

# Meetings®

INTERNATIONAL

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## JANE CUNNINGHAM

*Destinations International*

“Equity, diversity and  
inclusion are at the heart of a  
lot of destination change”

THE BEAUTY OF AI  
PERSONALISATION

SOCIAL SCRIPT

CLARITY OF PURPOSE

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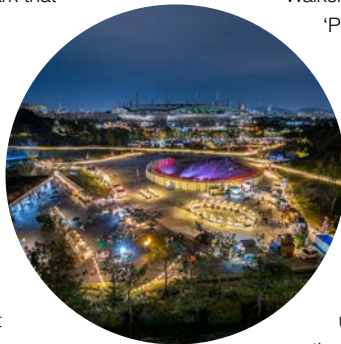
# Seoul

## Unique Venue and Urban Regeneration

### Oil Tank Culture Park 'beloved by Seoul's citizens'

In 2017, a secret space was finally revealed to the public. When the Oil Tank Culture Park was revealed to the public, many citizens were thrilled that an industrial facility for oil and construction was transformed into an eco-friendly culture park that focuses on culture, art and environment.

Seoul city hosted an idea contest for citizens and planned to transform it into a cultural complex with a direction and purpose decided based on the citizens' ideas. A series of private sector-led meetings attended by design advisory committees, working groups and expedition groups were held to implement the regeneration project through citizen participation and cooperation at every stage from space design to content selection. Seoul city provided citizens with the opportunity to participate, and the citizens presented their ideas. The project was praised for breaking away from the previous one-sided urban regeneration projects led by the government and suggesting a direction for community-driven urban renewal. Thanks to such a view, the Oil Tank Culture Park is now beloved as a place where people can share their thoughts and imagination with one another.



### 'Unfamiliar experience,' Théâtre des Lumières

Théâtre des Lumières used to be 'Walkerhill Theater.' 'Walkerhill Theater' was a popular venue that had received a lot of attention since its establishment in 1963. One of the things that brought Walkerhill Hotel notoriety was 'HoneyBee Show.' The

'Pacific Hall' of the hotel, which was equipped with modern stage facilities, presented unique and unconventional performances that had not been seen in Korea before. In 1963, Louis Armstrong, the world's most famous jazz musician, took the stage. Although the show's glory is in the past, the space made a comeback to the public 10 years later. Théâtre des Lumières is receiving attention from visitors by delivering a unique experience just like how Walkerhill Theater used to stage the sensational art and culture. Given the space's unique charm, Théâtre des Lumières is also used for MICE events. A range of events including piano performances, Samsung Galaxy Wonder Nightography event and Austrian National Tourist Office's event were held. Also, a financial company's VIP events, awards, and product demonstrations are scheduled to be held in the future. As the lighting and audio systems can be adjusted and customized for each event, Théâtre des Lumières is the perfect venue to host a special event.






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# Monaco

## A Land of Innovation and Expertise

Far from the stereotypes, Monaco stands out as a dynamic, innovative country focused on progress. In recent years, Monaco has highlighted its main areas of economic expertise. New technologies, finance, innovation, automotive, medicine and sustainable development all form the backbone of a stable and forward-looking economy.

### Pharmaceutical expertise

More than 5,000 companies are located in the 2 km<sup>2</sup> sovereign city-state which makes it a major employment hub for the entire South of France. A vast array of industries are represented in Monaco with their respective corporate headquarters and factories.

When it comes to Medicine and healthcare, Monaco has built a solid reputation on the international stage. The Principality has always been a fertile ground for pharmaceutical research and production. It shines with the presence of renowned laboratories. Princess Grace Hospital, the Cardiothoracic centre and the Institute of Sports Medicine & Surgery welcome regularly patients from all over the world.

It is therefore no surprise that Monaco hosts annual recurring events related to the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry. These events benefit from tailored support from the Convention Bureau to ensure compliance with ethical codes.

### Monaco advocates progress

Monaco is the place where progress is made and financed. In 2017 Monacotech was launched, a successful start-up incubator that helps innovative, high growth potential and social impact projects to take off, gain attraction and settle in the Principality.

Monaco is also far advanced on its digital transition journey. The country has unique assets for taking advantage of the digital revolution: its size, its capacity for action and investment, and its

brand. In 2019 it became the first country in the world to introduce full 5G coverage making it a pioneer in the field.

The destination showed its capacity to quickly respond to event organisers' hybrid requirements in a world post Covid-19. It offered innovative and creative solutions such as a pop-up TV recording studio at the Grimaldi Forum Monaco, or a live-stream wine-tasting session at the legendary Hotel de Paris Monte-Carlo's wine cellar dated 1864.

### The Monaco Smart City project

The destination has set the mission to improve the experience of living or visiting Monaco. A number of initiatives have been introduced to improve mobility with a more sustainable approach: electric bikes managed by Monabike, hybrid public buses powered by Diester, Mobee, the 100 per cent electric car-sharing service and even a solar-powered water taxi.

Better interactions with users through the use of digital tools is another aspect of the Smart City project. The recently-launched urban news site *Your Monaco* displays traffic in real-time, interactive maps, transport timetables, parking and electric charging stations. It also gives access to other digital services from the purchase of concert tickets to virtual fitness sessions or a carbon coach. All these innovative projects hugely benefit the conference delegates attending events in Monaco.

Monaco is a destination focused on the future and committed to reinventing business tourism by creating a more environmentally responsible offer and developing a personalised approach to events. The large choice of venues combined with the economic expertise of the destination makes Monaco the right location to host events. For further information, visit [cvb.visitmonaco.com/en](http://cvb.visitmonaco.com/en)

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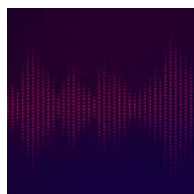
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# Turn ESG Theory INTO ACTION

**RAPID CHANGES** in the world over the last two years have accelerated the pace that leaders have put environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and certifications on the table. The result is significant organisational change around the world.

In simple terms, the pillars of ESG can be defined as: *Environmental*, to do with an organisation's impact on the planet, *Social*, to do with an organisation's impact on people, including staff, customers, and communities, and *Governance*, to do with how an organisation is managed and whether it is done transparently.

The Korea Tourism Organisation has, for example, prepared guidelines for ESG. It develops actionable items for convention centres, convention bureaux, international conference planners, companies, organisers, and participants, ultimately suggesting actions and strategies.

Whatever the starting point for ESG, the outcome of any ESG-focused project will be change in all areas of an organisation. This includes strategic decision-making, a new direction, and the reporting of progress.

According to insight from PwC analysis, there are three dimensions of the ESG revolution: *strategic*

*reinvention*, *business transformation* and *reimagined reporting*.

**Strategic reinvention** translates the aspirations of ESG into a blueprint for where and how to move forward: *What must we do? What should we do? What could we do?*

**Business transformation** drives ESG strategy into the heart of an organisation, often informing and extending ongoing digital transformation.

Finally, **reimagined reporting** enables the measurement and management of ESG, which can range across an organisation from carbon emissions and workforce diversity to supply chain sustainability.

ESG initiatives even impact an organisation's ability to find and keep talent. We know that customers make brand choices based on an organisation's environmental and social policies; this is the same for prospective and current employees. This means ESG is vital to an organisation's stability and is, therefore, a boon for talent attraction and retention.

One thing that will remain constant for business leaders is to ensure that employees understand how ESG benefits customers, the brand, stakeholders and the communities around

them at a macro level, as well as how it connects and supports the aspirations and needs of individuals.

Embedding ESG into purpose, culture, and an organisation's working methods prepares everyone for future disruption, whether a small change or a significant event. In addition, it rallies people into conscientiously embracing personal responsibility for high-impact areas such as climate change, racial divide, and responsible consumption.

Business events companies and associations must consider all elements of ESG as a strategic challenge if they are to future-proof organisations and deliver meaningful impact for the long term.

Environmental, social, and governance strategies and actions are about making a difference for our world, creating outcomes that drive value and fuel growth whilst strengthening societies.

When you put ESG at the very heart of your operation, you take bold steps towards a model that will deliver sustainable advantage and measurable value.



PHOTO Magnus Malmberg

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





TEXT

Roger Kellerman

PHOTOS

Sara Appelgren

# CUNNINGHAM





**Jane Cunningham's** expertise is based on 20 years of experience across the global meetings industry. Over this time, she experienced working for hotels, a convention centre, a destination marketing organisation and a PCO. However, the last 12 years have seen her working for Best Cities Global Alliance as Director of Community Engagement.

**IN PARTICULAR**, in recent years she has extended her work to deliver facilitation, moderation, and consulting projects related to meeting legacy and driving positive change.

"During the pandemic, I took the time to consider the next tranche of my life, and it was during that time that I became aware of the goals of Destinations International in Europe."

Destinations International (DI), the global association for destination organisations, has its headquarters in Washington, DC and doesn't have an office in Europe. Jane Cunningham works with them remotely from her home in Stockholm, Sweden.

"I have taken on the role of European engagement to find ways

to support European destination management organisations, the DMO community, to develop tools and collaborative opportunities to help them excel."

First and foremost, DI is about serving destination marketing and management professionals. Together with their members and partners, the organisation represents a collaborative association: exchanging ideas, connecting people, and elevating tourism to its highest potential.

"Our goal is to identify what is needed in the market and how we can provide a valuable membership opportunity for European destinations.

