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When the European Society of Association Executives (ESAE) came to us last year to discuss the possibility of an exclusive partnership, the conversation revolved quickly around strategic terms. The association had been around for some time, but had yet to position itself clearly, with definite added values.

Fast-forward a few months, and ESAE has embarked on an ambitious journey, which Boardroom is happy to support. After all, ESAE is a unique community of association members who want to develop themselves professionally and who want to make their voices heard on a European level and beyond. This works in harmony with Boardroom's vision of leading the conversation in the most innovative best practices and developments for associations.

At ESAE's General Assembly in June, during which Boardroom Advisory Board Member Giuseppe Marletta was elected President, a new strategic plan for the upcoming three years was unveiled. Including an organisational restructuring, bold goals for stronger membership and activities, as well as the development of additional initiatives,

dedicated to Association Leaders only, the plans are ambitious... and rightly so.

Giuseppe put it this way: *"At ESAE, we have strong ambitions for the coming three years. Not only we are on a mission to increase the number of our members - and in Brussels, with the strong base of headquarters of European and international associations, there is definitely something to do! - but we will also expand our education offering. It's our plan to organise one workshop a month for association executives to learn and network with their peers. I believe no-one else offers this at the moment."*

In that regard, all we wish ESAE is to be as successful as ASAE, its American older sister, whose members are trade associations and individual membership societies that represent almost every sector of the economy and countless professions. With 44,000 individual members, ASAE really leads the association community.

And you know what? At the time of writing, Boardroom is finalizing a collaboration with ASAE, with which both organisations will expand its offering. More on this very soon - both online and in print.



Rémi Dève

Founder & Chief Editor



Cécile Volz

Founder & Managing Partner



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CONTENTS



FEATURE: THE RESOURCES ARE HUMAN

EDITOR'S PAGES



THE CASE OF THE WWF	06
HOW TO APPEAL TO THE NEXT GENERATION	08
#MEET4IMPACT	11
DUBAI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2019	14

THE VOICE OF



KLCC	16
------	----



SOLUTIONS FOR STAFFING ASSOCIATIONS	21
-------------------------------------	----

Lane Nieset explores the challenges of - and solutions for - finding suitable candidates for staffing associations.

FROM PURPOSE TO IMPACT THROUGH MOTIVATED STAFF AND VISIONARY LEADERS	23
--	----

Finding one's own purpose and identifying the path through which this purpose will be put to use is key to accelerating the growth of your staff and deepening their impact, in both their professional and personal lives.

ASSOCIATIONS OUTSOURCING HUMAN RESOURCES?	26
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Annalisa Ponchia shares her insights on the opportunities presented by outsourcing certain association services, including human resources.

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE THROUGH INNOVATIVE PEOPLE	28
--	----

From a venue point of view, Helen Fairclough, from Melbourne, explains how an innovative, service-driven and visionary team of employees can inspire excellence.

DESTINATIONS



PARIS	32
NEW ZEALAND	38
MONACO	40
WASHINGTON	42
WALES	44
TEL AVIV	46
ZURICH	48

INSIGHT SERIES



HOLLAND	34
---------	----



The Case of the WWF

Who doesn't know the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the international organization working in the field of the wilderness preservation and the reduction of human impact on the environment? Just the name conjures up images of cause-driven individuals fighting against habitat loss, climate change, illegal trapping of endangered species... and the list goes on. What might be lesser known is the organization's growth strategy, which has to take into account all kinds of local characteristics, as Sid Das, Director, Digital Engagement, WWF International, explains here.

Interview Rémi Dévé

The WWF is a global organization. How do you define 'global' in your case?

WWF came into existence in 1961. From its origins as a small group of committed wildlife enthusiasts, WWF has grown into one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations – supported by 5 million people and active in over 100 countries across five continents.

Over this time, WWF's focus has evolved from localized efforts in favour of single species and individual habitats to an ambitious strategy to preserve biodiversity and achieve sustainable development across the globe.

From numerous initiatives, priority areas and priority species, the entire WWF Network focuses on six major goals – forests, oceans, wildlife, food, climate & energy, and

freshwater– and three key drivers of environmental problems – markets, finance and governance. As a network, we organize ourselves around communities of practice with one for each goal and driver. We are becoming more focused and more targeted in our efforts while building on the interconnectedness of each of these issues within the global agenda. WWF aims to bring the weight of its unique local-to-global network to bear and drive these issues forward cohesively.

Can you explain your growth strategy to be even more global' and what it implies?

Our mission is to ensure that people and nature thrive together. Our growth strategy is two-pronged. On one hand, we are looking to actively engage a billion people to care for nature. Nature not only provides us with all the things we need to live - from the air we

breathe to the water we drink, and from the shelter we need, to the economy we rely on - but also makes our lives better. However, its growing loss puts this all under threat.

On the other hand, we are looking to get nature up the political agenda. The world needs to come together to set ambitious targets to reverse nature loss as it did for climate. We will have a tremendous opportunity to influence the future direction of some of the world's most important policy instruments for sustainable development in the year 2020. We need policymakers to reset the agenda so that by 2030 the loss of nature starts to reverse.

What are your challenges as a global organization?

We are living in a time of unprecedented risk but also an unparalleled opportunity for the



future of our planet and our society. A time where the world's wildlife has halved in less than a generation; oceans, rivers and forests are struggling to cope with our growing pressure upon them; and where we are still on a path toward catastrophic climate change impacts.

As a global organization, our challenge is to balance local conservation priorities with the global agenda. We need to constantly align ourselves to the direction that is increasingly being set by governments, civil society and businesses. Additionally, the smooth flow of information between all of the offices in the world is something we put a lot of effort and emphasis toward. We choose innovative platforms like Facebook Workplace to ensure our employees and volunteers get all of the information they need.

Can you explain how you decide to locate regional offices and why?

We decide regional offices based on conservation needs. While we have 'Network offices' that focus on the conservation needs of a country, the regional offices look to bring countries together to weave a cohesive conservation strategy and its implementation. We also look at other factors like access to regional talent, attitude to environmental conservation amongst numerous other criteria. Currently, we have regional offices in Singapore, Woking, Nairobi and at our headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

You're based in Singapore. Why is that so? How does Singapore respond to the needs of your organization?

Singapore is at the forefront of conservation in Asia Pacific. The mission of WWF across the Asia Pacific is to ensure a future for both

people and nature. WWF has been working to conserve Asia Pacific's astonishing wealth of biodiversity for over four decades and has considerable experience in engaging with partners for conservation solutions that benefit people, economies and the environment. Singapore satisfies all of the criteria for WWF's regional hub. We are able to liaise with teams around the region easily and have access to regional media, creative agencies, fantastic corporate partners and a wide pool of talent which truly helps us build a global organization.

This piece is part of the exclusive partnership between Boardroom and the Global Association Hubs Partnership (GAHP), which comes as an innovative response to the increasing decentralisation of international associations, as they look to develop their activities globally.
www.associationhubs.org

How to Appeal to the Next Generation

With Millennials entering the market and baby boomers exiting, it is more and more crucial for scientific associations to involve young physicians and facilitate an easy handover. Associations have to think about younger generations increasingly and to take action in a way that will deliver value to them. Association congresses are, for example, a great time to promote it.

Words Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno

But the increasing of the membership of young professionals is not enough, and should not be considered as an objective in itself. The challenge for associations is to engage the young generations as an active part of the association's life, giving them direct responsibilities, creating volunteer opportunities, speaking their languages and answering their specific needs.

There are multiple ways of engaging the new generation, here are some best practices, taken from recent events.

The first example involves young physicians at the highest level, where decisions are made. For instance, you can create a "parallel young board" alongside the executive board, with a representative in the executive board and

supporting the congress organisation with a focus on the needs of the younger generation.

SOCIAL AMBASSADORS & COMMUNICATION MULTIPLIERS

Millennials were born with smartphones in their hands, so you can attract them if you are on social media and communicate with them consistently, with stories preferably. It is a great way for you to explain, for instance, why the association can be useful for their professional development.

Young delegates, in addition, can be involved as social ambassadors and contribute throughout the congress to post and share content and videos on social media. The young social media ambassadors can play a

key role when it comes to finding the right action to engage younger generations... because they are perceived as spontaneous, trustworthy and eager to share their personal experience. The ambassadors do not use a standardised language, but they speak about an activity or event they attended, filtered by their own experience, adding a more tangible feature to the 'content' that is produced this way.

Also, the young professionals, who play the role of volunteer ambassadors during congresses or other initiatives, will consider the association as a body that takes them into consideration, thus develop a stronger sense of belonging and will easily become ambassadors of the association itself.

DEDICATED SESSIONS AND NETWORKING

Meeting people, exchanging ideas, sharing opinions are always on top of the positive experiences people take home after a conference. Yes, it is important for everyone, but those who are younger are not always aware of that and they go to a conference or follow the association's activities mainly to develop their own knowledge. That is, of course, one of the key objectives of the association, but networking is also important, and young delegates sometimes need help to network.

Dedicated sessions like speed-dating between young delegates and industry leaders, for example, are a powerful way to establish fruitful contacts. Or, since young physicians have their own specific needs and experiences to share, it is also useful to organise dedicated sessions for this age group. You can organise a "Young Evening" or provide dedicated masterclasses or practical courses where a senior expert is available to openly interact with a small group of young attendees. Or you can arrange parallel meetings giving the opportunity to have 15-minute informal chats with senior doctors in a lounge area for instance.

GO TECH & INSPIRING SPACES

Young members are used to having access to content 24/7 from all devices and they love experiencing new technology. It is important to provide the association or congress website and app with rich content and features, easily-downloadable PowerPoint presentations, the ability to interact with senior members and speakers, etc. so they can share ideas, network online and give personal feedback. Also, new learning formats which include virtual reality, hybrid technology, wearable devices, robots, AI or bluetooth can help catch the younger delegates' attention.

Meanwhile, rigid settings, with traditional top table and lectern and speakers presenting at a distance from the audience, are not appreciated by the younger delegates who

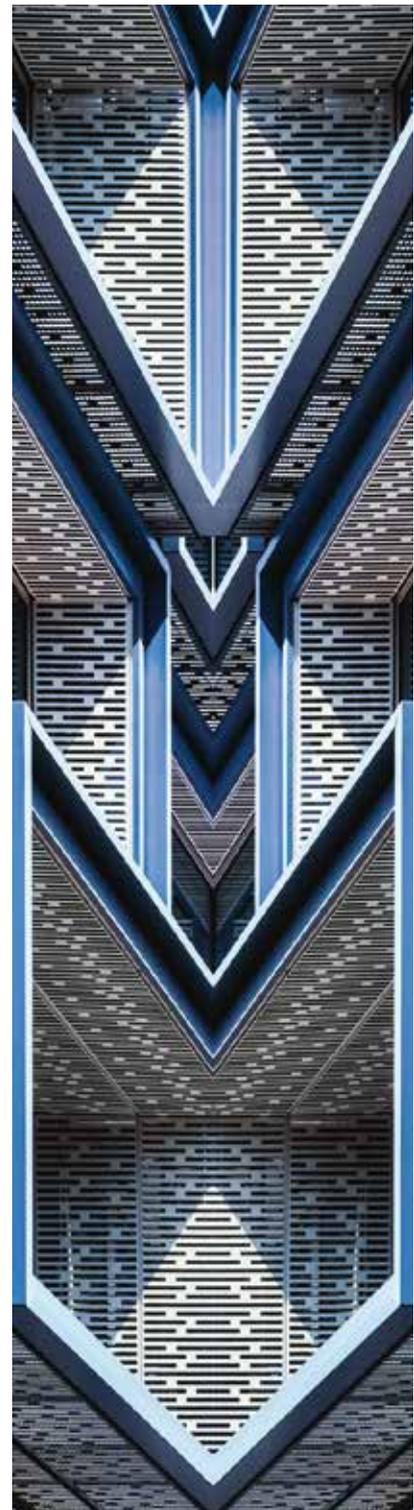
dislike hierarchy and prefer to participate and collaborate freely. Unusual locations or settings such as round rooms, collaborative bar-camps, equipped spaces for self-organised meetups and work groups and lounges to play and relax in can facilitate engagement.

