing campaigns in and out of Korea, training MICE personnel, and much more.

Ready for MICE

Gyeonggi's meeting facilities are indeed world-class. The Korea International Exhibition & Convention Center (KINTEX) is South Korea's largest venue of its kind with 108,049 m² of exhibition space.

KINTEX has recently decided to construct its 3rd exhibition hall (70,000 m²). The construction will begin next year, with the goal of opening in 2024. In addition, advanced MICE infrastructure will be built around KINTEX, to form a MICE complex together with nearby business hotels and the GTX (Great Train Express) line. The Suwon Convention Center, a leading convention center in the southern part of Gyeonggi Province, opened last January and is currently in operation. Equipped with a convention hall that can accommodate up to 3,000 people and 28 small- and medium-sized conference rooms with the latest facilities, it is the ideal venue for any MICE

events. Suwon Messe (980 m²), an exhibition hall located in Suwon Station, a center of transportation and industry, is also in operation since its opening this year.

Gyeonggi's Unique Venues & Activities

Gyeonggi Province has many unique venues for team-building programs or social events, including dinner parties and social gatherings. The northern part of Gyeonggi Province is where the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), a symbol of peace and the reality of the world's only divided country, is located. Registrants can participate in a hiking program that is administered along the DMZ's barbed wire fences, with additional events such as tying up ribbons of hope for peace and visiting the bunker exhibition hall. Sanmeoru Winery is an ideal venue for special hands-on programs. Sanmeoru is a wild grape variety that is distributed in Korea, China, Japan, and other countries. The fruit is also made into wine. The winery offers wine tastings, wine-picking, wine-making, and jam-making, and other hands-on programs.

Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, a Unesco World Heritage site, is a representative tourist destination in southern Gyeonggi Province. Suwon Hwaseong Fortress can accommodate incentive team building programs such as an archery experience and strolls along the fortress walls in the evening under the moonlight. In addition, a hot air balloon experience program called "Flying Suwon" is available, providing participants with a rare opportunity to see the entire fortress and the city of Suwon from 150 meters above ground.

The Korean Folk Village is Korea's only traditional culture theme park. The Korean Folk Village has pulled together everything related to traditional Korean customs and has made them accessible in one place. The village can accommodate banquets for up to 350 people or team building programs in the traditional atmosphere unique to Korea.

Gyeonggi Province has continuously prepared for the future amid significant changes in the MICE industry caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Please consider and select Gyeonggi Province as your next MICE destination in this post-Corona era.

For more information please visit gmice.or.kr



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**Basis for
Business**



Unlock YOUR SUPERPOWER

IF KNOWLEDGE is power, learning is a superpower. Learning is the oxygen of knowledge. We found that out when economies around the world ground to halt. In parallel, we have spent the last number of months investing in research to support our education strategy.

If you could have any superpower, which one would you choose? How about learning everything you want right away, with photographic memory and crystal clear, while being rationally razor-sharp?

Also, learning is the oxygen of meetings. How do we keep learning alive as a superpower? What do we want learning and knowledge to look like? How do we write a new future for the meetings and event industry and make it a good one together?

Many of us spend years educating ourselves and learning. Knowledge is held high. The reason is celebrated. Logical intelligence is refined. And, of course, it's still like this: Anything is possible. It will be fine. Only we dare to continue to believe that everything is still possible.

At the same time, we live in an era where a new set of questions changes the classic routine matrix we have

lived with for many years and generates new lenses that may enable a versatile perspective on complexity. What do you choose then?

Unfortunately, the perspectives we are facing right now have not coincided into a broader standard, more integrated theory of how and why relationships work the way they do. We see intense contradictions in many countries, we see economies begin to kneel, and completely new map sheets emerge, and ecosystems become more and never more straightforward, only more complex.

The digital experiments we are currently undergoing with more and more webinars of very varying quality mean that we have forgotten that there have also been face-to-face meetings in the past that have not given us new perspectives or new knowledge at all. Bad, ignorant, ill-prepared lecturers do not get better because the meeting with them is digitised.

The way forward is already here. It's just a matter of daring to see what happens and we have to go out into deeper water and look in more places to find the pearls that are out there after all.

During 2020, our world of learning has expanded. We have discovered many new possibilities to learn more thanks to a couple of well facilitated and produced webinars with thought-provoking content. We have developed our networks, strengthen already strong relationships, and we have entered new collaborations with people we, so far, only have seen in Zoom meetings.

The way forward is not so different the way we just walked. It contains only ten times as much analysis of the world around us. And more books to read, such as *Humankind – A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman. There is lots of new knowledge to absorb on the path where new learning strengthens our superpower.

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.



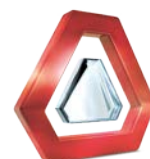
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STURK-NADEAU

TEXT

Atti Soenarso

PHOTO

Josée Lvesque



Chantal Sturk-Nadeau, who is the Executive Director, Business Events, Destination Canada, is a visionary, strategic and thought-provoking thinker in the meetings and event industry. Also, she is the person leading Destination Canada Business Events sector strategy to attract global events to the country.

THE MAJOR CITIES in Canada had the know-how to pursue international association business with in-market representatives or budgets. Canada is a huge country with around twenty-five cities in the meetings and conventions loop, but until Chantal Sturk-Nadeau implemented the economic sector strategy, attracting business events to Canada wasn't always a level playing field.

"When we began looking at who was aligned to Destination Canada programs, and who was seeing real value with what we offered, we realised we needed to adjust our approach so that DMOS (Destination Management Organisations) with

strengths in Canada's leading sectors had an opportunity to participate in bids for global events," says Chantal Sturk-Nadeau.

"At the same time, we evaluated how we could leverage Destination Canada's strengths in research, marketing, IT and communications. The result is a comprehensive strategy that spotlights our partner DMOS, their industry strengths, and in which we amplify using the resources of Destination Canada's marketing machine.

"We started by hiring the right people. Year one, we conducted an environmental survey, reaching out to our DMO partners and their

“Our strategy is global by design, and intentionally without borders”

economic development agencies to assess which centres aligned with Canada’s national sector priorities.”

From there, Chantal Sturk-Nadeau hired Virginie De Visscher, Senior Director of Economic Development Sectors. She works closely with Invest in Canada and Global Affairs Canada, and with their trade commissioners around the world to identify business event opportunities aligned with Canada’s priority sectors: advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, life sciences, natural resources and technology.

“We don’t care where the business opportunities come from, geographically speaking. Our strategy is global by design, and intentionally without borders. You could be coming out of Singapore or Australia it doesn’t matter to us. If you attend the International Microbiology Conference as a large corporation or an association, we’ll pursue it.

“We’ve changed our HR model and have hired three more business development managers for Canada. They are based in Canada close to the ministers and the sector ecosystems. The managers are well versed in their field.”

The natural resources business development manager (BDM) for

example, is based in Alberta, in the heart of the oil and gas sector, the tech BDM is based in Montréal, a global centre of excellence in technology, and AI specifically.

“Our approach utilises the meetings and conventions industry as a catalyst to help grow Canada’s economy. If we can bring conferences to our country, then it will help grow our economy as well as their organisation.”

Chantal Sturk-Nadeau says they have faced three main challenges creating the future of business events in Canada.

“Uncertainty remains one of our greatest challenges. If 2020 has taught us anything, it’s the need for flexible marketing strategies. While our approach remains adaptable to the changing circumstances presented by the pandemic, we must also remain mindful that when in-person business events resume, the marketplace will be a very crowded space.”

The second challenge will be to seek out the “blue ocean space”, where no others are playing, to solidify Canada’s place on the global stage.

“Part of our strategy to do this, and what I’d say is our third challenge, is the need to break down borders.









“If 2020 has taught us anything, it’s the need for flexible marketing strategies”

Rather than focus our marketing strategies exclusively on geographic boundaries and markets, we will instead organise our marketing activities by economic sector, and pursue global opportunities regardless of where they exist, geographically speaking. This will allow us to take a more strategic, targeted approach to business development focused on Canada’s leading sectors.”

The pandemic provided Business Events Canada with the opportunity to pause and reflect on the industry, their role within it, and evaluate what their partners and customers most needed from them.

“We have spent the last number of months investing in market research to support our economic sector strategy so that when full-fledged marketing resumes our partners will be armed with the most robust business intelligence, we can provide.

“Similarly, we have conducted and will continue to conduct, focus groups and survey research to truly understand our customer’s needs and look for recovery signals.

“That sort of intelligence is invaluable for Canada’s business events communities as it helps inform their marketing strategies going forward. We want to ensure we are working

towards a resilient industry and providing our clients with what they need to host safe, successful and meaningful events in a postpandemic world.”

On the question of how important sustainability is for developing business events in Canada, Chantal Sturk-Nadeau answers it is incredibly important.

It all adds up: from the distance delegates fly to attend an event, to the volumes of paper, food and plastics consumed in the process of educating and entertaining an audience, to the energy consumed in powering A/V and digital exhibit displays.

“Meetings can have an enormous impact on the environment. Organisers today seek destinations, venues and delegate experiences that promote a clean and healthy environment, support local communities and leave a positive legacy impact on their host community.”

Canada offers planners plenty of choices, including green infrastructure, LEED-certified meeting venues such as the Double Platinum LEED-certified Vancouver Convention Centre, sustainably-run conference centres, including five Canadian venues certified to the ASTM standard. Also, Canada offers certified

“Our approach utilises the meetings and conventions industry as a catalyst to help grow Canada’s economy”

food harvesting programs such as the Oceanwise sustainable seafood program and even entire communities such as Montréal which is certified as a sustainable host city.

“Our government is focused on the growing demand for our resources that can be met without compromising the environmental, social, economic and cultural needs of current and future generations, the same holds for our business events communities. Our goal is to support destinations in growing their share of business events in a sustainable way.”

International business events delegates spend, on average, 20–25 per cent more than other foreign visitors. International business delegates have grown at twice the pace of overall visitation over the last four years, while expenditure has increased five times faster.

The business events sector also claims that economic activity well beyond directly measurable metrics, underpinning knowledge creation and exchange, innovation and investment, among other positive impacts, economic value referred to as “beyond tourism” benefits. International business events bring global expertise, and world-best practises

to Canada. How important is this for your country?

“The legacy benefits of business events is at the heart of our business development strategy. Part of what we are doing at is measuring the economic impact of business events so that we can fully understand their true value to Canada’s economy.”

Leading innovators in advanced sectors have a role to play in driving the future of business events’ long-term economic growth and helping to create resilient communities.

“Providing access to Canadian knowledge and expertise is the best value proposition we know of to drive the future of business events and foster long-term economic growth. Canada is not alone in applying an economic sector strategy to their business event attraction, but our strategy is one of the world’s largest in scale and scope.”

Business Events Canada work with their destination partners on a monthly pace report which tracks definite events, delegate numbers, and the direct spending associated with events held in their jurisdictions.

“As part of our Response-Recovery-Resilience approach to the Covid-19 pandemic, we report on

the economic impact of lost business events.”

The latest impact report published in September shows that of the business events planned between 2020 and 2026, Destination Canada estimates that the total losses to the sector since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic include 3,668 events, 1.55 million delegates and nearly \$1.31 billion in direct spending.

These losses include both definite and tentative events. International events lost represent 27 per cent of this total with more than 594,000 delegates and nearly \$781.28 million in direct spending.

“You can see from these statistics the economic impact business events have on Canada’s economy.

“Strong networks and even stronger relationships are critical to our success. We take a Team Canada approach with our economic sector strategy by collaborating with our network of 27 destination partners and their economic development agencies to identify each jurisdiction’s leading economic sectors and their unique value propositions.

“As part of this process, we have developed a suite of collateral for the economic sectors which spotlight our leading destinations and their





“We have spent the last number of months investing in market research to support our economic sector strategy”

outstanding strengths in their specific subsectors.

“We have also created knowledge maps and business intelligence reports by sector. Combined, this is a comprehensive compendium of information that is constantly being updated as new information comes available.”

Each of the business development managers comes from an economic development and business attraction background, so they are accustomed to collaborating with multiple stakeholders within their specific area of expertise.