"Thanks to our European partners, MMGY Global, Simpleview, Expedia

## **“Our members and DMOs globally want to collaborate and are more open to sharing challenges and solutions”**

Group Media Solutions, Search Wide Global and Imex Group, we have been able to get this engagement strategy in place. Their global reach and knowledge are vital for us.”

Destinations International is working with tools and services such as the Event Impact Calculator (EIC), which measures the economic value of an event and calculates its return on investment to local taxes.

With this information, destination organisations and convention bureaux are better able to make the case for the ongoing development and growth of the events and meetings sectors, when talking to stakeholders and policymakers.

“Some cities used the tool to quantify the value of business lost due to the pandemic. This has helped tell the story of the destinations to generate the right business going forward.

“We are also working on a community indicator to help destination organisations communicate their relevance in supporting a destination’s social and economic goals.”

The Compensation and Benefits Reporting Platform is an online tool

that allows destination organisations to input their current salary and benefits structure and compare their practices with peer destinations.

“I think this is of interest to European destinations. There are also advocacy tools which I believe have a place in the European landscape, whilst others perhaps need more attention, translation and possible amendment to ensure value is created.”

Jane Cunningham shares four key steps within the organisation’s work in Europe for the coming five years. The first step is active listening. She has spent six months speaking and meeting with many European destination organisations to understand their situation and challenges.

“Step two is the creation of The Pathfinders Programme. As a result of my listening tour, it was clear that if we want to create a value proposition, it needs to be done in conjunction with destination organisations from European countries, regions and cities.”

The third step is the launch of the Pathfinders Programme.













## “How we engage has changed, and we need to facilitate activities that connect people more meaningfully”

“We have ten pathfinders from Europe and support from **Fred Dixon** from NYC & Company and **Adam Burke** from Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board. There is a need for international knowledge sharing and deep discussions on key topics such as community alignment, destination stewardship and valued-based action.

“We will launch the findings of the Pathfinders Programme at Imex Frankfurt in 2023, and we want to create a discussion involving more voices.”

Finally, the fourth step is about awareness building. By attending and speaking at conferences, Jane Cunningham has been able to share what Destination International is doing. Alongside this, she is creating connections and gathering insights from various communities within the meetings industry.

Business intelligence is vital for the organisation, so it is important they gather this information, something that can be challenging in an ever-changing and more polarised world. The solution is clear to her:

“Deep listening and environments where people are comfortable to share. How we engage has changed, and we need to facilitate activities

that connect people more meaningfully. Our members and DMOS globally want to collaborate and are more open to sharing challenges and solutions.”

According to Jane Cunningham, Destinations International is in a perfect position to facilitate these important discussions.

As Adam Burke from LA Tourism & Convention Board shared, “We have similar challenges. A shift is required as we develop regenerative destination management, which aligns with the legacy and impact process for business events.”

In an interview with *Meetings International*, **Sherrif Karamat**, CEO of PCMA, says: “Words are significant. Regarding the term legacy, I usually focus on the word results. Legacy has been an important word for several years in our industry despite not being able to implement what we mean. I think it’s time to talk about results as we change and adapt.”

What are Jane Cunningham’s thoughts about the difference between legacy and results? When does legacy become legacy washing?

“As a board member of the non-profit organisation Meet4Impact, I am delighted with the organisation’s







## “Event legacies should always start with the association or event client’s mission and objectives”

process. Legacy is produced through international efforts, and it creates a tangible asset through purposeful actions around a meeting or event.

“Creating a legacy starts with a desire from the event organiser or the association to create something that will be left behind after the event, which is acted upon.”

Well-planned and well-delivered legacies will generate results, or outcomes, for the community of the event or its hosting community. It is about creating positive value for many stakeholders.

She points out that what matters is the accumulation of several outcomes for the communities that benefit from the legacy activity. These benefits and changes occur over time for the stakeholders due to the actions carried out as part of the event legacy planning.

“Positive impact results from a well-managed sustainability strategy and of planning and leaving event legacies.”

Jane Cunningham says that ‘legacy washing’ examples include the promotion of legacy development by a destination with no structure. To prevent this, event legacies should

always start with the association or event client’s mission and objectives.

Also, organisers must understand what success looks like through the development of a legacy strategy, along with how it aligns with the client’s mission and the priorities of the hosting community.

“You have to invest time to conduct the process and engage with the event owner and a broad local community. You must create a set of indicators and engage the community to support measurement, and this needs to be communicated and supported.”

Sustainability is one of the top subjects for business events. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all developed and developing countries in a global partnership.

Destinations International has been open about the fact that the US could learn a lot from the

sustainability practices in Europe, and they are keen that there should be a good knowledge exchange between Europe and the US.

“If we are talking about the UN SDG, our steps towards more equity, diversity, and inclusion are impressive. I have had many conversations with **Sophia Hyder Hock**, our Chief Diversity Officer, about our tools, training and research over the last four years.”

When asked which strategic question within the meeting industry is the most important for the organisation, Jane Cunningham answers:

“How do we work together to develop a framework that the broader community can understand in the support of global meetings? If we do not act, ‘meeting shaming’ could be around the corner.”

She goes on to mention clarity of purpose; and the fact that less is more. There are several organisations, noise and words, and every organisation has its current and future challenges. Members must understand how clarity will help them; ultimately, engagement means something else now.

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## **“Net-zero-carbon events and practices are a must, and destinations must drive the shift that needs to happen”**

“There are lots of discussions about the membership model. What is the future of membership and also governance? Tides are changing, and I wish I could look into the future to see what a successful membership model would look like.”

Jane Cunningham says that the three most significant challenges for the organisation as a community are empowering future leaders, translating Destination International and contributing towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

“When it comes to empowering future leaders, there is already a successful community within the Destinations International membership.

“However, creating an environment where CEOs are driven to empower others is key. Now is the time to be bold, and leaders must look at how they hire, empower and create open environments. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of a lot of destination change.”

Translating Destinations International is her need to look at what works in North America and develop that into something tangible and workable in Europe.

“It will not happen overnight, but I am committed to working with both areas to create meaningful activities

on relevant topics. Personalisation is key, allowing people to leave after learning experiences able to do their job better for themselves and the end beneficiary, which is their community.”

The third significant challenge is contributing to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. According to Jane Cunningham, destinations can and should be doing more regarding the bigger ‘why.’

She believes that destination organisations are essential drivers of place branding that add value to the experience for visitors. This contributes towards economic recovery, transformation and sustainable development.

“Strategic legacy planning, management, and destination alignment within the broader goals and gaps of the destination will improve the liveability of a city and the visitor experience.

“Net-zero-carbon events and practices are a must, and destinations must drive the shift that needs to happen.”











# Do Not Let Others Project **THEIR NEGATIVITY ONTO YOU**

Who of us has never received criticism? All of us have, at some time, fallen victim to people who felt jealous of our work or who were angry at the way we behaved. Perhaps they didn't like our choices or opinions, or maybe they simply felt terrible and needed to project their negativity onto somebody else.

*“Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own unguarded thoughts”*

BUDDHA

**CRITICISM CAN** and does do us great harm. Depending on how strong your self-esteem is at the time, you can choose to ignore it or let it hurt and affect you. Ultimately, you have sole responsibility for how all external factors affect you, whether positive or negative.

You cannot control how others act, but you can control how you react and in this we are all different. Your best friend may not be affected by what

has been said, but for you, it could be very difficult and more impactful.

Those who criticise are defining themselves as they project insecurities and fears onto others. They shoot these like poison darts at others because it helps them feel better about themselves.

However, they (and us when we are guilty of criticism) need to realise that we are not solving problems but merely running away from them.

## “A smile in hard times can help us, whether we believe it or not”

Criticism is a defence mechanism to protect against impulses, actions, and thoughts that individuals do not want to recognise as their own. Their inner negativity then leads them to project them onto you to avoid having to take responsibility for, accept and solve their own problems.

Let us look at a typical example. Think of love relationships where one member accuses the other of being unfaithful without any evident signs that this is the case. A scenario like this could have many explanations.

One is that the person making the accusation has had these unfaithful thoughts themselves but does not accept them because they see them as negative. They project their insecurities onto their partner in their need to feel better and channel their fears into thoughts they cannot deal with.

But what is important here is how an individual reacts as the recipient. Will they let all the negativity projected onto them win? Will they keep the hurtful person by their side? Will they modify their behaviour to avoid further unfounded criticism?

We must therefore all learn to counteract negativity. Sometimes it is hard to stay calm with a person who criticises, but we must try to avoid letting the fears and insecurities of others rub off on us. It also enables

us to analyse why the person acts as they do.

At best, we might even get something positive out of it. In fact, the best way not to worry too much in situations like this is laughter. It may seem ridiculous, but it is a vital tool. A smile in hard times can help us, whether we believe it or not. So, start practising this today, and you will notice that criticism and judgment will have less impact.

Likewise, remember that criticism is just one person's opinion. As such, in theory, it should not tangibly affect you because limited people will have the same view. Incidentally, remember how many people criticise without knowing the individuals or the situation. Does their opinion really have value?

It is also vital to pay attention to how criticsers behave themselves. Often, those who project their needs and thoughts onto others are emotional. Their words overflow with emotions that lead them to see things in a much more brutal way.

