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2025 VOLUME 1 | VOLUME 2 | VOLUME 3 | VOLUME 4



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INTRODUCING

The Boardroom Association Podcast

Launching April 2025

In collaboration with



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& community building – the essential
qualities shaping the future of associations.



BOARDROOM
ASSOCIATION
PODCAST

LETTER TO OUR READERS

Launch of the Boardroom Association Podcast

As the world of associations continues to evolve, the need for strong, adaptable leadership has never been greater. Associations are facing new challenges and opportunities every day, from shifting member expectations to technological advancements and the ongoing global disruptions. As a magazine dedicated to providing education and insights for association leaders, we've long believed in the power of sharing knowledge to inspire and foster growth.

With that in mind, we are excited to announce the launch, in March, of our very first Boardroom Association Podcast, a new platform designed to explore what it truly takes to be an exceptional leader in today's rapidly changing landscape. In collaboration with the European Society of Association Executives, our inaugural series, *What Makes a Good Associations Leader?*, aims to dig deep into the core qualities that define transformative leadership in the association world.

In this podcast, available on all platforms you can think of (but also on www.boardroom.global), we'll explore the personal stories and professional journeys of association leaders who have made a lasting impact—whether through visionary strategies, adaptability in the face of change, or the ability to foster deep connections within their communities. Through real-life case studies and expert interviews, we'll break down these leadership qualities and offer practical insights that association leaders can apply in their own organisations.

The Boardroom Association Podcast is intended for leaders at all stages—those starting their careers as well as seasoned professionals seeking fresh perspectives. Our goal is to equip listeners with the tools to lead with purpose, resilience, and empathy, and to provide a space for learning, inspiration, and shared experiences.

We believe it will become a valuable resource for association leaders, offering not only inspiration but also practical strategies to lead more effectively. This new venture aligns perfectly with our ongoing mission to educate and empower those shaping the future of associations around the world.

Stay tuned for our launch—this is just the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Boardroom... and get in touch at info@boardroom.global if you want to be part of it, if you have a story to share.



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Contents



Editor's pages

- 6 | Empathy in Leadership
- 9 | ICCA: The AI & DEI Intersect
- 12 | Association Portrait: ISHA



Destinations

- 24 | Netherlands
- 26 | Switzerland



Special Report

- 29 | Berlin



Feature

Global Leadership Strategies for Associations

15 | Navigating Global Expansion: Getting It Right from the Start

For ESAE, Alain Mulder argues that expanding internationally isn't just about reaching new markets, it reshapes an association at its core, where governance, strategy, and member engagement are all evolved in the process.

18 | Eight Steps for Taking Your Certification Program International

Associations, according to ASAE, should consider expanding their credentialing programs to tap into new markets and grow revenue.

20 | Immunology Without Borders

A case study of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) under K.I.T. Group's stewardship – a contribution from IAPCO.

22 | Associations Are Not That Different

AIPC CEO Sven Bossu explains how the association is targeting new markets, catering to local business culture.

Empathy in Leadership

How understanding your team and organisation will make you a better leader

Special Boardroom contributor **Dr Ole Petter Anfinssen**, explains why empathy in leadership is vital for organisational and team performance.

Leadership principles, skills, and competencies are widely discussed nowadays, and the fundamentals of leadership have been among the most debated organisational topics over the last decade.

Define & differentiate

In short, leadership involves guidance and influence and leading a team or people towards a common goal. However, empathy in leadership is a relatively new concept – particularly from a historical perspective – and is now dealt with by many organisations as part of their training and development programmes. This is highly relevant, especially concerning policies and regulations on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

However, empathy is subject to several misconceptions and is often confused with sympathy and compassion. Before discussing empathy in leadership, it is thus essential to define and differentiate.

Sympathy is not fully understanding someone and feeling sorry for and/or pitying them. As a result, one can understand how this can be misinterpreted as condescending in a team or leadership context,

potentially leading to resentment and toxicity rather than fostering unity and providing psychological safety. In comparison, compassion is more about showing concern for someone, which may also involve pity for their situation and challenges.

Empathy, conversely, is about understanding someone and why they feel the way they do. For a leader, this is an invaluable skill and something one must possess to successfully build healthy teams and organisations while fostering an energising and rewarding environment where people can thrive and perform. How can a leader expect to influence and guide others without the ability to understand someone?