Another effective way to give visibility to young doctors is to recognise their research. Special Award categories for the under 40s or under 35s can be developed to recognise outstanding presentations or abstracts. You can also create a contest to select the most talented young professionals and give them the opportunity to take part in the association's annual meeting through a full sponsorship. This will give them great motivation and a sense of positive competition.

It is also important to liaise with schools, universities and institutions of higher education to set up so-called Awareness Days or Education Weeks dedicated to a specific topic or more playful activities like simulations, hands-on sessions and hackathons to activate powerful learning. This will help the association penetrate into the education path of this generation even before they get their first job in the industry.

Each association must find the best initiatives to engage and attract young participants. If successful, associations will nurture the engagement of the new generations who will, in turn, guarantee the success of the organisations in the future.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, Vice President, AIM Group International. IAPCO represents today 133 companies comprised of over 9,100 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 40 countries.
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#MEET4IMPACT

Define Your Intention First

In this third installment of our #MEET4IMPACT series, founder **Geneviève Leclerc** explores the first – out of four – key step needed to achieve a successful impact practice. As a purpose organisation, your association is likely constantly seeking to “make a difference” and create broader value for all of your stakeholders. But where to start? And who can we look up to for an example?

As not-for-profit organisations, associations already generate impact through their activities. But most do not properly understand the impact that they do have, and they are challenged in scaling their impact because they don't know how it is truly generated and how it could be amplified.

There are dozens of approaches to developing a robust impact practice for not-for-profits, but at #MEET4IMPACT we have designed our own pathway

based on commonalities drawn from various approaches. Our key insight is that significant impact can only occur once an organisation has: a) truly committed to the process by involving the highest level of governance and assigned dedicated resources; b) developed a clear and articulated vision of the impact it seeks to generate; and c) integrated impact as a core element of its management strategy and its performance assessment.

11 \ JULY 2019

The Mission of



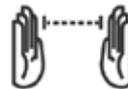
Define

Enables organization to define initial intention and engage stakeholders



Manage

Systematic process for implementing the desired impact



Measure

Report on globally accepted standards and custom indicators



Maximize

Helps organization to generate a maximum of value of their efforts and claim responsibility

A 4-step process is needed to achieve a successful impact practice through

A CLEAR PROCESS

Understand the need

So you're considering a legacy project, and want to onboard your team in this initiative. The first thing you should ask when defining your project is: What is the scope of the issue you seek to respond to? Who are the people affected by the issue? How can you help?

An easy mistake to make when considering a legacy project is to start with an organisation-centric goal, rather than one centered on the needs of our target audience. This occurs when the organisation attempts to define a project in a silo, and neglects to involve the community it seeks to serve in setting the goal. The intended impacts, otherwise understood as the change you want to generate, should seek to respond to an issue or a need and should be designed collaboratively with the community who will benefit.

Set objectives

You will want to state a broad intention in the beginning of your project as you're seeking to understand the issue you want to address. This may be something like: *"We want to increase accessible infrastructure in the city hosting our conference"* or *"We want to support local efforts by advocating for more funding and legislative change"*. While these statements are indicative of your purpose, results cannot be measured and reported on as they are too vague. Through the DEFINE phase, the broad impact goal first should be articulated as an "impact statement" that would contain the following: What will change (as a result of your action) + in what direction (increase? decrease?) + who will benefit + where will this occur.

Once this has been defined, the initial intention has to be converted into more manageable objectives and targets that can be measured and that your organisation can claim responsibility for. These should be SMART and specify what noticeable

change will occur as a result of your actions. Converting broader impact goals into measurable impact objectives is crucial in order to articulate a clear vision of your intention and is a necessary step to achieving results that you can report on.

Identify your stakeholders

A stakeholder mapping exercise is an important process in impact practice in order to identify who is being affected by or is interested in the activities of your organisation. At the core of your project are your stakeholders who will be benefit directly from the change you want to generate – for a conference legacy project, they would likely be from the local community; there are those who are interested but not involved directly, perhaps your members and funders; those who will support your project directly and help monitor your results, such as your local committee, the Convention Bureau, and a university research group, etc.

Mapping them will allow you to understand how different target audiences will benefit differently from the impact generated; manage their expectations; as well as align their contributions with your objectives. It is critical to find allies in your impact project, namely the entities who will carry out the activities and monitor the results. You have to find the connecting points between these stakeholders' mission and activities and your project, and then motivate them to participate with a clear value proposition for them.

Build a logic model

Clarifying the issue at hand, your impact objectives and your target audiences will in turn enable you to start planning how you are going to make it happen. To scope and implement the projects we support, we build logic models based on the Theory of Change (ToC), a tool used around the world to model how an activity and its short-term results can lead to a longer-term, more sustainable impact. It can be seen as a series of causal links that support the realisation

of the project and the desired impact in the end.

Through building your own logic model, you will be able to document the changes made and the process that allowed this change to take place, and therefore demonstrate and reinforce your responsibility and accountability for this impact. We will delve deeper into how to use the ToC for managing your impact projects in the next issue.

Results that lead to social value creation are most often an improvement in capacity, awareness, attitude, or knowledge. In the medium term, this can lead to behavioral change and improve the recipient's performance, method or practice. The longer-term impacts that affect the environment, social or economic conditions, and so on, are a change of state or condition and are the most durable, but more complex, longer to achieve.

THE NEWCITIES EXAMPLE

NewCities is a global nonprofit committed to shaping a better urban future. They launched a new initiative this year called "WellBeing City Awards" for which they designated four award categories in order to reflect the many facets of the notion of urban wellbeing: Public Health, Sustainable Environment, Community, and Economy & Opportunity. They convened their first WellBeing Cities Forum in Montreal on June 19-20, during which they recognised the award winners.

By featuring "wellbeing" as a core issue and holding this Forum, the intention of NewCities was to increase citizens' wellbeing globally by positioning this as an official strategic objective through the design and implementation of policies by key urban entities. To do so, NewCities reached globally by involving the local urban ecosystems of the participating cities as well as by mobilising a vast array of stakeholders of their own. They sought partners from

the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors as well as from the media. They outlined their stakeholders' roles according to their interests and strengths and clearly laid out what value each brought to the initiatives.

#MEET4IMPACT is working with NewCities to better understand the impact the Forum can have on global urban policy-making, how they can convert their stated intention into tangible results, and to communicate this value more effectively.

One area of desired impact was increased inclusivity. NewCities developed a list of criteria for candidates which included non-traditional indicators such as the use of innovative methods in policy making, and they created categories encouraging applications from lesser-known cities. By breaking down the concept of "wellbeing" into focus areas, it allowed them to recognise highly deserving cities around the world and bring to light amazing urban initiatives that we might not have otherwise heard of.

During the Forum, they showcased best practices through presentations from their laureates and panelists and catalysed meaningful connections to empower the global urban ecosystem. International participants were invited to interact directly with local social innovators through on-site visits of three Montreal innovative projects. They also partnered with BIXI, a bike-sharing non-profit based in Montreal advocating for sustainable mobility, whose bikes participants used while visiting with the local organisations. NewCities designed these interactions with the community to highlight the benefits of placing citizens' wellbeing as a keystone for urban development initiatives.

One of the tools that NewCities has chosen in order to assess the impact of their efforts is to administer a participant self-assessment survey at three different times post-event, to monitor the outcomes over time. The evaluation survey primarily focuses on

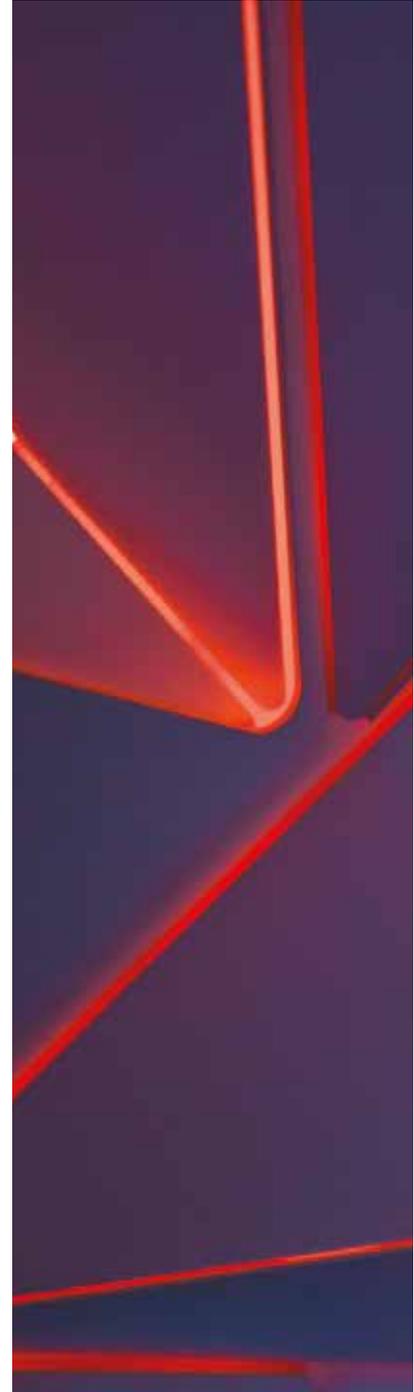
empowerment and knowledge transfer and seeks to understand whether this has allowed participants to initially increase their capacity, and subsequently implement practices shared during the Forum. They will also study their impact on participating cities with a list of preselected indicators, such as the expected increase of municipal policies and initiatives that specifically promote wellbeing.

NewCities will be sharing success stories through their awardees, communicating best practices and ways to scale those initiatives. This newly-implemented impact practice will empower the organisation to communicate more clearly to its stakeholders the value created by their project and learn from the findings.

Need help in developing your legacy project?

#MEET4IMPACT is a global not-for-profit aiming to build a community passionate about social impact in our sector, helping organisations increase their capacity to generate impact through their activities, deliver more value on their mission and implement positive change.

Keep looking out for updates on social media following the #MEET4IMPACT \ #Associations4impact \ #Cities4Impact keywords; check out our website www.meet4impact.global; or write to community@meet4impact.global to tell your story.



DUBAI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2019

Strengthening Association Impact on Society

How can the association community grow in a way that creates a positive impact on society? This is the key question the five-year-old Dubai Association Centre (DAC) aims to address in the second edition of the Dubai Association Conference, being held 9-10 December at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Words Lane Nieset

Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, the two-day conference will gather top association executives from around the world, as well as industry leaders, government representatives, and university faculties and students, to discuss how working together can “*create an ecosystem for associations to prosper*,” explains Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing.

“*As Dubai continues to grow as a knowledge hub, associations have immense potential for driving growth in our rapidly transforming economy*,” Kazim continues. “*Along with being a catalyst for business opportunities within a thriving ecosystem, they have the power to fuel innovation and creativity, which ultimately contributes to the wellbeing of our communities and society.*”

CREATING TRUE VALUE

During the inaugural Dubai Association Conference held in December 2017,

one of the major concerns expressed by associations and speakers was how their work and main activities are impacting global society and creating true value. This year’s theme, “The Societal Impact of Associations,” addresses this topic head-on and will offer deep dives into how associations can and should develop core strategies around sustainability and social impact in order to become key drivers of positive change. The conference will also touch on the value proposition of associations going beyond direct and indirect economic benefits—and how a community like the one growing in Dubai can help.

“*Dubai has strengthened its reputation as a regional association hub in recent years, and global associations are fast realizing the attractive advantages and expansion opportunities that the emirate can offer them*,” says Hassan Al Hashemi, vice president of international relations at Dubai Chamber. “*At the same time, Dubai is benefitting from the city’s fast-growing association community, as these organisations make a positive*

contribution to the economy and society by bringing with them best international practices, valuable expertise, and international events that support the emirate’s knowledge economy and enhance its long-term competitiveness.”

To aid associations in developing a cohesive and systematic approach to creating large-scale impact, this year’s Dubai Association Conference will break down its programme into four pillars: Impact and Legacy – Key Concepts; Designing an Impact Management and Measurement Programme; Organizational Resilience and Foresighting; and The Art of Collaboration. Each session will explore at least one of these four areas of impact: Community Well-being, Business and Opportunities, Knowledge and Research, or Creativity and Innovation.

The host destination, Dubai, will act as a living case study for the subjects addressed during the conference, discussing how the association scene in the city has evolved since the inaugural 2017 conference, as well as the legacies the event left behind.



