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News and updates

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NEWS & ARTICLES
Leadership
Looking to the Future
Virtual & Hybrid

MEMBERS’ EVENTS AND NEWS
Catch up with what IAPCO members are doing

The PCO: published by IAPCO
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE FUTURE IS SCARY IF WE TRY TO AVOID IT

The future is scary if we try to avoid it - Simon Sinek

If you go deeper into Simon Sinek’s words you’ll see how right he is and how timely this quote is for all of us. With autumn in full swing in the western hemisphere we strangely start to get a familiar feeling of déjà vu from six months ago; rising numbers of cases throughout Europe, new restrictions and new questions about the future.

I would like to bring you back to a more recent (and pleasant event) - to PlanetIMEX - and the IAPCO session we had with Olympic athlete Vicky Thornley, Team GB – Rowing, and Panos Tzivanidis, Director at International Olympic Committee – Corporate Events & Services. The underlying theme of our conversation was how to regain control when we feel the crisis hitting.

Vicky, an Olympic medallist, gave us the example of the cancelled Olympics and what that means for a professional athlete. She also shared with us the story of her recent bike incident in May 2020, when she ended up with surgery on her elbow – an injury that certainly could impact her performance and preparation for the games in Tokyo next year. This is a setback that she had not planned for and an additional stressor to her already complex situation; extending her preparation for her biggest competition for one more year. Furthermore she has had to do that under the unconventional circumstances of a global pandemic and national lockdown orders. Her advice: “focus on controlling the controllable”.

Panos Tzivanidis reminded us of the importance of coming together as a team, of keeping things very human and remembering to lift each other up. When a crisis hits we often fall back to what is familiar to us; close ourselves to the outside in order to protect ourselves. That means however that we close ourselves off from ideas, inspirations, good practices and a lot of positivity coming from those who thrive in such situations.

These conversations made me think of the similarities we event professionals have with professional athletes; we understand the feeling of having to deliver top performance while being under immense pressure, just like an athlete competing with the world’s top talent at the games. We have this experience with each and every event that we organise, both before and during the pandemic, with each in-person conference we have behind us. Stress, pressure; factors that we cannot control that can throw us off our bikes – they are familiar players in all our ‘competitions’. We race against time to deliver, we push through tight budgets to create magic and we are in constant pursuit of creating new worlds that will transform those that take part. In the end we are not so different from Olympic athletes.

Remember that while we are not awarded an Olympic medal after each of our events, we can control a lot of the factors around us. We should not fear the future because we never feared the future before. We are creators, inventors and a resilient community with incredible minds that thrive when a crisis hits.

We will come through this period better than before. Now we are better equipped and have better processes in place. We can do this. And we can even try to enjoy it while doing it.

Stay safe and strong

Yours,

Ori Lahav,
IAPCO President 2020-2022
American educator, author and businessman Stephen Covey, once said: “I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions.”

This could not be truer of IAPCO Accredited PCOs in 2020. The decisions they have taken have demonstrated a remarkable resilience, creativity and agility that has proven to be the key to helping their companies survive in these turbulent times, whilst also helping their clients continue to share their messages and knowledge - perhaps through different means but with equally great success.

As we all now eagerly look at closing the book on what has been the most challenging year for so many, we turn our attention to and welcome the opportunities ahead for a new and exciting 2021.

The IAPCO Dialogues, our new EDGE Virtual Seminar series (Europe, LATAM and APAC) and IAPCO’s webEDGE on-line educational tool will provide relevant, timely and practical content to IAPCO members and the entire meetings’ community around the globe.

New and exciting partnerships and task forces are forming with organisations that share a mutual understanding of the immediate and longer-term needs of our industry, that will ultimately provide additional value to all our members including our latest partnership with EventsAIR.

IAPCO members have clearly demonstrated the value that they place on their membership and have proven again that they continue to deliver the highest quality of service to clients, with 96% retaining their IAPCO membership this year.

Finally, it is important to note that with the pending global distribution of Covid-19 vaccines and the recent government announcements of cities re-opening to professional business events, the future is looking much brighter for all.

I congratulate our IAPCO members for their leadership in taking the right decisions at the right time and wish them, our partners and meeting professionals everywhere, a stronger healthier and more secure 2021.
ON IAPCO HQ

Pre-planning for the virtual council meeting, previously scheduled to be held in Jerusalem.

EVENTSAIR & IAPCO FORM TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership with technology provider, EventsAIR, presents exciting opportunities for IAPCO and its members. EventsAIR will shortly begin providing the Association with a package of software to enable IAPCO to integrate several different systems into one full-service platform delivering communications, marketing, finance and on-line broadcast capabilities.

“This EventsAIR Partnership will bring immense value to both our members and to the way in which IAPCO moves forward into this new normal world”, commented Martin Boyle, IAPCO CEO. “It is clear to see that the company’s technology, flexibility and professional team is the perfect fit for our requirements.”

EventsAIR CEO Trevor Gardiner said: “We are honoured to be chosen as IAPCO’s technology partner. IAPCO is a commanding voice for professional conference organisers around the world. We look forward to working together to share learning with members and promote excellence in conferences and events in the years to come.”

Due to the implications of COVID-19 the IAPCO Annual Meeting & General Assembly 2021 planned for Rome in February will be postponed until 2022. The 2023 AM&GA will therefore be held in Jerusalem.

There will however be a virtual IAPCO Day & GA to replace the annual physical gathering, with a programme comprised of a combination of IAPCO business and highlights, keynote speakers, member networking, destination partner showcases and espresso exchanges. This will take place on Monday 15 February 2021 and will be hosted by Team Rome as a precursor to the 2022 event.
In what year was Semico founded and how has it developed?
Our company Semico nv (Seminar and Congress Organisation Office nv) was founded in Gent, Belgium in September 1993 - originally to provide us with a platform to conduct type 3 clinical trials for our clients in the pharmaceutical industry, who were looking for a cure for infections caused by Rhino-viruses (related to the corona virus family).

The need to present our results to colleagues was the next step in becoming a PCO. Our clients became our congress sponsors and being part of the medical world made it easier to assist medical associations. Before long the new business took off and the rest, as they say, is history.

In 2000 a new chapter was written when a second company, King Conventions (specialising in Radiology and Orthopaedic meetings) was added to the Semico Group. Both teams joined forces to deliver the expected high standard of services.

**Why do you value being an IAPCO member?**
IAPCO played a major role in conquering our place among congress organisers. We understood quicker than most that to find our place in the crowded world of PCOs, a quality label was the way forward. 26 years later our membership of IAPCO is more than ever the quality label we use to stand out in our industry.

**With COVID-19 as a current challenge, how do you see 2021 evolving?**
2021: The great unknown. We do not see any recovery in our physical activities before the month of September 2021 and, even then, ‘hybrid’ meetings will be the best to hope for.
Tell us what you are working on at the moment for IAPCO
As Chair of the Training Academy, our latest project - with which I am closely involved - is the reshaping of our annual January EDGE seminar from an in-person format to an engaging virtual one.

What is your personal philosophy?
Somewhere in the distant past I must have been encouraged to ‘never give up’ and that has stayed with me ever since. Any time there is a setback my natural instinct is to find a work around or a way forward.

How has IAPCO affected your life and your organisation?
IAPCO has opened doors for me in so many ways but in particular to a fantastic global community of like-minded people who so generously share ideas and advice. Many have become firm friends and my regret right now is that our only conversations are via a screen. My team has always been very aware of how important IAPCO’s quality goals are to the way we do business and many have benefited from the education and thought leadership the Association provides.

Tell us something that might surprise us about you
I could have been a conference venue owner rather than a PCO. The land was purchased and the architect engaged to build a boutique venue on a cliff top site overlooking a lake and spectacular scenery in the middle of New Zealand’s North Island. Just as the work was about to start, in the late 1980s, along came the global financial crisis. Plans came to a halt and, as the crisis dragged on, the idea was abandoned and I went back to being a PCO. And, as they say, the rest is history.

Any advice for someone joining the events industry as a PCO
This isn’t a role for the faint-hearted but the rewards are amazing. You meet people from all walks of life, learn a little about a wide range of subjects and, when all goes smoothly, you have the satisfaction of knowing you contributed to connecting people - often from all around the globe. Be prepared for a long learning curve but it’s a role that is stimulating and challenging in equal parts. I highly recommend it.

What are the most important interests outside of work and how do you fit these into your busy life?
The great outdoors is my escape from work life. My ‘happy place’ is being in the snow - whether skiing (before the body protested too much) or snow shoeing (as I have to these days). But for the moment, with our borders closed, I’m very lucky to live in Auckland with its easy access to forests for hiking and biking, and a spectacular harbour and gulf for boating and kayaking with family and friends.
LEARNING SOLUTIONS FOR MALAYSIAN PCO SECTOR WINS AWARD

At the closing of the 59th ICCA Congress (held virtually from 1-3 November 2020), the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) was named one of the five winners of the ICCA Special Edition Best Marketing Award 2020, in recognition of its Leadership in Transformation.

KLCC was rewarded for its “Extraordinary Collaboration” that entailed a tri-partite collaboration it initiated and formalised with MyCEB (Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau) and IAPCO – its intention being to address a lack of PCOs in Malaysia able to service international congresses and conferences.

In order to address this gap the partnership provided an accessible and affordable solution to advance professional standards and skills gap through the IAPCO webEDGE online education platform. The partnership provides globally accredited learning solutions enabling Malaysian industry professionals to further enhance their skills set and to elevate the standards of knowledge and expertise of Malaysian PCOs - matching the industry’s international requirements and demands.

“The Centre is very proud to have IAPCO as a partner in this tri-partite collaboration together with MyCEB. Building a legacy together through the successful rollout and sustainability of the IAPCO webEDGE education platform is a highly valued expression of our commitment to industry professional development and leadership in transformation”, commented Alan Pryor, General Manager of KLCC. “We would like to thank IAPCO for all the support given and their contribution to making this collaborative partnership a success.”

IAPCO

ALBERT CRONHEIM SCHOLARSHIP

Would you like to win a scholarship place at an IAPCO Virtual EDGE Seminar in 2021?

- Are you a non-IAPCO member?  
- From an emerging country (OECD or World Bank list)?  
- Do you have at least 2 years’ experience working in the meetings industry?  
- A good English speaking level?

If yes, to all of the above, you should apply for the Albert Cronheim Scholarship

APPLY NOW  
Closing date for applications: 31 December 2020
Planning education in the context of COVID-19 poses challenges for all medical education providers. The environment in which we are operating has changed considerably and will continue to do so because of the global health crisis. The medical field arguably the most affected and Healthcare Practitioners (HCPs) face an increasingly complex array of pressures; one of which is to maintain their expertise and keep abreast of the latest science and best practices in supporting their patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an influential factor in the shift toward online education formats and, in this time of transition, agility and adaptation must be our guides. Online education offers valuable tools to deliver medical education to healthcare providers around the world, but we must appreciate that everyone has a different learning style and, for those learners who prefer hands-on, they can find education delivered via zoom harder to engage with.