When this is the case, we are dealing with a person that is not directing their words at us but at themselves. Their insecurities and fears are projected onto us, but we have no problem. We have done nothing wrong. They are afraid to accept what they disagree with, which is an obsession in their thoughts and beyond our control.

During your life, you will come across many people who criticise and fit this description. Many are toxic people who not only fill life with negativity but are also hurtful, throwing harmful feelings at you. The best way solution is to trust yourself. What these people say is not true but the fruit of fear and discomfort within themselves.

*“I’m on a diet from bad thoughts, destructive people and things that are not good for me”*

**PAULO COELHO**

*“The best criticism is that which does not respond to the will to offend but to freedom of judgment”*

**FERNANDO SÁNCHEZ DRAGÓ**





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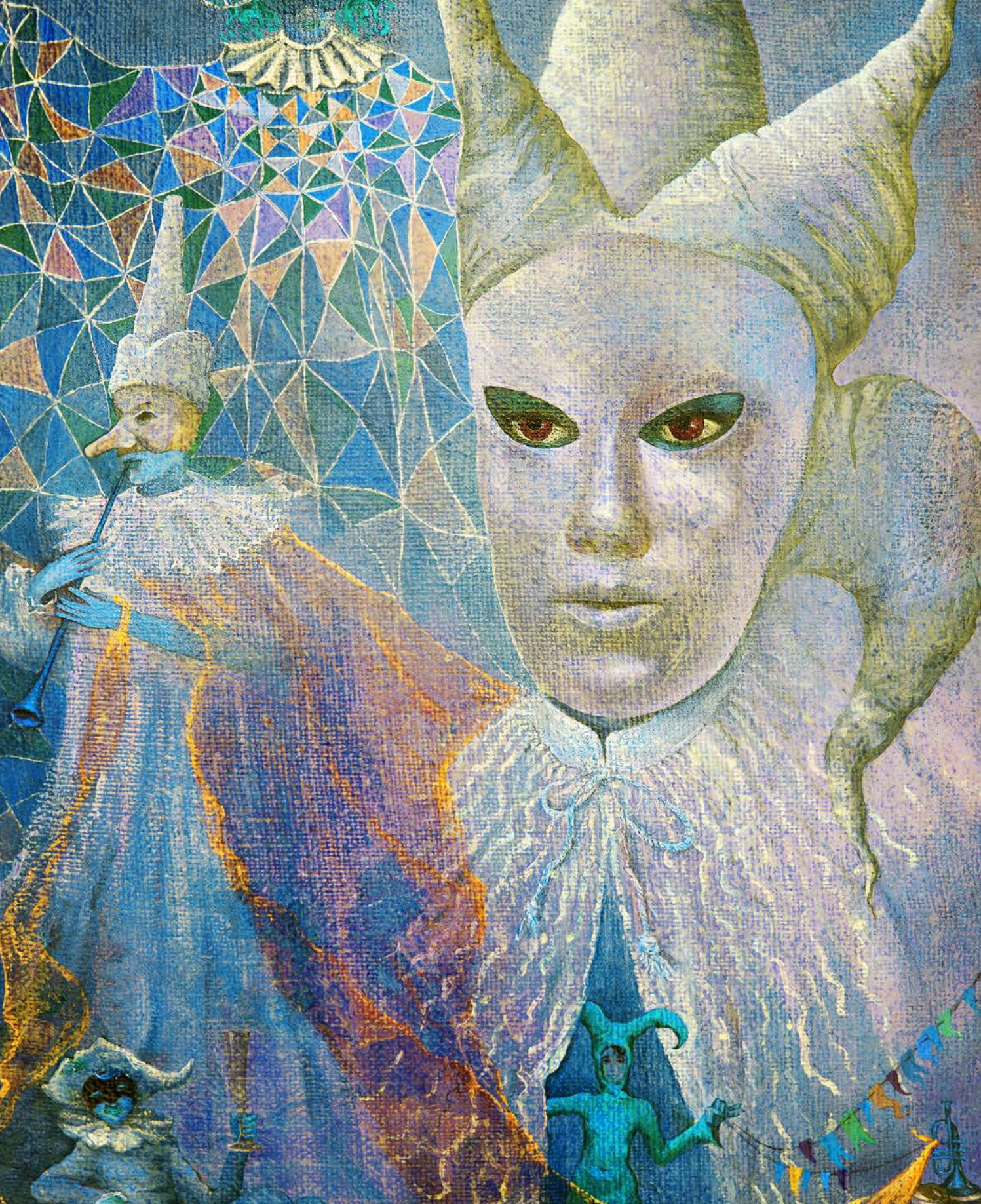
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# The Pros and Cons OF FUNCTIONAL STUPIDITY

**Excerpt from the book *The Stupidity Paradox – The Power and Pitfalls of Functional Stupidity at Work* by Professor Mats Alvesson and Professor André Spicer. (Profile Books)**

**FUNCTIONAL STUPIDITY** can be catastrophic. It can cause organisational collapse, financial meltdown and technical disaster. And there are countless more everyday examples of organisations accepting the dubious, the absurd and the downright idiotic, from unsustainable management fads to the cult of leadership or an over-reliance on brand and image.

And yet a dose of stupidity can be useful and produce good, short-term results: it can nurture harmony, encourage people to get on with the job and drive success. This is the stupidity paradox.

*The Stupidity Paradox* tackles head-on the pros and cons of functional stupidity. You'll discover what makes a workplace mindless, why being stupid might be a good thing in the short term but a disaster in the longer term, and how to make your workplace a little less stupid by

challenging thoughtless conformity. It shows how harmony and action in the workplace can be balanced with a culture of questioning and challenge.

The book is a wake-up call for smart organisations and smarter people. It encourages us to use our intelligence fully for the sake of personal satisfaction, organisational success and the flourishing of society as a whole.

We are publishing a short excerpt from the book with permission from the authors **Mats Alvesson** and **André Spicer** and Profile Books, the publishing company.

## Chapter 2: Not so smart

**Mindlessness** One of the ways people manage their own intellectual limits is by following present patterns. Bureaucrats working in the budget office would plod through

very familiar steps every year while developing a new budget.

In the early 1970s, two psychologists noticed similar processes among the subjects in their lab. **Ellen Langer** and **Robert Abelson** realised that much of the time we don't think too deeply about our own behaviour. Instead, we quickly slip into preprogrammed patterns of behaviour that they called 'social scripts.' We are like

When we are asked if we will do something for someone else, we consult a different script that is much more neutral. If we say no, we will not feel too bad. In both cases, the script does the thinking for us.

Langer and Abelson recognised that scripts have an influence on our lives that reaches far beyond whether we decide to help someone else or not.

situation, we look for clues about what script to follow. Once we decide on the scenario, we slip into mindless script-following. We also start to ignore contextual information. We grow rigid in our view of an issue, robotically adopting a familiar course of action.

Think about a routine service transaction. When you walk up and ask for help, the person behind the counter quickly tries to work out what script applies. Once they have figured this out, they are likely to grow more and more rigid about what they will and won't do.

If you make any special requests, the person behind the counter is likely to bat them away. It is not just routine service employees who follow established scripts.

Large chunks of what goes on in organisations entail simply following scripts. Meetings are highly scripted behaviour that we mindlessly work through. Job interviews also follow a script. So do emails. Much of this is sensible and necessary but can easily lead to mindless routine-following behaviour.

One of us studied managers who claimed to do leadership. They said that having coffee with their subordinates, listening to them or engaging them in small talk had a significant impact on them.

They saw this as an exercise of leadership. If another person, say their secretary, had done the same thing, no one would have called it leadership, but the managers followed the scripts of leadership and saw trivial acts as full of impressive influencing activity.

The script then said: if managers are doing something (however trivial) in relation to subordinates, it must be leadership. In fact, most of the tasks that make up the day of the average office-dweller are highly scripted.

## “One of the ways people manage their own intellectual limits is by following present patterns”

actors who dutifully follow a script we have been handed which tells us what to do and what to say.

To test their ideas out, Langer and Abelson got one of their assistants to ask people coming into their lab for help. Each request was the same apart from a few subtle changes.

Half of the time, the assistant seeking help presented themselves as a victim by saying: 'My knee is killing me.' The other half of the time, the assistant simply said: 'Would you do something for me?' They found that when the assistant presented as a victim, they would be helped 75 per cent of the time. While if they just asked for aid, they were only helped 42 per cent of the time.

The reason why there was such a big difference in responses, Langer and Abelson thought, was that each request cued very different scripts. Complaining about a sore knee cued a victim script, and the associated moral obligation to help a victim out.

Scripts drive all sorts of mindless behaviour. For instance, they found that the way a man in a film was first introduced would change how an audience of therapists saw him.

When the man concerned was introduced as a 'job applicant', the psychotherapists described him as 'candid and innovative', 'attractive and conventional-looking' and 'ordinary.' If the man was introduced as a 'patient', they described him as a 'passive, dependent type', with 'considerable hostility', and suffering 'conflict over homosexuality.'

Changing the way the man in the film was labelled triggered different scripts. When he was a job applicant, the psychotherapists looked for signs that he was normal. When he was a 'patient', they looked for signs that he was abnormal.

The big insight that came from Langer and Abelson's work was that much of the time, we mindlessly follow scripts. Faced with a novel



## “A dose of stupidity can be useful and produce good, short-term results”

Scripts do the thinking, people rehearse them.