HE HELAL SAIED ALMARRI, DIRECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND COMMERCE MARKETING, DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE, AND HE HAMAD BUAMIM, PRESIDENT & CEO, DUBAI CHAMBER, IN DIALOGUE WITH HAZEL JACKSON, CEO, BIZ GROUP AT THE 2017 DUBAI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

“Dubai has been at the forefront of positioning associations within various sectors to ultimately achieve their highest potential.” says Mahir Julfar, senior vice president of venue services management at Dubai World Trade Centre. *“Since its inception, the Dubai Association Conference has successfully bridged the gap between like-minded international and regional experts that share a combined passion for transformation, creativity and innovation.”*

The Dubai Association Centre was formed in 2014 as a joint initiative of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) and Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) as a *“response to the surge in the demand for association engagement in the UAE and the Middle East.”* Now, more than 60 associations fall under DAC’s umbrella, which acts as a platform for dialogue and education for associations interested in expanding their presence and activities in the Middle East.

“We’re honoured to have witnessed the evolution of education across industries

through intercultural knowledge exchange, which in turn will make an impact on the city’s economy.” Julfar says. *“We look forward to another edition of the Dubai Association Conference—one that will help businesses flourish, innovate and encourage key dialogue for those looking to explore business opportunities in the Middle East.”*

KEY CONCEPTS OF IMPACT & LEGACY

With issues like the growing pressure to attract and maintain members, associations are questioning how to improve their value proposition to stakeholders. In the first pillar – Impact and Legacy - Key Concepts – a TED-style session will explore how associations can set themselves apart from competitive offers and understand and measure the positive social impacts their activities are leaving behind. Attendees will also analyse goals to create a 2030 strategy similar to the blueprint drafted by the UN in 2015, which pinpoints 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Experts will take this concept and adapt it to the association sector, showing how goals

can be integrated into long-term strategy to create impactful business models that make the shift from being activity-driven to being motivated by the positive outcomes created for stakeholders. Attendees will hear first-hand how associations and stakeholders in Dubai are weaving some of these Sustainable Development Goals into their own strategy, in addition to how putting impact at the forefront of a business model can create new opportunities in terms of value sharing and growth.

While we only touched on the first pillar here, we will dive deeper into the conference’s three other pillars in upcoming issues of Boardroom, sharing more about the strategies and sessions that will help associations create more social value for both their members and their communities.

For further information regarding registration, please contact Mr. Junjie Si via Junjiesi@Dubaiassociationcentre.com or visit www.dubaiassociationconference.com



THE VOICE OF KLCC

How a Venue Can Help Build the Capacity of Local Associations

With the continued focus on the relevance of engagement and value creation to enhance the association journey, both from the organiser and delegate's side, the role of congress centres and their responsibility as advocates, connectors and advisors has clearly evolved over the years, as argues **Angeline van den Broecke**, Director of Global Business Development and Marketing, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.



INSIDE THE KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE

When a global association starts thinking of choosing a destination and more specifically a venue to host an upcoming international congress some of the most obvious factors that influence the decision are venue availability, location, space, technical capabilities and pricing. These technical and commercial considerations have historically driven the purchaser/supplier relationship between associations and venue providers.

Another key factor that global associations have to consider when choosing a destination is the capacity and capability of the local association or host partner, to contribute to the success of the proposed event, particularly their ability to assist with supporting the organisation of the event, contributing to content, delivering participants, and providing cultural communication support and an ease of doing business from a local context or perspective.

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Recognising the importance of the role associations play in advancing social and economic value, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre) in partnership with the national bureau Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) are investing in building the professional capacities of local association executives. Using their connections, resources, experience and knowledge this collaboration has led to them playing an active role in secretariat support to the Malaysian Society of Association Executives (MSAE)

This support role by the Centre in Malaysia, has assisted to highlight the important role association's play as a vital business segment of the meetings industry and just how important it is to invest in understanding the needs of associations beyond their meeting and event requirements.

Most recently, the Centre hosted an educational visit for AMC (Association Management Companies) Institute. As part of the programme the Centre, in

collaboration with MyCEB, organised an Association Education & Knowledge Exchange session. Over 200 Malaysian stakeholders, including many national association executives, attended the event where five AMC Institute board members shared their invaluable knowledge and experience on six association-related topics. These included 'Disruptions facing associations, 'Engage membership and volunteers to thrive and survive' and 'Challenges facing associations in today's environment', to name a few.

Commenting on this the Centre's General Manager, Alan Pryor, explains, "*Convention centres are ideally placed as advocates, connectors and advisors. Our entire existence is based around facilitating knowledge transfer, so it is a natural extension for us to use our resources to help build the capacity and capability of local associations.*"

Sharing her experience AMC Institute Chief Executive Officer, Tina Wehmeir, CAE, CMP, says, "*The level of maturity of associations varies from market to market and even within markets. While Malaysian associations may not be at the same level of development as those in the US, for example, what I did see in Kuala Lumpur is the right environment, enthusiasm and tools for them to build their capacity. Initiatives such our knowledge sharing session, facilitated by the Centre and MyCEB, play an important role in enhancing the capabilities of local associations, as well as triggering excitement and opening up new horizons such as running for international boards or hosting their association's global meeting in Malaysia.*"

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Pryor continues, "*We view our investment in developing local associations as part of long-term strategic objective to grow their capabilities. We feel that this partnership approach helps differentiate us from our competitors. Even if local associations go on to bid and host meetings in Malaysia that end up going to other venues, we see this as a positive and part of our ongoing contribution to the development and growth*

of the local business events industry and the country more generally – which benefits us all."

An important contributor to the success of their capacity building work with local associations has been a commitment to the programme's sustainability. The Centre has been working closely with Malaysian associations since it first opened in 2005 and for Pryor this has been a key part of its success. "*Our focus on viewing associations as partners rather than clients has been part of our organisation philosophy since day one. We have built on this using our unique position to attract national, regional and international partners to share their expertise with Malaysian associations,*" he adds.

In 2018 the Centre partnered to host the PCMA-ICESAP Knowledge Exchange Kuala Lumpur, which provided an avenue for business event professionals to explore how changing digital, political and economic climates can be effectively responded to, turning possible threats into unique opportunities. They also partnered to host the UIA (Union of International Associations) Associations Round Table Asia Pacific. These events were designed to promote engagement, advance professional development and provide a knowledge exchange platform and were well attended by local associations.

Pryor concludes, "*We see the capacity building of our local associations as a long-term commitment. As key players in business events, venues such as ours have a lot to offer associations beyond our facilities. Convention centres are well-connected and perfectly positioned to help associations develop their full potential if a partnership mind-set is adopted on both sides.*"

More information on
www.klccconventioncentre.com



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FEATURE

The Resources Are Human

Associations are, in many ways, like any other businesses when it comes to human resources. To meet its goals, a nonprofit must hire and retain quality workers, requiring it to be competitive and attractive. Because of the nature of nonprofit work, top executives also often make less than their counterparts at for-profit businesses. Understanding the challenges of staffing nonprofits will help you create the best team possible within your budget. This is what Boardroom explores in this Feature.

Solutions for Staffing Associations

After rounds of team interviews for the role of Director of Education and Events at the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP), chief operating officer Colleen Eubanks thought they found their match. They did the background check, called references, and made an offer. The candidate accepted, and the start date was set.

Words Lane Nieset

But the Friday before starting the position, the new hire was swayed back by their current employer with a counter offer. “*We had to start the search process all over,*” Eubanks says. While they ended up hiring a leader who is “*more of a team player than the individual who did not join the team,*” this sort of scenario is quite a common one.

“In terms of finding talent, I think it’s getting harder and harder to find great talent who are also going to be a cultural fit for the organization,” explains Debra BenAvram, CEO of AABB, the leading organization representing the transfusion medicine and cellular therapy communities. *“There is so much competition for good talent that dollars don’t go as far. We’re doing more for less and juggling a lot of factors as making decisions on how to design staff and culture in a way that’s going to deliver results for our members.”*

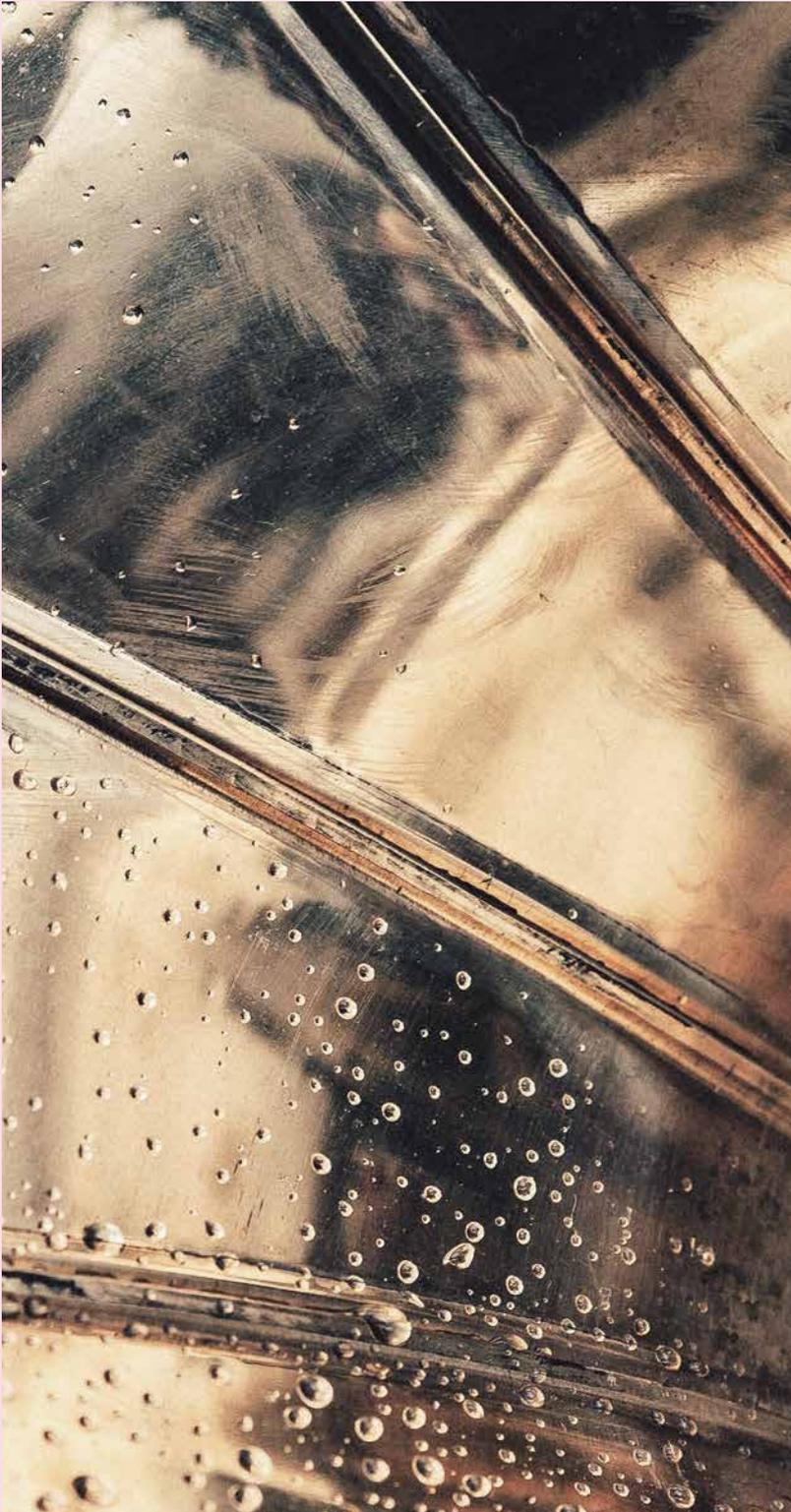
ATTRACTING TALENT

In a 2019 “Association Salaries & Staffing Trends Report” conducted by PNP Staffing Group, 28 percent of associations reported candidates declining their best offer, and 57 percent of those surveyed said that senior executive positions are the most difficult to fill. In 2019, the majority of competition will be in this area, since baby boomers are retiring and a large portion of staff replacements are for leadership positions.