“With the help of our industry partners, our team researches the influencers, sector champions, researchers, businesses, and members of professional associations all across Canada to stay up-to-date on the latest innovations in our priority sectors.

“This is no small undertaking, the volume of research required to map out the connections between Canada’s industry leadership and prospective business event opportunities are vast, but it’s this sort of market intelligence that helps set our partners up for success when a bid opportunity arises.”

The business events team also builds relationships with C-suite

executives, members of Canada’s Global Affairs in-market teams, and representatives of international associations affiliated with their leading sectors around the globe.

Chantal Sturk-Nadeau states their conversations seldom start with tourism or conference infrastructure. Instead, through their research and prospecting activities, they seek to understand how Team Canada can help prospective association customers increase their revenues and how corporations can grow their businesses.

“Also, how we can add to their outstanding value proposition and memberships, how to expand the knowledge of their delegates, and how their best practices can be shared with a wider audience at events in Canada.

“This multi-faceted approach evolves with each new opportunity. Sharing our learnings with our Canadian network, and adapting our strategy is an important component of our collaborative process.”

If we look five, ten years ahead in time for business events in Canada, what does Chantal Sturk-Nadeau foresee?

“While signs of recovery remain uncertain, we are striving to create resiliency within our business event

community. Our latest Covid-19 Business Events Impact Report with data from August 31, 2020, shows business travel for in-person sales and client meetings will return first, and resilient sectors, such as life sciences, financial services and technology are anticipated to be the first to travel.

“We are keeping a close eye on the trends in those sectors to evaluate the implications for business events.”

Using the tech sector as an example: Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) can have implications for a variety of industries, including business events by spurring on the need for conferences to establish policies, regulations, guidelines for the use of AI technology.

Or, it could create a need for trade shows and exhibitions to engage tech innovators with distributors. Or AI advancements could generate demand for continuing education/(re)-certification workshops. Or top sellers of a specific technology could be rewarded with an incentive trip to Canada.

“Monitoring these trends and evaluating the implication for business events will be a key focus going forward.

“Our research is showing that industry experts believe that an announcement of an effective vaccine

“Leading innovators in advanced sectors have a role to play in driving the future of business events’ long-term economic growth”

or treatment for Covid-19 will spark confidence in travelling for business purposes. We remain committed to international business development and marketing efforts to keep Canada top of mind as event organisers adapt their research, planning and hosting efforts.

“I mentioned that there is a lot of uncertainty in the world today, but what we know with certainty: business events, when they are aligned with a destination’s sector strengths and outstanding value propositions, have the power to fuel economic resilience within the host organisation, within a community, and within the sector itself.”

Business Events Canada is committed to keeping Canada top-of-mind in the global marketplace until the time is right for international business events to resume.

“While we wait for that day, we will continue to lift our communities by sharing stories of innovation, ingenuity and inspiration.

“Also, we will continue to spotlight the Canadian innovators and entrepreneurs who are making significant contributions to life sciences, technology, advanced manufacturing,

agribusiness and natural resources industries.

“We will remind the world that Canadians are both resilient and welcoming and that we will be ready to meet in person again when the time is right.”







PHOTO Sara Appelgren

HANS GORDON, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Authorised Psychologist, specialised in Aviation Psychology. Authorised psychotherapist, since 1987 running *Gordon Consulting*. Has for decades been engaged by airline companies, among them SAS and Thai Airways International.

Lies

When social lubricants become dangerous weapons



Lying, concealing, distorting and denying facts have always been political tools. Though it may sound amoral, being a 'true' politician does not necessarily entail sticking to the facts"

From *The Contemporary Art of Lying* by ANNA-KARIN SELBERG, Eurozine.com, May 2019

IT SEEMS NOT to matter how many lies and misleading claims are concocted and disseminated by Donald Trump and his administration. The majority of his followers turn a deaf ear to his lies because to them he is a long-awaited harbinger of truth, a man who speaks his mind like no other politician would dare to.

His fearless head-on approach of claiming to know what nobody else knows has taken him a long way. It has enhanced his credibility among those who fall for the naive narrative of their would-be hero blazing a trail through the 'snowflake' establishment they perceive as dominating the US Congress and Senate. This says more about Trump's followers than the man himself, as well as something

pertinent about us so-called ordinary people.

Throughout history, our modern times included, people from widely differing backgrounds have sworn allegiance to what they perceive as strong individuals. Today we have the likes of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus, Kim Jong-Un in North Korea, Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Vladimir Putin in Russia, among many others. Millions of Germans joyfully elected Adolf Hitler as their new Chancellor in 1933. It was of little or no consequence to them that the Nazi party and Hitler himself stood for an extreme racist ideology with a deranged focus on antisemitism.

All these leaders, dictators or otherwise, may be the object of loathing for many people but are also much admired by many more.

Hero narratives are the key elements of storytelling and also one of the strongest driving forces in linguistic change. Grimaces and simple guttural sounds have never sufficed in our communication with each other. We have always needed to hear and understand more to make better sense of the complex world we live in,

where the small talk takes place, the storytelling on everything from local concerns to global issues.

The storytelling is usually on request because we need to hear about becoming involved, we need to get involved in participating, and we need social interplay to form a reasonably strong identity. The stories become essential social lubricants. Whether they reflect any knowledge or truth is of secondary importance. This is not a world of lies but a web of

with live ammunition. There are countless examples of this, even in our enlightened times.

I intend to quickly bypass the criminal world regardless of whether it operates individually or in gangs. They have adopted lies as their special tools. They are looking to deceive, and they blatantly lie to their victims and investigating authorities to gain power positions. Instead, I choose to return to the fascinating question of why so many people seem to reject factual and evidence-based knowledge in favour of complete and utter nonsense.

The answer to that question can be found within the realms of science and philosophy. The biggest philosophical question of all is: Why is there something rather than nothing? When that question is placed on the dissecting table of science the most common conclusion reached is that nature, including the universe with all its galaxies, stars, planets and black holes, may have arisen without thought, meaning or intention.

This is the hypothetical starting point that modern science emanates from. Nature and the universe are what they are, and there is nothing out there that cares much about what we humans do on our pitifully small planet, except for other humans, of course. We, humans, can produce countless ideas, ethical precepts included, that show considerable care and consideration of others. But there is nothing else out there with the ability to control us or slow down our creative mindsets.

Such a thought naturally leads to the question of why we humans exist at all. Those who have generally accepted Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory could claim that there is no supersensible, metaphysical force that created us or has continued to develop the Homo Sapiens species.

“The boundaries between global thinking and narrow sectarianism are easily erased”

and we have always strived to coordinate our strengths and resources in ways that would empower us and within us in our everyday pursuits.

So ... please tell me more, give me your version of what is around us and within us. Please do not leave me wallowing in uncertainty but explain to me how everything was created and the meaning of it all. Convince me there is somebody up there looking down on me as a child. Tell me more, feed my curiosity that I may pass on my interpretation to others so we can build our social unit of covenant communities and closely-knit congregations.

Enclosed by four walls, we quickly switch to hellfire and brimstone preaching. Hear the words of the Lord! The collective chant of “more empowers skilled preachers (or rhetorically adept as they are known today), tell us more” ringing around the temple or political auditorium. Outside these mass meeting rooms is

fantasies, finely tuned social interplay in which most of us actively participate.

The boundaries between global thinking and narrow sectarianism are easily erased. Scientific facts are pushed to one side, and the innocent social interplay creates ominous imaginary worlds based on fantasies and fictional narratives. These worlds are created by both small non-conformist groups and large political organisations with the ability to reach out to entire nations. The narratives easily become “holy scriptures” that claim to reflect the only true and objective reality. Members of such communities are indoctrinated in a way that borders on mass psychosis.

The strong belief in what the group considers to be the only truth dominates completely and usually leads to a total ban on any critical examination from within. Lying becomes normalised and in addition to that dangerous, especially if loaded

“Politics and the flow of myths have always gone hand in hand in maintaining the status quo”

We exist because we happened to fit into a random form of evolution in which only the most resilient species have managed to survive this long.

That which we describe as external reality is, as far as we know, the only one, and it is entirely possible to describe it in physical terms. The primary task of scientists is to compile what they discover through research and clarify and revise it under the heading Knowledge. Revision is a vital part of this. One good example is Einstein's theory of relativity, which surpassed Isaac Newton's 17th-century law of gravity in the 1920s. The apple does not fall from the tree to the ground due to gravity but follows something known as curved spacetime.

Most people, or at least those I usually socialise with, find deeper philosophical questions and current scientific findings of quarks and strings and the like far too challenging to comprehend. I am sure most of us thirst after learning more about our planet, the universe with its galaxies and black holes, and why we and other life forms exist like we do and how it all came about. But finding the answers requires a lot of hard work.

To sidestep facing an unknown void while waiting for more precise and, hopefully, not too complicated knowledge, we amuse ourselves by creating fictional stories. Scientific facts are rehashed into illusory tales. There are plenty of writers who are highly adept at weaving stories for films and series based on legends. Thick manuscripts that easily find their way into the hands of the power-hungry.

Politics and the flow of myths have always gone hand in hand in maintaining the status quo. Modern science and its theories of origin are seldom elevated in this way because scientific findings usually come across as being stone-cold and godless. We ordinary people generally like authoritarian figures who are good at leaving the door ajar to the world of illusions. A world in which we turn a blind ear to the blatant lies that are concocted, the glorification of the nation and the people in power, and we're dying for the cause of gaining a questionable territorial advantage is the done thing.

From here it is but a short step to building more weapons factories to cope with the military rearmament,

as is often the case when we abandon facts in favour of glorification narratives that are seemingly tailor-made for narcissistic personalities.

Global arms sales reached an estimated turnover of \$420 billion a couple of years ago. The current figure is difficult to estimate, but in all probability, it has risen significantly. Do nature and universe care? Probably not.



The Evolution OF FAROESE MUSIC

MUSIC IS deep-rooted in Faroese culture. Before the late introduction of instruments in the mid-1800s, Faroe Islanders would sing ballads, lullabies and hymns using only their voices.

In recent decades, Faroese artists have been able to make a living from music, through international connection. Some have reached international audiences, but to date, these efforts have had limited institutional support.

The next step in the evolution of Faroese music is to develop opportunities for better connections between artists and the international music market.

Leading that effort is UK native Fred Ruddick. He is the newly appointed head of Faroe Music Export (FMX), a government-run music export office, founded in 2019. One of its first tasks has been to undertake an appraisal of the entire Faroese music industry.

“First and foremost, we need to understand what we already have here,” says Fred Ruddick. “We need, amongst other things, a broad overview of companies, content, venues and opportunities, as well as an understanding of how funding works for music. It is an ongoing process, and by gaining a good basic

insight, we can start to find areas where we can best inject ideas and opportunities.”

One of FMX’s first local projects is a collaboration with Faroese national broadcaster, Kringvarp Føroya. A new series, called “Í Luftini”, translated as ‘on-air’, will feature live studio performances by current artists releasing music. Launched in October, it airs every few weeks on national television and is shared online via FMX’s website.

When an artist releases music, they create assets to accompany their music, such as videos, press photography and live performance videos. These assets enable artists to connect to markets. Artists featured on the series will be able to share the content with their audiences and future business partners.

“Storytelling in music is essential,” says Fred Ruddick. “This collaboration works very well for everyone involved. For Kringvarp Føroya to share new Faroese music with the Faroe Islands, for the artists to have high-quality content and for FMX to tell the story of new Faroese music as it happens.”

Although FMX is involved in helping to create opportunities for artists, artists themselves must also work

hard to connect their music. FMX is there to amplify people’s efforts.

“We have, for example, shared possible PR courses with artists, to help them prepare and undertake this when they request PR work. We’re duty-bound to talk to people, support and guide them with ideas and opportunities, but we cannot supply inside business services for any company or individual. It is very much up to them to do the work.”

Although he has worked at FMX for less than a year, Fred Ruddick has been connecting Faroese artists to the outside world for much longer.