Empathy in leadership is demonstrated though:

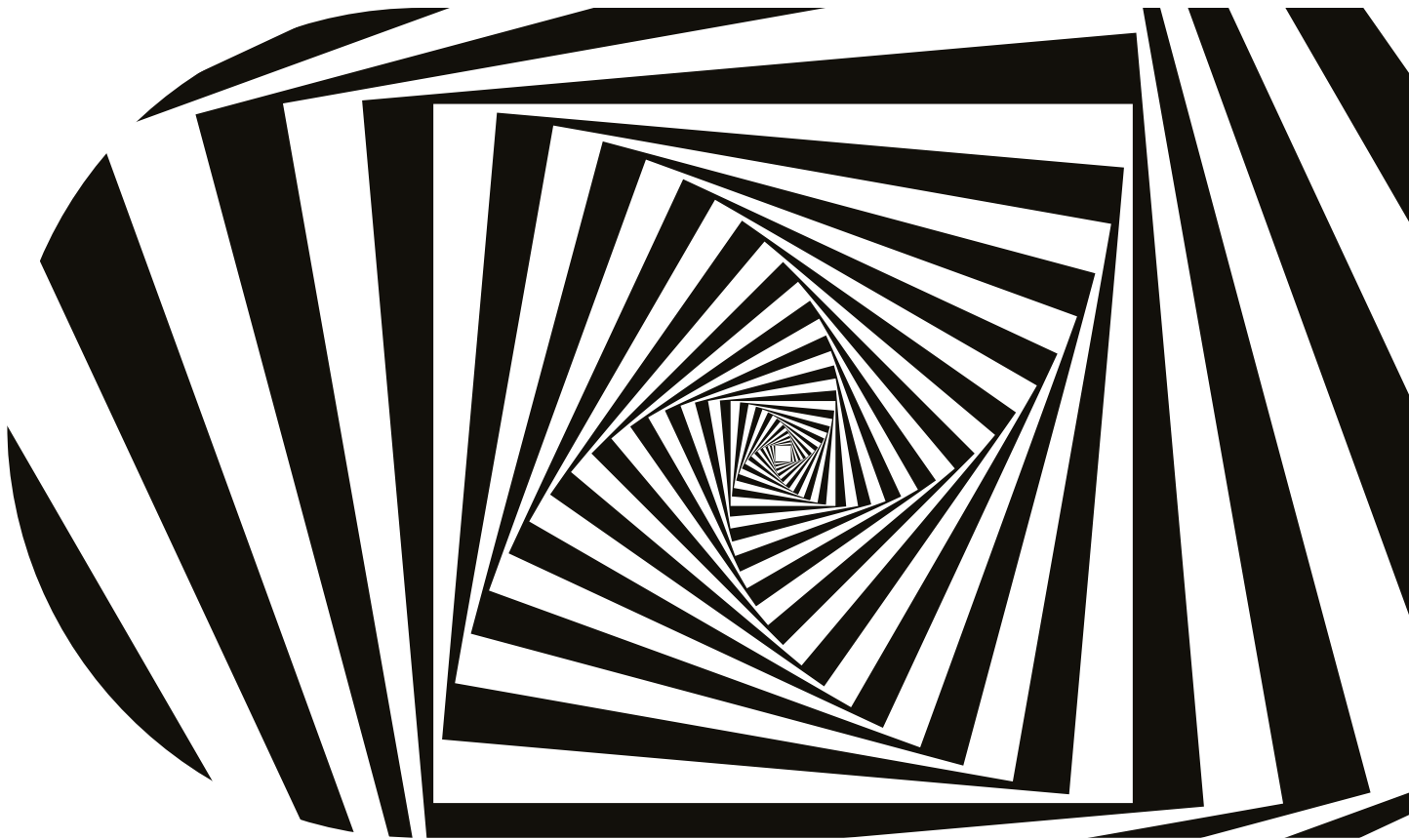
- Providing necessary support
- Asking questions and showing genuine interest
- Active listening and effective communication
- Being flexible and adaptable
- Showing understanding and acknowledgement
- Offering freedom

Leadership in history

Historically, empathy has not been seen as a component of leadership, largely due to misconceptions about the differences between leadership and management. As a result, leadership has often followed an authoritarian style with little consideration for individual needs or requirements. It has been a one-style-fits-all mentality driven by authority, obedience and discipline. This, again, has led to a lack of engagement, conflicts, poor communication, and decreased employee retention.

However, this is not always the case, as the authoritarian style works well for some organisations and people. On an individual level, it can often strengthen and develop resilience and self-discipline.

On the other hand, some organisations and leaders lean too heavily on empathy, leading to a decline in efficiency, effectiveness, direction, focus and performance. Excessive flexibility, understanding, and freedom can indeed allow the needs of a select few to jeopardize the productivity of the entire



organisation. In such cases, the benefits are limited to individuals rather than the team, and an egocentric attitude of entitlement can become the primary focus.

This is where the leader may overidentify with others or become a pushover, for lack of a better word. Overidentifying takes place when a leader embraces others' feelings to the point of experiencing stress or emotional strain. On the other hand, a "pushover" might be the result of fear, often influenced by what might be described as "woke" culture. There is also the danger of empathy for a certain person or group being perceived as favouritism.

Gen Z controversy

Consequently, a conflict occurs between an authoritarian leadership style and leaders becoming pushovers due to the gap and misconceptions between the two extremes. Therefore, one could argue that both perspectives – those of Gen Z and past generations – are valid in the current debate about what is right or what is wrong.

However, finding some sort of common ground is essential to ensure proper knowledge transfer, learning and training. Both sides and all generations have invaluable lessons to offer to each other, and by working together through mutual understanding and acknowledgement, organisations will

thrive. Remember, it is about mutual understanding!