So how can we deliver effective, engaging education to healthcare providers in a world where we are all just a talking head in a box? Here are some suggestions:

• Designing education with a diverse mix of formats - such as doing mixed reality or attractive videos - will accommodate a spectrum of styles helping more learners to get the most out of the given content programme.

• Embedding interactivity throughout each module - such as polls, quizzes, and Q&A discussions - works well to increase engagement.

• Reinforcing learning soon after completion helps HCPs reflect on the new knowledge they have gained, consolidating their education.

• Highly skilled moderators can help transform webinars into an engaging, enjoyable and effective learning experience.

• Incorporating real-world evidence and the patient perspective enriches medical education.

For virtual meetings - and online medical education alike - we have access to a greater amount of data about the learner experience than is possible to collect with face-to-face education. This gives us an important opportunity to take a deep dive into the data, enabling us to understand more about the ways in which HCPs access our education. We can use these insights to fine-tune the continuing medical education (CME) and optimise the learner experience, as well as to better understand the needs and preferences of individuals as they work through the material.

The key to our medical education remaining robust through the pandemic and into the future will be a commitment to innovation, interactivity, quality and responsiveness to the needs of HCPs that draw on the rich array of data we can access.
Managing Events in a Virtual and Hybrid World

Start 2021 as you mean to go on – connected, inspired and prepared to take on the Virtual and Hybrid World.

Affordable, Accessible – the IAPCO EDGE Seminar direct to your desk for the first time

Monday 25 – Friday 29 January 2020
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 09.00-12.00
Tuesday 11.00-14.00

JOIN THE EDGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

IAPCO Education is open to all, not just IAPCO members!

Who should attend:

An IAPCO EDGE Seminar encourages all sectors of the meetings industry to join the seminar, including:

- PCO/ Meeting Planners
- CVBs
- Associations
- Congress Centres/ Venues
- DMCs/ AMCs/ Travel Agencies

This week-long immersive learning experience will take you on a journey from bid to delivery, using virtual engagement techniques which will leave you not only inspired but also give you excellent practical knowledge to takeaway and utilise in your work.

Why attend

Your hosts - Team Athens

IAPCO’s members in Greece
As events move inextricably into the virtual and hybrid world, skills need to be retuned and adapted to make the transformation. New skill sets, new talent, will be introduced and existing knowledge transformed to meet the requirements of this exciting direction for the meetings world.

IAPCO’s first ever Virtual EDGE Seminar will be taught by an international faculty made up of leaders in the business meetings industry who have real-life experiences and case studies to share with the audience.

The Line-up

Master of ceremonies
Mathias Posch
President, International Conference Services Ltd
IAPCO Immediate Past President

The Faculty

Sabine Adam
Director Business Development & Key Accounts, Partner, Congrex Switzerland

Keith Burton
Owner and Managing Director, African Agenda
Treasurer, IAPCO

Oscar Cerezales
Global Executive Vice President Corporate Division, MCI

Ori Lahav
VP Client & Operations, Kenes Group
IAPCO President

Nicola McGrane
CEO, Conference Partners International

Patrizia Semprebene
Buongiorno Vice President, AIM Group International

Lesley Williams
Managing Director, BestCities Global Alliance

More names to be announced soon

Register today

Places are limited, and EDGE seminars usually sell out quickly, so please ensure you register as soon as possible.

www.iapcoedgeathens2021.org/registration

Registration fees

- 150 euros - IAPCO Member Rate
- 170 euros - IAPCO National PCO Association Taskforce members
- 200 euros - Non IAPCO members
TAKEAWAY MESSAGES & EVENTS
From some recent IAPCO Speaking Engagements

The Necessity and Advantages of Hybrid
China Congress of Association and Chamber of Commerce
3 September
“Uncertainty about the ability to meet in-person has led to cancellation or postponing of events, but the world does not stop, science and research continues, there is greater need to connect and sustainability practice is more relevant than ever. Embracing the necessity for hybrid brings a significant number of advantages – expanding reach, access to presenters who you may not have heard, better data to inform decision making, greater flexibility, cost savings in some areas, re-purposing content for a wider audience and revenue generation and increased sponsorship offering.”
Stephen Noble, speaker on forum at 4000-person event.
Also presenting, Mathias Posch as part of the plenary faculty.

The Event Ecosystem – Taking the Pulse of the Industry
Fielddrive Seminar – 30 September
“The future is hybrid. The default of the future in-person meeting will become hybrid. Technology is already here; it’s just a matter of how you design the programme.”
Ori Lahav, IAPCO President - presenter

Technology v. Content – How can one support the other?
The Meetings Show - ACS and IAPCO Seminar
20 October
“Delegates considering attending a virtual event first look for professionally delivered content and high quality of speakers before committing. Once registered, sometimes at the very last minute, the ability to connect with those speakers and interact in a live platform is what builds engagement on the day. However, on-demand content made available for many months after is what builds loyalty.” Martin Boyle, IAPCO CEO, and Jarno de Boer, ACS – presenters

Virtual Forum of Global Tourism
Tourism Expo – LATAM – 14-16 September
“It is up to us, as industry professionals, to educate the market, with emphasis on the major stakeholders: speakers, delegates and sponsors. They all need to know how to better engage and interact in the new virtual space.” Ori Lahav, IAPCO President - Keynote and Expert Panellist

Brains for Gains
ITB Asia and MICE Show – 21 October
“In an ever-changing world we know WHAT we do but are spending too much time on questioning HOW we do it, rather than the more important question: WHY we do it. Understanding why our clients attend conferences in person
will help us design valuable experiences moving forward and keep our conferences relevant in the long term.”
Mathias Posch, IAPCO Immediate Past President - presenter

13th Convention India Conclave
ICPB – 30 October
“Across our industry new skills sets will be required from video production to data analysis. Venues will have to adjust to the new norm; flexibility and adaptability will be needed when it comes to contracting and space management.” Ori Lahav, IAPCO President - keynote speaker

Politicians’ Forum
FIEXPO – 25 November
“Differentiating between ‘mass gatherings’ and professionally managed business events: professionally managed business events are delivered in very controlled environments where planners can adhere to all social and safe restrictions in place whilst still ensuring the event and knowledge-share can continue; unlike a mass gathering, concert or sporting event where the general public buys a ticket to attend and the organiser loses all control.” Martin Boyle, IAPCO CEO – presenter.

Live Q&A
ICCA workshop – 28 October
“The post-COVID-19 era will lead us to apply ‘the best of both worlds’; the best that virtual meetings have to offer and the best of live meetings. But all parties – planners, associations, sponsors – will have to collaborate to address the new challenges: challenges around compliance, around sponsorship & ROI, around the role venues and destinations will play when “virtual” takes a more prominent place. One thing is sure: meetings will continue and people will come together again…” Juriaen Sleijster, MCI, and Alejandro Ramirez Tabache, BTC, representing IAPCO

Practical Realities of Medical Meetings’ Compliance in Virtual Congresses
IMPACT Dialogue - 15 October
“This is a ‘new world’ that requires new solutions through on-going industry input from across the globe. Agreed recommendations from IFPMA/EFPIA/PhRMA have now been released and are considered the launch pad for a more detailed set of guidelines to which IAPCO will contribute, as part of a larger working group, moving forward.” Martin Boyle, IAPCO CEO – moderator, with Barbara Calderwood, MCI UK, Christian-‘Claus Roth, IPCCA, Nicky Simpson, IPCAA, and Inge Hanser, CPO HANSER SERVICE, as speakers

Virtual Congresses: What does and does not work
IT&CMA
17 November
“Virtual is the now. Hybrid with hub and spoke are the default congress formats in future, but at the core of it all is the ability to communicate effectively. This will require digital communications’ experts with agile business structures coupled with the ability to provide ‘attendees’ with free, on-demand and premium content access solutions.” – Martin Boyle, IAPCO CEO – moderator, with presenters Jason Yeh, CEO, GIS Group and Nicole Walker, CEO, Arinex
The Change Curve, a popular model (Kubler Ross) that comes in various guises, is a tool that identifies the transition people go through when something happens that affects the smooth running of their daily lives whether it be organisational (large or small impact) or as catastrophic as personal loss (grief).

The reaction stages are similar. “Initially it is shock, quickly transforming into denial, before turning to anger and blame”, explained Ori Lahav, IAPCO President, introducing the Curve at the outset of IAPCO’s webinar at Planet IMEX. “At this point some will drop out while others are still on board, able to cope and move to the final two steps, acceptance and then, of course, problem solving.” Understanding this model helps us to make a better personal transition when challenges arise, and also to assist and support the needs of others. It helps us to predict how people will react.

It is a journey faced frequently, to a greater or lesser degree, but hopefully it can identify where one came from and what to expect moving forwards. It helps us to understand why we are not going to be at peak performance during periods of unwanted change. The Chart reminds us that it is normal and helps us to understand stress and the route to problem solving – something that has been in high demand this year.
CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES

‘Controlling the Controllables’ was one of the topical key messages imparted by the inspirational Olympic panel - represented by Panos Tzivanidis, Director at International Olympic Committee (Corporate Events and Services), and Victoria Thornley, Olympic Medallist for Team GB – Rowing.

Asked by moderator Ori Lahav how they each managed to handle resilience in their different Olympic spheres - as an Olympiad and as an Olympic Organiser - both had the same message to offer. “There are a lot of things I cannot control, such as what the government is trying to do regarding lockdown or what’s happening with the postponement of the Olympics,” explained Vicky. “But there are lots of things I can control. I can control my situation. I can control how I manage my training, how I communicate with my coach and my support team… and I navigate the best way that I can. But I am lucky because I am doing what I chose to do, because I want to do it. That makes it easier.”

“I share what Vicky said”, added Panos, “Resilience is very important for our industry. Too often we are focusing on things over which we have no control. People are getting demotivated and frustrated. Focus only on the things on which you can have an impact – this is a form of resilience. There is nothing you can do about a decision that the government or others have made so skip this and start focussing on things you can do and then resilience will come automatically.”

Keeping teams motivated; another legacy from the COVID-19 fall out. “Panos”, probed Ori, “you manage a very big team - suppliers, partners, stakeholders etc - how do you keep them engaged because the current situation can be very demotivating?”

Setting the scene, Panos referred to the Change Curve: “When the Olympics was postponed the team went through shock and it was difficult at the beginning to motivate them, but they found their own rhythm by themselves. It was more complicated, however, with suppliers and contractors; we had to embrace a new form of communication. Imagine a triple effect; we could not get into an aeroplane and meet face-to-face so everything had to be done by video conference which was something new for everyone. But the biggest challenge was getting used to doing new ways of business in such a different culture and embracing the language barrier. When you are doing this online it is multiplied tenfold. We overdosed on meetings and team communications. But that was the key – communication is paramount and today we are now doing it all remotely, successfully… and motivated.”