As booker and creative director at the Faroese music festival, G! Festival, for four years, he regularly helped Faroese artists with promotional packages, biographies. He introduced them to outside agencies when appropriate. At times he would feel frustrated with how things did or did not work locally and experienced a conflict of interest in selling a festival ticket and wanting to develop the Faroese music industry.

“On paper, I was selling a festival, but I have always worked for music. I have always put the artist first. In terms of development, I understood and felt many of the gaps that exist here.”

Functioning as an export office under the Ministry of Industry, FMX can connect with industry without being compromised with any other agenda than export and best music practice.

“Having an export office helps the country because it gives agencies from abroad a point of contact and an official office that has a responsibility and commitment to music. Without us, it is less easy to connect.”

seen many projects put on ice for the foreseeable future.

“I have made some plans and then changed some plans. The year has completely turned on its head. The Faroese music industry has taken a huge hit. We cannot even begin to quantify the loss, not only of money but also opportunities.”

Faroese artists have lost huge sums of money because of tour cancellations. FMX has supported the

consolidation and reflection. Also, of strategic thought on how to move on.”

Despite the current state of the music industry, Fred Ruddick is optimistic about the future.

“When you experience this level of depression, you see a boom when it is over. For example, people will be delighted to stand in a queue! They will be only too happy to suffer what they previously did, to experience live music again, so in the long term, it could have a positive effect on business.”

Fred Ruddick sees opportunities to work on the locals’ perception of the Faroese music industry. It has earned more respect than it is given.

“We need an evolution of thought about music in the Faroe Islands. We need people to respect music as an industry and a form of income. There are great opportunities for Faroe Islanders to develop international music careers, and many who already do it, largely because of the digital revolution that has produced platforms like Spotify.”

Fred Ruddick recognises it is early days and points out that having realistic goals will help create success stories.

“When the export office was founded, the press reported that FMX was going to make Faroese music world famous. I spoke to the journalist and explained that when Faroese football got their first manager, they did not expect to win the World Cup. But there is significant, meaningful success to be achieved and enjoy, between where we are now and qualifying for the World Cup.”

[Listen to music from the Faroe Islands on FMX's playlist on Spotify.](#)

“Storytelling in music is essential”

International opportunities have been minimal in recent months as the music world struggles to cope with the dire effects of Covid-19. Tour cancellations, a decrease in digital streaming growth and plummeting physical album sales, among other products, mean the music industry stands at the forefront of industries that have taken one of the greatest hits during the pandemic.

A June report by the National Independent Venue Association in the United States indicated that 90 per cent of independent music venues in the US could close forever as a result of the pandemic.

A Musician’s Union report in the United Kingdom says a third of British musicians could leave the industry due to financial losses. A recent Oxford Economics study suggests that the global live music industry could take three to four years to recover fully.

Covid-19 has also affected the Faroese music industry and had a significant impact on FMX’s plans during the first year. Fred Ruddick has had to cancel nine international trips and

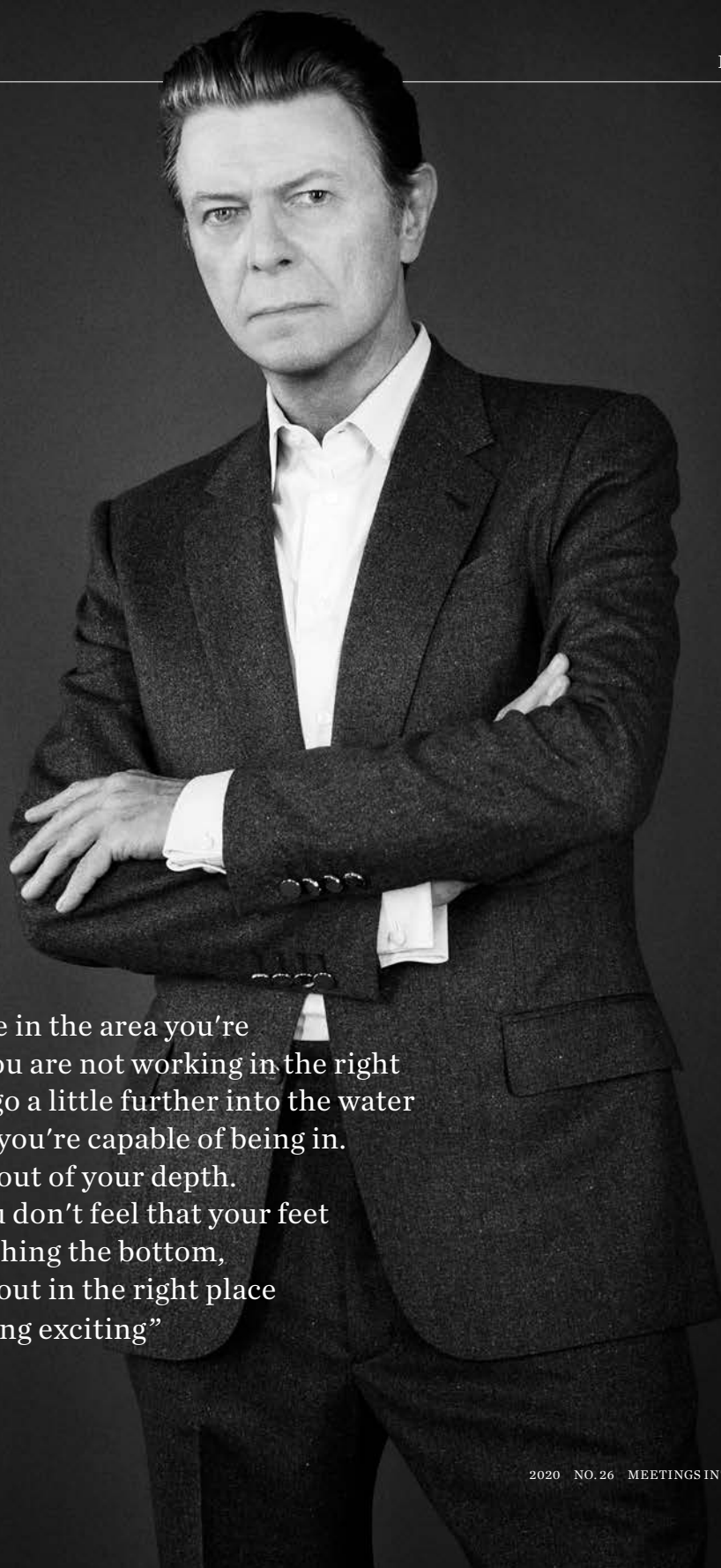
industry by speaking to the government about the challenges artists are facing. The support packages have helped but need to be more focused, according to Fred Ruddick.

“The intention of the support packages was correct. But we need them to work effectively, primarily supporting artists who make music professionally. In the current state, we feel they fall short of this.”

The effects of Covid-19 have also resulted in more music being produced globally. This trend also applies to Faroese artists, with many releasing albums and singles in 2020.

One of the islands’ most treasured artists, Eivør, was forced to cancel her autumn 2020 tour. On a brighter note, her recently released album, called Segl, has received glowing reviews, and she gave a digital live stream release concert in the Nordic House in Torshavn, Faroe Islands capital, in October. The event had a socially distanced audience of 100 people in attendance, with a ticketed stream accessible worldwide.

“You need to adapt to any given circumstance. It is a period of



“If you feel safe in the area you’re working in, you are not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you’re capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don’t feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you’re just about in the right place to do something exciting”

DAVID BOWIE

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Reflect, **RESET AND REDEFINE**

TEXT

Elizabeth Rich

Back in 2000 and again in 2006, Australian business events industry profile Elizabeth Rich wrote provocative articles about industry identity issues.* She spent decades at the helm of the Meetings Industry Association of Australia and The Business Events Council of Australia.

Sydney-based Elizabeth Rich is a keen observer of an industry which remains close to her heart. *Meetings International* thought it timely to ask for her views in a column in these challenging times.

THE INDUSTRY has always grappled with its identity. However, I have been heartened to see a growing use of the broader term ‘business events’ over the past decade to encompass exhibitions, conferences, meetings, incentives and so on. But there has never been a more vital time to revisit this identity than now, during a pandemic which is bound to have serious long-term impacts on the industry’s health.

Thankfully, the industry embraced the ‘beyond tourism’ concept some years ago, which showed the importance of event legacies, so it is already positioned for its next essential move. There is an event life beyond travel if we want it.

At the heart of our traditional industry are the live face-to-face-business events which are convened to educate and inform, to reward, to demonstrate, to market, to problem-solve, and to celebrate. To that traditional model, we now have to add “in

person” to make it clear we have been talking about people who physically are all together in one place.

For the majority of established suppliers, this is a necessary ingredient. Without people travelling to one spot to be together, there is no catering, no accommodation, no seats in venues, no transport, and no flow-on beneficiaries in destinations which have come to rely on this industry sector. These unfortunate suppliers are the ones in the eye of the current storm.

But let’s examine the fundamentals; the foundation on which our industry is based. Whether you are educating, demonstrating, selling or celebrating, you have a need to communicate. Convening physically to achieve this aim is just one option in the mixed bag of communication delivery options.

Business events is not tourism; it is not travel; it is a form of communication. The event purpose lies at the core. All the affiliated operators supply products or services that enable this chosen communication method.

In 2020 everything changed. Evolution quickly became revolution as the pace of change rocketed. We do not know whether this change is permanent or temporary until a widely-available, proven vaccine is found to the pernicious coronavirus. We may snap back to our old ways, similar to the 9/11 attack. Or not. Or something in between.

But lessons have been learnt, the hard way. Many are still in shock

understandably. Nimble ones have pivoted where they can. Whatever happens, we are all on notice that it can happen again. Another pandemic can hit at any time. So, we need to think long term. Travel barriers and social distancing rules are complex now: hopefully, they will lighten but can quickly be reintroduced as has already been demonstrated. We grapple with changing government policies and permissions, with no international standardisation, at least not yet.

Even if the brave host is permitted to go ahead, risks in running physical events have skyrocketed. Insuring against these risks is not easy. Extra work is involved in terms of compliance on hygiene and health matters. Duty-of-care issues have leapt to the head of the queue for concerned employers. What sort of liabilities comes with endorsing official suppliers? New delegate-tracking systems raise privacy concerns. In a jittery world, it’s a minefield.

To wade back into the water, delegates are going to need a lot of reassuring to encourage registrations. Corporate travel bans come into play. Concerned families too. Air access is problematic and probably more expensive.

Overlay personal and corporate nervousness with the growing environmental concerns, and you can see the gods appear to be conspiring against travel to live events.

You can see the compelling reasons to go virtual, especially if you

can still achieve the required results, including financial ones. Many have been pleased to discover that their audience reach is much larger with virtual. In a world of big data, the mining of virtual audiences opens a whole new world of analytics and personalisation.

Yes, I know the industry mantra is that physical beats virtual hands down. Everyone may be saying that they are keen to get out and travel

on tribal aspects. Anyone who has attended a global business events trade show or conference will attest to this. “Buyers” have enjoyed being feted. Governments have shown as increasing willingness to “buy” business, offering attractive financial incentives to pick their destination. It has been a heady time for everyone involved.

Also, events courses blossomed around the world as young people saw

association, or government not now investing heavily in virtual communications?

The adage of following the money never fails. The big power players in the future industry are more likely to be technology companies than convention centres unless clever alliances are formed. Technology budgets have soared, while event space costs have shrunk. Several venues have moved quickly to create broadcast studios.

Some elements will never change. Events are integral to the fostering of communities. Associations rely on the need for communities or memberships. They need event revenue. So do trade exhibitions. It is all about the power of communal connections driving learning, collaboration, sales and promotion.

The events industry was always an earlier adopter of technology, especially to ease the operational work of registrations with online integrated systems essential for organisers. This software is now being expanded to include virtual options. Technology is also playing a critical part in the new environment of social distancing, temperature checks, contactless registering for live events, along with the production of virtual or hybrid events.

Some platforms are clunky, but with innovations popping up almost daily to overcome virtual fatigue and frustrations, expect increasingly sophisticated virtual and hybrid elements which are broadcast quality and highly interactive. Teleporting was regarded as gimmicky when it first launched. Its day may have finally arrived.