According to Alexander Mohr, executive director for the European Flavour Association (EFFA), part of the challenge when it comes to hiring is explaining the role and tasks of trade industry associations, especially if you’re looking outside of major cities like Brussels, London, and Washington, DC. Associations are often not on the radar of young people,

which is one of the struggles when it comes to positioning associations and attracting fresh talent. “*Companies should highlight the work that’s done on a national, European and maybe global level,*” Mohr advises. “*Demystify the industry and give the people who work with us, the volunteers, more visibility. I think it’s the association’s task and work to give those volunteers the chance to shine a bit.*”

EFFA, for example, created a community called the Flavour Ambassadors, a multimedia project that highlights the roles and expertise of professionals from different departments through video interviews. “*Engage beyond just giving once a year report about activities, and maybe try and make volunteers ambassadors for the industry with visibility on social media,*” Mohr adds.



CREATING A CULTURE

The “Googleplex” campus in California may boast swimming pools, volleyball courts, and 18 cafeterias, but associations can create just as strong of a company culture without all the bells and whistles. *“One of my colleagues always says culture happens by design or default, and one of those two things is going to happen, so you better design it well,”* says BenAvram. *“When I think about designing culture, any time we have a person coming into or leaving a team, it’s a brand-new team – and we can never forget that.”*

To combat budget constraints and rotating work forces, BenAvram advises developing a strong and ongoing set of values to create a team that trusts each other, challenges each other, and holds one another accountable to accomplish great things. *“Culture development and team development is something you’re never done doing,”* she says. *“When I’m working on building culture, I’m working on building a connection for everyone in the organization to the results for the whole organization, not just the results for their own team.”*

Eubanks agrees, which is why the hiring process at IASP is a team effort. When a spot opens up, this is a chance to look across the organization and make a group decision on how – and where – to allocate those resources, instead of rushing to replace a member. *“When we set up the interview process, I purposely include team members from other departments and from different levels so the candidates can get a good perspective of how our organization works and what the culture is like,”* Eubanks explains. *“We also discuss the open position in our leadership team meetings and agree on expectations for the new person to work with different teams, so everyone understands the role and expectations before we even make the hire.”*

Having a methodology in place helps to build trust with teams and show that leaders are looking to make the best decision for the organization as a whole, ensuring that every member’s voice is heard. This way, one team doesn’t feel prioritized over another – a challenge in today’s resource- (and budget-) strained world. *“Culture change takes three to five years – these are building blocks that take a long time to get people to see and trust and value as you’re building a team and figuring out how to use your dollar,”* BenAvram says. *“At the end of the day, people want a connection to the altruistic mission we’re all here for. Where I work, if we do a good job, patients who need a blood transfusion will have safe blood. That’s a pretty powerful tool for me to use to motivate employees.”*

From Purpose to Impact Through Motivated Staff and Visionary Leaders

Like any other organisation, an association's success or failure will depend on the strength of their leaders. From executive decision making about business strategy to the establishment of an organisational culture where staff and volunteers feel included, empowered and inspired to contribute, strong leadership ensures that an association has the direction and resources needed to deliver on its goals and implement its mission.

Words Chloe Menhinick & Joana Visa

Associations today are operating in a complex and disruptive environment where it is increasingly hard to successfully manage change and achieve objectives without losing their long-term perspective. Confronted in parallel to this, with the formidable task of meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), association leaders and their staff have a distinct set of challenges requiring them to align organisational goals with changing member behaviours and expectations. The scale of the challenges faced require associations to innovate and inspire not only to ensure that they can keep engaging with their traditional membership audiences but increasingly to find ways to navigate new territories and form partnerships with non-traditional actors.

These challenges are already pushing the skills and expertise within associations into new realms of professionalisation. With the opportunities that associations have to contribute to the development of robust civil society and the challenges they will need to overcome in order to continue driving progress in achieving the SDGs, transformational leadership will be key.

Transformational association leaders can move their members beyond immediate self-interest through influence, inspiration and intellectual inspiration. They are able to elevate their members' ideals for achievement beyond the individual to the level of the organisation and, most importantly, the society. However, in order to reach their broader visions, associations need to also ensure they retain a robust, engaged, highly skilled and motivated staff. This is no easy feat especially so given the lower salaries, and highly demanding roles typically associated with the association sector.

STRONG CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

Nonetheless, as we see the continued emergence (particularly from generations Y and Z) of a workforce characterised by altruism, conscientiousness and civic virtues, the association sector has all the potential to become a highly sought-after industry for young professionals to enter. The demand for outstanding talent is going to increase with time, and so is its scarcity in the talent market. The only way to stay competitive will be by ensuring that the right people are hired, kept happy and motivated. Retention of such talent will require

associations to offer staff a strong career development pathway as well as an organisational culture which aligns with their personal values. Understanding what employees want and what drives them (more on this below) should become business priority in order to survive in the unpredictable times coming up.

Therefore, as competition for highly skilled and committed professionals increases, cultivation of a deep trust in both the leadership and an association's governing frameworks and policies will be required to fuel an intrinsic alignment of staff with your organisation and in doing so provide the strong foundations your association will need in order to drive success.

ADOPTING A CULTURE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Adopting a culture of transformational leadership will nourish individual leadership potential. This focus on staff is crucial since an association's staff and volunteer leaders hold the key to turning the association's goals into reality. Transformational leadership which fosters autonomy and challenging work is increasingly an important factor in job satisfaction and retention of staff.

Ensuring that your staff - no matter what their role or position - sustain the motivation to overcome challenges, and the inspiration to push themselves and your organisation to deliver the very best, requires an organisational culture stimulated by the leadership and supported and facilitated through HR frameworks which encourage transformational leadership to permeate throughout all layers of association staff.

A culture of transformational leadership can also help unleash organisational leadership potential, as it seeks to create a positive change in those who follow and so can - and should - be applied to the organisation as a whole. Members of transformational teams care more about each other, intellectually stimulate each other, inspire each other and identify with the team's goals.

Organizational policies and practices can promote employee empowerment, creative flexibility and *esprit-de-corps*. Crucially in the association space the power of change we are seeking to establish will be accelerated and amplified if association leaders focus on unleashing the leadership potential within their staff.

In the end, a culture of transformational leadership will reduce the disruptive effects of leadership changes, with the latter often bringing periods of intense disruption to membership programmes, staff morale and often risk stalling progress as the staff and leadership need to re-focus and recalibrate. Embracing transformational leadership development throughout your organisation increases the possibility of finding successive leaders from within existing staff who are fully aligned with your organisation's values, who are already adept at converting the vision and mission of your organisation into reality and

most importantly who have developed and nurtured trust amongst peers and members alike.

In this context, the benefits of leadership development programmes will impact all facets of an association - from employee and member engagement and staff retention to succession planning. Achieving this, however, is no easy feat. Associations need to place the development of transformational leadership as a cornerstone of their organisation's strategic plan and ensure that systems and policies are developed to ensure association staff and leaders maximise their transformational leadership potential. Human Resources plays a strategically important role in delivering these ambitions.

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF HR

Outside of the association sector, in recent years, HR has undergone dynamic shifts in its roles and functions and has increasingly become a significant influence in shaping organisations. An HR manager now wears multiple hats, and these roles vary based on the need of the hour from being an employee advocate, a change agent and a strategic partner. This includes designing specific programmes and strategies to ensure an engaged workplace, happy employees, reward strategies that retain talent and ensuring there is diversity and inclusion in every sense. Similar shifts in the role of HR are only slowly entering the association sector. Hence, the first crucial step will be for associations to give due recognition to the vital role that HR plays in the organisation's strategic planning and operationalisation.

Finding one's own purpose and identifying the path through which this purpose will be put to use is key to accelerating the growth of your staff and deepening their impact, in both their professional and personal lives. Aligning your staff with your organisation's goals, with your vision and your mission is therefore another crucial step towards achieving the highest levels of motivation and inspiration. Here, HR plays a vital role in helping executives find and define their leadership purpose and put it to use no matter what part of the career ladder they are on.

Indeed, the potential for transformational leadership begins at the early stages of one's career path. And in order to create an environment in which transformation leadership can be nourished, a long-term trajectory for leadership development should be established. This will, in turn, reinforce a holistic approach to leadership development which touches all levels of staff and will ensure that staff at all stages of their career path have the opportunity to develop and stimulate their leadership potential.

Moving forward, associations need to devote more resources and energy to supporting and scaling the development of transformational leadership capabilities of all their staff. This will require HR to review



staff recruitment, training and development as well as an overhaul of organisational HR policies to create the frameworks necessary to support leadership development.

A health-check of your association's HR frameworks should include a review of the following four crucial aspects.

1. Does your organization have a proactive succession planning policy in place? - Succession planning is a procedure through which an organisation make sure that the employees are recruited to fill in all the key roles, also ensure that no key role has been left open.
2. Does your organisation act as an advocate for your top-tier staff?
3. Are you focusing sufficiently on employee development to mentor and nourish your junior staff? and
4. Do you have an active diversity and inclusion strategy?

With associations today facing the dual challenge of ensuring that the interests of the organisation and the member remain aligned but also that the staff of the association remain engaged, motivated and above all inspired, the journey to becoming a truly a transformational organisation will take work, introspection and growth.

Are HR of associations who serve as custodians of culture, lead through example and align culture with core business goals ready to lead the way?

This article was written by Chloe Menhinick- Partner- Associations Consulting at GainingEdge & ESAE Board Member and Joana Visa, Founder of 35+ Executive Women Coaching. Boardroom has an exclusive partnership with the European Society of Association Executives. For more information on ESAE, visit www.associationexecutives.eu

Associations Outsourcing Human Resources?

Annalisa Ponchia, Director of Innovation & Customer Experience, AIM Group International and former CEO of the European Society for Organ Transplant, explores the challenges and opportunities presented by outsourcing certain association services, including human resources



Last January at the Annual Meeting of the AC Forum, a membership organisation exclusively made for and by associations aiming for excellence in association and congress management, we debated about the constant need of the associations for human resources and the sustainable balance between employed staff and external resources. In an environment where volunteers make up the bulk of an organisation's strength compared to employed staff – who can only deliver to their capacity – the workforce plays an important role, especially in regard to the always increasing quest for technology and strategic communication.

Is there a limit of services that can be delivered in-house or shall we do everything ourselves? How many employees can we hire in relation to the size (and financial sustainability) of the organisation? Which skills make a resume appealing today? Should we hire multi-skilled individuals who are flexible and polyvalent or specialized experts who are, say, well-versed in communication and technology? Is it better to grow a young talent or search for different experience levels?

Those are some of the questions association executives should ask themselves, and I expect many readers to share the same dilemmas. We all want to deliver top quality services that support the organisation we work for but we have to make do with sustainability, flexibility and functions that serve the needs.

LIMITED KNOWLEDGE SHARING

In my previous position as CEO of the European Society for Organ Transplant (ESOT) I was managing a rather small-size team and had to make clear-cut choices on the amount of staff we could hire. It resulted in a limited variety of expertise to count on 'in-house'. Knowledge sharing in this context was limited and we found the participation to events and trainings offering exchanges and dialogue with colleagues of other organisations very valuable. This was also a

great opportunity to meet experts that could be hired as consultants.

Typically, what associations offer range from educational events and congress management to member services and association management. Frequently, they need temporary workers to shadow, support or substitute for staff members for a short period of time. The search of the perfect 'avatar' can be very arduous and the sector lacks agencies offering this kind of services.

During the discussions at the Annual Meeting of the AC Forum, my peers indicated which services they would normally outsource both on a long- and short-term basis: digital and strategic communication, CRM and data analytics, finance and tax advising, HR, change management. There were also some special services such as broadcasting, A/V and IT, stage management, and app development.

SIZE MATTERS

You would be tempted to think that the size of the organisation matters and the bigger the association – thus the amount of hired staff – the more seasoned experts you have in-house. Not surprisingly Isabel Bardin, CEO of the European Society of Cardiology, thinks that *"for a business it is called the USP (unique selling point) but for a non-profit such as the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) the USP stands for 'unique scientific provide.'*

She says: *"What makes associations different and unique must lie in their 'core business', and anything helping towards this can be either outsourced or supported via consultancy. Some are obvious: they can range from finance and tax advisors to HR and labor laws. But others may be less visible, such as publishing & data collection."*

She adds: *"At the ESC, we outsource any very focused service which comes in support of our own activities such as CRM and data management or digital development and videoconferencing. When we were small and young, we needed lots of technical and logistics support which we have*

taken in-house now. Today we are bigger and more mature, and we need advice on strategy, governance and change management. To fulfill our mission, we must listen and deliver our strategic pillars (membership, education, research, advocacy and congresses) and anything that helps, supports and consolidates this needs to be considered and managed. Thanks to this we have developed a unique expertise in project coordination!"