Mindlessly following scripts can have some big advantages. Scripts set staff pulling in the same direction. Script-following can also help make what people do look good to the outside world. But perhaps most importantly, script-following can help staff to conserve their cognitive resources. Going along with the script means you don't need to think too much. This can save both time and effort.

But mindlessness also comes with some big dangers. Following scripts means that much of your work becomes about 'going through the motions.' This can easily go wrong, particularly in large organisations that keep a whole library of scripts.

As people observe these, they risk ignoring contextual information, which means that they may become less vigilant. These small oversights can create ideal conditions for big mistakes. Mindless rule-following also impairs authenticity.

If a person working in a service job just goes through the motions when talking with customers, the customers often feel the interaction is hollow. This can annoy the customer, but also create a sense of deep dissatisfaction in employees who are

forced to spend their days speaking phoney lines.

Mindless script-following can also lay the ground for some significant problems in the way that people make decisions. It can mean that decisions are made too quickly, crucial information is ignored, and the wrong lessons are drawn from experience.

Mindless script-following can contribute to getting things done, but it can also create some significant oversights and problems.

*Mats Alvesson is Professor of Business Administration at the University of Lund, Sweden, University of Queensland and Cass Business School, City University, London. He has published extensively across a wide range of organisational behaviour topics and issues, is one of the most frequently cited European researchers in management and organisation studies and is a sought-after speaker around the globe.*

*André Spicer is Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Cass Business School, City University, London, known for his research in the areas of the human side of work, leadership and ethics. He is widely published in both academic literature and the general business media and is a frequent commentator on sustainability business, behaviours at work and business culture.*





# Aiming to Create THE WORLD'S LEADING INNOVATION HUB FOR LEGACY

TEXT

Roger Kellerman

**COPENHAGEN** Convention Bureau launched the Copenhagen Legacy Lab (CLL) in 2019 to integrate international congresses held in Copenhagen with local public, business and science communities.

This is achieved through the facilitation of systematic exploration and development of activities that have the potential to generate positive, long-term sustainable impacts for communities. These can be local or global, and their chief benefit is transformation and flourishing.

The CLL presents a great opportunity for international associations to, through their events, achieve their organisational purpose, vision, and objectives. At the same time, the destination is able to solve societal challenges and stimulate economic and social growth by promoting innovation, know-how, and internationalisation.

Legacy has been intensely researched, developed and

experimented with for many years by Copenhagen Convention Bureau. It started with a PhD study on the impact and legacy of congresses. This was followed by the Meet Denmark Outreach and Legacy reports and contributions to the Best Cities Legacy Measurement Report.

The importance of legacy to an association and its congress has been discussed for many years. A key question throughout these conversations has been whether or not legacy is an important element of a winning destination bid.

And in Copenhagen, people are convinced that the answer is: yes.

Thanks to their considerable investment in the CLL, they have won several congresses and achieved award-winning added value for the city's already successful environmental work. For Copenhagen, legacy is an important door to the future.

"Financial issues are still the most important, and the foundation for

## “Legacy should be considered a way to create responsible and resilient business models and attract funding in the long run”

carrying out a congress or meeting. Still, legacy should be considered a way to create responsible and resilient business models and attract funding in the long run,” says **Annika Rømer**, Lead of Copenhagen Legacy Lab.

“Legacy as a development issue is still in an upward trajectory, so it is difficult to say what it will look like in the long term. But we should not underestimate the legacy issue and what it does for Copenhagen’s future as a congress city and as part of our brand.

“We see legacy like an Olympic flame that is carried forward, with exponential development potential. Questions about regenerative society and climate are flowing more and more together. This is the reason legacy will continue to come in different shapes, forming part of the industry’s future journey as it supports not only congresses but also the development of destinations.”

**Bettina Reventlow-Mourier**, Deputy Convention Director at Copenhagen Convention Bureau, adds:

“Customers, partners and suppliers are looking into legacy, but there is still much to be done in creating long-term positive impact

from visiting congresses and events. As part of this, we see that more and more congresses are becoming catalysts for seriously crossing borders. For example, we will have Nordic Life Science Days 2023 in Copenhagen.”

With over 20 years of experience in the meetings industry, Bettina Reventlow-Mourier has extensive knowledge of working with association congresses and creating a close collaboration between associations, academia, organisations, companies and government.

With a mission to continuously pursue and contribute to developing innovative, sustainable solutions in the meetings industry, she has been the cocreator of the CLL alongside Annika Rømer, who joined the CLL in 2021 when the initial methodology and funding model was put in place.

Together they continued to develop the programme as it is today, building an entity focusing on legacy and applying methods inspired by the Theory of Change.

In addition, they have used EU Commission work with impact assessments in close collaboration with national economists and the meetings ecosystem.

As an intrapreneur, Annika Rømer has for more than a decade been

identifying, designing, building, measuring and communicating about impact-driven business models and communities with global outreach across industries and sectors.

There are three essential questions the CLL is working with: *Why do we believe legacy will have an impact on the future meeting industry? What does it take to embed legacy in our business model?* And finally, *what are the main obstacles to working with legacy and how do we overcome them?*

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier goes on to say: “Based on insights, data, and practical experiences, the Copenhagen Legacy Lab has, since 2016, been diving into *how* we advocate for our industry and create a responsible, resilient and regenerative business that goes beyond ‘heads and beds.’

“Our process includes do’s and don’ts that market players can get inspired by when kickstarting their legacy work with associations, hosts, partners, and governments.”

Annika Rømer explains that the CLL aims to support associations in developing new business opportunities that leave a mark on their destination, and potentially global society.

Associations should consider the CLL as a free-of-charge service. Using insights and data, it supports the



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## **“We see legacy like an Olympic flame that is carried forward, with exponential development potential”**

achievement of their objectives and develops their business model using meeting platforms as a catalyser for long-term positive change, reaching far beyond the meeting itself.

“The Copenhagen Legacy Lab identifies key challenges for our customers and the destination using a proven methodology. We involve only the most relevant stakeholders and design activities for the congress that have the potential to create a long-term positive impact,” says Annika Rømer.

The long-term strategy of the CLL is to open more doors and get congresses to Copenhagen that maximise the value of the event for the association, their communities and for the destination.

“By investing in these legacy processes and supporting the change from a focus on economic turnover, to strategic value creation and capture, the subsequent value proposition to the association is enhanced. Ultimately, therefore the reason to travel to a congress is strengthened and further justified,” says Annika Rømer.

The CLL team has experienced challenges getting the associations to understand the concept.

“One challenge is confusion around the term ‘legacy.’ In Denmark,

it is a strategic and structured approach to creating long-term positive meeting impacts, supporting our customers and partners before, during and after the event,” says Bettina Reventlow-Mourier.

“For many associations, it is still about creating standalone outreach activities, not necessarily a strategic tool to support their overall strategy, vision and mission or the destination where the meeting is held,” says Annika Rømer.

The second challenge is resources. Associations are often forced to focus on short-term meeting outcomes.

They need more time, finance and skills to develop the meeting set-up and organise impact measurement. This is an obstacle to creating resilient business models in the long run.

“This is where the Copenhagen Legacy Lab tries to fill in the gap for creating long-term positive impact from congresses and events. It benefits not only our customers and their communities but our business too,” says Bettina Reventlow-Mourier.

“It is the insights, understanding and buy-in on how the choice of destinations can enhance strategic meeting design and hence leave a legacy.

“The Copenhagen Legacy Lab aims to be involved as early as

possible in the customer journey as it should not be considered a nice ‘add-on.’ It should be regarded as a commitment to help associations meet their objectives and drive positive change in the destination,” says Bettina Reventlow-Mourier.

Looking into the future of the CLL is difficult, as transformation takes time, Annika Rømer points out.

“We hope the Copenhagen Legacy Lab will not only have created a movement within the meeting industry but can identify new services for business and destination.

“We want to create the world’s leading innovation hub for legacy. We also want, as a satellite, to support the transition of business tourism, developing and collecting knowledge and best practices to turn them into concrete, actionable learnings for the benefit of the industry and society as a whole,” says Bettina Reventlow-Mourier.



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# The Response Room

## AN OPEN INNOVATION PLATFORM

**WHAT WILL** the future look like? It is sometimes difficult to see the big picture clearly in a complex world with multilayered challenges.

The solution therefore seems could be to follow the advice of

**Abraham Lincoln:** “The best way to predict your future is to shape it.”

Trying to solve complex problems in our increasingly fast-paced world by ourselves is becoming more difficult. Therefore, we need joint efforts and collaborations, which you can achieve by joining the Response Room.

Through the Response Room, you can discover an open innovation platform, discuss the meetings industry’s current challenges with a growing global community, and collaboratively create solutions (and business models) for future business events.

### Shared problems, shared solutions

Nature, in particular, bee colonies, have shown us the power and principle of swarm intelligence, where

interactions between single entities lead to more intelligent collective behaviour or outcomes. This is something that can also be seen in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics.

A more famous example, though, is Wikipedia, where the personal knowledge of many creates an almost unbelievable pool of collective wisdom.

The same applies to collaboration in teams in the workplace, especially for those with diverse backgrounds. Humans often share similar problems and consequently can learn from each other, give each other new impulses, and create new experiences and ideas.