This transition period is not without its headaches. Some argue that hybrid is neither beast nor fowl and double the trouble. Others see hybrid as essential to maintain the physical

“Business events is not tourism; it is not travel; it is a form of communication”

again, see each other, meet up. But will they? Can they?

At the risk of cries of heresy, perhaps our “traditional” model of business events, which was regarded as a sunrise industry in the last quarter of the 20th century is heading towards a sunset unless the model adapts.

While the ultimate power of the industry lies in the decisions of the event host organisations, the industry’s soft power has been with the big players that have the most to gain and the biggest marketing dollars. Supply-led demand has been driven largely by the convention centres, the bureaux, and the accommodation providers.

They have been major influencers and promoters of business events, vying for business, lobbying governments on the benefits of these high-spend events which has seen significant infrastructure spending and global competition blossoming over the past few decades.

Indeed international, fiercely competitive yet collegial, highly lucrative, this industry has taken

events as an intoxicating mix of travel and large gatherings.

What now? Before you write off this column as being too negative, keep reading. I can see the potential for the industry to be bigger and more vital than ever. There is a proviso: if we act now, embrace the opportunities, and have the right leaders to take us forward. Inevitably this sort of major hit sees industry bodies regroup and consolidate, particularly where there has been a plethora of similar associations. Some may wither, others merge and strengthen.

There has never been a more critical time to stay close to your clients. Difficult decisions have to be made, and clients need savvy, professional and objective help to work through the options.

If the current industry wants to stay in the game, it has to adapt and to hitch itself to the rising stars in this communications market. No surprises these rising stars are most likely to be technology-driven. Can you imagine any major corporation,

element. Many are opting for the hub and spokes concept with groups gathering in select regional areas.

Everyone is still scrambling to work out how to monetise virtual events. On one side are expectations that virtual events will come free or for minimal cost, with so many free webinars available during the virus lockdowns. Zoom software is free, although ticketing is possible now Zoom has partnered with Paypal.

On the other side are the hard costs of producing a decent virtual event, and the recognition that both the delegate and the organiser is saving on additional costs such as travel, venue hire and catering. This will sort itself out and find the right level. Some associations are already charging the same or similar registration fee for a full virtual conference as they would have for the in-person option.

The smart operators are watching related sectors closely: think online education and the explosion in ecommerce. Some countries have returned to physical events. China is the obvious example, but one which is also seriously embracing the virtual world. Talk has surfaced about giants Alibaba and Tencent entering the virtual trade show market.

It is not all doom and gloom for destinations. The big challenges facing convention bureaux, especially those relying on bed taxes, will see these organisations reevaluating their performance measurements. Ironically, where we have been saying

“content is king” for so long, for physical events it is likely that destination choice will take on extra prominence, as long as the program has plenty of interaction. Pure information can be delivered to your inbox. After the basics of health and safety are covered, irresistible destinations will be those who truly integrate unique local experiences which add greater depth to a live event.

So where are we landed? We are still in communications, and we are still in events. We are still an industry, just one in flux which needs to embrace the new movers and shakers. Bring them into the fold sooner rather than later, before they start their movement.

By way of example, the Business Events Council of Australia defined business events as:

“Any public or private activity consisting of a minimum of 15 persons with a common interest or vocation, held in a specific venue or venues, and hosted by an organisation (or organisations) ...”

This definition must change. What we do as an industry which distinguishes us from other forms of communication is to draw together business-related communities, be it physically or online. It is all our space. We must claim it, or risk being left behind.

The future is filled with exciting possibilities. We shall draw more from the worlds of broadcast media and entertainment; we shall use producers as well as organisers, we shall

extend beyond a few days to a 365 community. We shall be even more creative, more immersive. We shall become the glue which overcomes the disjoint of lack of physical contact.

And when we can come together for physical events, we shall appreciate even more seeing our tribe, and we shall collaborate more than inform. Probably we shall be more selective in our event attendance, and we shall look for physical programs that provide the elements missing from the virtual ones. Think collaboration rather than information, think networking rather than presentations, think touch, feel, smell and taste.

Our world has expanded, not shrunk.

Draw confidence from a quote from author John Naisbitt, who first raised the high-tech high-touch argument:

“Whenever a new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human response, that is, high touch or the technology is rejected ... We must learn to balance the material wonders of technology with the spiritual demands of our human nature.”

**Columns from M&C Asia Pacific, July 2000, “Perception is Reality: are we an industry?”, and The Business of Events, No 1, 2006: “What’s in a name?”*



PHOTO Annie Day

Sydney-based **ELIZABETH RICH**, the owner of Agenda Pty Ltd, is a business event specialist who has been working in the industry for over 40 years. Her work spans association management, PCO, industry trainer, and consultant work. elizabethrich@agenda.net.au



Forum Unites Ancient Societies WITH GLOBAL INVESTORS ON A FUTURISTIC PLATFORM

TEXT

Alistair Turner

THE WORLD'S indigenous economies hold nearly 30 per cent of this planet's total assets and, at the same time, own, have nurtured and protected, 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity*. However, these communities have a grossly understated role in global business.

The reality is though that indigenous businesses, and the skills within them could account for nearly \$3.3 trillion of economic value**. This value, however, needs to be unlocked, accessed and the many barriers to establishing partnerships between indigenous business owners and the wider (western) world, overcome.

That is the role of the World Indigenous Forum, which took place in November and brought some 10,000 indigenous business owners and investors together. The event was at the same time a trade fair, a conference and a global political forum that could emerge as every bit as important as COP26, the Global Economic Forum and Davos.

As Kevin Jackson, CEO of Blueprints, the organisers behind the forum comments:

"How we treat those societies that are most remote and societally excluded will tell the world a great deal about how well it builds itself back in a post-Covid world. A reset

button has been pressed, and leadership is looking as much into ancient knowledge as it is into technological innovation to establish the sort of society we want to recreate."

The World Indigenous Forum, this year, crossed both these areas several times; ancient societies meeting with modern investors; Rainbow Warriors meeting ethical investors, and a face-to-face event reimagined on a futuristic technological platform.

Like many events in 2020, the option to organise a live experience was quickly taken off the table, and a forum that intended to speak to some of the remote audiences in the world had to decide to cancel or go forward in a digital format.

"It really wasn't a difficult decision at all," says Kevin Jackson. "Technology was never going to be a limiting factor to reaching indigenous communities any more than it would be for the investor audience. These entrepreneurs have the technology and, be they in Columbia, Australia, North Africa or Canada, they can be familiar with a digital experience.

"The bigger challenge is one of trust. These are communities that have, for centuries, learned the hard way to resist doing business with the western world, and a face-to-face event allowed us to put them in a

room, have a human experience and break down some of these trust barriers. It left us with a different challenge; how could we do this on a new kind of digital platform."

The answer came from the London based experience agency Engage Works. The team set to work on creating a digital world that could be accessed in the same way as a computer game or 3D film experience, with every delegate given an avatar and able to "walk" around the experience with complete freedom.

The design elements of the bespoke world created by Engage Work's team is extraordinary; the foyer included windows that let in sunlight, showed calming forests and brought the natural world inside the forum itself. The team even created a spinning world that attendees could watch and interact with, again underlining the global and CSR elements of the event.

Walking into the event itself, rows of exhibitor stands and conference rooms, from main plenary to small fireside chats, could be walked through and chance encounters allow for face-to-face discussion. Each attendee could visit stands, attend meetings and watch live speakers within the platform, streamed from around the world.

“The front end is amazing, it’s visual, it’s on-brand, and it creates the right experience of the objectives of the meeting. But the back end is where the magic is,” says Kevin Jackson.

“The way we collect data, the pre-registration and the delegate communication mean the avatars aren’t just robots, we’re giving them personalities as well; history, interests, social media profiles and objectives.

between indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs and investors interested in impact investment, ethical business and reinvestment models. The meeting was also attended by prominent indigenous leaders and trailblazers as well as renowned figures of the business community, all interested in the economic regeneration of the indigenous world.

“We are often seen as incapable of representing ourselves or having

ambitions for the impact the event will have on the planet.

“More and more businesses and brands are going back to nature, looking at green initiatives, investing in ethical companies and bringing ancient cultures and learning into their brand values and staff incentives,” says Kevin Jackson.

“Indigenous businesses come with these values ready-packaged and completely authentic. An investment in this kind of business is an investment in the natural world and the ability of those societies that have been frozen to achieve economic justice and freedom.”

The World Indigenous Forum has lofty ambitions both in terms of its objectives as an event, to and for its attendees, but also the innovative platform it has created. It means that, whereas in the past, the event would not have been able to happen, it can now exist and add value to the many indigenous societies around the world.

**Source: World Bank, Indigenous Peoples, 2020.*

***Source: Blueprints, blueprints.org; the International Monetary Fund estimated emerging/developing market size is \$33.52 trillion. Blueprints believes that Indigenous cultures represent 10 per cent of this growth, allowing for, out of the 90 countries with indigenous societies, many sit within mature markets as well as emerging ones.*

“The world’s indigenous communities are owners of highly innovative businesses”

“Without this, we’ve just got a lot of pretty robots walking around a gorgeous room. With it, we have engagement and a personal experience.”

This additional layer of information will be of massive importance with the World Indigenous Forum, which has the added complexity of attracting delegates from over 90 countries and as many different languages. The conference programme, which included over 30 speakers from 15 different countries, was simultaneously translated into English and Spanish.

The forum also gathered a “Council of 90” leaders from those countries with recognised indigenous communities, in the run-up to the event. The meeting will be the first to convene representatives from every culture and created a manifesto for the global indigenous community around economic development, indigenous rights, land rights and climate.

Finally, and most importantly, the World Indigenous Forum brought together thousands of meetings

self-agency. Coming from stagnant cultures, the world’s indigenous communities are owners of highly innovative businesses and are astute entrepreneurs; culturally and consciously rich, ethical and with a deep understanding of the finite balance between nature and productivity. We have high standards for investment and expect dignity to be placed foremost,” says Tamara Lakomy, Chairwoman, World Indigenous Forum.

“The role of the forum is to facilitate open discussions that allow western and indigenous businesses to better understand the amazing economic potential of forging alliances and cutting out middlemen.”