Organisations are becoming more demanding and their needs more sophisticated. The *raison d'être* of experts and consultants might be to fulfill what associations cannot manage and deliver in-house while supporting the client's vision and adding extra value in a seamless fashion, whichever the service provided.

Consultants must of course be reliable, cost-effective and understand the business of associations and the not-for-profits. Outsourcing is not an easy task and you should never underestimate the amount of time and exertion you still need to invest to achieve good results. Should you choose to work with 'outsiders', don't be afraid to provide extensive briefings and information about the scope and the culture of your organisation, and be clear on expectations and budget available. Good suppliers and consultants are valuable partners to engage in long-standing collaborations, don't be lured by best price and discounts.

The odds are that a client becomes the supplier of tomorrow and vice versa in the vast and yet small association world.

Annalisa Ponchia has an extensive experience in the association management and the events industry, which includes running her own PCO company before setting up the managing structure of the European Society for Organ Transplant, where she served as CEO for twelve years. As a volunteer, she used to be a member of the AC Forum Board and is currently a member of the PCMA European Advisory Board.

Inspiring Excellence Through Innovative People

Helen Fairclough, Director of People, Culture and Improvement, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, explains how an innovative, service-driven and visionary team of employees with a culture that inspires excellence has helped the venue be recognised globally for outstanding achievement in recruitment, engagement and retention practices - one of only six organisations in the world.

At Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) our diverse and inclusive culture is something we pride ourselves on, and is key to our recognition as an Employer of Choice for two years running (2017-18). This accolade is a testament to our people, who work hard every day. Our working environment is defined by a commitment to shared learning and continuous improvement, and we invest in our talent and encourage them to be innovative.

EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

In 2016, we engaged with our employees across our casual and permanent workforce to determine our employee value proposition (EVP). We think of our EVP as the promise we make to our people. Through a series of focus groups, we looked at the value our employees placed on a range of offerings at MCEC, why they were attracted to work for us initially, and what keeps them engaged with our brand.

From these discussions, our EVP was born – ‘expect anything, experience everything’. Just like every event, every day at MCEC is different. Once we knew our EVP we could build our talent acquisition strategy, focusing on sourcing, recruitment and selection. The strategy includes educating managers on unconscious bias, and the importance of attracting the best and brightest employees who form part of a diverse, inclusive and collaborative culture.

We also focus on upskilling and progressing our employee’s career development, with a preference to promote from within the organisation. This has led to over half our positions being filled with internal applicants. We offer ‘temporary transfers’ across our business, opening opportunities for employees to work across different areas, allowing them to develop skills and enhance their professional growth.

HOW TO RETAIN TALENT

One of the most important ways to retain talent is through employee engagement and recognition. Effective communication is a strong focus throughout the stages of the employee journey, and we encourage continuous feedback, ensuring employees are supported, valued and feel connected to the business. We’re proud to provide an inclusive workplace where senior leaders actively engage with and mentor employees - it’s important for leaders to provide an environment where employees are encouraged to take risks, learn from colleagues and collaborate.

Managers and employees are provided with a framework for employees to participate in reward and recognition activities. As a result of feedback from employees there has been a focus placed particularly on recognition with recent examples being a ‘Thank You’ event and ‘Shout Outs’ in our weekly employee newsletter. We strongly believe recognising and rewarding performance motivates employees to want to be part of the company.

CONNECTED WITH THE COMMUNITIES

We also recognise our employees' desire to be involved and connected with their community and global issues, including sustainability, volunteering and wellbeing. We have formed an Employee Health and Wellbeing Committee to organise a calendar of activities including massages, workout sessions and yoga.

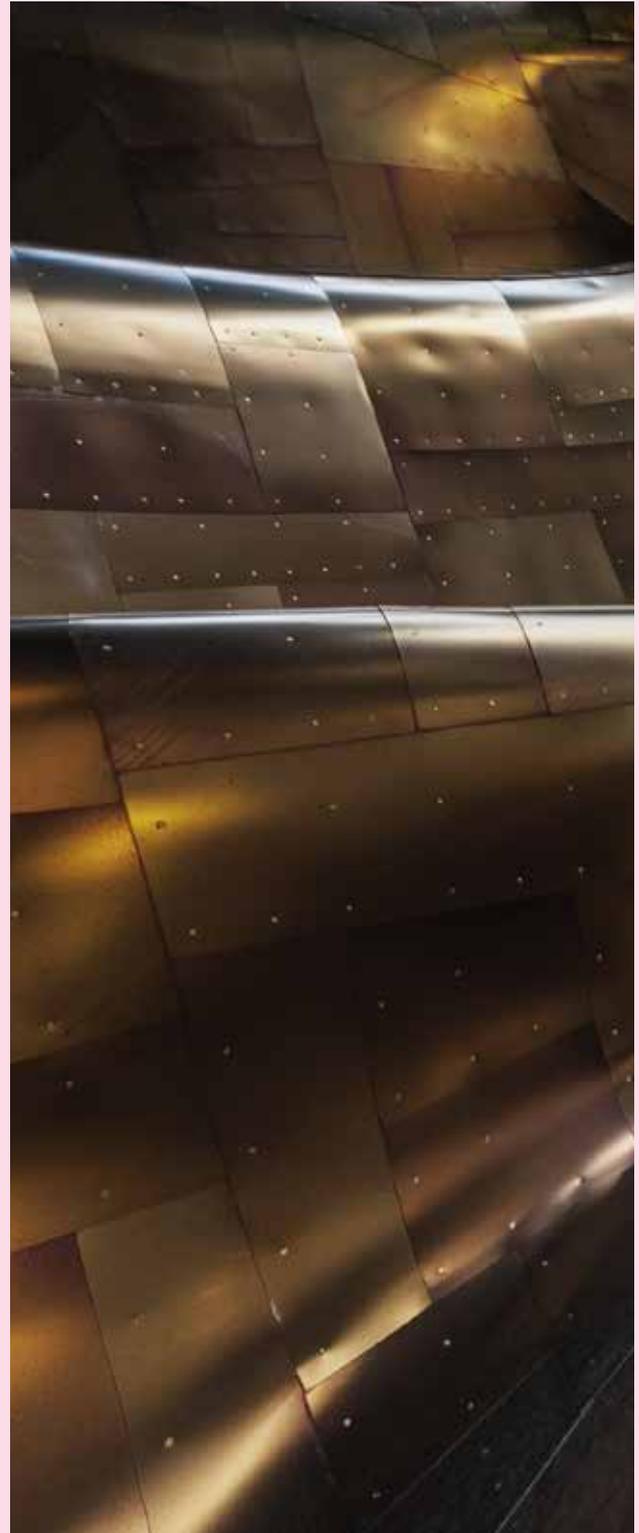
Our employees are supported by processes to help them achieve, and we have worked hard to implement a holistic performance framework that encourages our employees to succeed. This starts with on-boarding, which includes regular check-ins and objective setting and continues with our annual review process MAP (meet, align, perform), which outlines the responsibilities of both manager and employee throughout the performance management process, ensuring employees are supported and empowered to achieve their goals.

It's important for us to focus on our employee experience, and to continually improve.

We learnt our employees value a 'personalised' approach to their MCEC experience: How they work, when they work and their benefits. We listened to what they want and introduced flexible working, opt-in and out benefits, and performance-related pay.

Our EVP is evolving as our business, people and culture have shifted and grown. We need to ensure we're aware of the brand we have, the brand we aspire to, and how we leverage that to identify, connect to and ultimately attract key talent both locally and internally to work at MCEC.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is a long-standing member of the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC). AIPC represents a global network of over 190 leading centres in 64 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide.
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Associations have
fuel innovation
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Healthy Legacies for the World's Largest Cardio Congress

It's hard not to conjure up clichés when it comes to organizing a conference in Paris. The 'City of Light', as it is often referred to, is one of the international meeting capitals *par excellence*, drawing thousands of tourists and delegates from around the world every year. A glorious city renowned for its historical heritage, awe-inspiring architecture and café culture, among many more attractions, it is also where things can get big, as they will for the European Cardiology Congress which will be held in conjunction with the World Congress of Cardiology this summer.

Words Rémi Dévé

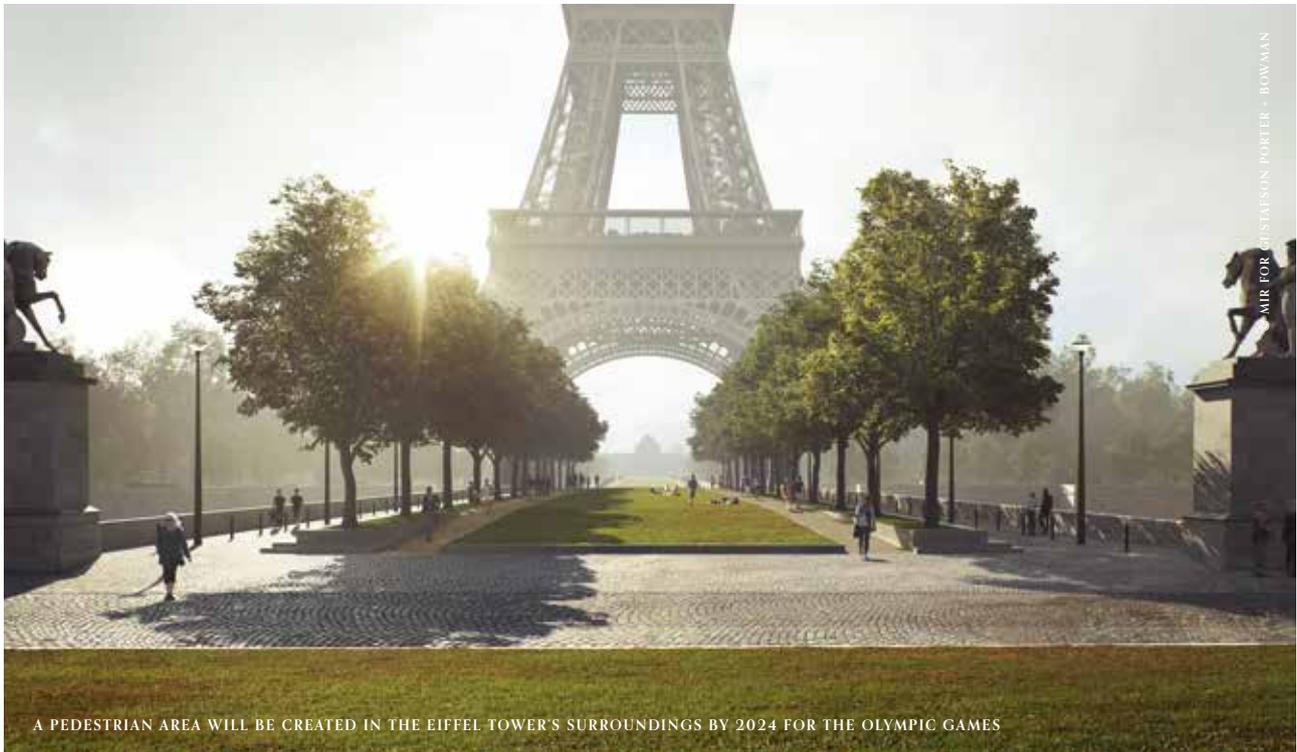
The numbers speak for themselves. As Europe's preeminent healthcare and life sciences region, the Paris area hosts a multitude of research institutes, top international corporations and pharmaceutical laboratories. 1,000+ life sciences organizations, 300+ pharmaceutical companies, 200+ biotech companies, and 360+ medical technology companies... the list can go on and on. Home to Europe's largest hospital network and Europe's largest hospital, the Pitié-Salpêtrière, Paris and its surrounding region are a world-class research centre, with 11,800 life sciences researchers and globally renowned institutions like the Pasteur Institute, Curie Institute, the Gustave Roussy cancer research centre, or INSERM (the French institute of health and medical research).

In this context, it's only fitting that Paris will play host for the world's largest cardiology congress in August 2019 because it's a major player in the field, with a strong network of scientists, partners and collaborators, and literally dozens of research centres across the Ile-de-France region. Jointly organized by the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the World Heart Federation (WHF), it will promote excellence in cardiology research in Europe and the world at large and facilitate the exchange of knowledge – in this regard, Paris seems to be the ideal place to do so.