Whether it’s an open collection of ideas on a particular problem, feedback on solutions already developed, or a brief mood barometer on current topics: every one of us possesses valuable knowledge that can only really blossom in interaction with others.

This approach lies at the heart of the Response Room’s open innovation platform. Ultimately, it provides

the opportunity to collaborate with fellow event professionals on innovation challenges and solutions for future business events.

### What’s in it for you?

- Be the first to learn about new solutions and actively participate in their development.
- Sit at the forefront of a growing movement to take business events to the next level.
- Share your knowledge and expertise, whilst benefiting from others’ knowledge.
- Expand your network in new directions.
- Strengthen your profile and position yourself as a thought leader on specific topics.

The platform’s global search function makes it easy to navigate and find topics or other community members.

Response Room is the global open innovation platform for all players in the world of business events.

## “Collaborate with fellow event professionals on innovation challenges and solutions for future business events”

Initiated by the German Convention Bureau (GCB) and implemented with the support of PCMA and the Imex Group. Initially launched in January 2021, access to the forum is open to anybody and creating an account to participate is free of charge.

### The latest innovation challenges

International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) were looking for innovation projects within its global community.

On the road to the 61st ICCA congress in Krakow this November, all ICCA members were invited to share their innovative tools, products, programs, collaborations, research projects, startups, or other approaches.

From all submissions, ICCA's team selected topics and speakers for a session on innovation. This provided the perfect opportunity to present ideas live and develop them further in personal conversations.

Another recent innovation challenge was aimed specifically at the

hospitality industry. Titled: “In search of best practices for Property Management Systems (PMS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM),” the challenge invited the Response Room community to share their own experiences of PMS and CRM programs and to talk about their do's and don'ts.

The platform includes an innovation blog, providing users with research results, out-of-the-box reading recommendations and inspiration on how to drive innovation in their day-to-day work.

One of the latest articles discusses the research radar by Future Meeting Space, which presents nine insights for the future of business travel. These include mobility behaviour affected by sustainability and the paramount importance of personal security and health.

**Get started** Visit [responseroom.io](https://responseroom.io). Register with your name and email address, participate in the innovation

challenges, find inspiration in the blog, and stay tuned for upcoming events.

For a deep dive into the platform's functionalities and to make the most out of your experience, you can watch a short tutorial video by scanning this QR code.



*Do you have any questions or ideas you would like to share with the community? Would you like to contribute to the blog as a guest author? Or do you know of any upcoming events that should be listed? Send an email to the GCB's Response Room team via [Dr Martina Neunecker: neunecker@gcb.de](mailto:DrMartina.Neunecker@gcb.de)*





# How and Why AI Will Revolutionise the **LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE AT BUSINESS EVENTS**

TEXT

Martin Sirk

**WITH THE NOTABLE** exception of intergovernmental gatherings, the vast majority of international meetings have been gradually moving over the last decades towards English exclusivity, even where native-speaking Anglo-Saxons constitute only a small minority of the delegates.

The cost of old-school interpretation, the ever-increasing complexity of events, and the assumed competency of delegates have conspired to reduce multiple-language meeting environments to rare exceptions.

But some big changes are coming. Artificial intelligence promises to disrupt the linguistic status quo, as it is upending almost every facet of our economic lives.

In this interview, we explore some key issues with **Lakshman Rathnam**, founder and CEO of Wordly Inc, the Silicon Valley start-up leading the way in AI-driven simultaneous

interpretation for online and face-to-face conferences.

**As you weren't originally a meetings specialist, how did you become involved in our world?**

"I was working in the hard-of-hearing technology field, where I hold several patents, and had been focusing on the challenges of AI voice-to-text transcription, exclusively in English. I happened to attend a conference where the main language wasn't English and realised that, in effect, I had become functionally deaf.

"That was the revelation that I could adapt my work to any number of languages and that the international meetings sector was a wide-open market for AI solutions to this challenge.

"I built a team from my wide circle of contacts in Silicon Valley, and after a lot of hard work, Wordly was launched just over three years



ago. We passed the one million user milestone in April this year.”

**How many languages does Wordly translate? What equipment is needed?**

“We’re now handling live audio interpretation and text transcription from 20 and into 26 languages, regularly adding new ones. But only once we’re convinced by the quality we can deliver and that there’s sufficient demand.

to the quality and size of specialist directories, the addition of each new language is never lost.

“Today, we’re confident that AI interpretation can match the quality of cloud-based human interpreters, but things can only get even better in the future.

“The second driver is the competitive environment facing meetings. There has never been a tougher fight

access to translated live text is invaluable support.

“The third driver is the growing importance of values-driven strategy and DEI, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Working with associations and large corporate clients, we’ve discovered that language inclusion is important to this agenda.”

Offering multiple languages online and at events demonstrates that an organisation is culturally respectful and open.

“Also, Wordly can be used to support the needs of the hard of hearing and deaf, our original source of inspiration.”

**Did the pandemic and the related growth in online meetings impact your business? Are online meetings a stronger environment for multilingual solutions?**

“I think what the pandemic unlocked was a willingness to experiment. Everyone had to reinvent their business models, all the old assumptions about what worked or was unacceptable became irrelevant, and suddenly we all became (just about) competent in using tools like Zoom and Teams.

“It’s difficult to remember that those used to be the playthings of the IT department.

“We’ve focused a great deal of attention on setting up seamless integration between Wordly and the most important online platforms so that we became a simple plug-and-play solution.

“And we found it was easier to sell into an online environment (“reach new audiences worldwide”) than it had been to persuade an English-only face-to-face meeting to change their long-established practices.

“But once we proved ourselves online, Wordly functions and is priced similarly in both environments. Once face-to-face started

## “If you’re only willing to offer your world-class content in English, you’ll inevitably miss out on potential audiences”

“The beauty of an AI approach is the ability to offer all these for approximately the same price as for a single language pair.

“As for equipment, all the delegate needs is their smartphone or laptop. The organiser needs the equivalent of an iPod for each meeting room to connect to our cloud-based system.

“Integrating Wordly with an event’s existing production platform is extremely simple. And, of course, there’s no need for booths and racks of individual headset devices.”

**Is price the most important driver of demand?**

“There are three strategic drivers, all of which are long-term. The first is not simply price and achievable scale but constantly improving quality and increasing scale for a specific price.

“The ratcheting effect of AI is a one-way-only process: each incremental improvement, to the technical accuracy of the translation, to our ability to ‘hear’ what’s being said,

for attention, attendance, or active engagement.

“Every marginal advantage counts. If you’re only willing to offer your world-class content in English, you’ll inevitably miss out on potential audiences, especially from key markets like China, Japan or Latin America.

“If you’re only showcasing English-fluent speakers, you’re potentially ignoring exceptional research or fascinating minds, leaving that opportunity open to your competitors.

“Meeting owners and organisers typically underestimate the desire to work in native tongues. We’ve had clients who anticipated demand for five or six languages but discovered that their delegates were using Wordly for 15 or 16.”

Delegates for whom English is their second, third or even fourth language might be capable of full concentration for 20 minutes but working in a non-native tongue for hours is exhausting. So, even having

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Name Erick van de Scheur / Age 31 years old / Position & Organization Director of Watertaxi Rotterdam / City Rotterdam

In 1993, the owners of Rotterdam's iconic Hotel New York used wooden boats to attract customers from the city centre to the new hotel. Now, almost 30 years later, Watertaxi has a modern fleet of 25 boats, transporting hundreds of passengers daily.

Erick, the director of Watertaxi connects Rotterdam over the water. "Today, our company's focus is simple; to be an indispensable part of the city's mobility network." In Rotterdam, traveling by water can be the fastest and most efficient way to access many locations. Watertaxi connects commuters for work, people going shopping in the centre, and tourists going out for a bite. Travelling by water is something that all of Rotterdam takes pride in. It's almost impossible to take a photo of the beautiful skyline without seeing a Watertaxi in the picture.

One of Erick's favourite routes is from Hotel New York to the Veerhaven. "It's amazing, within 15 minutes you can experience an incredible skyline view on the water, arrive at a historic harbour with a unique vibe, and end your short trip enjoying a relaxing cup of coffee in the

park. I also love to listen to our boatmen. Many of our Skippers have been working the port of Rotterdam since childhood and they have the most incredible stories."

Water is a part of everyday life in the Netherlands, so Rotterdam and Watertaxi are committed to sustainability and have ambitious goals for the future. "We just introduced the first hydrogen powered water taxi which is a first in the Netherlands. We are highly motivated to transition our engines and approximately one third of our fleet is already powered by a sustainable source. By 2030, we will have replaced all fossil fuel engines with emissions free engines."

"I believe we have to rethink urban mobility which should be quick, inexpensive, sustainable and accessible for everyone. If we do it right, we will generate more spare time, more living space and better air quality to help improve the overall quality of life throughout Rotterdam"

As the people of Rotterdam say: Stop talking, start doing.



# NL

# Netherlands



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## “Meeting owners and organisers typically underestimate the desire to work in native tongues”

again, our online clients were happy to continue using us, not least because their communities were now expecting this service.

“Online events are a fantastic, low-risk way to test multilingual solutions. And let’s not forget that the Netflix generation expects all their content to come with accompanying text in virtually any language.”