While the main objectives of the forum are to create a marketplace for investment, the place of sustainable and ethical investment will be front and centre from a content point of view. Indigenous people are crucial to the growing efforts by consumers, businesses and governments in reducing CO2 in the atmosphere, and with ethical investment a key part of the forum, the organisers have grand

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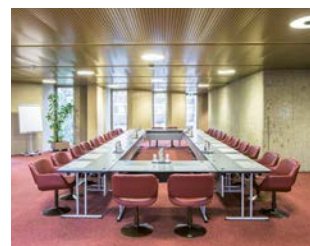
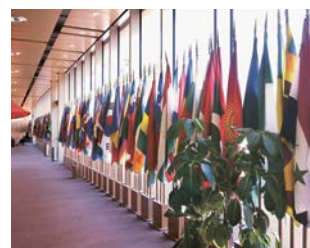


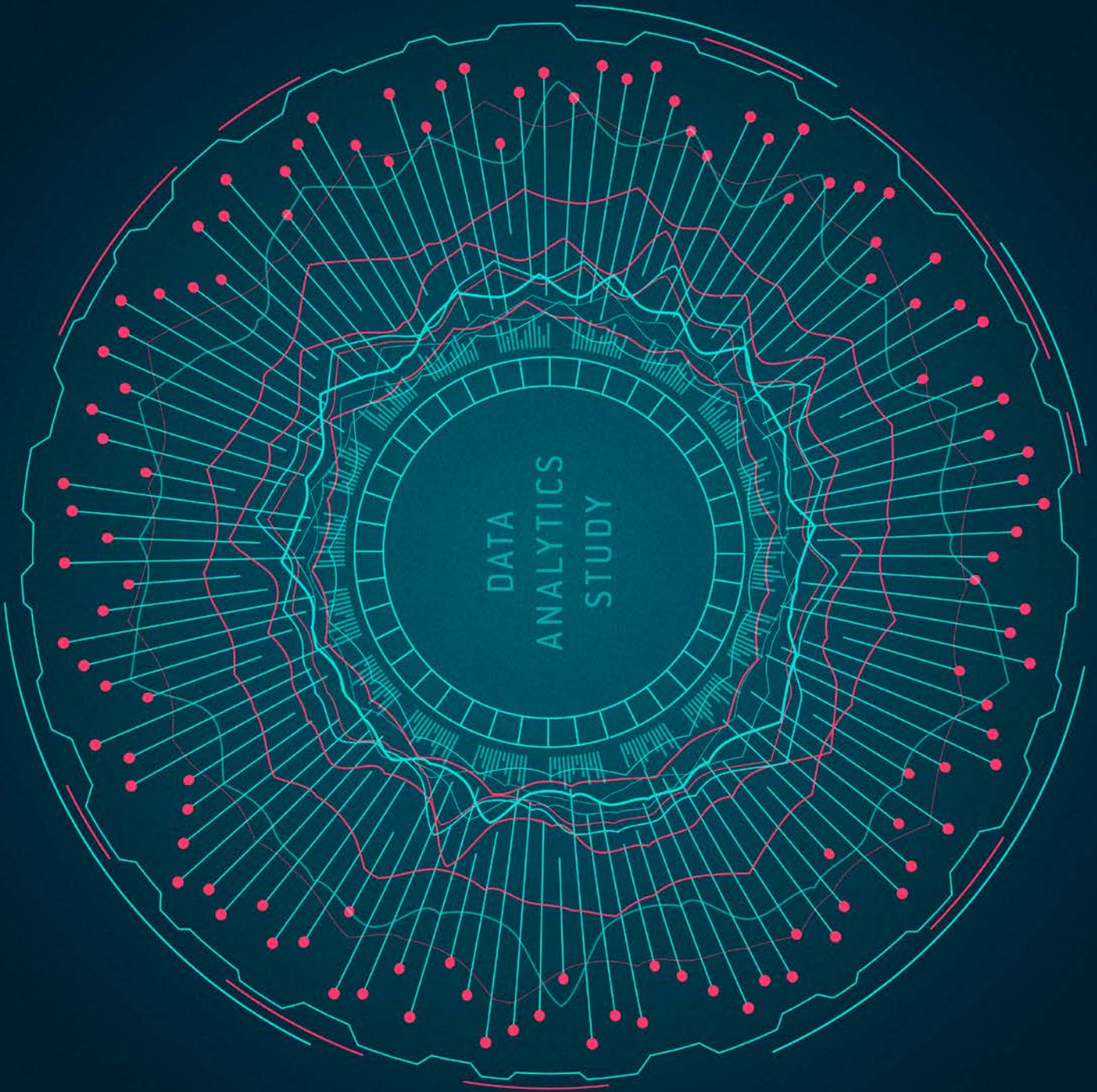
MEET THE WORLD IN GENEVA



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New Study Spotlights HOW SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES IN EUROPE IMPACT EVENTS

A NEWLY RELEASED study, *Europe as a Destination for Meetings and Conferences*, is described as “a joint look at the current economic and socio-political trends influencing Europe as a meetings destination,” but its insights are not confined to that continent.

Conducted this year by lead research partner German Convention Bureau (GCB), along with fellow members of the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe, the Austrian Convention Bureau, Convention Bureau Italia, Croatian National Tourist Board, Meet Denmark, Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions, Polish Tourism Organization, Swedish Network of Convention Bureaux, and Visit Norway. The study, supported by Simpleview and PCMA, involved desk research as well as telephone interviews with 45 European and US meeting buyers and sellers in different industries.

Based on ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association)

figures, more than half of meetings organised by international associations take place in Europe. As the study points out, the key to regional dominance for a specific country is not having the highest number of cities topping ICCA's list, but one or two of the top cities, along with a much larger proportion of lower-tier cities that host fewer meetings.

Cities lower on the overall rankings have the opportunity to promote themselves based on key buyer decision factors such as ease of access and venue availability, as well as regional scientific and economic expertise, according to the white paper.

“To focus your marketing on being a lower-cost destination is unlikely to be as effective,” the white paper reads, since, when it came to decision making, the budget was not one of the first three factors considered by the interviewed planners.

What is of greater importance to them is specific local strengths and expertise. Therefore, the study

advises destinations to fine-tune their marketing to particular segments in which they excel. For example, leaders in tech and innovation should target the organisers of tech-focused events. Those destinations with high marks for environmental sustainability should “communicate accordingly with buyers concerned about the environmental impact of events.”

The Economy According to the study, chief among respondents' concerns is the economy. A decade after the global financial crisis, “many fear that we are on the brink of another Euro-zone showdown.”

That's not all bad news for the business events industry in Europe as the growing strength of the US dollar “is making Europe a comparatively cheaper destination, which could lead to more organisers hosting their international conferences in Europe as opposed to American cities.”

Brexit popped up as both a threat and opportunity for the industry throughout Europe, depending on the

“The study advises destinations to fine-tune their marketing to particular segments in which they excel”

final deal or no-deal situation. If it becomes more difficult to host events in the UK, according to the study, organisers will look to other countries to host their events.

Security Surprisingly, security threats were not cited as a primary concern among respondents. “They either follow all the standard security practices without actively worrying. Or, should a terrorist incident occur, they would cancel or move an event that is scheduled in the same city.”

Event Tech The trends that are driving change in the events space are hybrid and online meetings, internet speed, 5G networks, the Internet of Things (IoT), and AI.

In terms of the last three, the study points to how the rollout of 5G networks, expected to be widespread in 2020, will offer unprecedented speed and connectivity and give IoT a boost. That’s most likely to impact conferences and events through wearable technology, which respondents said they are looking to use to enable greater attendee personalisation and foot-traffic mapping.

As far as AI, based on respondent feedback, “a kind of AI movement is currently building in the industry,

with many planners already using AI matchmaking tools and/or chatbots.”

Other Industry Trends A majority of respondents expressed environmental sustainability concerns around events. “This means that planners evaluate if physical meetings are actually necessary and attempt to consolidate them into fewer, larger events while moving others to online formats,” the study says, “in an attempt to cut down on air travel.” There is also a growing expectation that venues will operate under sustainable practices, and that it will be a crucial criterion in site selection.

Also, respondents are placing greater emphasis on the ROI of events. “In the industries where the bottom line is an issue,” the report says, “upper management demand more justification for the budget of events. For many, events need to be more focused and actively solve business problems.”

Download a copy of the “Europe as a Destination for Meetings and Conferences” study.

LET'S MEET SAFELY AND WITH CARE FOR BUSINESS EVENTS IN LUXEMBOURG



LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE TOGETHER BY ORGANIZING YOUR BUSINESS EVENT IN LUXEMBOURG.

Luxembourg is wonderful and Business Events Luxembourg wants to make sure your event is too. Our times have totally changed the way we live and work, which is why we assure you to organize unique meetings and conventions with solutions adapted to your needs.



Copenhagen CB Strengthens ITS BUSINESS MODEL FOR CONGRESSES

WHILE IT HAS received much attention, there is little knowledge of how to work strategically and systematically with congress legacy. Hoping to change this, the Copenhagen Convention Bureau shares insights from its Copenhagen Legacy Lab initiative with the ICCA community and the global meetings industry.

Congresses of the future need to have a long-lasting, positive impact at heart, not solely as a justification to travel and meet but to augment their contribution to stimulating and driving social and economic change. To achieve this, associations and destinations need concrete tools that can help them work strategically with legacy when planning and hosting a congress.

After years of research into legacy and the impact of international congresses along with producing legacy reports and tools with Meet Denmark, Copenhagen Convention Bureau shared its new Copenhagen Legacy Lab publication with the global meetings industry parallel with this year's ICCA World Congress.

Presenting reflections on legacy as well as straight forward and hands-on information on how to work systematically with a legacy in a congress setting and the processes involved, the publication follows work by others such as The Joint Meeting Industry Council, Best Cities, ICCA, Sydney University of Technology and IMEX.

"We are pleased to be able to share these important insights and processes. They are the result of years of hard work to capture and understand the long-lasting and positive impact that international congresses can have on destinations and associations," says Kit Lykketoft, Director of Conventions at Wonderful Copenhagen.

"Reflecting on the past year and all the challenges and uncertainty it has brought along, there is no doubt that the need for international congresses to leave a sustainable impact is more important than ever."

In addition to the reflections and insights, the convention bureau also shares the concrete legacy tools, which have been developed in close collaboration with Meet Denmark partners. These tools include posters, commitment sheets, and examples of activity cards that can serve as an inspiration for both destinations and associations in the ICCA community and the meetings industry at large.

The new publication is the result of the convention bureau's Copenhagen Legacy Lab, which is an initiative set out to support and develop a positive, long-lasting, and sustainable impact of international congresses.

As part of the project, Copenhagen Convention Bureau is currently conducting legacy processes on several congresses, creating new partnerships with local stakeholders, and exploring a range of activities that

can deliver on association and destination objectives. These processes provide the convention bureau with an opportunity to adjust and improve the legacy tools developed together with Meet Denmark.

"The purpose of the Copenhagen Legacy Lab is to develop and collect knowledge and best practices and turn them into concrete, actionable learnings for the benefit of the industry and society at large.

"By sharing the insights and learnings we have achieved so far with the global meetings industry, we hope that associations and destinations will join our commitment and efforts to ensure positive, long-lasting, and sustainable impacts of international congresses and a strong meetings industry of the future," says Kit Lykketoft.

Copenhagen Convention Bureau will continue its work with the project as a valuable component to its congress business model. As part of its ongoing legacy efforts, Copenhagen Legacy Lab has also become a partner of The Iceberg to support the global work with legacy and to be part of an international platform that enables destinations to knowledge share with each other.

*All material can found on
www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/cl*



How the Pandemic WILL CHANGE BUSINESS EVENTS FOR THE BETTER

THE GLOBAL Business Travel Association (GBTA) welcomed CEO and Founder of Cvent, Reggie Aggarwal, to share his insights on the future of meetings and events and how technology will play an even more significant role moving forward.

In the webinar, “Virtual, In-Person, Hybrid: What’s Next for the Meetings Industry?”, GBTA Interim Executive Director Dave Hilfman engaged Aggarwal on diverse topics related to the meetings and events industry, leading to several key takeaways, including:

The necessary shift to all-virtual meetings over the past eight months will create benefits for the industry in the mid- and long-term. The positives of virtual meetings, increased attendance, cost and time savings, have allowed more participants to engage in business events they might not have before.

“Meeting and event programs will be more powerful now with companies having not just one arrow in their quiver, in-person events, but three. With the addition of virtual and hybrid meeting capabilities that allow companies to grow their audience, ushering in what we call the golden age of events,” says Reggie Aggarwal.

“Virtual event capabilities have also allowed companies to keep their meetings and events staff on board, which puts the organisations in a

stronger position to hit the ground running when in-person meetings ramp up again.”

Technology has rapidly accelerated and opened the door to exciting innovations for the industry. Video conferencing technology has been around for 10–15 years, but according to Aggarwal, “growth that would normally take 5–7 years has happened in the first 30–60 days of this pandemic and will continue.”

Reggie Aggarwal cited Cvent’s new Virtual Attendee Hub, it’s all-in-one virtual meetings solution, as an example of a rapid technology.

“Just like with in-person events, meeting planners need to be able to measure the success of their virtual events. This new platform makes it simple to assess 25 different engagement actions in virtual formats specifically, giving event hosts deep insight into buyer interests and preferences, thus helping to strengthen their total meeting and event program and resulting in higher ROI.”

Early indicators show a positive outlook for meetings and events in 2021. From their insider perspective of working with hundreds of thousands of meeting and event programs around the world, Cvent is starting to see bookings for later in 2021, including their customer conference which is planned for the third quarter of next year.

“We know that attendee engagement levels are much higher for in-person events than for virtual. But I project that companies will take a hybrid approach. A combination of the in-person and virtual experience, to secure that high level of engagement while also being able to reach new attendees who may not be able, or feel comfortable, to attend in person,” says Reggie Aggarwal.