"It is definitely a big responsibility to organize the world's largest cardiology congress!" says Isabel Bardinet, CEO of the ESC. *"Clinicians and scientists will come from all over the world to learn about the latest science, innovation and research in cardiology. We expect more than 30,000 delegates to*

attend more than 500 sessions during the five-day conference – and there is a lot at stake, as the main spotlight for this year's conference will be on Global Cardiovascular Health."

The ESC decided on this theme because cardiovascular health is becoming a major concern not only in Europe but across the world. Ischaemic heart disease and stroke are the world's biggest killers and have remained the leading causes of death globally in the last fifteen years. Reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease is a common goal for the ESC and the WHF, so it seemed like the perfect topic for this joint congress. *"During ESC Congress, we will also offer several sessions and specific activities like its Meet & Share Forum bringing together experts from many international foundations and societies to identify specific challenges and discuss solutions,"* adds Bardinet.



AIR FOR CHRISTOPHER PORTER - BOWMAN

A PEDESTRIAN AREA WILL BE CREATED IN THE EIFFEL TOWER'S SURROUNDINGS BY 2024 FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Paris has been extremely active in promoting healthier lifestyles. In 2015 the city launched an ambitious Health Plan that includes promoting physical activity and reducing air pollution, two prevention topics strongly connected to cardiovascular health. “At the Congress, we will launch a new project called Heart Healthy Cities,” says Bardinet “It aims to provide elected officials with scientific evidence on the link between the urban environment and cardiovascular diseases and support the promotion of measures to reduce the social and economic impact of cardiovascular diseases. The City of Paris has welcomed this initiative, that we hope to continue in other cities where ESC congresses will be held in the future.”

The project has clearly been designed as a legacy programme. The Congress is set to have an impact not only on the people

attending the event but also the community at large. “Heart Healthy Cities will support the existing policies put in place by Paris’ Mayor Anne Hidalgo and help promote healthy lifestyles among citizens,” comments Isabel Bardinet. “The ESC in collaboration with the Société Française de Cardiologie is also organizing a public event over the weekend to give Parisians practical advice on how to look after their hearts.”

It is actually not the first time the ESC has chosen Paris to host the event, “but it will be the first ESC Congress to be held at the Paris Convention Centre – Europe’s largest conference venue” says Bardinet. “And we are very excited to welcome our delegates in this newly designed venue in the French capital.”

As a conference destination, Paris offers many advantages. It is served by extensive public transport links and Paris airports can be

reached in less than three hours from every European capital, which is a great asset for delegates. “You can imagine that bringing 30,000 people into a city implies a huge logistical challenge,” concludes Bardinet. “Our needs include ensuring hotel capacity for our delegates, collaboration from transportation authorities to help visitors move around town, security issues, working with airlines and much more. We ‘implant’ a mid-sized town for five days into a major city with all that this may mean, and Paris, all across its suppliers’ chain, starting with the Convention Bureau, has been incredibly supportive.”

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TAKING A DEEP JOURNALISTIC DIVE INTO
DESTINATIONS AS KNOWLEDGE HUBS AND
THEIR ASSOCIATION APPEAL

Putting Expertise to Work

Holland's network of thought-leaders play a vital role in helping attract international association events and enhancing the country's reputation as a knowledge hub. They provide an essential link between not-for-profit organisations and convention bureaus or destination marketing organisations. Their areas of expertise may be widely different - from science to healthcare and education - but they all have a common goal: to share and exchange knowledge for the greater good. Boardroom Magazine meets four influential figures instrumental in winning bids for their cities.

WORDS CHANTELE DIETZ



Research in Mathematics Education

The Netherlands is a hotspot for education and pedagogy, with Utrecht boasting expertise in the field of mathematics. Utrecht University's Freudenthal Group - named after the Jewish-German-born Dutch mathematician Hans Freudenthal - carries out research into the didactics of mathematics in early childhood education, primary education, special education, and vocational education.

One of its leading researchers Michiel Veldhuis, is also a member of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education (ERME). He and his colleague, professor Marja van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, saw the potential in bringing the association's eleventh annual congress to Utrecht earlier this year. *"The Netherlands, especially Utrecht University, has a long-standing experience in researching and designing mathematics education for which Freudenthal and his collaborators laid the foundation about half a century ago. Since then it has further developed as a strong research community with theoretically and practically relevant output,"* he says.

Confident Utrecht would provide a *"fruitful academic environment for sharing knowledge"* Van den Heuvel-Panhuizen and Veldhuis worked alongside the Utrecht Convention Bureau and professional conference organiser Congress by Design to prepare a bid. *"After ten successful editions in other European countries, we hoped to be able to organise this prestigious meeting for the first time in this beautiful city in the heart of the Netherlands,"* explains Veldhuis, who has a PhD in mathematics education.

Having successfully won the bid, they collaborated on setting a budget and sourcing venues for the conference sessions and gala dinner. The historic Dom Square was chosen as the focal point for the event, which took place from 6-10 February, welcoming 1,000 delegates. Plenary sessions were held in the Dom Church (St. Martin's Cathedral), one of the oldest buildings in Utrecht, while parallel sessions for 34 thematic working groups were hosted in historical buildings surrounding Dom Square, all within 10 minutes' walking distance.

A winning combination of location, setting and expertise is what won Utrecht the bid says Veldhuis: *"One distinguishing factor for the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education choosing Utrecht was its central local in Europe. The city of Utrecht combines the tradition of the old historic buildings and canals and the new world architecture and infrastructure. Finally, a very important factor for choosing Utrecht is the high reputation of Utrecht University."*



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PETER REISS

Tuberculosis Foundation

Kitty Van Weezenbeek has a career in tuberculosis (TB) related organisations stretching back over 37 years. She started her career as a provincial TB officer in the Netherlands, moving on to hold leading positions at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, and the WHO Western Pacific regional office.

As executive director of KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation (KNVC) - the world's leading TB expert organisation - she was responsible for attracting the 49th Union World Conference on Lung Health to The Hague at the end of 2018. "Since KNCV's headquarters are in The Hague and our organisation celebrated its 115 years anniversary in 2018, we decided to bid for the conference," she explains.

KNCV had already established itself as a trusted partner of the event, having acted as a local host to the conference in 1932 and 1967, in Amsterdam. Van Weezenbeek was certain her foundation would make an excellent local host, prompting her to put in a bid with support from The Hague Convention Bureau. The conference's organising team agreed and so the work to facilitate the network, introduce potential speakers and sponsors and identify suitable venues began.

"We worked together with the venues, the local authorities, including protocol departments for the presence of the Crown Princess of Japan, HHH Princess Kiko of Akishino, and Princess Margriet of the Netherlands, private sector partners, the Japanese Embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health," reveals Van Weezenbeek.

The four-day event from 24-27 October attracted clinicians and public health workers, policymakers, researchers and advocates working to end the suffering caused by lung disease from 125 countries across the world - each presenting their own research



MICHEL VELDHUIS

findings. It specifically helped to generate more attention around TB in the Netherlands, which was amplified by some groundbreaking results in the field of childhood TB delivered by KNCV.

Van Weezenbeek says The Hague offered a unique and easily accessible setting for the conference: "The many direct flights to Schiphol [Airport] and the easy accessibility of The Hague to and from this airport was an important strength. The Hague is a relatively small city with excellent public transport, cosy restaurants and the seaside nearby."

International AIDS Society

Physician-scientist Peter Reiss partnered with the International AIDS Society (IAS) to host the 22nd International Aids Conference (AIDS 2018) in Amsterdam from 23-27 July last year. A professor of medicine at the Amsterdam University Medical Centers, Amsterdam UMC - locatie AMC, and a former governing board member of IAS, Reiss has been working as a HIV researcher since the early 80s and is an advocate for HIV and AIDS education, prevention and treatment.

As co-chair of the conference, he brought together key stakeholders from Amsterdam and the Netherlands to secure their support in raising as much awareness of the event as possible. "We needed to do this jointly, so we got a group of representatives together, including key NGO's, ministries and affected patient communities," he explains. "Because we are a relatively small city and country the lines between people are short, and you can make a lot happen by getting the key people round a table."

Against the background of AIDS 2018 the Dutch government committed to setting aside a rather large €10m fund for HIV prevention and making antiviral drugs more accessible for vulnerable groups particularly in regions where the disease is continuing to



KITTY VAN WEEZENBEEK

spread such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and West and North Africa.

Reiss knew getting the local communities and other stakeholders involved in the build-up to the conference would play a major part in raising its profile. Two and a half years prior to the event he helped set up a planning group formed of various sub-committees responsible for overseeing a plethora of complementary events, alongside those directly organised by AIDS 2018. *“We kept an inventory of ideas and logged what people were working on so we could bring that information together and communicate it centrally so our delegates knew what was going on. It was also a great way to prepare the country for what was going to happen,”* he explains.

Reflecting on the conference, Reiss says it was this collaborative approach that made it such a success: *“I’d like to see the same model we used for AIDS 2018 applied to events for other life-threatening conditions, like diabetes for instance. But to make it work all parties, including the local community, need to get behind it.”*

Patient-centered care

Professor Jan Hazelzet is the clinical lead of the Value Based Health Care (VBHC) programme - a healthcare model focused on patient-centered care - at Erasmus University Medical Center (Erasmus MC) in Rotterdam. *“The topic of VBHC is becoming more and more popular and important from clinical, economical, and policy perspective,”* he explains. *“My research is focused on the added value of our care to patients and exploring what are the outcomes that really matter to patients in relation to the costs and energy needed to achieve this.”*

Hazelzet is also one of Rotterdam’s official knowledge ambassadors, having previously helped to bring association events for the city. This



JAN HAZELZET

network of ambassadors helps to promote Rotterdam as an attractive congress destination and was established by the Rotterdam Partners Convention Bureau. It encompasses 87 academics, researchers and other experts connected to the Rotterdam region.

It was through his research into the VBHC sector that Hazelzet was able to persuade the International Consortium for Health Outcomes Measurement (ICHOM) to host its 2019 conference in the city from 2-3 May this year, bringing 1,250 delegates. *“ICHOM is heavily involved in VBHC - it’s their reason for existence. Erasmus MC was their first strategic partner. Since the Netherlands are front runners in this field, it made sense to try host the ICHOM congress in the Netherlands, and in Rotterdam in particular,”* he says.

With support from the Erasmus Congress Organization Center and Rotterdam Partners - the city’s convention bureau - Hazelzet secured the event without having to enter into a formal bid process. He and Rotterdam Partners then worked together to book the conference venue, source speakers and provide accommodation. *“Everybody is still talking about the Rotterdam ICHOM conference and the far majority of the 1,250 participants were very happy and enthusiastic about the congress facilities,”* says Hazelzet.

He is full of praise for his city as a host for association events: *“We have excellent congress facilities and hotels centrally located, no-nonsense mentality, efficiency, a modern image and architecture, moderate prices, excellent international access and of course Rotterdam Partners with their pleasant efficacy.”*

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Knowledge Hubs Without Boundaries

New Zealand has become a synonym for authenticity. Authentic diverse environment, nurtured by the people's sense of duty towards nature, alternates with unique ultramodern facilities powered by kiwi resourcefulness. This winning combination has brought the country an innovative edge across a number of key sectors, leaving associations no doubt as to why this is an ideal conference destination. The small nation promises and delivers big.

Words Vicky Koffa



New Zealand offers event planners and international thought leaders the opportunity to tap into the creativity and knowledge the Māori culture has passed down through generations. The kiwi spirit of ingenuity is indisputably present in all the innovation the country lays out for the world. 3rd out of 139 nations for global creativity, 9th globally for Artificial Intelligence, 13th out of 136 nations for safety and security, 1st for the management of sustainable fisheries, the list goes on.

Market segments like Health Sciences, Agribusiness, Tourism, Advanced Manufacturing and Design, High Value Food and Wine, Information and Communications Technology and Earth Sciences are thriving. Collaboration between forward-thinking learning and research centres and a strong focus on education and progress on behalf of the government have led to breakthroughs in these sectors and have taken New Zealand centre stage globally.