Panos’s tip of the day was a word of advice on communication: “It is essential the video is always on; a meeting without video does not help anyone.”

A final prompt from Vicky: “Put time aside to do things that make you happy and allow you to switch off; scheduling time to switch off regardless of the industry you are in. Little breaks to rejuvenate, try and put things out of your mind that you don’t want to focus on and cannot change – focus on things that make you happy.”

Visit Vicky’s blog - www.victoriathornley.com

Olympians and meeting professionals are not so different after all.

Panos Tzivanidis and Vicky Thornley speaking at the IAPCO #WinningWebinar, moderated by IAPCO President Ori Lahav as part of Planet IMEX last month, titled ‘Olympians and Meeting Professionals – not so different after all.’

TUNE IN TO FULL BROADCAST www.iapco.org/videos
Who would have ever thought that we would need to come up with the concept of Screen Fatigue, or more precisely Zoom-Fatigue?

We have all felt it at some time or other over these past few months. We cannot really explain it rationally as we have been at home, in our comfortable baggy-home clothes, but we are exhausted; why is this happening? Should the online meetings not feel like less of an effort than in-person meetings?

We have tight schedules of one video call after the other and we are sitting in the same spaces, doing the same things day after day.

Various studies are highlighting how there is a "cognitive overload" as we try to decipher and understand what is going on via the screen, connecting to our colleagues and our various work scenarios. The cognitive overload that we are experiencing comes from our brain needing to work more to read the other signals that are usually readily available in a face-to-face meeting. Our brain is trying to compensate for aspects of communication that are lacking through the two-dimensional world to which we are all connected.

Video calls require more focus than a face-to-face chat. "Video chats mean we need to work harder to process non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, and body language; paying attention to these consumes energy. Our minds are together when our bodies feel we are not. The dissonance, which causes people to have conflicting feelings, is exhausting" - Gianluca Petriglieri MD, and Associate Professor of Organizational Behaviour at INSEAD.

In addition having our own face and image magnified on the screen during calls, in which we observe ourselves and how we move and interact, is in itself quite bizarre. Marissa Schuffler, workplace and wellbeing expert adds: “When you’re on a video conference you know everybody’s looking at you; you are on stage, hence the social pressure and feeling that you need to perform. Being performative is nerve-wracking and more stressful.”

Gianluca Petriglieri recommends careful consideration regarding the following:

**Think Carefully about what needs to be a video-call meeting and what does not**
Could the video-call meeting have been an email?

**Choose whom you invite with care**
Do you really need 20 people on the call?

**Don’t waste people’s time**
Why are we meeting? How long are we meeting for? What is the task?

**Take care of your body and brain**
Don’t schedule yourself back-to-back, move around, exercise, and make sure you’re drinking enough water.
The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of forceful, dominant leaders and demonstrated that those who have the courage to be seen as vulnerable are far more effective leaders, according to a Harvard Business Review article.

Strong leaders are traditionally perceived as being highly confident and having a tough exterior. But according to a recent Harvard Business Review article, there is a case to be made for leaders who make themselves vulnerable - especially in the current world in which we live. “In a complex and uncertain world that demands constant learning and agility, the most apt and adaptable leaders are those who are aware of their limitations, have the necessary humility to grow their own and others’ potential, and are courageous and curious enough to create sincere and open connections with others,” write authors Amy C. Edmonson, the Novartis professor of leadership management at Harvard Business School, and Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, chief talent scientist at ManpowerGroup and a professor of business psychology at University College London and Columbia University.

Here are just a few of the ways Edmonson and Chamorro-Premuzic outlined how leaders can become more vulnerable with their team:

**Tell the Truth**
**Ask for Help**
**Engage Others**
**Admit your Mistakes**

Tell the truth: Encourage leaders to share their “candid perspective” with others, admitting what they know and what they are not so sure about. “Although it is easy to tell people what they want to hear, the best leaders tell people the truth, no matter how traumatic,” the authors write. “When you are clear about the challenges ahead, you help your team.”

Ask for help: “Leadership is not heroic”; it should not be about the single person in charge, but instead the leader’s ability to bring people together as a team. “This requires you to be honest about your vulnerabilities and your need for their support.”

Engage others in your self-improvement journey: Edmonson and Chamorro-Premuzic wrote that over their coaching and consulting careers they have seen some leaders who were serious enough about personal development that they openly shared feedback, such as their own performance reviews, with their teams.

Admit your mistakes and apologise: When leaders misstep, no matter how disappointed team members are, they will appreciate transparency “and trust you more than if you lie to them,” the authors write. “Failing to admit you were wrong is an ineffective strategy to persuade others that you are right, and when that strategy fails, people will question not only your judgment, but also your self-awareness.”

This article ran in Convene
The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) is pleased to announce that Hong Kong has been awarded the ‘Best City for Meetings’ in the Best of the Decade Awards (2010-2019) by Smart Travel Asia, in recognition of the city’s leading position as the ‘World’s Meeting Place’.

Since 2005, Smart Travel Asia has been conducting its authoritative Best in Travel Poll. With travel derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Best of the Decade Award was based on a combination of weighted readers’ scores and journalists’ views over ten years of polls from 2010-2019.

Hong Kong has consistently cemented its leading position over the years thanks to its strong business fundamentals. The city is set to launch a new destination image to reinforce its position as a leading MICE destination with unrivalled attributes, new world-class infrastructure developments, new Greater Bay Area initiatives and endless unique destination products and experiences.

Mr Kenneth Wong, General Manager, MICE & Cruise and Regional Director, Europe said: “Winning the ‘Best City for Meetings’ award is certainly encouraging news for us and the industry amidst the pandemic. Nothing gives more assurance than knowing Hong Kong has consistently been capturing the hearts and minds of our long-term partners and Hong Kong fans. While many visitors may not be able to come just yet, rest assured the city has applied its ‘can-do’ mind-set and flexibility to stand ready to welcome everyone back when the pandemic subsides.”

Additionally, Hong Kong International Airport has won the ‘Most Efficient Airport (Worldwide)’ title in the same award programme, being cited as a hugely efficient airport by both long-haul and short-haul passengers. This attribute was again demonstrated during the COVID-19 outbreak as the airport became one of the first in Asia Pacific to be accredited by the Airport Health Accreditation programme of Airports Council International for its efforts in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of airport staff and passengers.

www.mehongkong.com
Following a total lockdown (implemented in March 2020 as a response to the announcement that COVID-19 had made its way to Africa), Rwanda’s MICE industry is now geared up for recovery after months of stillness.

**Adjusting to the new normal:**
A cabinet meeting chaired by His Excellency Paul Kagame on 12 October lifted the restrictions of hosting MICE business from the use of 30% to 50% of the venue capacity, but with strict adherence to the advised COVID-19 health guidelines - including social distancing and the wearing of masks by all who are present.

This decision complements the current efforts the Rwanda Convention Bureau have been making to reposition its capital city Kigali as a preferred MICE destination in the region. In June 2020, Rwanda was among the first countries to re-open its Tourism and Meetings Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) industry and since then the country has managed to successfully host both local and international events.

In September, the Government of Rwanda, together with the Commonwealth Secretariat, announced the new dates for CHOGM: June 2021 (postponed from June 2020 due to COVID-19).

**Moving forward:**
Rwanda continues to establish itself as a safe, secure MICE destination due to an enabling environment, investment in world-class venues, ease of connectivity and an open visa policy among others.

With the world returning to some semblance of normality, Rwanda has not only assured its visitors’ safety but gone beyond; earning the trust of the international community by the way the country managed the pandemic. Rwanda was one of the first countries to receive the “Safe Travels Stamp” by the World Travel and Tourism Council, which meant that the country had put in place all safety and health measures in preparation for receiving visitors. Since 1 August, Kigali international airport has been open to local, regional and international travellers.

**Safety Precautions:**
The Rwanda Government’s commitment towards the safety of its people and guests cannot be over emphasised; just one example being that all travellers coming into Rwanda must present a negative PCR COVID-19 test certificate for a test taken no more than 120 hours before their initial flight. Also, upon arrival to Rwanda, visitors will be taken to the designated quarantine hotel of their choice. At the hotel they will be tested in their hotel room until they receive a negative COVID-19 result, approximately 24 hours after arrival.

Visit www.rcb.rw
“I think we would have made these changes anyway, but much slower,” says Thomas Reiser, Executive Director of the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH).

“I heard a colleague say in a round table discussion that associations have done in more or less three months than what we would have planned to do in two years.”

In Episode 13 of ICS Connects, Mathias Posch, President of ICS, holds a discussion with Thomas regarding the future of association management. One of the first topics of discussion is the speed at which the COVID-19 pandemic has forced associations around the world to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding meeting and association management. Thomas believes that associations which fail to adapt or are too slow in so doing will inevitably become a casualty of the changes in the industry.

“Either you do it or you will not survive,” Thomas states regarding the need to evolve to the current circumstances. “It’s a disruptive moment, and either you make it or you don’t.” With travel and medical restrictions keeping international associations from holding in-person events, more and
more associations are turning to the virtual space in order to host their meetings. While virtual meetings present a viable alternative, Thomas believes that virtual meetings are not quite at the level where they can replace in-person meetings – yet.

“A meeting is one of those things that personalise an association, a community - the ability to get together, the ability to see each other, to connect, in a more emotional and personal way,” he states. He says that while he has yet to see this replicated in a virtual world, he remains hopeful that new virtual technologies and formats will eventually lead to an evolution in the makeup of meetings. He highlights the invaluable networking that takes place at in-person meetings as something which is still missing from virtual events.

“One of the biggest things that early career professionals appreciate about being at these meetings is the opportunity to walk up to one of the big professors in the field and have a discussion with them and introduce themselves; to have these more informal networking opportunities. To do so virtually it needs to be a little more curated at this point.”

Mathias’s and Thomas’s conversation goes on to cover a wide range of interesting topics in meeting and association management, including the existential threat to associations and PCOs posed by the pandemic and its effect on the relationship between PCOs and associations. The conversation also proceeds to non-pandemic related topics, such as achieving buy-in from the younger generation and how different generations interact with and appreciate virtual meetings.

Thomas goes on to stress the continued need for global collaboration at a time when travel and medical restrictions have caused many associations to focus inwards, on local or national meetings.

“You don’t solve cancer in Austria, or in the United States. You solve it through global collaboration, through global change.”