“The meetings and events industry will not only survive but find ways to thrive, coming out of this pandemic.

“People have been missing the texture of life, a big part of which is seeing customers and coworkers in person and will never again underestimate the power of the human connection. I would never bet against the determination and perseverance of those who work in meetings, events, travel, or hospitality.

“With the latest news on a vaccine, our industry is poised for a truly great resurgence in the months and years ahead.”

The webinar, “Virtual, In-Person, Hybrid: What’s Next for the Meetings Industry?”, is one of many being presented by GBTA as part of the Collaboratory 2020 series.

For the recording of this session and more information on future webinars, gbta.org



Brain Research SHOWS ADDED VALUE IN LIVE EVENTS

AT LIVE EVENTS, the brain invests in the communication message according to research during the lifestyle event Huishoudbeurs and at the University of Amsterdam.

What's going on in people's minds when they visit a live event, such as an exhibition? In a study, five event organisers commissioned brain research into the effect of an exhibition visit on the subconscious.

Neuroscience agency Neurensics compared the value of live events with other forms of commercial information exchange such as video and commercials. With the medical device NIRS and MRI scanning, they showed that the value of a live contact is of a different order, more unconscious awareness of the message than that of a delayed or digital connection.

It also became clear that video cannot replace an event, but it does extend the lifespan of an event. Initiators Event Branche and partners RAI Amsterdam, DPG Media, D&B Event marketing and Party Rent Group, want to substantiate the added value of live events scientifically.

Two studies During the Huishoudbeurs 2020 and at the University of Amsterdam scientists have equipped a representative group of 24 visitors of the exhibition with the medical device NIRS (Near Infra-Red Spectography) that records the unconscious assessment of observations. Contact moments with exhibitors Weleda, Fruittella and The Famous Grouse were video recorded.

The compilation of these images that represented the exhibition visit, with the welcome, a product introduction and closing with offerings were shown to the second group of 24 respondents. This gave them an "extended" event experience. This time via the MRI-scanner at the University of Amsterdam. Activated emotions in the brain were measured, also whether this activation leads to a positive or negative assessment.

Personal and direct contact is more effective It seems that when someone is approached personally, the brain "consciously" searches at an exhibition for the processing of

information. This information is then evaluated to conclude.

For example, storing new information or buying something. To see whether this effect applies specifically to a live event, or whether it also applies to forms of advertising such as TV commercials the experiment was extended with the second study.

"A special area of the brain participates actively in a live event, which is not or much less activated when watching a video," says Martin de Munnik cofounder of Neurensics.

"This part of the brain is mainly involved in assessing the factual information provided. The energy used by the brain for this purpose is much greater than that of the control group. We see this as an investment that the brain makes in acquiring knowledge. It's also the explanation for the fact that personal and direct contact is much more effective than delayed contact."

More activity in the brain during live event Our brain works with facts and emotions, the sum of which leads

“A special area of the brain participates actively in a live event, which is not or much less activated when watching a video”

to behaviour, in this case wanting to buy something or not wanting to buy something. The decision itself is always emotional. What distinguishes us from other animal species is that we humans have a reason.

Looking for what makes a live event so special, the scientists saw that it is mainly the activity in the area at the front of the brain, the Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC). This part of the brain is considered responsible for planning and higher aspects of control, such as ‘monitoring’ behaviour and suppressing undesirable behaviour.

In particular, processing the logic and structure of cognitive, factual information causes a lot of activity in this part of the brain. For example, the deeper emotional brain would like to decide to buy a specific product. It is then the DLPFC that can do some last rational intervention: yes, because it is reliable and competent, or no, because it is not sensible, unhealthy.

Lean-in: The brain invests A comparison of the brain activation of the exhibition visit with that of seeing video images such as commercials shows that the brain is “consciously” searching for information at the

exhibition where the data of a commercial is passively processed.

Sjoerd Weikamp, the owner of Event Branche, says:

“The scientists at Neurensics have called this difference lean-in and lean-back. With lean-in, information is processed proactively, which requires a lot of energy. It is an investment that the brain makes in gathering, processing and assessing that knowledge. Maybe this explains why the effect of advertising on sales costs so much contact, time and money. A visit to an exhibition, event or showroom can quickly lead to a positive attitude or a direct sale.”

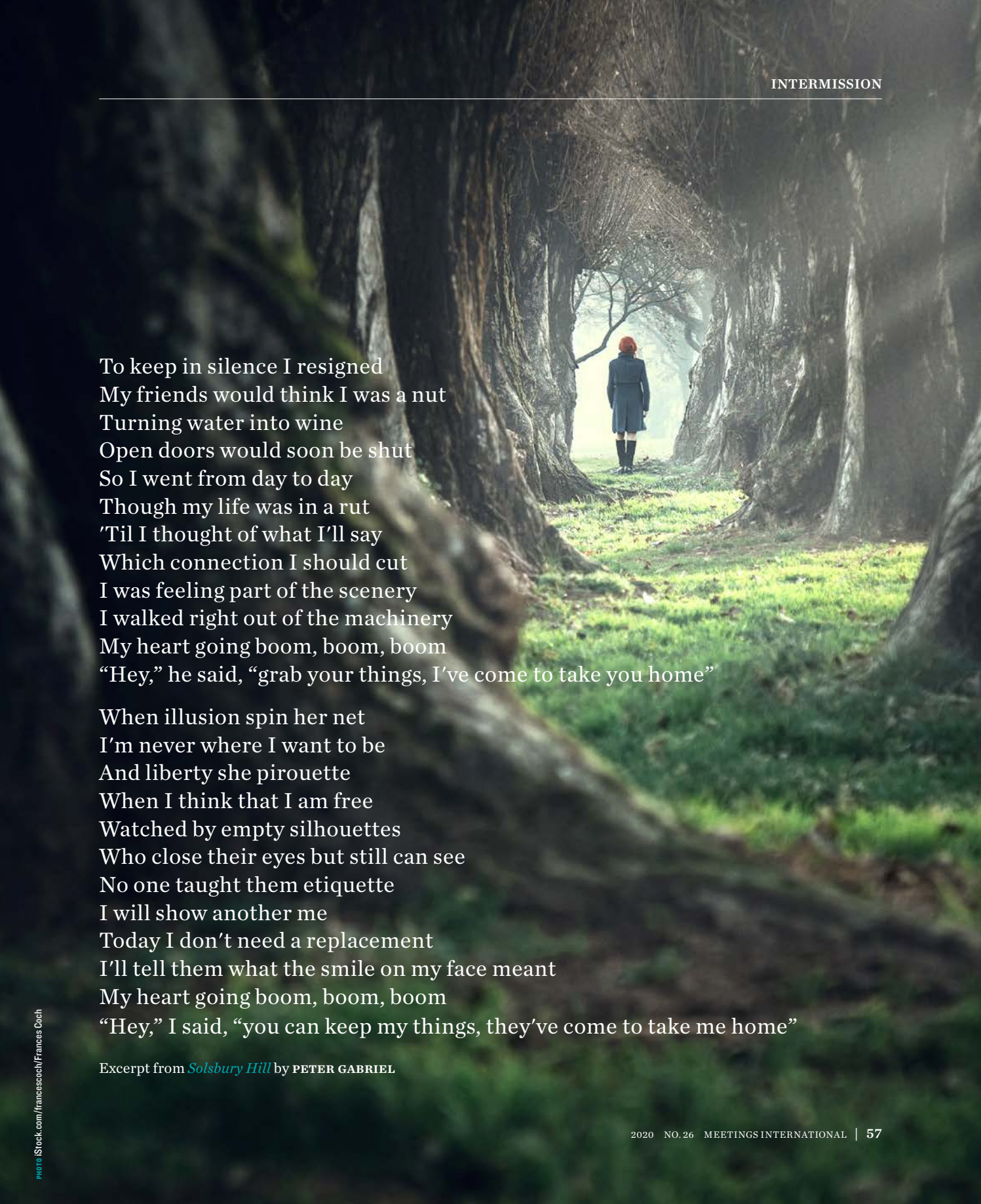
The value of live events “The study shows that the value of a live contact is of a different order than of a delayed or digital communication. With live connection, the scientists saw that the message is processed much more actively in the brain. The brain is not only unconsciously, but also consciously processing the information with live contact,” says Martin de Munnik.

“Whether this is during the visit or at the moment of the interaction between customer and seller. A good product proposition consists of a promise and proof. We then see that

the brain wants to take the trouble to process and store the factual information. The personal approach that can give life through eye contact, a smile and non-verbal signals and a conversation seems to be the key to making this investment.”

An event is therefore ideally suited to lay the foundation for a communication strategy that requires demonstration or factual explanation. For example, at significant changes within a company, at introductions or important moments.

Products and services that need explanation or whose value needs to be substantiated with facts are also better suited to a form of eventing. Because of the proactive attitude of the brain, an investment is made in a valuable relationship.

A person wearing a blue coat and a red hat is walking away from the viewer down a path in a forest. The path is covered in green grass and fallen leaves. The trees are tall and have thick, gnarled trunks. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

To keep in silence I resigned
My friends would think I was a nut
Turning water into wine
Open doors would soon be shut
So I went from day to day
Though my life was in a rut
'Til I thought of what I'll say
Which connection I should cut
I was feeling part of the scenery
I walked right out of the machinery
My heart going boom, boom, boom
"Hey," he said, "grab your things, I've come to take you home"

When illusion spin her net
I'm never where I want to be
And liberty she pirouette
When I think that I am free
Watched by empty silhouettes
Who close their eyes but still can see
No one taught them etiquette
I will show another me
Today I don't need a replacement
I'll tell them what the smile on my face meant
My heart going boom, boom, boom
"Hey," I said, "you can keep my things, they've come to take me home"

Excerpt from *Solisbury Hill* by PETER GABRIEL



Don't Accept Webinars AS GOOD ENOUGH

THE MEETING industry: We are all in pain, I see that. Not all of us have moved fully into online meetings yet, and I understand that. But we need to sit down and evaluate what we are doing. Are we rolling towards the abyss?

Meeting professionals, doing classical onsite meetings and events, are very detail-oriented and very much aware of the importance of networking. Not always the case with events where the fun and wow factor were more dominant, but at most conferences, trade-shows, meetings, seminars, etcetera the “meeting among participants” was a cornerstone of success, the proven number one reason why participants came: To meet other people. If you ask participants: To learn from speakers always comes second.

Now the meeting industry is going online. I consciously say “going online” and not “pivot to the virtual” as I strongly believe the online meeting can be a real meeting, not a virtual one.

Let me explain. You have real people (not avatars) coming together with real speakers to listen to a real presentation and ask real questions leading to real answers, and some real learning happens. Nothing virtual about that.

Highly interactive or slightly active. But then it gets even worse, and that makes me worried about the industry. I see meeting professionals, large brands, and even tech-savvy influencers doing webinars, webinars and more webinars. Sometimes a nicely produced studio webinar and

sometimes a simple webinar. Speaker and slides in a webinar.

I see “Highly interactive webinar” with only the chat box used, and participants may vote twice? Or we have 12 speakers in one hour? Sometimes there is even a professional MC (Master of Ceremonies) introducing the speakers or doing an interview. Highly interactive? I don't think so. “Slightly active” sounds more like it.

Forget the *inter* in interactive as the participants cannot see how many are present, let alone see who is there, or, God forbid, can connect with anyone. Even the word participant itself is misplaced: “the audience” is closer to the truth. And the audience kept on listening.

Webinars, webcasts, web streaming galore! Sometimes even pre-recorded. Ask yourself: What has become of me? Did I become a TV-producer? Did I become a teacher, or am I still a proud meeting professional? An organiser of gatherings of humans? The creator of connections, the builder of relations, the instigator of collaborations?

The holy trinity of meeting value is networking + learning × motivation. What happened to our number one? Where did we lose networking? Webinars? Come on. Seriously?