**What are your thoughts about the role of meetings industry associations concerning this issue? Are they supportive of multilingual meetings?**

“We’ve been pleased with their reactions to the idea that English-only need not be the only model. I think the DEI argument has been particularly helpful in raising awareness and shifting perceptions: any organisation serving members worldwide has to be culturally sensitive, and language plays a huge role in cultural identity.

“We’re now working with PCMA, MPI, ASAE, and Imex, which we classify similarly because of their role as a global community for the industry. We were selected as one of AIPC’s first international partners in

their “Start-up Lab” concept, which enables their member convention centres to offer a range of proven tech solutions to clients.

“But we’re also working closely with technical partners with big corporate players, such as Cvent and numerous PCOs. Indeed, we are happy to collaborate with traditional human-interpreter companies.”

**Can you imagine a future where English-language-only international meetings are a rare and endangered species?**

“Actually, I can. Our research indicates that provided perceived barriers of cost and technical friction are sufficiently reduced, offering access to content in different languages attracts organisers and delegates alike.

“Faster than most people can imagine, interpretation AI will reach a level of fluency that is superior to all but the most field-specific-expert human interpreters.

“Technical friction, already very low with Wordly’s model, will become a distant memory. And per-capita pricing, whether for tens of thousands

or just ten people, will be driven down to an insignificant fraction of overall event costs.

“Once faced with these three fast-approaching realities, why would any meeting owner not choose to go multilingual?

“But this doesn’t just apply in the Anglosphere. Why not offer any-language access to German, French or Korean or Chinese events providing world-class content? It won’t be tomorrow, but it isn’t science fiction.”



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“Improvisation is like us sitting here talking. It’s impulsive without reflection. We just let it spin. It’s like speaking straight from the heart. But to improvise you need to know the language ... you have to have a language that you master. If you don’t, then you can’t improvise all the way. It’s about nuances and their shifts. A word can have so many different meanings”

JAN LUNDGREN

*Jan Lundgren, Swedish pianist and composer. Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Ystad Sweden Jazz Festival, Ystad Winter Piano Fest and Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen. He is a Steinway Artist, a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and has recorded over 50 albums.*







# Redesign Event Content AND PROGRAMMING

TEXT

Scott Steinberg

**IN A WORLD** of constant uncertainty and disruption, attention spans are shrinking as the pace of change continues to accelerate. Time is becoming harder to come by and we are all being asked to absorb more information faster than ever.

Throw in a constant influx of digital disruption, and it's enough to leave anyone's head spinning, and that's before you consider that we are all increasingly being asked to get up to speed on new technologies and business trends in record time.

As a futurist and keynote speaker who's worked with over 1,000 brands and hundreds of meeting planners to help make complex concepts more understandable and approachable, I'm often asked to help educate audiences in a minimum amount of time.

It has become increasingly clear to me that the same learning principles that we presenters use on-stage can be applied to help fast-track other forms of learning. This will allow us to improve the way we teach, train, and communicate with working professionals about emerging business topics and technologies of all types.

In effect, using a new training and education method I call Pop Future (free to download at my website) you can make future trends, innovations, and business concepts simpler for audiences of all backgrounds and skill levels to comprehend.

Meeting and event formats are one of the first and most obvious places to turn for reinvention. I have therefore suggested ten ways to mix specific content and programming formats to

help better connect with and engage audiences, in turn facilitating more rapid learning and retention.

Weave any of the following activities, programs, and exercises into your next get-together. Don't be surprised when audiences appear more awake, more attentive, and more apt to walk away equipped with the tools they need to better adapt to change and disruption.

example, a new Covid variant has delayed your return to the office, and rising geopolitical volatility just put the squeeze on your supply chain that participants must adapt to.

**Ask the Expert Segments** Also known as fireside chats, these are essential, informal conversations in which a moderator or the audience puts pressing queries to a well-known

**Entrepreneurial Contests** Imagine Shark Tank-style shows of good sportsmanship that invite teams to design and pitch new product or service ideas and concepts. Peers then vote for the winners that should become real-world prototypes.

Alternatively, you might design custom trivia games on trending topics or hands-on learning challenges for meeting attendees to enjoy.

**Video Training Packages** These compress discussions of featured topics into short, engaging clips of three to five minutes (maximum) in length. Present them through the lens of wit, insight, or clever anecdotes that help make subjects seem more approachable and relatable to the day-to-day challenges that audiences face.

**Speed Networking Programs** Invite a group of five or more mentors to serve as expert consultants, whilst groups of meeting participants cycle through five-to-ten-minute meetings where they can ask questions and get business advice or tips.

**Crowdsourced Commentary** Pre-taped segments in which three to six attendees, industry professionals, or association members respond to a question, for example: What's the next big trend in meetings and conferences?

On the day of the event, you put the same question to the audience and then play the video to see how well their answers align.

**Problem-Solving Challenges** Present table groups with a scenario and associated challenges and opportunities, then name the executive team of a fictional company facing them. Ask each table to develop solutions, then present their ideas to the larger group.

## “Meeting and event formats are one of the first and most obvious places to turn for reinvention”

**Scenario Planning Sessions** Role-playing exercises that challenge participants to puzzle their way through real-world scenarios. For example: adapting to new supply chain disruptions or dealing with a hack or data breach in real time.

**Quick-Hit Innovation Programs** Give meeting participants a problem to solve grounded in the real-world challenges your business faces and a set of tools or resources to do so. Then allow them up to 90 minutes to rise to the challenge.

Groups of attendees should be broken into tables for the exercise and assigned a facilitator who can ask smart questions and keep the conversation flowing. Facilitators can also be swapped every 20 to 30 minutes to keep things more interesting.

Want to spice things up? You can also pop in every so often and announce a new challenge. For

authority or industry thought leader. The format allows for more free-form and off-the-cuff answers to attendee queries.

**Call-and-Response Programs** Think keynotes and panels where audiences are polled, surveyed, and asked to respond (verbally or online) to questions. Presenters adapt their commentary and the flow of discussion accordingly on the fly.

**Quick-Hit Discussions** In short, five-to-ten-minute bursts, roundtables of professionals from different backgrounds, departments, and experience levels are asked to team up to answer a series of pointed questions.

For example: Which trends will most impact your industry and company going forward? What are we doing to stay ahead of them? Where can we turn if we need further insight and inspiration? Etcetera.

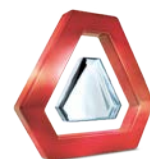
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For example: “Congratulations, you’re now in charge of multibillion-dollar telecommunications firm Connected Wireless. Just one problem: You’re in the middle of a 5G high-speed technology transition and can’t find enough talented installers. On top of that, your customers are struggling to make sense of what this new technology will mean for their business.”

A great way to quickly source multiple perspectives on a topic is to start a discussion or presentation on a subject hosted by one commentator. Then draw names randomly, whether from preselected individuals or any of your audience members, every five-to-ten minutes and invite those picked to come up and pick up the conversation thread where it left off.

For example: cybersecurity, blockchain, or the future of finance.

You can even build in badges, certificates, or awards to reward audience members for attendance and allow them to hop between these mini-conference tracks to personalise learning paths and specialise.

**Turning the Tables Challenges** Divide meeting participants into teams and ask them: If you were a competitor, what would you do to outperform, outmanoeuvre, and outcompete our business?

Then switch things around and ask contributors: What can we do to keep rivals from applying these strategies to our detriment? Putting yourselves in a rival’s shoes can be a powerful way to see your organisation’s strengths and weaknesses.

## “Give meeting participants a problem to solve grounded in the real-world challenges your business faces”

**Peer Review Panels** Don’t underestimate the power of gamification (game-based learning) to help boost audience participation and involvement.

Case in point: One simple way to make events more engaging is to ask groups of attendees to present ideas, design new concepts, and/or solve real-world problems as part of an entrepreneurial competition that comes with small prizes and awards attached.

But rather than stop there, you could also invite colleagues from throughout the organisation; industry thought leaders; people from other fields, such as the world of startups or academia; to critique and vote for winners and give participants feedback.

**Randomised Expert Talks** Who says what you see on the meeting agenda must be what you get, especially if you can add an extra surprise guest or play pass-the-microphone from time to time?

**Variable Subjects** Another fun way to randomise discussions while maximising impact is to structure a talk around a specific, broad topic, for example, the future of work, diversity and inclusion, etcetera. You set a timer for ten or 15 minutes. Each time the buzzer goes off, the speaker must vary the subject of their presentation while still sticking to the broader theme.

For example: in the case of the future of work, the conversation might flow from how to adapt to variable working schedules; to how to redesign your workplace to accommodate hybrid operations; before going on to how to connect with customers when most interactions now happen virtually.

### Micro-Tracks and Mini-Conferences

Consider carving out time during a conference or event to run a concurrent track of one to three hours in length filled with bite-sized learning sessions of 15 to 20 minutes that are hyper-focused on a trending topic.

*Scott Steinberg, President and CEO of Bizdev: The International Association for Business Development and Strategic Partnerships. Haired as the World’s Leading Business Strategist, award-winning professional speaker Scott Steinberg is among today’s best-known trends experts and futurists, and the best-selling author of “Think Like a Futurist; Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty,” and “Fast >> Forward: How to Turbo-Charge Business, Sales, and Career Growth.” Find him through [FuturistsSpeakers.com](http://FuturistsSpeakers.com).*



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](http://robinsharma.com).