A NETWORK OF INNOVATION

At the foundation of innovation lies New Zealand's network of universities, research institutions, and Centres of Research Excellence (CoRE). In its biggest city, Auckland, research in various sectors makes headlines globally and innovative ideas reach the international market. The Medical Technologies Centre of Research Excellence (MedTech CoRE), for starters, serves as a world-leading research platform in medical technologies. The University of Auckland's Bioengineering Institute is undertaking groundbreaking work in AI, as seen in the digital humans by spinoff Soul Machines.

In the field of manufacturing and design, harnessing the power of the waves abundant around the islands, the University's Yacht Research Unit carries out more wind tunnel testing of yacht sails than any other laboratory in the world. Combined with innovative manufacturing and materials research and a leading marine industry, New Zealand has launched world-leading racing yacht and superyacht technology.

From the cloud to the ground, the Geothermal Institute at the University of Auckland offers leading geothermal expertise along with New Zealand's lead knowledge hub in earth sciences, the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science (GNS Science).

KNOWLEDGE SPREAD OUT

Taking a closer look outside Auckland, the wealth of knowledge in New Zealand expands all over the nation. The Dodds-Wall Centre in Dunedin, in the South Island, is at the forefront of photonic and quantum technologies, while the Xerra Earth Observation Institute, located in Alexandra, is increasing New Zealand's work in satellite, earth observation and remote sensing technologies.

Found also in the South Island, Christchurch is home to New Zealand's Natural Hazard Research Centre, at the University of Canterbury's Department of Geological Sciences. The city has absorbed all kinds of knowledge the 2011 earthquake left in the area in fields like earthquake engineering, low damage

construction, building technology, resilient infrastructure and sustainability.

In the North Island, the University of Waikato in Hamilton is home to the Cyber Researchers of Waikato (CROW), leading proponents in Cloud security research, and tools.

In a land of just 4.9 million people, nature and agriculture have the upper hand and research at Palmerston North's Massey University in agritech innovation, farming systems and cutting-edge genetics has helped bring New Zealand to the top of dairy, meat and wool production worldwide.

From producing raw materials to producing high-value food and wine, New Zealand excels in food technology through courses offered in most of its universities and research by

Crown Research Institutes. Prominent examples with Palmerston North operations include AgResearch, Plant and Food Research, and the Fonterra Research and Development Centre with expertise in dairy.

Trevor Simpson, Deputy Executive Director of the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand, sums up New Zealand's business events mentality: *"In terms of Aotearoa, New Zealand, I think we clearly have a lot to offer the world in terms of the way we are as a people. So multidimensional and multicultural. at the same time having this indigenous Maori aspect to it. New Zealand's really keen to demonstrate our leadership in health promotion,*

we're doing a few things that are really unique at the moment. And that uniqueness revolves around indigenous health promotion and elements of that we think would be of interest to the rest of the world. We think there's some secrets in there that would be good if we could unlock them and share with the rest of the world in terms of how we could make the planet earth a better place."

Upcoming conferences in NZ

Associations could not but notice New Zealand's expertise in certain sectors and are now planning one conference after another in the country.

- IEEE - Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITSC), Auckland, 27 - 30 October 2019
- The 18th International Semantic Web Conference, University of Auckland, 1 - 3 October 2019
- Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, University of Waikato, Hamilton, 26 - 29 June 2019
- Symposium on River, Coastal and Estuarine Morphodynamics, University of Auckland, 1 - 4 November 2019
- World Hereford Conference, Millenium Hotel, Queenstown, 9 - 13 March 2020
- International Conference on Laser Spectroscopy, Rydges Lakeland Resort, Queenstown, 8 - 12 July 2019
- 16th World Cereal and Bread Congress, Christchurch, 2020

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Making Good on Green Promises

Monaco is steadfastly stepping beyond its reputation as a playground for the rich and beautiful to take its rightful position as a leader in the global fight for a more sustainable and healthy planet. There is a storied and adventurous history behind its dedication to cleaner oceans and air, which is today available for all to see who enter the pristine seaside country.

Words Samantha Shankman



Prince Albert II founded the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation immediately upon taking his role to support public and private projects including limiting greenhouse gas emissions, developing renewable energies, protecting biodiversity, managing water resources and combating desertification.

The government is leading the way with a strong whole-of-a-city approach - that includes the entire Monegasque society and visitors in the major energy transition - which means adopting new habits and evolving as a society.

“The Grimaldi Dynasty has always been very involved in studying the environment to better understand the link between humanity and the planet. It started with Prince Albert I, who is internationally acknowledged as the father of modern oceanography, in the early 20th century. He created the Oceanographic Institute in Paris, the Oceanographic Museum in Monaco, and led many sea expeditions in the Arctic and Antarctic region,” explains Olivier Wenden, managing director of The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

The Foundation's efforts stand out for their ambitious targets – the Principality will need to cut emissions four times faster than the current rate to achieve its goals – as well as a commitment to achieving them with practical initiatives. Monaco's unique positioning is part of what makes it such a powerhouse in this area. Its sustainability efforts extend beyond the 2-km country itself; it has a global plan with a real sustainable vision.

"Monaco is one of the smallest countries in the world, but it has always been very open to the world, to the sea, to trade, and to different cultures. We are very blessed with our economic growth. The whole intention of the residents and government is to give back. It is a very natural path to follow, to give back not only for education, health, and society - but also the environment. We cover the whole scope of the environment in the [Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation] mission statement including the fight against climate change, the promotion of renewable energies, the protection of biodiversity at land and sea, and access to renewable water resources," says Wenden.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN

Although Monaco's efforts have a global impact, there are exacting measures being taken at home that even a first-time visitor will note.

Monaco banned the use of single-use plastic bags in 2019 and will ban the use of plastic straws, cutlery, and glasses from January 2020. It also became the first country to ban bluefin tuna from the Mediterranean after learning the species would become extinct within two years if action was not taken. Other countries involved in the International Union for Conservation of Nature refused to join, given the popularity of the rare fish.

"You have to understand the power of the market. We lost the case [to ban bluefin tuna among UN participants], but it caught the attention of media. The EU started to raise quotes to better monitor fisheries and serious work was done with the fisherman in the region. The stocks are back after five years," says Olivier.

Monaco also has one of the few marine-protected areas within its perimeter, which was formed in the 1970s. Only 3 percent of the Mediterranean is protected and 1.6 percent of that is due to principality's efforts.

The Principality has also been actively engaged in the fight against climate change through the ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and more recently the Paris agreement. Its efforts have shown considerable results: It is on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of 50 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

Monaco has become a pioneer in the 'ecological transition' necessary for creating a world that people can live in and enjoy

for generations to come. It is vital to note how the country's efforts go far beyond the marketing initiatives and "greenwashing" that other destinations often prescribe to. It instead looks to involve every level of government, business, the local community and even visitors in reaching its ambitious but attainable goals through consistent change.

ACROSS THE WHOLE SUPPLY CHAIN

To further this deep commitment, the Monaco Convention Bureau launched a digital campaign this year to elevate awareness of its environmentally-conscious approach.

The campaign's tagline "Business is Green" helps to highlight the very tangible efforts happening across the principality and the environment that associations and business travelers can learn and interact with while there. There is a clear shift among business seeking cleaner and more responsible events that match their concerns around the environment, our planet's sustainability, and their role within that transition.

The sustainability of Monaco and commitment to its efforts is one of the most important factors in drawing associations to its shores today.

The attraction to Monaco's congress centre, the Grimaldi Forum, goes beyond the history, quality, affordability, stability and beauty of the destination. The venue has a strong sustainability policy where visitors seen the use of eco-friendly materials, photovoltaic panels on the rooftop, and sustainably-powered air conditioning at work. The majority of its 2,500 hotel rooms are certified by Green Globe, Green Key and Planet 21 by Accor, all while maintaining four and five-star quality of service.

Visitors can dine at the first 100-percent organic Michelin star restaurant Elsa, enjoy a tour of the organic urban gardens run by Terre de Monaco, or take a tour of the green efforts taking place throughout Monaco.

"As sustainability becomes more and more important to company's strategies, either to their shareholders or customers, they make the move to Monaco," concludes Wenden.

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Great Minds Confer in Washington, DC

Washington, DC, the U.S. capital, seems to have become the place of choice for great minds to confer in the technology, biotech/pharmaceutical, education and medical sectors. As the Connected Capital par excellence continues to expand its knowledge economy, those working in sustainability, transportation and government advocacy have also taken notice.

Words Vicky Koffa, with Destination DC



In Washington, DC, all the expertise comes together to form a leading meetings destination; as Elliott L. Ferguson, II, president and CEO of Destination DC, sums it up, *"It's more than promoting the destination, it's having a better understanding of the real businesses that are thriving in DC, such as the various startups creating a strong technology scene. For meeting planners, our Connected Capital positioning shows customers how to utilize the resources we have right in our backyard."*

A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The city has built a path towards greener living and meeting with more LEED-certified buildings than any other city in the U.S. and an accessible environment where every government building is powered by renewable energy, placing sustainability at the top of its priorities. The District of Columbia government plays a crucial role in advancing sustainability, committing to practices like the Clean Energy DC Act, the nation's first 100% renewable energy bill, or membership in the C40 initiative, a grouping of more than 90 cities around the world dedicated to finding evidence-based and bold climate action solutions.

This sustainable way of thinking has formed a large talent pool in the area with domestic and international sustainable startups, such as Clean Choice Energy, Arcadia Power, and Potential Energy DC, an incubator of 16 organizations dedicated to propelling energy and sustainability startups in DC. The Department of Energy and Environment, the authority on energy and environmental issues, is also based in DC and employs approximately 300 engineers, biologists, toxicologists, geologists and environmental specialists.

When asked about the connection between such a plethora of local experts and targeted meetings for the city, Ferguson says: *"We look at what is happening in DC - for example, we focus on the associations that are headquartered*

here and that have a certain expertise. We want to study how groups can leverage the local expertise and show planners how this can add value to their meetings. A good example is the American Geophysical Union. Although headquartered in Washington, DC, 2018 was the first time the group held its meeting in Washington after meeting in San Francisco for 40 years. We showed them that they can benefit from peer-to-peer exchanges with the breadth of DC-based experts right in our backyard. We helped them understand how their meeting can succeed in DC, with assets unlike any other destination."

UNRIVALED ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Washington, DC's role as the advocacy capital of the world is key for successful business events. Meeting planners can add value for attendees by tapping into DC's network of federal policymakers, prospective industry sponsors or high-level speakers. In fact, 54% of the people employed by the federal government in the region are headquartered in DC, as are most federal agencies.

Moreover, fifteen local universities have significant credentials in government, offering courses and connections to key policymakers and political institutes, ranking the city high in political science and government graduates.

This allows associations to meet with congressional leaders, hold a legislative day on Capitol Hill or educate policymakers. For example, the International Gas Union leaders at the 27th World Gas Conference, held in June 2018, focused on educating policy makers on the importance of gas in an increasingly carbon constrained environment.

PREMIER PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

From easy-to-use public transportation and accessible airports to widespread walkability and innovative developments, the nation's capital provides for an effective public transportation network. Distances

can be cut short for conference attendees with over 40 hotels within walking distance of the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, adding to DC's appeal.

"For the American Geophysical Union's 2018 Fall Meeting, we selected Washington, DC in large part because the city is so walkable and has excellent public transportation," said Lauren Parr, vice president of meetings, American Geophysical Union (AGU). *"AGU never shuttles for large meetings as it's a carbon and financial expenditure that we don't wish to incur, and we had excellent feedback from our attendees on what a great walking city DC is. Washington, DC was a great choice for AGU and it's a great choice for any planner looking to leverage the local transportation options and eliminate shuttles."*

Air travel comes to complete the picture of an efficient transportation system. Dulles International Airport provides daily nonstop service from more than 50 international destinations including new nonstop air service from Tel Aviv, Rome, Cairo and Lisbon. The Metro's silver line extension to Dulles International Airport is expected to be completed in 2020, providing a convenient, economical connection between the Virginia airport and heart of Washington, DC.

"Washington, DC offers associations a value-added approach with a thriving start-up community, venture capitalists and access to thought leaders, influencers and industry experts," concludes Ferguson. *"Aside from DC's strong industries, the city is dedicated to investing in new opportunities in development, 16 hotels in the pipeline and other ongoing infrastructure developments that continue adding to our city's appeal."*

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The Strong Ambitions of Wales

To consolidate its positioning in the conference world, Wales has a new asset up its sleeves: ICC Wales, the result of a joint private/public partnership. Riding on its academic and research strengths, the country has been attracting the attention of international and European associations over the last few years.