Are we just doing the easy thing? Or are we unconsciously doing a sloppy job online to protect our onsite past respectfully? I don't understand it. To me, the industry seems suicidal. Because we don't know what lies ahead?

Whatever lies ahead of us, online meetings and online events will remain part of what we do, more than ever. Let us prepare for the worst-case scenario and hope for the best one. With all those “zero-networking webinars” we are destroying meetings and scrapping our job.

We can do it. It is not rocket science. Go for 50 per cent of the time in small breakouts. Small group conversations are the golden nugget in online meeting design.

Be a Robin Hood! Steal minutes from your speakers and give them to your poor participants, each gets 50 per cent. Build that into your script, make it happen. We have to do it, or people may lose their appetite for meeting other people. That will be bad for the meeting industry and our jobs, bad for the economy and humanity.

Don't accept webinars as good enough. Don't let your AV-company turn you into a video producer. Say no to talking heads. Don't accept voting and a chat box as interaction. Don't accept a platform that doesn't allow for small group conversations. Fight back and demand networking. Fight for your participants and their need to meet.

Good news: Zoom now allows for participants to choose during the meeting which breakout room they want to join.

*Written by Maarten Vanneste,
Meeting Support*


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IBTM World Virtual 2020

GOES LIVE

IBTM WORLD VIRTUAL is set for success with over 10,000 meetings due to take place over the three days of the event, which will this year take place entirely online from 8–10 December.

The virtual event will include three full days of meetings between the world's largest and best-known destinations and suppliers with top Hosted Buyers from some of the biggest global corporations, associations and agencies, as well as a comprehensive programme of education sessions.

Recently signed major exhibitors include Singapore Tourism Board, Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau, Adelaide Convention Bureau, European Convention Centre Luxembourg, Visit Norway Meetings & Events, South Africa Tourism and German Convention Bureau.

Furthermore, also Monaco Convention Bureau, Tourism Vancouver, Destination DC, The Carlton Tower Jumeirah, Visit Portugal CB, Visit Britain, Rhodes Bay Hotel & Spa and Bruges Meeting & Convention Centre.

Buyers will attend from across the globe, with almost a third being new to the event. Association buyers include those from the European Society of Urology, the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), World Confederation for Physical

Therapy, The International Ecotourism Society, International Society for Cell and Gene Therapy, Research Quality Association (RQA), The Linux Foundation, and The European Society for Medical Oncology.

Major corporations due to attend include Jones Lang La Salle, F Hoffmann-La Roche AG, Bain & Company, IBM, Michelin, Dell, Novartis International AG, Boston Consulting Group, Real Madrid CF, Deloitte, Cook Medical, Nike, Leroy Merlin, BBVA France, Puma Brazil, Mundipharma International Limited, Hyundai, Horiba Medical, and Schlumberger.

The content programme will be available on all three days of the event and has been designed to reflect the key themes relevant to event professionals as our industry rebuilds and recovers postpandemic, including sessions focusing on leadership through change, technology and sustainability.

New for this year is a programme of bespoke content for those running experiential events in the Exceptional Experiences stream.

Also, Hosted Buyers will benefit from dedicated content tailored specifically for them with the IBTM Inspire Masterclass stream, a separate on-demand track available from the 10th December, with sessions for associations, corporates and agencies, which is sponsored by Korea Tourism Organization.

On 10th December, IBTM TV, which is sponsored by Meet England and Monaco Convention Bureau, will stream live and on-demand content from our expert speakers direct to attendees' screens. This will include a variety of panel sessions, keynotes, trend reports and awards ceremonies.

The recently announced fourth keynote speaker Philippe Legrain, who is a senior visiting fellow at the London School of Economics' European Institute and the founder of international think-tank Open Political Economy Network (OPEN), will deliver a talk titled: "Prospects for 2021: Recovery, Resilience, Reinvention." His session will explore what we can learn from past crises about the recovery and how the industry can reinvent itself in the future.

David Thompson, Event Director, IBTM World, says:

"While we're disappointed not to be able to meet in person this year, we're excited to bring the industry together at IBTM World Virtual.

"We couldn't have created this event without an incredible amount of hard work from our team and the support of our partners and friends within the industry. We look forward to being able to get together in person again from the 30th November to the 2nd December in Barcelona 2021."



IBTM World **VIRTUAL** 2020

IBTM HAS ANNOUNCED Cecilia MoSze Tham and Mike Wittenstein as the latest two keynote speakers for IBTM World Virtual, which will take place online from 8–10 December.

Cecilia MoSze Tham, who has been described as an innovation activist and serial entrepreneur, will present a session on the future of human connectivity called “When the future worlds meet: How technology will transform the way we gather in the next year and beyond.” It will be a deep dive into the myriad fascinating ways that technology may change the way we meet and interact in the future.

She is currently a social technologist at Alpha Telefonica, using technology to help solve global challenges. Cecilia MoSze Tham has founded several companies such as MOB (Makers of Barcelona), the largest coworking community in Barcelona, Fab Cafe, a digital fabrication lab meets coffee shop; and All Women Tech, an AI training school for women by women to build the next generation of women and technology.

Founder and managing partner at Storyminers and former e-visionary at IBM, Mike Wittenstein is an expert in customer experience and will present a talk to help leaders gain support for their boldest ideas and strategies.

Over three decades, he has advised leaders and their teams during times of immense change, with a client roster that includes AT&T, Adobe, Apple, Delta Airlines and Holiday Inn.

Both speakers will present their sessions on IBTM World Virtual's brand new feature, IBTM TV. Available to all registered attendees, IBTM TV will allow attendees to access the knowledge programme with a user-friendly mix of live and on-demand content.

There will also be a new programme of content tailored to those running experiential events in the Exceptional Experiences stream. Besides, Hosted Buyers will benefit from dedicated content tailored specifically for them with the IBTM Inspire Masterclass stream. This separate track is all on-demand, with sessions for associations, corporates and agencies.

Other speakers will include: the first keynote is Pancho Campo, who will speak about “The future of events: Lessons learned from working with Barack Obama.”

Sonja Piontek, who will present a session on ultra creativity: “How to create marketing magic with impressive ROI through unforgettable experiences.”

Isabel Bardinete, CEO, European Society of Cardiology, will deliver her

thoughts on “Going digital: lessons learnt and going forward.”

Mikael Ek, Managing Director EMEA, BCD M&E whose session will cover “State of the industry: unexpected trends for the future of meetings and events.”

Finally, Patrick Rush, Senior Regional Director, Head of Asia Pacific, American Express Meetings & Events who will run a session on “2021 Global Meetings & Events Trends.”

David Thompson, Event Director, IBTM World:

“IBTM World Virtual is a platform to deliver not only high-quality business meetings but also a programme of inspiring content that will provide attendees with tangible learnings to take back to their businesses.”



PHOTO Sara Appelgren

In a survey of 22,000 business people ranking top leadership gurus, **ROBIN SHARMA** was #2, with Jack Welch. Sharma's books have sold millions of copies in over 60 countries. His new book is "The Leader Who Had No Title: A Modern Fable on Real Success in Business and in Life" (Simon & Schuster). Robin Sharma founded the Titan Academy and his blog is at robinsharma.com.

×5 Your Positivity AND PRODUCTIVITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

FOLLOWING THE CROWD and behaving as the mass of humanity does will not get you into the rare-air that very few know. Legendary (or simply just happy) requires one to become a member of the anti-majority. Some of the specific unusual mentalities that are at the foundation of the way that I do my best to work and live are these:

1 To Imagine a Glorious Future is to Come Alive

Personally, if I can't keep making my tomorrows more beautiful than my todays, I don't want to live. As a matter of fact, I come to life when I build. And when I make. And when I feel the spiritual energy that is released when I progress. Imagining your next-level of heroism and then having the guts to get that dream done is, to me, why we are here.

Yes, getting into the ring brings the risks of a knockout punch. I should know because I've been struck by a bunch. And yet, isn't that part of the sport of living? And to know the victory of getting back up, though bruised and bloodied, is one of the greatest satisfactions of a courageous human existence.

2 Reaching for What Makes Your Spirit Soar is How You Become Heroic

Remaining in your Safe Harbor of The Known is a wonderful way to stunt your self-respect, while you degrade your mastery. It is in the process of pursuing your visions that

the winning lives. Please don't fall too in love with the rewards that sit at the end of the journey you're on as they never are as amazing as you now think they'll be.

Embrace where you now are. Adore the micro-wins and mini-triumphs. Appreciate your perfect decisions as well as your dead ends. And celebrate what you are advancing steadfastly toward your Mount Everests' is moulding you into as a leader, producer and person.

3 The Triumph is in the Try

Really important point above, I suggest with very real respect. First, you'll never get to great if you're afraid of any risk. Just not possible. Every fantasy carries with it the threat of adversity. And sometimes even tragedy. That's simply part of the calculus.

Second, and even more essential to appreciate, the real success lies in the fact that you disbelieved your doubts, ignored the naysayers and continued your climb. If you've tried and lost, you've won. And if you've tried and won, even better. God bless you.

“Personally, if I can’t keep making my tomorrows more beautiful than my todays, I don’t want to live”

4 Any Fall Breeds Increased Fearlessness

Those stuck in insecurity and scarcity and impossibility secretly hope you’ll fail. Because once you do, it quietly validates their psychological philosophy that aspiring for mastery is the game of fools. And that it’s best to operate within a tiny field to avoid getting stung.

What these souls don’t understand is that it’s in the storm that strengths are made. It’s in the hard periods that we receive the chance to grow exponentially, in wisdom, honour and skill. And it’s in the falls that we are schooled in the fine art of fearlessness.

5 Pessimists Are Self-Faithfulness Mentors

A pessimist is someone who looks for the calamity within every opportunity. They natively seek out what could go wrong and the reasons not to seize a possibility like a heat seeking missile whizzes towards its target. You are a possibilitarian. A POIV (Person of Immense Vision). A hopefulist and a radical enthusiast.

The more you own your power and develop the exceptional confidence that comes with making your fantasies real, the bigger your dreams will get. And when that happens, even more people will think you’re weird. And foolish. And wrong.

Those who condemn you are locked in their limited beliefs and terrified of their own bigness. That magic that was awake within them when they were kids has been stuffed deep into their darkest natures through life’s trials and corresponding traumas. And so, they know not what they do.

Their criticism is awesome soil within which to grow your faith in yourself. And your ironclad trust in your finest instincts. Bless them rather than cursing them, for they are helping your rise.

I hope this piece that I’ve handcrafted with deep care helps you stand strong and productive during these challenging times.

Love + respect,
Robin



Here East AN INTELLECTUAL ECOSYSTEM

TEXT

Robert Cotter

ON 5TH AUGUST 2012, having dazzled London's Olympic Stadium by his mere presence, Usain Bolt, the greatest 100 m sprinter of all time, went on to electrify the night sky as he shattered the Olympic record. His feat sparked a frenzy of activity throughout the Olympic Park's global press and broadcast centre, with the reports of 30,000 journalists duly despatched across every time zone heralding the smashing of personal bests, the fulfilment of lifetime visions and that ultimate quest of taking gold.

Little could the world's sporting media have known then that the very same cavernous and high-tech building from which they were broadcasting their 2012 eulogies would assume a new guise equally dedicated to personal bests and striving for gold standards shortly after the starting gun was firing for the 2016 Olympic Games.

Transformed from its press and broadcast function to be unveiled in 2016 as Here East, an innovation campus set in the heart of the

Olympic Village on the eastern fringes of central London, the complex and all that it has become today is the brainchild and vision of one man who has been its driving force from the outset.

"We won the rights to do the development after London 2012 with a very clear vision to create a campus with a technology focus and businesses working within the creative industry space," says Gavin Poole, CEO of Here East. "We knew we could create an environment here where the large global corporates could sit alongside smaller start-ups and scaling businesses, and each party would learn from each other."

To date, this innovative campus environment spanning 120,000 m² across two buildings framing a courtyard space has managed to attract a whole range and scale of businesses and in so doing has created 4,000 jobs, with the ultimate goal to almost double this amount in the coming years.