Listen to the entirety of Thomas’s and Mathias’s conversation on Episode 13 of ICS Connects: www.icsevents.com/ics-connects-thomas-reiser-future-of-association-management
I have been to some dreadful parties in my time. I’ve also been to some pretty good ones. A few have been truly memorable. Disappointingly for the event management professionals reading this, the difference has never come down to theming, décor, entertainment, food or quantity of alcoholic beverage on offer. It has always been about the people in the room. More importantly; how the people in the room meet and mingle. A good party is always a party where you meet someone new, find common ground and arrange to meet again.

A good conference is the same as a good party, albeit with (possibly) less drinking and dancing involved. But the chance encounter, the meeting of minds and the tacit exchange of knowledge is what makes a good conference experience stand out from a bad one. And professional conference organisers, in-house or agency-side, know this.

Conference networking is pre-planned, structured and helped along by networking tools (and some tricks) but always by a conference programme design that maximises the opportunities for people with common professional interests and ambitions to meet.

That is why in this staggered shift to virtual and online conferences, associations are better digital hosts. They are bothered by, and restless to solve, the issue of digital hosting. They want to be sure that, whatever solution (or platform) they choose to use to host their next virtual or hybrid conference, they can directly influence who and how people meet digitally.
ASSOCIATIONS

Virt-Us Live brings together the best of live video conferencing, pre-recorded content, live streaming, and content sharing into a single, fully customisable platform. The platform enables organisations of every size to host meetings and events that are engaging, interactive and scalable; all with a core promise of creating a better delegate experience.

Associations have always been early adopters of conference technology. Today, as the long days of working from home serve to drain us of any last bit of creative programme planning, associations are proving to be better digital hosts than most. Why so? Because associations are not leaving the meet and mingle aspects of their conferences to chance. And they are not using single solutions to solve this complex problem. They are using online platform providers, of course, but they are deploying the full suite of communication tools and techniques to set up chance encounters online.

The value of networking is not measured by the number of people we meet but by the number of people we introduce to others

Simon Sinek

So hats off to those associations who are planning communication campaigns that comfortably embrace the networking opportunities either side of the conference, to those associations plotting individual (and particularly first-time attendee) social calendars, to those matchmaking across professional areas of interest and to those taking an almost forensic approach to making sure the attendees bump into as many like-minded people as possible virtually.

Virt-Us Live brings together the best of live video conferencing, pre-recorded content, live streaming, and content sharing into a single, fully customisable platform. The platform enables organisations of every size to host meetings and events that are engaging, interactive and scalable; all with a core promise of creating a better delegate experience.

Built by the agency’s in-house digital development team, the platform is already helping transition existing live events, including an association conference, company conference, AGM, and fundraiser into online events. The platform can be used by itself or integrated into Worldspan’s existing in-house production, video, logistics, content, creative & digital teams as an end-to-end solution.

CREATING A BETTER DELEGATE EXPERIENCE ONLINE

WORLDSPAN LAUNCHES VIRTUAL EVENT PLATFORM

Dec 2020

Dec 2020

23
Ernest Hemingway once famously wrote: “The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.” Alas it is 2020 and the idea of trusting is not the easiest concept to handle. COVID-19 has made our beloved events’ industry unrecognisable.

We trusted that, as in years past, this would be filled with the hustle and bustle of perfectly staged in-person events; delegates eagerly pouring out of a large lecture theatre, swarming trays of food, and lining up for coffee; exhibitors set up at their stations and eagerly greeting their curious guests; the energy and the hyperactivity. It is what event organisers do best.

Instead we were consumed by the intensity and immediacy of border closures, limited gatherings and restricted movements. The groundwork we laid future-proofing our businesses and guaranteeing longevity crumbled around us.

But in the midst of the devastation, many of us were granted much needed time to reflect, and rebuild. We took to the internet, creating virtual events’ platforms and redesigning our offerings to somehow keep our businesses afloat.

We poured trust into every aspect of our operations. We trusted our relationships with our staff, suppliers and clients. We trusted our history and skills in developing great events. We trusted the potential for making back our lost profits.

And we trusted that we would come out of this stronger, more resilient and better connected than before.

At ICMS this manifested in a creative outcome for one of our longest-standing clients, which has since become the benchmark for our current practice.

The Australian Society of Antimicrobials (ASA) has been staging its annual meetings with ICMS since 2000, the latest of which was cancelled due to COVID-19. For an association, whose greatest source of revenue stems from its carefully planned events, this was an especially detrimental blow.

ASA provides an important platform for medical professionals to share, build and celebrate their scientific discoveries and societal contributions. Their annual meeting is the highlight
of the year for all parties involved. But while the energy raised for going virtual was positive, the heavy content and long days inherent in the meeting’s format was a worry for the transition online.

The result was the launch of the innovative trademarked offering entitled ‘Antimicrobials Online’ – a year-long educational series of monthly forums, supported by our virtual events platform ICMSconnect.

Antimicrobials Online hosts a variety of session types, ensuring the attention and enthusiasm of delegates is maintained year-round. It is equipped with a real-time information desk for delegates to seek support and an interactive exhibition hall that houses downloadable informative brochures.

Most importantly it is free to all financial members of the association and incorporates sponsorship throughout, from logos on slides to opening videos, heavily decreasing the costs associated with a traditional meeting.

The first events for the year have already gained significant attention and, even more exciting, engagement from sponsors has created new business opportunities, with several connected parties making contact for their own ICMSconnect demonstrations.

It took hard work to establish these results. It took creative decision making, commitment and sincere collaboration. It took adaption, flexibility and newly developed skills. And it took trust.

Trust that we could keep the ASA community connected. Trust that we could deliver for our client. Trust that our business would survive this. Trust that even if we didn’t get it right the first time, we would just keep moving forward.

Because, after all, the best way to trust in something - is simply to trust it.
WE’RE BACK!

TravelRevive kicks off as Singapore’s first hybrid tradeshows

IAPCO Member: International Conference Services (ICS), Singapore
Author: Mathias Posch, President ICS

1000 delegates, 65 of them international from 14 different countries – doesn’t quite sound like a conference that would be held in November 2020, but yet “Travel Revive” has showcased what an ‘in person event’ could look like during the pandemic.

Leading the way with rigorous protocols and innovative solutions for the end-to-end visitor journey, TravelRevive is the first international travel tradeshows to take place physically in Asia Pacific during COVID-19, with both local and foreign attendees and exhibitors. The 1000 local and international attendees came together on-site over two days to exchange ideas, bridge knowledge gaps, and reimagine the future of travel. Alongside TravelRevive, was the IAAE Asia Hybrid Forum and SMFX x MICE Connect Forum on 26 November 2020.

"It felt incredible to walk into a conference venue again, see industry friends in person and experience sessions live."

Enhanced safety measures for all were taken to ensure the safety and well-being of attendees at TravelRevive. “Attending and speaking at the conference was certainly a completely new experience”, commented Mathias, “and started well before the conference kicked off, continuing through to post-event”.

- Each delegate received
  - an individual itinerary that specified the time slot to pick up their badge,
  - an allotted zone of 20 to sit in (within which they had to stick to the same table of 5 people)
  - a specific timeslot and zone for lunch
  - a dedicated time to visit the tradeshows floor.
• The international delegates had a planned out and controlled itinerary and had to undergo testing on arrival at the airport and then consequently again onsite.

• Every delegate had to check in and out from certain areas via an app as well as carry a token with them that would help with contact tracing should a delegate turn out to have contracted COVID-19. TraceTogether was used to facilitate contact tracing for all the international visitors.

• Onsite testing was available and required for overseas and at-risk delegates before entering the conference area – the results took only 15-30 minutes to come back and clear the attendee.

• Tradeshow booths were bigger in size and spaced further apart.

• Appointments with exhibitors could be scheduled via the app and took place in a separate area with plexiglass dividers.

• Masks were to be worn at all times by everyone.

• Shaking hands was strictly off limits.

“As a speaker I was assigned a specific seat on stage to which I had to stick and of course I received my own disinfected microphone and waterbottle” added Mathias. “As I shared a stage with speakers from overseas, I had to receive my own post-event Antigen Test as well – just to make sure.”

“Despite all the restrictions, I have to say it felt incredible to walk into a conference venue again, see industry friends in person and experience sessions live,” concluded Mathias. “The Singapore Tourism Board and ITB Asia need to be commended for the outstanding effort that went into this showcase. I had to ask myself though – will this be a model for the future? Certainly I hope that a mix of vaccines, therapies and testing will make many of the precautions taken at this conference not necessary in the future, but the conference certainly gave a great overview of all the different aspects to consider when organising an event in a COVID-19 world.”
Over the past few months many important topics have gone unnoticed or been overshadowed by COVID-19-related news. Chief among those crucial subjects is how the pandemic has changed the way people and organisations interact.

Social interaction has almost become synonymous with social media and many still consider it a must-have tool that organisations cannot neglect if they want to be successful. But anyone who has seen the documentary “Social Dilemma” can, and should, call into question the role of social media into the future of communication and community engagement.
The Problem with Social Media

A string of scandals has raised serious concerns about the basic concept underpinning the business model used by social media.

First is the issue of purpose, since algorithms are programmed to boost more on-screen time instead of meaningful interactions, quality time or relevant information.

Second is the concern over data handling, especially in countries with strict privacy laws. For example, GDPR compliance in EU countries has rendered the use of social media impractical and cumbersome for associations wanting to attract or communicate with members. We cannot overlook the ethical aspect of data handling by these platforms since it is common knowledge that they use personal data for advertising or market research purposes.

Third, social media success is quantified as “awareness”, “reach”, “likes” or “new followers” but these metrics say little about meaningful connections. There is an entire industry built around improving these metrics and yet a number is not equivalent to a loyal member - not even follower numbers guarantee that, not to mention that social media experts and gurus may be overstating their case. There certainly are a handful of success stories, mostly related to early adopters who were in the right place at the right time. But for the rest of users, success may or may not arrive, and only after a substantial monetary investment and time-consuming endeavour to get noticed and to obtain tangible results.

In short, the prime time for social media for meaningful communities is over.

The Alternative: Private Member Communities

So, should associations invest time and money in social media? Not as their sole or primary strategy. The alternative is to focus on its member base and not on social media. Digital member communities are the future of social. There are compelling reasons for this:

- Unlike social media, private communities are not controlled by corporations; associations own them. They do not have to accept questionable terms and conditions.
- Content and member data belong to the association.
- Associations can set their own success metrics and analytics processes, never in exchange for ad space or promoted posts. This makes brand activation easier and it portrays the association as an entity that cares enough to invest in creating a trustworthy community.
- Because they are not created for the general public, curated member communities foster higher engagement and solidify loyalty to organisations moved by a genuine desire to provide value to their members.

A stable network of real people with similar interests still works for most organisations. In today’s environment, being ahead of the curve means investing in building a digital space that members can call home.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is accelerating the need for real digital transformation exponentially and, with it, the need for safe digital community-building. The fact is people are spending more time online than ever. Why? Social networks are a tool that satisfies the desire of belonging to a community. To be aware of this fact presents a golden opportunity to forward-thinking associations who can address that need by investing in their own digital community solutions to grow, engage and retain membership, communicate in a safe and meaningful way and even create new revenue streams.