Words Cécile Koch

Wales, part of the UK but with its own government, has strong ambitions. The country wants indeed to build up on its academic reputation, particularly in the Engineering and Manufacturing fields. Although compact, Wales counts eight universities of which four rank in the world's top 500. Additionally, thanks to a proactive academic network, international collaboration has been established with big corporations such as Airbus, Rolls Royce and General Electric.

Half an hour away from ICC Wales, Cardiff enjoys capital city status, with students bringing creativity and fresh ideas to the scene. Offering the best quality of life in the UK according to many recent rankings - and excellent value for money - it's a thrilling, diverse and dynamic destination, the fastest growing major area in the whole of the Kingdom.

MOST COMPETITIVE

In fact, Cardiff is today one of the most competitive locations in the UK for skilled service sector businesses, home to companies such as Admiral. The region boasts a flourishing advanced manufacturing sector, with links to universities delivering

world-class research. Cardiff is also a business hub for the automotive sector including Ford and Aston Martin.

The city leads the way in life sciences as well. In fact, the field is one of Wales' fastest growing and most innovative sectors, employing more than 11,000 persons. Cardiff is the homebase of the so-called Life Sciences Hub, Europe's first centre for nano-health, and host every year BioWales, one of the largest life sciences conferences in the UK, which will celebrate its 18th anniversary in 2020. Among the leading academics is Nobel Prize Winner Professor Sir Martins Evans who leads the stem cell research in Wales.

When it comes to technology, Wales has nothing to blush about, and is a pioneer in everything related to cyber security. The University of South Wales is the only university in the UK with GCHQ accreditation for computer forensics. GCHQ is one of the three UK Intelligence and Security Agencies, along with MI5 and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), and provides assistance on the security of Government communications and electronic data.



The creative industries are booming in South East Wales: a thriving creative cluster is home to around 10,000 people in the city, and over 25,000 in the city-region. Creative and innovative companies include Bad Wolf, Wild Creations, Milk and Bang.

In this context, if R&D and innovation are at the forefront, so is sustainability, which is at the heart of policy making in Wales, with energy and environment concerns taking centre stage in Wales' planned development.

ICC WALES IN FOCUS

To develop the business events industry, the Welsh Government and a private owner, the Celtic Manor Resort, have joined forces and invested in a brand-new congress centre, ICC Wales. Located right at the entrance to Wales, a stone-throw away of the highway leading to Cardiff in half an hour, the glass and slate building with a capacity of 5,000 people overlooks the valley in a majestic manner.

One of the first clients of ICC Wales will be the Disability Expo of the Accessibility Group who will organize their event this

coming September. The event is expected to attract more than 5,000 trade and consumer visitors. It will make good use of the ICC's industry leading accessibility and provide a truly open forum for disabled people, professionals working in the sector and, really, anyone interested in sharing ideas and seeing the latest products and services available in this field.

"We wanted to create an event for disabled people that is organized by disabled people, with a true understanding of the market and the needs of attendees," comments Leighton Morris, CEO of the Accessibility Group.

ICC Wales will also host the Alzheimer's Research UK Conference in 2020, building on the strong expertise and knowledge to be found in Wales to support this specialized event.

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A Tale of Transformation

Travelling to Tel Aviv in May at the same time the Eurovision Song Contest was taking place was truly an eye-opening experience for Boardroom. The city proved that it is more than capable of delivering high-quality events, but it also shed light on its real strength: its drive for innovation.

Words Rémi Dévé



Tel Aviv—Israel's engine of commerce and a centre for contemporary art and culture—is often referred to as the “city that never sleeps” thanks to its buzzy downtown, with impressive skyscrapers (and outrageously expensive real estate prices) that resemble a miniature New York City. But unlike the Big Apple, Tel Aviv boasts nearly 15 kilometres of turquoise coastline, where people lounge in the sand along palm tree-lined boulevards that sport some of the city's hottest restaurants and bars (picture a Mediterranean South Beach).

Looking at such a modern city, it's hard to envision Tel Aviv a century ago, when it was staked out by Jewish immigrants as an appendage to ancient Jaffa. Today, the club scene is as vibrant as any cosmopolitan city across Europe—better yet, on the globe—with one bar or nightclub for every 239 residents. This image of a vibrant metropolis is coupled with Tel Aviv's revamped reputation as a knowledge centre, a revolutionary hub for scientific research institutes, universities, hospitals and high-tech companies.

STARTUP NATION

Israel's population may measure a mere 8.5 million people, but in recent years, the country has developed more high-tech startups than all of Europe and comes in only second to the US, earning it the well-deserved nickname of “Startup Nation.” Tel Aviv is also known as “Startup City,” with over 1,700 startups—more per capita than any other city on the globe (and rivalled only by Silicon Valley).

From software and security to medical and agricultural technology, international companies like Amazon, Facebook, and Google are among the many operating R&D centres in Tel Aviv, where a cluster of high-tech industries built around military, startup and venture-capital communities are working in the surrounding coastal plain of Silicon Wadi (wadi means valley in Arabic). No wonder the city continues to host high-profile annual conferences, meet-ups, and events dedicated to technological innovations, including the DLD Tel Aviv Digital Conference, Forbes 30 Under 30, and Cybertech, in addition to being named one of the world's most innovative cities by *The Wall Street Journal*.

At the forefront of this innovative spirit is the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. Founded in 1996 by late president Shimon Peres, the centre is designed to propel Israel's reputation as a startup nation and show how a country with a

small population (and large security issues) covered 60 percent in desert can have a global impact. Groups of up to 200 can gather in the centre's sea-facing auditorium or four workshop rooms, totalling a capacity of 1000 pax.

“As an association, we're interested in hosting our events where our delegates can expand their knowledge while also taking advantage of the location's unique assets,” explains Solomon Rataemane, Secretary General of the World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation. *“Tel Aviv is the perfect place to do just that. As a global leader in technology and innovation, it impressed me. I liked the unique combination of culture, history and hi-tech. Of course, it doesn't hurt that the food scene is second to none!”*

GLOBAL GATHERINGS

In Tel Aviv, convention venues include Expo Tel Aviv, which hosts thousands of exhibition events and meetings annually, including this year's Eurovision Song Contest. The largest and most advanced venue in the country, Expo Tel Aviv welcomes 2.5 million visitors per year to its eight pavilions and 20 conference halls (with capacity ranging from 200 to over 1,000), in addition to offering 25,000 sqm of exhibition space.

As for location, Tel Aviv is accessible by nearly 300 incoming flights a day into Israel's largest international airport, Ben Gurion International Airport. Most flights from Europe are between three and five hours, and when attendees return home, they can rest assured their flight will be a safe one. The airport is known for its thorough security, which includes a recent checked baggage

screening upgrade.

“It is our plan to become a leading destination that attracts European and international associations, and, with a whole-of-a-city approach, our efforts have been recognized by ICCA,” says Noa Sapir, head of Tel Aviv Convention Bureau. *“The ultimate goal is to introduce Tel Aviv as a new player on the world's stage. When Tel Aviv is sometimes referred to as a ‘Lighthouse City,’ I'm confident we're going in the right direction.”*

Tel Aviv Fast Facts

- +/- 25,000 sqm of meeting space spread over 8 pavilions at Expo Tel Aviv (maximum capacity 9,000 pax)
- 11,000 hotel rooms located within a 15-km radius of the convention centre
- Ben Gurion International Airport located 20 minutes away from Tel Aviv, offering nearly 300 incoming flights per day
- Hub for scientific research centres, universities, hospitals and hi-tech companies
- Tel Aviv University ranked among the world's Top 100
- 320 days of sun per year

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Zeroing in on ICT in Zurich

Thanks to an attractive meetings infrastructure and one of the most innovative networks in ICT, Zurich continues to lure association events. The Swiss city is known as a global leader in many fields – especially information technology and sustainability – in addition to being one of the top in terms of life quality, which has helped attract the attention of international associations for some time now – and rightfully so.

Words Rémi Dévé, with Zurich Convention Bureau



One of the best examples of innovation in Zurich? The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, one of the world's leading universities in science and technology. Known for cutting-edge research and innovation, it was established in 1855 as the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School, and, more than a century and a half later, the university counts over 20 Nobel Prize laureates as alumni, including the great physicist Albert Einstein.

IBM, Google, and Disney are just three of the many corporations that chose to locate important research centres in the city, which is also home to 450 spin-offs and startups. As if this figure isn't impressive enough, over 5,000 companies employ around 50,000 ICT specialists in Canton Zurich alone.

digitalswitzerland

Zurich is Google's largest research and development centre outside the U.S., employing almost 2,500 staff. The company has rented new offices in the city and, according to Patrick Warnking, who has been at the head of Google Switzerland's business operations since 2011, Google intends to expand further in the coming years. When asked about Zurich's position as a centre of knowledge, Warnking responds: *"Switzerland stands for diversity, innovation, and quality. The great administration and infrastructure here are further success factors. Google's Swiss centre has maintained its international competitiveness for years."*

A few of the key services he's referring to: Google Search, Google Maps, Google Assistant, and YouTube. In addition, Google's "made in Switzerland" services are being developed for the whole world. For these operations to be successful, an in-depth knowledge of languages and cultures is crucial. *"With some 85 different nationalities, our workforce in Zurich encompasses this*

diversity," Warnking says. *"In addition, numerous employees come from Zurich's outstanding technological colleges and universities, which we collaborate very closely with in the field of research. For Google, this is also an important argument in favour of Zurich."*

Google Switzerland sees itself as part of the Swiss society and the Swiss economy. *"For this reason, we are actively involved in a wide variety of projects at a local level, such as start-ups. We are also a founder member of the 'digitalswitzerland' initiative and part of the framework of the partnership between Google for Entrepreneurs and the Impact Hub Zurich,"* says Warnking. Thanks to these partnerships, Swiss start-ups have global access to the Google for Entrepreneurs programmes and events, such as Silicon Valley boot camps or the investor pitches, "Google Demo Days." Start-up company Kenzen, which is affiliated with the Impact Hub, is just one of the many success stories.

As for top picks for places to visit in the city, Warnking recommends ICT convention delegates add these three to their Google Maps before visiting: the ETH main building, a symbol of centuries-old tradition, innovation, and fascination for the sciences; Zurich Airport (in which other metropolis in Europe can you reach the city centre in just 10 minutes by train?); and the top of Uetliberg, where you can admire panoramic views over the city, lake, the Glarus and Graubünden Alps. *"It's just beautiful!"* Warnking exclaims.

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BOARDROOM ADVISORY BOARD



Silke Schlinnertz

Head of Operations & Events, Euroheat & Power

Appointed in July 2014, Silke is in charge of the oversight and management of the Euroheat & Power office, events organisation and relations with Euroheat & Power members and partners. She joined Euroheat & Power in March 2011 from Colloquium Brussels, an international events agency.



Jennifer Fontanella

Director of Operations and Finance, International Studies Association (ISA)

Jennifer has been with ISA since July 2014 when the association moved its headquarters to the University of Connecticut. She is responsible for the management of ISA headquarter staff and has responsibility for managing the ISA's budget and finances as well as coordinating future convention planning.



Giuseppe Marletta

Managing Director Europe, Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC)

Prior to joining ACC, Giuseppe Marletta was the General Manager of the International Association of Young Lawyers. In his career, he has managed several European and international groups and associations, in the field of intercultural dialogue, policy making, project management as well as in the health sector. Giuseppe is President of ESAE, the European Society of Association Executives.



Mohamed Mezghani

Secretary General, UITP: Advancing Public Transport

Mohamed worked at UITP as Senior Manager (1999-2001), Director Knowledge and Membership Services (2001-2006) and Senior Adviser to the Secretary General (2006-2013). He also out several technical assistance and training projects in Africa and the Middle-East. He established the UITP office for the Middle-East and North Africa in Dubai.



Matthew R. D'Uva FASAE, CAE, CEO

International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP)

Matthew has served as the CEO for the IASP since July 2015. He holds an MBA from the University of Maryland and a bachelor's degree in International Relations from Tufts University. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Association Executives and has previously served as a member of the Board of Directors of both ASAE and the ASAE Foundation.



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