# The 6 Power Tools OF MAGIC MAKERS

**MY THOUGHTS** are on magic. Yes, magic. Because ...

- ... you have "the magic" that Mr. Riley speaks of within *The 5AM Club*, deep within you.
- ... you hold the ability to be the glorious magician of your field.
- ... you carry the capacity to make your life into an electrifying magic show.

The starting point is developing the *eyesight* to see that what I write of is true. See, here's the thing: With the layers of doubt, fear and disbelief people sold us as we left the wonder of childhood, the majority are blinded to their true nature. And to the way the world really works.

A line from the book that so many people have been sharing: *Limitation is a mentality that most people practice daily until it becomes their reality.*

We see life through a lens. Through a pair of goggles. Via a filter. Made up of our closely cherished beliefs, and regularly run emotional patterns. And we rehearse these

constantly until they submerge into our subconscious ...

... if you're not aware, you'll believe what you see is true. Instead of recognizing that what you're witnessing is simply your *perception of what's true*.

To enter the magic that only the advanced minds of history were able to access, I suggest you begin training yourself on the following six daily practices.

## 1 Deliberately Set Project Intentions

I've never been so enthusiastic about setting intentions for the activities I do. Intentions are creative, I've discovered. Set the intention to produce a new product that users find to be pure genius and it's remarkable how that focus becomes real.

Predict that your morning workout will be intense, excellent and thorough and your thinking will make it so. Mentally (and emotionally) commit to running your next team meeting full of inspiration, encouragement and humility and that

Mindset plus Heartset will cause the correct result.

## 2 Release Limited Magic versus Ubiquitous Mediocrity

The majority is caught up in the "relentless release of stuff." Most producers rush to deliver many materials rather than investing the time and *painstaking* care to handcraft a single masterpiece that stands the test of time.

I go into great depth on this pivotal subject in *The 5AM Club* yet for now please consider this: it's wiser to make one *Fifth Symphony* versus many pieces of mediocrity (that never establish domain dominance).

## 3 Mine Emotion and Mistrust Reason

Digging deep and working on your Heartset instead of only improving your Mindset is a supersmart move.

You see, to enter the magic, you must be able to feel. Too many people on the planet have numbed out their



## “Digging deep and working on your Heartset instead of only improving your Mindset is a supersmart move”

emotions because they’ve been hurt so much. They’ve done this to protect their once wide-open hearts. And yet, this serves to sabotage their efforts to win.

During your morning routine, make the time to let go of old pain via prayer, meditation and journaling. Write about what’s good in your life so you rebuild a heart full of gratitude. As you do, you’ll shift from working for applause to creating with love. And you’ll leave the addiction of the reasoning mind telling you that because it’s never been done it’s simply not possible.

All masterworks began as impossibilities.

### 4 Recalibrate Your Ecosystem

Your environment influences your ability to unlock the door that is the entrance into the magic life has in store for you. (The universe really does want you to win, you know? You just have to start doing the growth required to get out of your own way.)

Starting your day checking emails or peeking into your texts or watching the news, allowing your workspaces (and life spaces) to be messy and

sloppy, and being around toxic people are all concrete barriers to accessing the secret universe known to the great women and men of the world.

Reorder your ecosystem, so space gets created for your inner magician to show up.

### 5 Head into the Creative Wilderness

The masterful artist’s life isn’t always in the world. Peak creativity occurs by relaxing into the two main seasons of high productivity. I’ll go granular on my life-changing *Twin Cycles of Elite Performance* framework in *The Circle of Legends*, my world-famous digital mentoring program. Yet, for now, I’ll simply say that if you’re serious about becoming a virtuoso, balance periods of being in the world with periods in the wilderness of isolation, contemplation, reflection and renewal.

Such times are not a waste. It’s essential to the incubation of the next-level insights that will cause you to own your game. And for protecting the assets of genius that will allow you to sustain your mastery over the coming decades.

### 6 Pursue Extreme Helpfulness

The one who elevates the most people wins. I do believe in karma. I’ve seen that life has an enormously fair accounting system. *Good things happen to people who do good things.*

The billionaires and industry titans I mention mostly have one trait in common: they are radically generous because they understand that generosity breeds prosperity. And helping as many people as possible isn’t just a gift for those people. It’s a reward for yourself.

I truly hope this piece I’ve worked so hard on pushes you to make some new moves today. And elevates the standards that you play by. And to do something extremely special for you to help you thrive in this hard time. Stand strong and be of good courage.

Love + Respect,  
Robin



# Refreshed Knowledge Programme FORMAT FOR IBTM WORLD

**IBTM HAS ANNOUNCED** the first details of its Knowledge Programme for IBTM World, which takes place at Fira Barcelona from 29 November to 1 December.

This year's programme has been designed to provide cutting-edge insight and take-away learning across a refreshed format with three keynotes and five targeted tracks.

In partnership with ACS, the programme will focus on the event's core theme of culture creation. As the business events world adapts to more disparate working postpandemic, this is a vital area for all businesses to consider so that tracks will cover connections, business, careers, brands and experiences.

IBTM World's first keynote will be delivered by **Anick Beaulieu**, VP, Growth and Partnerships at C2, one of the world's most forward-thinking business events. Anick Beaulieu, alongside **Igor Beuker** (futurist, entrepreneur and activist) will discuss how business entertainment can shape culture, using the C2 Montréal event as a case study.

During the second keynote, **Gareth Kelly**, Senior Director and Head of Strategic Events EMEA at Salesforce, will explore how Salesforce uses empowering and inspirational events to bring better business results and create meaningful cultural experiences for businesses.

Day three, Igor Beuker returns to inspire with his radical vision and imaginative ideas as he shares his strategic foresight on the issues that will shake up the events industry. With his foresight and focus on

trends and the technologies impacting business, the economy and society, he will ask: What will the events look like in 2030?

Another highlight of the programme is **Despoina Zachariadou**, Lead UX Designer, Creative Technologist VR/AR, Jack Morton Worldwide. She will take us on a journey from storytelling to story experience as she considers how the metaverse shapes communication, behaviours and communities and what implications it may have for future events.

**David Thompson**, Event Director, IBTM World:

"This year, we've gathered a schedule of new voices to deliver fresh perspectives, exciting solutions and thought-provoking concepts."

A complete programme of sessions will take place on the IBTM Accelerate stage, which returns this year to help answer delegates' questions on the future of business events. This year Accelerate presents Tech for Good, with three days of content that assesses where the industry is now, what it looks like in the near future, and what is to come next in the world of technology, both in and out of the events industry.

With interviews, keynotes, panel discussions and highly interactive formats, Accelerate will look at everything from gamification, the metaverse, AR and VR to the changing face of technology in events and how it fits into a new world of ethical, values-driven events.

Accelerate stage speakers include Influencer and Creative Director at Chorus, **Grant Dudson**, who has

become one of the leading creative voices in the business events industry. He will look back at the journey of event tech through a creative's eyes and speculate about what this can tell us about the future of tech innovation at events.

During the event, several sessions will reveal the latest market trends and insights, including the Global Meetings & Events Trends report presented by Amex.

The annual *IBTM World Trends Watch Report*, presented by its author, **Alistair Turner**, MD of Eight PR, will explore how current world events shape culture and influence the events we create and the people attending them.

On the 28th of November, *The Association Leaders' Forum* and *The Corporate Experiences Day* will take place across exciting venues around the city of Barcelona. *The Association Leaders' Forum*, curated by **Stylianios Filopoulou**, International Associations Expert, will consider the role associations can play in our changing world.

*The Corporate Experiences Day* is a tailored day of learning for corporate buyers, designed to provide an interactive look at the latest technology and sustainability developments within the events industry.

*You can preview the IBTM World Trends Report 2023 on the IBTM World website.*







# Connecting the Event's Purpose **DIRECTLY TO THE STRENGTHS OF THE HOST DESTINATION**

TEXT

Chantal Sturk-Nadeau

**IT'S ASTOUNDING** to think about how much progress has been made in the business events industry over the last few months.

After two-plus years of navigating the constant changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of our industry is once again looking bright. Canadian borders have opened for international travellers, and all travel restrictions have been removed.

Business events and incentive trips are seeing a resurgence as new leads and wins come in. For example, Banff recently won the 2024 *International Gas Research Conference*, Vancouver is now set to host the *World Congress of Anaesthesiology* in 2028, and Toronto was named the

host of the 2030 *World Congress of Soil Science*.

People are finally reaping the many rewards that only in-person meetings can bring, including our team, who have been busy attending events and trade shows across Canada and around the world.

Throughout the pandemic, the business events team at Destination Canada remained committed to telling stories about extraordinary experiences that reward top performers in Canada.

We have highlighted Canada's diverse destinations through content marketing, panel discussions and interviews, attendance at trade shows, and much more. These efforts

have paid off: we have seen a surge in interest among international groups that want to host upcoming incentives in Canada.

That said, incentive travel has changed dramatically, and we have had to adapt quickly. More than ever, research has become paramount, and we focus on uncovering the latest trends and aligning them with our tactics and strategies.

For instance, it's no secret that personalisation is key within the

An adventure could also look like going face-to-face with beluga whales while Aqua Gliding in Churchill, Manitoba, or diving in the waters off St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador for scallops.

Activities like these get hearts racing with adventure, celebrate the diverse cultures of Canada, and go well beyond the ordinary.