Now is the time to move the focus away from social media marketing and to create a modern community built around ownership and trust.
In April 2020 the expectation was that there would be a vaccine by October 2020 and by the end of the year things will slowly start to get back to our old “normal”. October has come and gone and, despite the likelihood of a vaccine on the horizon, we are still far from getting that “global vaccine” worldwide that would effectively slow the progress of COVID-19.

An IMF report of October states that “In 2021 global growth is projected at 5.4 per cent. Overall this would leave 2021 GDP some 6.5 percentage points lower than in the pre-COVID-19 projections of January 2020”¹. While these are positive predictions, travel and tourism is not expected to bounce back any time soon. Notwithstanding some travel corridors between a few countries, open borders, open destinations and risk-free travel will not come back anytime soon²⁻³.

It is November 2020. We know for certain that the world has not brought the disease under control and the real end of COVID-19 will be longer than initially predicted and/or hoped for. Given these circumstances, organisations must start planning for what is inevitable; the economic recovery of 2021 is going to be much slower than that which the pundits are predicting. Organisations need to plan and put into action certain contingencies to weather what could potentially be the mother of all economic storms. Listed below are some key considerations businesses need to keep in mind before heading into 2021:

• **Financial Planning:** Review business pipelines for the year 2021, evaluating all risk parameters and ensuring that all risks are calculated for. Ideally create three scenarios of budgets based on your country’s ability to manage COVID-19 and the predicted impact it will have on your destination. The goal should be to achieve a financially lean and profitable/or break-even operation.

• **Staffing & Skills:** The mantra to skill and re-skill staff has taken on a whole new meaning. If there is an enthusiasm for hiring or re-hiring staff because things are looking up, hold on. Re-evaluate the need; would it be prudent to get existing staff to become multiskilled and able to multitask in different roles within the organisation? Should there be an actual need to hire, ensure that the potential candidate is able to bring more than one skill to the job. Remember that “Work from Home” will continue to be a reality for most countries as the “second wave” continues to abound.
• **Streamlining Products and Services:** It is important to streamline and focus on key products. Staffing is a finite and precious resource hence streamlining services and products will ensure focus and reduce.

• **Marketing:** For the large part, almost all communication these days is digitalised and virtual. The real estate around online corporate communication is busy, cluttered and target audiences are only interested in content that is relevant to them. Build the right content, choose the most appropriate channel for your audience (go where they are) and ensure that the information is relevant and accessible.

• **Innovate:** Drive innovation across the organisation. It is time to adapt to faster and better ways of getting things done. Everything is being disrupted at a pace as never before in history, hence it is important to evaluate every cost and find ways to get the same or better result faster and cheaper. Being agile and flexible will ensure long term survivability.

COVID-19 is not taking any prisoners and has no emotional attachment to health, people and/or economies. Businesses that understand this and plan, innovate and manage their finances accordingly (read: prudently and cautiously) will have the best chance of weathering the anticipated storm.

Being prepared for the unexpected is the way forward – well, at least for 2021.

The challenge for our industry this year has been less ‘can we adapt?’ and more, ‘how fast can we actually do so?’ Meeting planners had already started redesigning the way they work by integrating what technology and globalisation offers into the way projects were planned. It is a fact that most PCOs believed that hybrid events would be the future and therefore investing in efficient event management/e-learning platforms and educating team members was already a big part in most business development plans.

Although all were well aware that it is a fast-paced world, no-one could believe that in 2020 they would have to run so fast, especially at a time when almost the entire world was forced to be locked in their homes, for a very long period of time.

From baby steps such as a webinar or a series of e-learning courses, giant strides had to be taken to plan from scratch a totally virtual congress. And while most were still under the shock of a modern pandemic, everyone had to work more efficiently than ever, training not only team members but also suppliers and clients.

2020 is almost over and while facing the worst crisis of the century, congress venues and PCOs are still alive and kicking, even if f2f conferences hardly exist. The industry adapted.

“Sometimes, when we look back to five months ago, we find it hard to believe, even ourselves, how much we have evolved and how many things we have accomplished in such a short period of time. For us in ERA Ltd, this means 21 hybrid or virtual meetings, 17 different associations, almost 8000 participants, more than 250 sponsors and 600 scientific papers and lectures,” commented Margarita Katsiavou, ERA Ltd.

While still trying to recover, and as companies plan for the upcoming year, the main challenges could be summarised as:

- Sustainability, finding the ways to keep staff and clients
- Upgrading skills by constant training
- Applying innovation and technology in daily working processes
- Creativity in negotiations (propose new services, provide “all weather” budgets etc)
- Keeping everyone healthy (the biggest challenge of all)

When the pandemic ends, and all this is just a well-remembered past, the new policies in congresses will have engraved a new chapter in the post-COVID-19 era, in the mind and souls of all of us.

Until then: “Please fasten your seatbelts because there is a possibility of unforeseen disturbances”… the journey continues!
“2020! What a year! The meetings industry went virtual - not by choice, but by necessity. Back to the drawing board for marketing strategies, meeting design and delegate engagement - upskill fast!”

This was the message which emanated from the presenters at the IAPCO webinar held on 8 December at Virtual IBTM World.

10 MARKETING SURVIVAL TIPS FOR 2021

1. Content is King and delivery is Queen
2. Leverage the power of video marketing, but keep it short, engaging and straight to the point.
3. Know your audience. Never has it been more important to understand the target audience. How technologically savvy are they? Where are they based? What content do they value?
4. Create clear ‘how to’ videos and supporting FAQ documents, as part of the marketing campaign, to ensure an improved user experience.
5. Keep on your toes. The event cycle is much less set in stone, adjustments to marketing will need to be made 365 days a year – be flexible, don’t be afraid to adjust if something is not working.
6. Timing! Timing! Timing! Work with the project manager and client to ensure that the live content has an engaged online audience. Accessibility is so important to the success of the meeting.
7. Think about your marketing budget – do you need to spend differently, boost posts nearer to the event?
8. Engage ambassadors and influencers to promote the meeting but think carefully on how to involve them for successful outcomes. Perhaps consider creating an easy to use promotional toolbox.
9. Keep looking at data and analytics to discover trends as your focus on marketing your meetings in 2021.
10. What works for one meeting does not work for another. Marketing is not a one size fits all, ensure you adjust accordingly. We are all learning as we go along in this new meeting environment – so be kind to yourself.

SPEAKERS

Magdalina Atanassova
Marcom and Brand Manager,
Kenes Group

Giulia Ineke Sarri
Marketing Communications Specialist,
AIM Group International

Olivia Galun
Marketing and Membership Manager,
IAPCO

MODERATOR
As we look towards 2021 uncertainty remains a big part of almost any conversation among event professionals. With the limited information available the only option is to prepare for multiple scenarios; all plans around events being as flexible and resilient as possible.

With restrictions varying significantly across the globe it is encouraging to see that events embracing strict safety measures are taking place. While the participant experience may not be the same, these are good examples for us all.

Our understanding of COVID-19 is continually improving and there is now specific research on the effect of events. The recently published RESTART-19 study, highlighted by EventMB, staged a reduced capacity live music concert and used a computer-simulated model of airflow to devise an epidemiological model.

The findings of the study suggest that the registration and check-in phase of the event carries the most risk of viral transmission due to the aggregation of participants. It also indicates that hygiene measures such as social distancing, the wearing of masks and regular sanitising are effective. Ventilation is also highlighted as essential to minimise risk and, regrettably, both networking and food service are simply too risky in their traditional format.

While this may not be the best news for conference organisers, it helps us plan for the future based on scientific research. In the case of fielddrive, we are actively working with conference organisers to promote staggered arrivals and staggered even participation in the case of exhibition areas. Our facial recognition powered live badging allows for a fully touchless check-in experience and, with badges printed on demand, the colour coding of name badges offers a simple way to identify participants for each time slot. Hygiene measures are also part of the offering with multiple options for monitoring participant numbers and event physical distancing.

There is no way of knowing what will happen next but we are confident that conferences will continue, and indeed continue to change, in 2021 and beyond. It is up to us all to prepare and plan based on the latest research so that we can ensure the safety of participants and be able to safely welcome more and more people to the conferences we love.

This article is brought to you by fielddrive, a Service Provider partner of IAPCO www.fielddrive.eu
TOWARDS 2021: TACKLING SDGs

IAPCO Member: Congrès Inc., Japan

Through endeavours, ranging from the management of inter-governmental conferences to medical and academic association meetings, that publish cutting-edge scientific breakthroughs and research outcomes, PCOs are engaged in advancing and fostering communications and interactions that are indispensable for debating and identifying solutions to today’s societal issues.

Whether face-to-face or virtual, PCOs, through their work, contribute to solving society’s issues in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that “Leave No One Behind”.

In Japan, Congrès Inc. launched an internal SDGs project team to tackle various initiatives.

1. Tackling the SDGs on the frontlines of meeting management

Meetings and events involving large movements of people and goods (and thus the consumption of resources) have historically had a substantial impact on the environment. They serve however to drive forward advances in science/medicine, in business and in international exchange; advances that further connect to new developments in related industries leading to innovation and creation of new partnerships.

Today PCOs are called upon to tackle initiatives to ensure sustainable business events. The rush to switch to virtual meetings in 2020 on account of COVID-19 has positively impacted this area, providing extra opportunities to promote the shift in that direction.

As Noriko Takeuchi, President, Congrès Inc. says, “SDGs are not something new within the meetings industry but now the general public is highly conscious of environmental issues and want to play their part. For the G20 Sustainable Growth and Energy ministerial meeting, we delivered aspects related to 17 of the SDGs and, because the G20 has such a broad impact, it has become easier to recommend these for other meetings in various fields, extending the outreach by calling upon participants to join in the initiatives.”

In order for society to recognise that meetings and events are necessary (if not essential) their value must first be enhanced. Meetings and events have the ability to reach and involve a broad range of the public and consequently the affinity between SDGs and the business events industry is significant. Our industries can play a large role in realising a better society through the projection of SDGs.

2. Tackling SDGs at convention centres and culture/tourism facilities

Another business domain for PCOs in Japan is the management of conference/event and cultural/tourism facilities under a tender programme for out-sourcing facility management to the private sector. Congrès Inc. operates some 90 facilities throughout the country.

Management of facilities naturally involves tackling environment-related issues however through proactively planning, self-producing and running events that educate and raise awareness of the SDGs, PCOs are endeavouring to make an even greater contribution to impact for social good.