Major players such as BT Sport, Ford (Smart Mobility Hub) and

Sports Interactive work alongside 122 smaller businesses housed within Plexal, Here East's dedicated Innovation Centre and coworking space, and several smaller-scale creative start-ups based at The Trampery, Here East's low-cost creative workspace.

Complementing this are a further 72 businesses working specifically on cybersecurity. Also, on-site as part of the campus's omnium-gatherum are major universities such as University College London (UCL), Loughborough University and Staffordshire University, collectively participating in the special intellectual ecosystem that in its first four years has already taken deep root and flourished.

"The globals look into the innovation centre to see what they're up to and then our start-ups look at the globals and ask how they can learn from them and how did they scale so quickly," says Gavin Poole.

"The difference is that we're not just cyber, or fintech, or TV production, or fashion; what we see is the benefit of having businesses who are focused on innovation and disruption

“What we see is the benefit of having businesses who are focused on innovation and disruption into their current system or sector of business”

into their current system or sector of business. Some are using technology to drive that disruption, whether in the creative industries or pure tech companies and what we look for is the diversity of businesses to come in.

“Our role as a business is to make sure we fully understand what people are doing in their businesses and what they want to do when they come here. Also, to look at opportunities across campus where they can interact with other businesses, with universities and so on,” says Gavin Poole.

“That takes a lot, and we spend a lot of time trying to understand where the touchpoints are between businesses in the broader world and then the pure Here East world. That’s what I mean about being vision led, and we’re purists in pursuit of our vision.”

Bringing this vision to fruition and ensuring the touchpoints can benefit from solid germination and growth, in its first four years Here East has also made the optimum use of its meeting spaces throughout the campus.

Alongside a 1,000-seat fully equipped theatre space and smaller event space in Plexal, the facility has also utilised its spacious outdoor

terraced areas for break-out and reception functions, as well as creating The Yard. It is the outdoor space between the Here East buildings that has evolved into a prosperous community gathering and collaboration zone.

There are other assembly spaces and studio areas within the university facilities on site as well, all on tap for bringing collective thinking into a defined arena. Since opening its doors Here East has already managed to secure some high-profile meetings and events with even-higher profile delegates along the way.

“In all we had 50,000 people come through the campus for events in 2019. We’ve had quite a few events based in the theatre but also lots of place-making events in The Yard, which has more of a community feel bringing the community into the space,” says Helen Fisher, Head of Marketing for Here East.

“We’ve had quite a few launches for London Tech Week where we had (ex-Prime Minister) Theresa May open it on the campus. We’ve also worked with the Smithsonian who came over from the US to run a big skateboarding event in The Yard. We brought in lots of Olympic skateboarders and also managed to build in

a disability element in it because we have had the Global Disability Innovation Hub on the campus and Spoke, who also focus on disability.

“And we’ve also run big commercial agent events and many community events working together with London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).

“In addition to that we did the Samsung S8 Global launch where we live-linked the theatre to the Johnson Theatre in New York, so they had a NY launch and a London Global launch that were live-linked, which was fascinating,” says Gavin Poole.

“We’ve also taken the front off the theatre to put in a whole load of cars, put it back on and had a very visual car launch for Ford. We’ve done fashion shows as well and an esports demonstration match, so we’ve had a real mix of events that we’ve had on our bucket list.”

Whilst the first four years of Here East’s operation may have scooped gold in terms of delivering on the vision and nurturing growth, this has not been without some challenges along the way, such as having to balance the uptake of space in the complex with identifying the ideal chemistry of tenants on-site to best power innovation.





“We are 76 per cent let and soon to be 80 per cent because we have said no to more people than the space that we’ve got available, and this is because we are vision-led,” says Gavin Poole.

“We’ll say no to people if it’s not going to fit. Back office accountancy, back-office finance functions and HR teams out of banks have all been here, and it doesn’t work. It’s just not going to add value to the overall campus. Our current customer base won’t

“Lockdown has had a huge impact on all of the businesses. While we don’t necessarily have the critical mass on the campus, we think that once lockdown has eased, we’ll be perfectly positioned to provide a safe and secure environment for in-person events when people start coming back.

“I think that one of the advantages of this is that it’s taught a lot of people how to go virtual because it’s not been the primary way people have been

going to disappear. It may take us a year to get it back, possibly a bit longer, but it will come back.

“We are fully committed to those types of spaces, whether it’s in Plexal with their fully-equipped 250–350 event space or whether it’s our theatre space and our future plans for what that could look like going forward as we start to invest in that capability,” says Gavin Poole.

“We see that we are a species and a race that thrives on interaction and therefore mobilising that, curating that, convening and gathering people is in our DNA, and we will continue to do that at Here East going forward.”

Going forward in a post-Covid world will be a process and a journey that holds significant promise arising from the current challenges.

This will not only be for the innovative resident community, especially so as the facility begins to pivot its success to a more international audience, but also for the wider community, one that has been central to the campus plans from the outset and one that is now taking on a role greater than ever before.

“If anything that this health crisis has shown for us is that our strength and reach into the community has to be safeguarded and now is the time to double down on community programmes,” says Gavin Poole.

“Community is more important than ever before, and we are committed to it. The 4 E’s of Education, Employment, Enterprise and Environment are as important now, if not even more so, than when we wrote them aspirationally back in 2011 in the pre-bid stage.

“I feel that as we go through the 80 per cent barrier of let and when we’ve successfully delivered our vision of getting the right type of businesses which are scaling, growing and taking more space and filling it is the

“The value comes from being purely vision led ... we’re purists in pursuit of our vision”

back us if we rip up our vision and let it out to create ‘value’; the value comes from being purely vision led.”

Equally valuable for the campus tenants, or the “citizens of Here East” as they also liked to be referred as, is what they derive from the richness of collaboration and touchpoint opportunities, which have been dealt a serious blow by Covid-19.

As a mission-critical and high-value facility Here East wasn’t able to fully close since the onset of the virus in March. Still, the numbers on site reduced dramatically, and much constructive thinking is in train to get the campus and its deeply collaborative culture prepared for a post-Covid future.

“It’s definitely about collaborating. Even during lockdown we’ve kept a close eye on all of the tenant companies and continued to build those relationships to make sure that we are fully aware of what events they’ve been running and what they’ve done virtually, and we continue to promote that,” says Helen Fisher.

running events historically,” says Helen Fisher.

“But I think what we’ll see in the future is possibly people moving towards more of a hybrid event strategy, where they will be running virtual and capitalising on those people that can’t make it in person in the future so that we can run those events concurrently.

“We’ve been keeping a close eye on all of our tenants and making sure that we’re continuing to build those relationships so that they feel a part of the campus very much.

“What we’ve also found that the quality of some of the more online conferences that we’re starting to see means that you do need a space to go and deliver that from and that those who do it in a professional, focused way can drive viewership successfully,” says Gavin Poole.

“However, we like gathering people, humans like networking, and they like the fun of going somewhere and having an experience which allows them to learn, and that’s not

“We spend a lot of time trying to understand where the touchpoints are between businesses in the broader world and then the pure Here East world”

time that we can drive community engagement.

“That’s not just the aspiration of the team behind Here East because it’s what motivates us, but also it’s really important for our customers,” says Gavin Poole.

“We get pushed on that now. On what the talent pipeline is, on how we work in the local community, on how we can build our talent pipeline. How can we make sure that they’re not excluded? How can we add value into their community, how can we help add gva (gross value added) into the wider community? All of a sudden, that is interesting.

“We meet people and take the brand out internationally, which is about brand building and also about raising awareness so that we can potentially gain more customers from international markets,” says Helen Fisher.

“This is not about us pivoting away from the community in Hackney and the local area, but it’s more about making everybody in the world more aware of Here East and the amazing collaboration that happens on the campus.”

The collaboration going on in Hackney and Here East has recently been formally recognised by the

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), whose Social Impacts Award Programme went to the facility. Not only for the Best Commercial Project of London and the South East but also for the Best Overall Project, the crème de la crème across fourteen disciplines of evaluation.

Reflecting such acknowledged success in their community impact bolstered by their campus collaborative triumphs, Here East is eager to adhere to a winning formula that has served it so well in its first four years of operation and seems well established for the years ahead.

“We look long-term, so five or ten years out and so we are very much configuring for the future, and that is still in our DNA,” says Gavin Poole.

“Our vision stays the same, and that’s not just because we’re dogmatic. The vision works, and we know it works both physically and virtually, and that’s what we’re committed to. Over the past years, we’ve had a huge amount of fun through this project, but I’ve always said that when Here East is full, that is when the fun starts. Now is when we can drive-forward.”





PHOTO Sara Appelgren

ROGER KELLERMAN *Publisher, business intelligence analyst, trend creator, educator and networker. Has over 30 years' experience of the global meeting industry. Founder of Mötesindustriveckan. twitter.com/thekellerman*

A Political PERSPECTIVE

THE POLITICAL landscape has been changing for at least ten years when it comes to the future of the meetings and event industry. The right-wing parties in countries like, for example, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, and Brazil are all swinging to cut down public service on TV. So, even Denmark. And look at Donald Trump in the US. This is the start of something terrible.

The *Fragile States Index*, produced by the Fund for Peace, is a critical tool in highlighting not only the normal pressures that all states experience, but also in identifying when those pressures are pushing a state towards the brink of failure.

The index, and the social science framework and software application upon which it is built, makes political risk assessment and early warning of conflict accessible to policymakers and the public at large. Let's learn from it.

You will find Finland as the most stable country at number 1, Norway 2, Switzerland 3, Denmark 4, Iceland 5, New Zealand 6, Sweden 7, Canada 8, Luxembourg 9, Australia 10. Look at the UK and the US, both at place 29. It's an index you should study a little more in-depth.

The Fragile State Index may not mean anything to the meetings and event industry yet, as the pandemic in this troubled time still has a pole position in many governments minds around the world. However, a few

markets in Asia, like Taiwan, Singapore and Korea and destinations like Sydney/Australia are slowly opening up if that means allowing 300 participating delegates instead of 50.

The next step in many destinations will be to open the doors for at least 500 participants indoors. Germany allows up to 1,000 people indoors from October 1st, if this hasn't changed during printing this edition.

At the same time, the bigger question and the more significant political perspective is a development that right-wing parties in many destinations in the world, who have moved their positions, want to take advantage off.

Lockdowns create more significant quarrels on the direction to riots in society. This behaviour creates space to make stricter laws with increasing power over the people.

First, control the public service, and let social media free without control and after that, the power of the courts. The next step comes to universities. Knowledge hubs as universities can be dangerous and a threat for the right-wing parties.

It is worrying when politicians step into trying to take control of the universities and their research even though they are not educated researchers or educated at all; they want to control research and information. Look at the developments in countries, like the one's mentioned

above, where illiberal radical nationalist forces have come to power. They try to limit what knowledge production should prevail.

The university "free speech crisis" has been a right-wing myth for 50 years, according to the British daily newspaper The Guardian. The myth of the "free speech crises" cannot be divorced from the broader rise of the global far-right.

In some countries, universities are accused of being left-wing bastions, unwelcoming to conservative and right-wing professors. It is the door the right-wing parties want to shut. Research and Development should always support the progress for research including diversity, gender, racism or climate that is still against the right-wing establishment.

If we allow this political perspective to take over, Research and Development will face a tremendous and dangerous period. A period in our time that will seriously negatively affect the meetings and event industry.

The face-to-face meeting must always be protected. There, the entire meetings and event industry must fight. There, the world's convention bureaux must raise their voices. Otherwise, we have crossed the line to dismantle the knowledge society. And by that, we will dismantle the meetings and event industry.



READY AND
WAITING
TO WELCOME
YOU BACK

We have always been proud to be a place that brings people from all over the world together. A home, purpose-built for making connections, where people make friends, collaborate on ideas and collectively share in an unrivalled event experience.

What events look like may have changed, but how they feel, and the impact they have, doesn't have to. We are here to help you find new ways of connecting, so you can continue to inspire delegates and create shared experiences, while navigating new social norms.

We're looking forward to welcoming the world back to The CCD soon.

**UNTIL WE
MEET AGAIN**



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