Alternatively, many prefer to focus on wellness, which has become an essential component of incentive

included Incentive Canada at the start of July in Nova Scotia. The event brought together 20 international buyers to discover what makes this destination an incentive reward worth bragging about, from private yacht trips and helicopter rides to interactive culinary experiences.

Conferences, meetings and trade shows have also bounced back. However, new trends have emerged that are reshaping the industry. Among them, delegates have become increasingly selective about the events they attend in person.

Beyond simply visiting another convention centre or hotel, they want to know who they will meet, what they will learn, and what their return on investment will be.

It is the reason why Destination Canada's economic sector strategy is so impactful.

Aligned with the Government of Canada's international trade priorities, Destination Canada identified six key sectors in which Canada excels. These include agribusiness, finance and insurance, life sciences, natural resources, technology and advanced manufacturing.

By proactively pursuing events across these sectors, we can align a conference's focus with a hub or destination with expertise.

In essence, we are connecting the event's purpose directly to the strengths of the host destination. That might include leveraging Canadian innovators as visionary keynote speakers or hosting inspirational tech tours that give delegates a first-hand look at the innovations shaping the future.

This July, we hosted Innovate Canada for the first time in two years. Held in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, it fully displayed Canada's global leadership in the ocean technology and sciences sector.

## **“Research has become paramount ... We focus on uncovering the latest trends and aligning them with our tactics and strategies”**

incentive industry. So, this year, we conducted a deep dive analysis to gain a deeper understanding of our target audiences, from psychographics and demographics, to how they choose to spend their free time.

Equipped with these powerful insights, we are helping our clients create incentive programs tailored to their audience, which include some of the most captivating, out-of-the-box experiences.

Take our technology target audience as an example. We know that adventure is a particular passion point for this earner profile, so we're delivering experiences that match.

An example is the Via Ferrata at Kicking Horse, British Columbia. Here groups can experience a genuinely elevated incentive as they use catwalks, suspension bridges and steel rings to ascend to the summit of Terminator Peak.

programs. Trips that incorporate it are especially appealing to top performers, which is why we showcase how Canada delivers just that.

This was the focus of our recent white paper created with the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise in collaboration with the Incentive Research Foundation and eight senior incentive industry leaders.

The initiative spotlighted a diversity of transformative experiences centred around wellness: these included a private morning canoe trip on the turquoise waters of the glacier-fed lake and an invigorating outdoor yoga session.

The group also participated in another form of wellness: giving back to the community through a fundraising polar bear dip in Lake Louise on behalf of a local charity.

Our Signature Business Events returned over the summer, which









## “Delegates have become increasingly selective about the events they attend in person”

The event allowed attendees to take exclusive, hands-on tours of some of the world’s leading ocean research facilities, seeing how this local knowledge capital can translate into events that drive attendance. It was so successful that we will host a second oceans-focused program in Victoria, British Columbia, in the fall of 2023.

Innovate Canada will return early in May 2023. Hosted in Waterloo, Ontario, the program will spotlight the brilliant minds and transformative work done across Canada’s advanced manufacturing sector. Notably, this marks the first time Innovate Canada will be carbon neutral.

Knowing that sustainability has become a central consideration for events, we launched the Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan. A first-of-its-kind national program aims to improve the economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability practices of events hosted in Canada.

We were recently thrilled to share the next phase of the Sustainability Plan, as domestic partners across Canada embarked on the Global

Destination Sustainability Index to benchmark the sustainability of their business events offering.

This will, in turn, drive future improvement through training and coaching. Once complete, this work will create actionable programs for each destination to achieve relevant parts of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This will then be rolled out to global clients to accelerate the industry’s progress toward net-zero targets.

Destination Canada has also commissioned a Legacy Impact Study in conjunction with the Canadian Business Event Sustainability Plan.

Led by Meet4Impact and Gaining Edge, the multiyear study will evaluate the beyond-tourism benefits that our international business events generate in host communities. This will be aligned with the core sustainability pillars of economic, social and environmental enrichment.

What else lies ahead? We will continue to align ourselves with the top trends, data and leaders in the field to help us ensure Canada comes out on top. This is why we continue to invest in telling our *Why Canada* story, whilst connecting with audiences,

leaders and decision makers to demonstrate what Canada has to offer.

As we welcome business events and incentive groups back, Canada, as a host and destination, is not only resonating with our guests and what they are prioritising but is inspiring a deep confidence in the need to travel and meet in person.

We know organisations and teams are looking for open spaces where they can reconnect and take part in meaningful, authentic, and inspiring experiences.

While the road ahead may not be a smooth one for the industry at large, by reconnecting with purpose our industry’s success is unstoppable.

*Chantal Sturk-Nadeau is Executive Director, Business Events at Destination Canada.*





PHOTO Sara Appelgren

**ROGER KELLERMAN** *Publisher, business intelligence analyst, trend creator, educator and networker. Has over 40 years' experience of the global meeting industry. Founder of Mötesindustriveckan. [twitter.com/thekellerman](https://twitter.com/thekellerman)*

# The Forgetting **CURVE THEORY**

**I HAVE ALWAYS** wondered about the struggle between the various supporters of digital, hybrid, and face-to-face meetings. The benefits of each have been argued about for at least the last twenty years but we have all forgotten what has already been discussed and are repeating the same old arguments. This is due to the Ebbinghaus Curve.

The Curve shows us that we often cannot remember what happened five years ago, or even the day before yesterday. Consequently, it is no surprise that we have forgotten industry debates from two decades ago.

**Hermann Ebbinghaus**, born in 1885, was a German psychologist and a pioneer in the study of memory. Ebbinghaus's methods were experimental, he was a trailblazer in psychology, and the first to systematically study how we forget things over time.

On an intuitive level, we are all aware of the phenomenon of *forgetting*, which is why we repeat, write down and otherwise store information we do not want to forget. However, we are all travelling along what Ebbinghaus called the oblivion.

Ebbinghaus was the first psychologist to scientifically study memory, or at least the first to try. He studied at the University of Bonn, receiving his doctorate in 1873. As Ebbinghaus developed his abilities as a

researcher, he increasingly felt the need to apply quantitative methods to measure mental processes and believed there were good ways to measure psychological aspects

He was therefore his own research object. He wanted to study the phenomenon of *forgetting* that we all experience. Consequently, by experimenting on himself, he was able to define what we now call the *forgetting curve*.

Ebbinghaus conducted a series of experiments using the equipment available at the time. His goal was to describe our memory functions based on a series of laws and to achieve this he used a variable that we are exposed to every day: time.

For example, he performed a recall test to explore memory. It was based on repeating phrases with deliberately omitted words. The idea was to discover something about how learning and forgetting worked. His results included a range of findings including the fact that everything we remember and learn has three phases: codification, storage and recall.

In the first phase, we codify information, then translate it into the language of the nervous system and make room for it in memory.

The information will then be retained for a certain period in the storage phase. In some cases, this phase is relatively short, and

information in short-term memory for example lasts for only 15–20 seconds.

A typical Ebbinghaus forgetting curve shows how we forget most of the information we have learned within a few days or weeks. Specifically, this happens if we do not work to retain the data through practice and other memory tools.

So, if you want to remember something, you must first review the information again within an hour of learning it and repeat the exercise over increasing time gaps to ensure retention. In a practical example, you must go through the information one day after learning it to remember 50 per cent of what you have learned. Two days later, you will only retain 30 per cent, and one week later, the figure will be close to three per cent.

Are you still trying to remember the debates from 20 years ago about digital, hybrid and face-to-face meetings? Are you still trying to decide what format to choose?

Ebbinghaus's research shows that we retain more of what we learn, when we learn in person. So, people will always need to meet face-to-face, and we will forget the rest, according to the Ebbinghaus Curve. We will even forget the discussion we had about whether to meet face-to-face.

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Name Robin Berg / Age 52 years old  
Position & Organization Founder of  
We Drive Solar / City Utrecht

Robin Berg is the founder and owner of We Drive Solar in Utrecht. Robin studied in Utrecht and stayed after his graduation. He started the company in 2015 and understands the urgency of the global climate crisis.

"The climate crisis is becoming more and more serious all over the world, so solutions like ours have to be implemented now and not in 10 years." The main impact of We Drive Solar's technology is bidirectional charging. This technology uses the battery as a buffer in the energy system. The city of Utrecht is the first city to work on a large scale network of charging stations that can charge and discharge electric cars. Utrecht is a great fit for a company like We Drive Solar with ambitious goals for renewable energy and mobility. The city is very progressive and eager to incorporate new solutions to today's problems.

"We have now developed a technology capable of not only charging cars with power but also to

discharge the power back to the grid." The city's progressive nature led Utrecht to become the first bidirectional city in the world. The mission is to evolve to a 100% renewable energy system.

"We started as a concept company with the idea to use cars as energy storage. We now have a large charger production facility in the Netherlands thanks to our partnerships here in the Utrecht Region." It's a revolutionary idea that can work globally and contributes greatly to Utrecht's ambitions for a healthy city. Currently, We Drive Solar is in the process of rolling out hundreds of shared vehicles. They will provide smarter mobility, plus cheap and affordable transportation for a growing number of people that wants to drive electric vehicles.

"We are now active in many cities throughout the Netherlands, but Utrecht will always remain the city where we expand on new ideas to help solve the global climate crisis."

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