The “Buoy Art Project” was launched at the Hamagin Space Science Center in Yokohama, providing opportunities for children to learn about marine pollution while encouraging artistic creativity. Sports Business Japan, self-produced by Congrès Inc. and held virtually this year, featured dialogue and interaction in the sports and sports-business domain, which is close to the heart of communities. The SDGs’ 2030 goals of the project involve reaching society at large through these much valued hubs.
Amidst all the challenges faced in 2020, Dubai and the wider UAE did not lose sight of other important priorities and a key development towards the end of the year was the official normalisation of relations with Israel with the signing of the Abraham Accords.

As well as all the wider social and economic ties and mutual benefits set to be realised, one immediate result was the signing of an agreement between the Dubai World Trade Centre, the region’s leading business networking destination and events venue, and the Israel Export Institute.

The agreement creates a framework for co-operation and participation in international conferences and large-scale exhibitions, organising and exchanging business delegations between the countries and support in realising the significant business partnership opportunities between both countries.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai World Trade Centre Authority and Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing said: “In the face of a rapidly evolving global setting we are confident that this collaboration will create unparalleled immediate market access opportunities for UAE and Israeli businesses that are looking to expand their reach in both countries, with wider economic impact across the region.”

Dubai resumed business events in mid-September and continues to host them safely, supported by a robust framework for planners, venues and other stakeholders. The city expects to welcome planners and delegates from around the world in 2021.

Visit [www.dubaibusinessevents.com](http://www.dubaibusinessevents.com)
HAMBURG IS POSITIONING ITSELF FOR 2021

“The past year has been a challenging one for the whole meetings industry – thus all the more reason for us to thank you for the year together; the support and continuous co-operation. You all have spread encouragement and raised hope. Let us look to the future with optimism and consider this year’s more modest and quiet celebrations as a new beginning. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a great start into the New Year.”

Smart City - Hamburg is Germany’s smartest city according to two recent studies, described as a “role model of multimodality” and named as the most advanced of 400 cities in terms of everyday digitalisation as well as digital infrastructure and strategy.

Cities of the future - Hamburg ranks 5th after San Francisco, Montreal, Houston and Düsseldorf in the “Tier 2 Cities of the Future 2020/21” study conducted by the Financial Times. Key categories were economic potential and international networking.

The Show - Hamburg is reorienting itself and has cautiously launched the first offline events, sending a clear signal for compliance with the new hygiene standards.

More about Europe’s top jewellery manufacturers ‘The Show’ in Hamburg here.

© Volker renner

Virtual Tour - Experience Hamburg virtually! Go on a journey of discovery into the future. Experience the latest highlights of the city’s hotel scene and see how meetings can be combined with creative flair and outdoor fun.

https://lnkd.in/dJ4xFfs
Yet again SIAARTI, the Italian Society of Anaesthesia, Analgesia, Intensive Care and Resuscitation - together with AIM Group International - broke the mould and re-invented the concept of a congress. With the “Travelling with ICARE” tour, anaesthesiologists and resuscitators were greeted around the country with a travelling knowledge-exchange event.

“For the first time, the congress left its physical location and travelled to major hospitals,” says Gaia Santoro, Project Manager and Head of Sponsorship Unit AIM Group International. “Anaesthesiologists and resuscitators, still dealing with the pandemic, could participate in the live events, held close to where they work, rather than travelling to a congress. It was a courageous event, but one that combines safety, knowledge exchange, innovation and ability to react.”

From 21 September to 4 October, the SIAARTI truck went on tour, visiting hospitals in eight Italian cities: Turin, Milan, Brescia, Padua, Bologna, Rome, Naples and Bari - strictly following preventive measures and social distancing. “If you are unable to participate in ICare, ICare will come to you; this was our motto”, adds Gaia Santoro.

The participants had the opportunity to meet experts, health managers, local administrators and sponsors, in the outdoor meeting area, attending dozens of round tables, interviews and “meet the expert” sessions. A total of 48 hours training was provided. In addition, all the content collected during the tour enriched the web platform of the annual congress: SIAARTI ICare 2020, which took place in a virtual format, allowing it to be enjoyed by a wider audience.

As global event professionals we have all been there; the early start, the long flight and the inevitable jet lag as we physically transition from one time zone to the next.

But virtual events present a different set of time zone challenges. When we invite people to meet virtually we need to consider availability in a very different way and schedule to suit. So how do you start to programme content so that many people in many time zones can attend?

Here are Worldspan’s top ten tips:

- Collect the time zones of your attendees by surveying them in advance. The key is to do this before selecting a date, sharing the details or opening your event registration. If you cannot do this before going live you will need to collect time zones from attendees as they register.

- When collecting an attendee time zone as part of registration you will be promoting an event on a specific date - or series of dates - but not an exact time. You can leave it broad but set expectations by telling prospective attendees how much of their day it will take. For example, you can say a half-day event or two half-days.

- Host your event in the time zone where the majority of your attendees are based. Then create an on-demand service for those who may have missed out on specific sessions because of their time difference.

- If most of your event sessions need to be a live presentation then it may be worth considering having specific days dedicated to certain time zones during your event.

- Include downloadable calendar invite links for attendees in your registration system and in confirmation emails. Most calendars update based on the person’s local time zone, which does the conversions for them.

- Try not to programme time-oriented breaks (e.g. lunch break at 12pm BST or a virtual happy hour at 5pm BST).

- Break up your event into multiple sections that split your audience. If you then have attendees with a 6-hour difference it will not matter so much.

- Anywhere you share an agenda you should explicitly list times in all relevant time zones for attendees.

- Virtual events should be shorter in length than in-person events or, at minimum, be broken up into shorter chunks over a few days. People will not sit in front of their computer and be an engaged audience for eight hours at a time. This actually helps with navigating time zones because it’s much easier to have three hours of programming across multiple time zones than 6-8 hours of programming.

- It is also worth considering interpretation within this element too. The live sessions may have had a simultaneous translation, so if you are providing people with an on-demand service who missed the live content, transcribed translation may need to be considered.
The meetings industry has undergone a profound transformation since the beginning of the year. The shift from in-person events to online events has involved significant logistical challenges, and organisers have also had to come to grips with new forms of securing potential sponsors and ensuring sponsorship packages deliver something of value to all stakeholders.

In light of the latest industry changes, event sponsors may have a reasonable concern: is sponsoring online events effective and profitable? Will its impact on the target audience be comparable to in-person events? The answer is yes and, in the following section, we will examine how to transmit this positive message to potential sponsors.

Guidelines for Sponsoring Online Events

Whether we are talking about a hybrid event, an online conference or an in-person gathering, event sponsorship is essentially about value. Potential sponsors still want to know how the event will help them achieve their business goals and promote their brand among the target audience. In the new environment this requires having updated marketing personas that take into consideration the impact of this year’s disruption into attendee needs and expectations.

The sponsorship package concept still applies, as do the event metrics that organisers need to gather to sell different packages. When it comes to sponsoring online events, it is crucial to go beyond metrics like attendee numbers, audience engagement and social media impressions.
In the current scenario, organisers must understand that many sponsors will only be willing to invest in minimum risk solutions, so the scale of sponsorship packages should be revisited. For example, it may be more effective to sell an online event sponsorship based on lead counts or 1-to-1 meetings, allowing sponsors to set their own targets and creating sponsorship tiers around those.

A few aspects need adjusting or rethinking entirely. The most obvious is the medium through which sponsorship value and benefits are delivered. Organising online events entails, at the very least, pivoting towards digital sponsor booths, online demos and ad space, and remote interactions.

Five Online Conference Sponsorship Ideas

• **Hyperlocal chat sessions**
  Online events have opened up their potential target audience to the entire world. Despite their global scope it can be productive to include one-to-one chat sessions with local sponsor representatives. This adds a more personal touch to the entire experience.

• **Sponsored games or team-building activities**
  Games and team-building activities are an effective way of keeping the sponsor’s name top of mind as their brand will be associated with an engaging session. In addition why not top it up with a branded thank-you gift for participating?

• **Virtual exhibition booths**
  Virtual booths are particularly apt in medical and healthcare conferences. A basic but effective format could include having an attendee click on a logo to access a virtual medical technology demo, or pre-booking a 1-to-1 online meeting with the sponsor’s team.

• **Swag bags**
  Digital swag bags can be emailed to attendees or delivered via messaging through event apps. Emails or messages must clearly highlight the sponsor’s logo and fully describe the freebies and their benefits. It is also possible to mail physical swag bags. In this case make the offering relevant to the growing digital interaction we are all experiencing.

• **Branded coffee breaks**
  Conference breaks are not just time off; they can be a memorable experience where participants get something valuable and engaging. This could include anything from short yoga sessions to celebrity Q&As or live recipe or cocktail preparation by well-known personalities.

Conclusion

The shift from physical events to digital events touches on every aspect of event planning but does not need to jeopardise the organiser’s ability to secure sponsorship. Restrictions on live events can be turned into opportunities because they urge organisers to get creative with their online event sponsorship ideas.

When guided by a desire to align objectives and deliver value, this creativity can help forge mutually beneficial partnerships. Design compelling packages that deliver exposure, stimulate engagement and promote the sponsor’s brand. This will help make the transition towards digital event sponsorships smooth, rewarding and successful.

A result of virtual congresses having become the new normal is that organisers have only a short lead time in which to prepare. One of the many challenges is the professional production of lectures for the virtual event; the solution of choice being pre-recording. However a home office is not a professional studio.

In terms of background, lighting, hardware and internet connection, faculty members will have different settings at the place from which they participate.

To optimise the quality of speaker videos, an organiser needs to prepare detailed guidelines for virtual presentations, providing advice as to how video and sound can be improved with minimal effort. For example:

- By keeping the background neutral
- Having the face lit from the front
- Recording in a quiet room (preferably by oneself)
- Speaking straight towards the microphone and
- Looking into the camera as often as possible

If criteria such as this are met, a consistent quality of the stream is ensured that makes it smoother for participants to follow the content.

For a large number of speakers, a dedicated appointment scheduling software for the recordings is recommended, through which speakers can select time slots. For international events it is helpful to use software whereby speakers can choose their own time zone before selecting an appointment.

About a week before the recording, speakers receive an e-mail with a link to upload their slides, as well as the meeting ID for the recording. During the recording technical staff provide recommendations on the settings, and guide the speakers through the procedure.

By calculating one hour per presentation, even with “second takes” and speakers who are running late, there are no time issues.
The business events sector came together to attend ‘The Turn of Events, Bringing Business Events Back’ in an Australian wide hub and spoke format on Wednesday September 16 in 6 city locations across Australia and live streamed globally.

This new delivery format brought to fruition the vision of collaboration and kick-starting the business event sector in Australia. Arinex CEO, Nicole Walker, was proud to bring together over 26 organisations in a spirit of unity to showcase business event readiness. Live and virtual events from six capital cities in Australia launched the process of reigniting the passion to 488 business event planners and Associations in Australia and globally.

Business event professionals and clients were able to attend in their preferred Australian city either in person or virtually. Virtual and live attendees were catapulted out of hibernation by MC Nick Bartlett who guided attendees to their selected breakouts that featured over 30 industry panellists followed by a face-to-face and virtual networking experience.

The Arinex DCO (Digital Conference Organising) team gathered insights from this event that will assist planning and management of future hub and spoke and virtual events. Knowledge was acquired about the integration of technological systems across multiple platforms including:

- The learning that the technology staff required is double that of a face-to-face event
- Appropriate lighting for recording purposes may conflict with normal face to face lighting norms
- Sound and picture syncing should be tested in all locations
- Guidelines on screen backgrounds
- Appropriate clothing colour for speakers

Dr Vanessa Findlay from Business Events Council Australia (BECA) provided details about the newly announced $50 million business events government funding package, and survey responses from attendees post event confirmed that ‘The Turn of Events’ kick-started events in Australia. Attendees enjoyed attending a physical event after a difficult six months with isolation compounding the financial loss.

Hub and Spoke joins Virtual and Hybrid as the new ways of delivering events.
While Healthcare Practitioners (HCPs) - as well as event professionals - adjust to virtual events, the format shows a lot of promise. Ground-breaking science continues to reach HCPs online, even professionals across disciplines. With an extended event life, there are more opportunities for all stakeholders: the event owner, supporters, participants and, yes, organisers too. And because we find ourselves in this unique moment in time, let this be a reminder that we need to inherit the future rather than aim at saving the past.

Everyone across the industry sector is looking at virtual events believing that that is the way forward, and that it is a good way. But do we have evidence of what is really required for a successful virtual event? Have we heard it from the HCPs direct?

Kenes took up the challenge by conducting an in-depth survey, and answers to the questions are being carefully analysed and reproduced in their White Paper “What do Healthcare Practitioners want from Virtual Events?” 809 past delegates, from 112 countries over 6 continents, provided truly global feedback on the pressing question of effective virtual conferences.

Whilst some HCPs preferred in-person events because they enjoy:

• Dedicated time and space to dive deeper in the scientific content
• The better networking and human interaction which is spontaneous

...to name just a few; there was overwhelming feedback on the benefits of virtual events.

Content remains King but delivery is the new reigning Queen

Among many other advantages named, the top reasons to enjoy the virtual event were:

• The flexibility given in terms of time management, or understanding complex content with the option to stop and rewind
• Saving time that would be spent in travelling to and from the conference destination
• The possibility to listen to all the content that usually would be often presented in concurrent sessions
• Availability of the content and the option to view it on-demand

The support to HCPs remains but is now focused on allowing undistributed time to fully submerge into the virtual experience. The survey summed up the elements that form The Ideal Virtual Event.

Read the full results bit.ly/HCPsurveyDownload
The Ideal Virtual Event

EVEN A MARATHON CAN GO DIGITAL
IAPCO Member: AIM Group International

“Creativity, resilience and flexibility are essential during the pandemic, especially for event organisers”, remarked Rosangela Quieti, Managing Director of the Congress Division of AIM Group International. “The current restrictions on mass gatherings and social distancing measures are pushing us to be more creative and courageous”.

This was the case for the SIR Run: a virtual marathon held throughout Italy, designed by AIM Group for the Italian Society of Rheumatology (SIR) to raise awareness about rheumatic diseases among the public.

“Sports events are much debated as potential public health risks but they are still a major part of social life and, for many people, viewed as an indispensable part of the year”, explained Fabrizio Rizzi, key account manager of AIM Group. “Within current constraints we tried to find an alternative and innovative solution combining a safe sporting event with a communications campaign aimed at promoting a culture of well-being and awareness about rheumatic diseases. The hybrid marathon was born”.

Participants ran individually in their own city while making short videos with their mobile phones, explaining who they were, why they love to run, their preferred place to run and their favourite place in their city. The selected videos were used to produce a short film about the run and the beauty of Italy. The film was presented to much acclaim during the 57th SIR National Congress (25-28 November 2020).

“Over the past few months we have been creating a series of first-time projects that are innovations on our usual practices. It is clear that ‘going digital’ is not only obligatory but can also mean an opportunity to reach new audiences and targets. We are experimenting, pivoting to new formats and events and expect that they will become unique features for our association and corporate clients in the future”, concluded Rosangela.
Creating memorable business events when face-to-face opportunities are limited is now much simpler thanks to the Melbourne Convention Bureau’s (MCB) new digital marketing site - designed to help planners and PCOs promote Melbourne and Victoria to delegates attending future meetings.

The Delegate Destination Site provides event organisers with relevant destination content and resources to help optimise their business event and boost delegate engagement with the event’s host destination.

MCB Chief Executive Officer Julia Swanson said, like most businesses, MCB is focused on maintaining support for its clients and is responding by reorganising the digital delivery of some of its products and services in lieu of traditional sales and marketing activities:

“As cities worldwide are in different stages of the coronavirus pandemic, usual conference promotion and marketing schedules have been disrupted. Alternative solutions to ensure clients can keep promoting their meetings are in big demand.”

Building on the event planning support already provided by MCB, the Delegate Destination Site can be easily accessed via a button on a conference website and seamlessly integrated into organisers’ existing communication channels.

The site’s VR and experiential content has proved to be a real hit as demand for virtual and hybrid meetings has increased. The user-friendly site features a wide range of resources to virtually explore the destination, key travel information, exciting itinerary ideas and special offers from MCB partners to experience the best of Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The site also features a light-hearted ‘Working from Home Kit’ to support clients and delegates still working remotely. At its core, the survival kit has a destination focus and offers fun online activities, Melbourne Zoom backgrounds and virtual experiences provided by MCB partners.

Click here to access all features of the Delegate Destination Site.
Toronto's hospitality industry has always made guest safety a high priority and that commitment has taken on new importance in the current environment. From placing restrictions on gatherings to continuously updating travel measures, the destination remains vigilant and responsive.

Toronto's hospitality community continues to keep guests safe by following the highest of health and safety standards and adhering to public health guidance. Here is what groups can expect:

- **Reduced capacity** - Business enforcing physical distancing by reducing the number of guests.
- **Managed traffic flow** - Timed tickets and physical navigation markers help to lessen crowds and keep foot traffic moving along.
- **Mandatory masks** - Face coverings are required of both employees and guests.
- **No-touch technology** - Expect to read menus via QR codes and check-in via app.
- **Cleanest of clean** - Cleaning protocols and sanitation stations will be rigorous and plentiful.

Destination Toronto, along with several hotels and attractions in the city, has received the “Safe Travels” stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) - recognising the adoption of the WTTC’s health and hygiene protocols for travel safety. The move follows the high priority Toronto's hospitality industry have placed on safety over the course of the pandemic.

Administered domestically by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO), the WTTC stamp will allow guests and future travellers to recognise businesses that have adopted health and hygiene global standardised protocols so that guests can experience ‘Safe Travels’.

From placing restrictions on gatherings to continuously updating travel measures, the destination remains vigilant and looks forward to welcoming guests soon.

www.destinationtoronto.com
Arinex, Australia and their collaborating partners, Business Events Perth, AIM Group International and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre were announced as the winners of the IAPCO Driving Excellence – Collaboration Award during the IBTM World Virtual Awards Ceremony.

Ori Lahav, IAPCO President and VP Client & Operations, Kenes Group said ‘2020! What a year… The PCO year of innovation, collaboration, resilience, adaptation and forward-thinking. It is time for us to celebrate the triumphs, despite the still challenging climate.

The winners demonstrated the power of collaboration, where partners and supporters came together for the good of the business events industry to deliver one of the first and largest business events industry hub and spoke events since COVID19 pandemic: The Turn of Events; Bringing Business Events Back

IAPCO received a record number of high quality submissions for the award in 2020. These submissions were shortlisted to the following finalists:

- ICMS, Australia with the Australian Society of Antimicrobials
- Arinex, Australia with Business Events Perth
- Conference Partners International with Glasgow Convention Bureau

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY VENUE WEST**

Venue West Conference Services, Vancouver, is proud to announce that the company was founded 50 years ago on 18 November 1970 by four brave women, Betty Fata, Mae Yee, Olga Nazarchuk and Lou Cox.

They persevered through industry doubts that nobody would need their services as “conference planning” was done by secretaries and junior staff. After focusing on small local association meetings for the first few years, Venue West changed its focus in 1975 to international congresses after the founders attended the ICCA and IAPCO meetings in Berlin. Venue West became the first IAPCO member in Canada and, since that day, the founders never looked back turning Venue West into an internationally recognised PCO. Betty would go on to become the President of IAPCO and was instrumental in turning Vancouver into a top meeting destination in the world.

After Betty passed away in 2004, Venue West was bought by her long-time friend, Sue Daugulis, who continues to operate the company as a proud family-owned and operated business in Vancouver. Venue West continues to be involved in the international community and is one of the longest standing members of IAPCO.
INNOVATION IS A MUST

Monica Fusaro and Marta Calderai, AIM Group International, were the celebrated winners of the IAPCO Driving Excellence Innovation Award, supported by IMEX. In a break from tradition the awards ceremony took place during the IAPCO #WinningWebinar as part of PlanetIMEX and was witnessed by a 100-strong zoom audience of meeting professionals.

The award celebrates those innovations and creative solutions where individuals have met a challenge and gone the extra mile to deliver above and beyond their clients’ expectations.

Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX, was delighted to make the announcement: “IMEX and IAPCO have had an amazing partnership over the past 20 years and for the past six years we have been delighted to present their award during our gala dinner. This year we will celebrate virtually. We are delighted to recognise the creativity of the IAPCO membership which, as everyone in the industry recognises, is the pinnacle of professionalism. I am therefore delighted to announce the winners, Monica Fusaro and Marta Calderai, for their innovation of introducing web TV to their clients’ congress to broaden the reach of its high-quality scientific content.”

Marta and Monica were delighted. “We are very proud to be the winners of this award, especially considering this particular moment in our lives when innovation is a must”, commented Marta. “It is an additional motivation for us to go on and to continue working hard and with the same passion we have always had”, concluded Monica. “Thanks so much.”

MORE THAN JUST A CLIENT / SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP

Göteborg & Co were awarded the IAPCO Driving Excellence Recognition Award during their Annual Members’ day on 19 November 2020. The award, nominated by IAPCO member Kenes Group, recognises a supplier that has gone above and beyond in their service, commitment and delivery of a successful meeting.

The nomination highlighted more than just a supplier/client relationship but a partnership built on strong foundations and spanning over many years; working together to deliver high-quality meetings.

Ori Lahav, IAPCO President, said: “One thing that became apparent once we started working with Gothenburg’s team was the superb blend between the different suppliers. In very few destinations do you feel as if you are talking to one cohesive meeting’s organism that is working together with you towards delivering the perfect event. It is a place where the local team consider how to make your event greener and the best way to impact the local community through a well-thought-out legacy project.”

Annika Hallman, Director of the Gothenburg Convention Bureau at Göteborg & Co replied: “This is an award dedicated to the whole destination showing the importance of collaboration between the suppliers in the meetings industry. Meetings involve the exchange of knowledge, which develops and drives research, business and society forward. We want Gothenburg to continue to be a sustainable and innovative destination speaking with one voice.”
NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RE-OPENING EVENTS

IAPCO Member: ICOM Group, Egypt

Following the Prime Ministerial Decree, Egypt returned to conferences and events as of October 2020. This re-opening is expected to drive the Egyptian Economic Revitalisation because it puts people at the heart of its business model: “We bring people together to do business, to learn, to inspire and to meet.”

ICOM organised several hybrid events during September and October and this dual model is making a huge bounce in the industry outcomes. People and businesses are enthusiastic about this new template as it embraces both the virtual and the physical.

“We all want things to go back to normal quickly and be able to meet each other again soon”, commented Dr Ahmed El Shal, ICOM Group Chairman. “The good news is that we finally found the way to return back to resume the events business in a safe manner using the Hybrid & Physical New Normal. These new events’ formats are the future of the events industry, we just need to trust these new norms and accept them in our business lives.”

As a market leader in the Middle East, ICOM foresees that hybrid events will be the new norm: “These are the kind of events that straddle physical and online space - each complementing the other. Virtual sessions that allow events to transcend geographical boundaries and time will make for a more inclusive experience.”

SHINE GOLD PROMOTING AWARENESS OF CHILDHOOD CANCER

IAPCO Member: Cankarjev dom, Slovenia

Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, decided to make a difference and join the worldwide initiative to raise awareness of childhood cancer launched by the International Society of Paediatric Oncology – SIOP. This socially responsible act brings professional congress organisation to a new level.

SIOP, the only global multidisciplinary society entirely devoted to paediatric and adolescent cancer with 1800 members worldwide, has a vision that no child should die of cancer. SIOP declared September 2020 an international Childhood Cancer Awareness Month to honour the thousands of children/young people and their families who are dealing with a cancer diagnosis. Gold is the colour that symbolises this worldwide awareness.

The year 2020 is particularly difficult as the world grapples with the coronavirus pandemic. It has therefore become even more important to recognise that cancer did not disappear or go away. To promote human welfare Cankarjev dom – one of Slovenia’s most iconic buildings - joined the Shine Gold Campaign along with many other famous and historic landmarks, monuments, bridges, and natural environments across the world. In lighting up its marble façade in gold, CD – a congress centre committed to fostering scientific development, life-saving research and innovations – demonstrated its support for the community and expressed human concern for its most vulnerable members: the children.
8 DECEMBER - BRITAIN BEGINS ROLLOUT OF COVID-19 VACCINE

This was the day that the first vaccine outside of a clinical trial was administered, with Margaret Keenan, a 90-year-old grandmother, becoming the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine shot. Millions will follow and, although there is still much pain and agonising yet to come, there is light at the end of the tunnel and hope that during 2021 this pandemic can be beaten. The fight against COVID-19 has taken an historic leap forward.

Since that first shot, throughout the day, 1000s of vaccines have been administered, creating the history makers - the first people in the UK and the world to receive the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine outside a clinical trial. People aged over 80, as well as care home workers and NHS staff, have been given the first batches.

And on another note, inline with many other governments worldwide taking similar measures, the UK’s Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced on 23 November that business events will be allowed to continue in Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas now that the UK has emerged from its national lockdown on 2 December.

Indoor events of up to 1000 (or 50% capacity of the venue) are now able to be staged, with larger numbers for outside performances, all of course subject to social distancing.

Event associations welcomed the PM’s announcement: The Meetings Industry Association (MIA), Association of Event Organisers (AEO), Association of Event Venues (AEV), and the Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA), released a joint statement on 24 November: “The business events sector warmly welcomes the Prime Minister’s announcement ……… This integrates the business events sector with sports and performing arts sectors, providing the consistency for which the associations have been fighting.”

Capacity limits remain in place, however, but the associations expressed a positive outlook as the industry looks to rebuild confidence among its client base. “While the road to recovery will no doubt have a few bumps, this is a start,” the statement concluded.

ADVOCATING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR INDUSTRY

IAPCO Members: AFEA, CONVIN and ERA, Athens

Three Organisations (HAPCO, Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau and Thessaloniki Convention Bureau) recently formed a collaboration with the aim of jointly conducting research on the impact of COVID-19 on national meetings. HAPCO was represented by three IAPCO member companies*: AFEA CONVIN and ERA, together with Mrs Zenia Kerasidou (HAPCO Vice President).

The survey results, as well as the next steps and strategy of the three Organisations towards a better future for the industry, were presented at the Series 1 of the Greek Meetings Industry Web-Forum. This virtual event, broadcast live via 3D Technologies and available nationwide, was a huge success with very high attendance. IAPCO President Ori Lahav participated in the event, highlighting the positive impact and value of the international meetings industry and its important role in the recovery process.

The productive collaboration between these Organisations continues and Series 2 of the Greek Meetings Industry Web-Forum will follow soon.

HAPCO is also a member of the Global Task Force of National Associations of PCOs led by IAPCO.

(*) HAPCO (the Hellenic Association of Professional Congress Organizers) was represented by Mrs Irene Tolis - ERA (HAPCO President), Mrs Sissi Lygnou - AFEA (HAPCO General Secretary), Mrs Antonia Alexandrou - CONVIN (HAPCO Board Member), and Mrs Zenia Kerasidou (HAPCO Vice President).
AIM Group Lisbon Office hosted the 1st fully virtual Annual Meeting of the Portuguese Society of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (SPAIC) with a remarkable success story for its 70th anniversary year.

In an atypical year that has tested the organisation’s adaptability, resilience and creativity, AIM Group Lisbon Office managed to overcome challenges, transforming them into opportunities.

The key lessons:

- The importance of greater detailed planning with actions itemised per minute
- An effective communication with all stakeholders
- The necessity to add forms of interaction and engagement during the virtual experience for both participants and sponsors

ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SERVICES (ICS), CANADA

Working from home doesn’t stop this great project team at ICS from smiling in a virtual auditorium.

ON ICCA CONGRESS

We might not have been able to be there in person, but we were certainly there in spirit.
CONGRESS BY DESIGN ON AIR

Last month ‘Congress by design’ presented their online platform Congress by design On Air to a number of their clients. This multifunctional platform designed for (inter)national meetings contains live Q&A, polls, network facilities, poster viewing/discussion, exhibition etc.

This platform will be key in supporting their customers in re-designing their meetings to online or hybrid. Martin Boyle CEO of IAPCO opened the launch proceedings with an overview of IAPCO.

NEW MEDICAL ONLINE CHANNEL

IAPCO Member: ICOM Group, Egypt

UES (The Universal Experts Studio) is one of ICOM’s new products; a medical online channel that records interviews and round table discussions with experts from around the world sharing their valuable knowledge and expertise through a series of talk shows broadcast through the ICOM platform www.experts-studio.com

The main objective is to spread knowledge and transmit an authentic medical voice direct from the top KOLs in Egypt and the region in a more interactive way. The portal has many videos that penetrate hot topics and discussions in several specialties including Cardiology, Diabetes, Nephrology, Oncology, Pediatrics etc.

We promise our audience (our knowledge-seekers) a unique experience through watching a wealth of on-going discussion between eminent experts and receiving the best of science from medical leaders.

Achievements over the past two months bear witness to its success, with 11 specialties and 200 episodes.

AIM COMMUNICATION ACQUIRES MAJORITY STAKE IN GAS COMMUNICATION

IAPCO Member: AIM Group International

AIM Communication - the open innovation network dedicated to communication, brand activation and digital technologies (part of AIM Group) - has acquired the majority stake in GAS Communication, an established communications agency specialized in PR and Media Relations. The consolidated teams are now providing fully integrated communications strategy and services including brand communication, PR, media relations and digital technology.

GAS Communication is a communication and public relations agency specialised in the health sector, which has been offering communication consultancy and highly professional services since 1999.
Entertaining virtual-style. Surgeons at the 120th Annual Congress of the Japan Surgical Society, organised by JCS, take up their instruments to entertain delegates at the virtual reception.

A virtual meeting is a lot more than just using Zoom or some other system. For instance, in anticipation of the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Japan Pediatric Society, JCS had to organise a multitude of laptops with far more scrutiny than for a traditional-style meeting; checking the speakers’ screen, the chairs’ screen, Q&As, not to mention online distribution and live stream devices for each session.

The 3rd International Red Sea Emergency Virtual Conference took place from 10-12 October 2020. With the help and support from the Saudi Arabia Emergency Medicine Society and King Faisal Hospital the virtual event was executed with 660 attendees. The event, attended by national and international faculty members, involved building an interactive virtual exhibition with great features; networking sessions for all delegates as well as workshops and competitions to keep them engaged.

In September 2020 MCI Denmark arranged a hybrid conference with several pharmaceutical companies as sponsors and participants from respiratory medicine departments from the country’s hospitals. The physical part of the European Lung Congress ERS in Vienna had been converted into a virtual congress due to COVID-19. MCI Denmark created a Danish hybrid solution in collaboration with the Danish Society of Respiratory Medicine.

Nine pharmaceutical companies participated as sponsors and the Danish respiratory doctors were invited to join two 3-day meetings in Roskilde and Vejle. In both destinations there were three session rooms including a studio from which Danish lectures were broadcast between the two meeting locations. There was a direct link to the ERS virtual sessions broadcast into the three rooms divided by topics. Local hosts provided relevant discussions after the sessions. During the breaks there was the always the opportunity for further networking and conversations with exhibitors and sponsors, at all times taking into account COVID-19 rules and guidelines. Fifty people attended in each of the two locations and 100 persons participated on-line.
AIM Group International last month published its Corporate Annual Report 2019 and announced positive economic and business results. On the one hand these results highlighted how the recent health emergency has put a brake on a cycle of growth for the Group while on the other they provided reassurance of the ability to face up to the current challenges.

“The positive economic results confirm the stability of our Group and are particularly important now as we face today’s extraordinary market situation”, outlines Gianluca Buongiorno, President of AIM Group International. “The global pandemic, which spread suddenly and completely disrupted our industry, forced us to review our business plans and to focus on service innovation, with a major shift to virtual and digital events and internal reorganisation.”

DESTINATION PARTNERS

Long-term partners of IAPCO, each representing specific regions of the world

webEDGE

Supporters of web-EDGE educational programme - KLCC and MyCEB

HOSTS, SERVICE PROVIDERS & CONVENTION CENTRES

Recognising convention centres and suppliers to the meetings industry who provide an insight into current trends, latest innovations, advice and tips and quality service. And thanks to the hosts of our Council Meetings throughout the year.