By adopting an empathetic leadership style and embedding it into their organisational culture, leaders will enhance employee retention, communication, engagement, well-being and satisfaction. It will also strengthen relationships within the organisation, while improving external relations and supporting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

This is what success looks like moving forward – with mutual understanding through empathetic, strategic leadership.

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The AI & DEI Intersect

Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA, explores how the convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) can shape the future of the meetings and events industry in transformative ways.

As we continue to build and expand upon the technological milestones and developments available to us, ICCA is thinking about how the next chapter in professional development for international associations must be written in tandem with these tools.

The up-and-coming generation of meetings professionals won't be playing by the same rulebook that has been in place for the past few decades. The power of Artificial Intelligence and its potential to dramatically transform the way we do business is no longer just a hypothetical situation – that future has arrived, and with it, great potential for the business events industry to harness this power and potential for the betterment of our industry.

Building a stronger future together requires not only strong values surrounding DEI and global outreach. The kind of diverse, interwoven, and interconnected community that makes us all stronger necessitates a proactive effort to advocate for all members of our global family, and to evangelise the business events space to those who wish to join our industry.

We recognise that success thrives in an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and included, and that leading our global community is central to our mission to effectively represent members and shape the future of the industry. We know that collaboration and active listening are key to providing opportunities for up-and-coming leaders in the meetings space.

The intermingling of these two concepts – emerging technology and outreach and development of a strong, diverse, and dynamic cohort of professionals – is a trending topic of great relevance to our organisation, and to associations around the globe. To that end, we're developing programmes geared toward addressing the intersection of two of the topics that have come to represent critical touchpoints for our industry: DEI and technology.

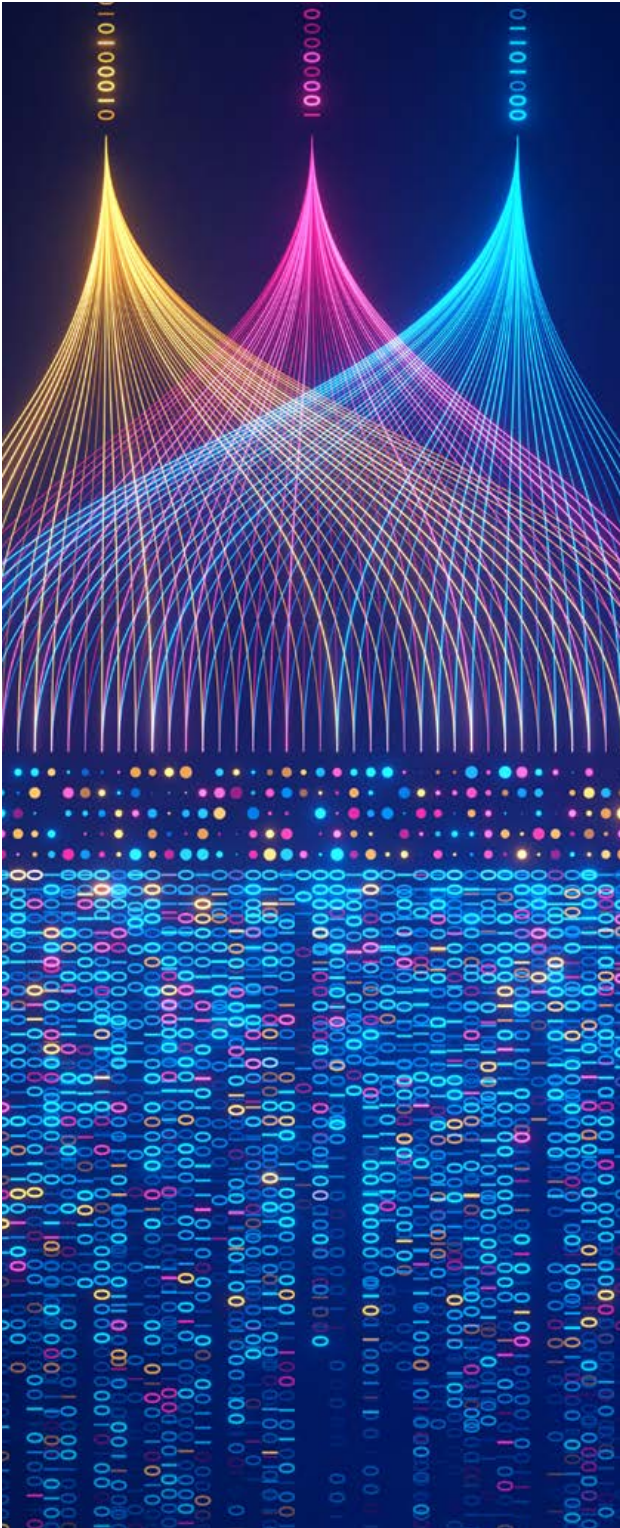
Association Expert Seminar

At our upcoming Association Expert Seminar, taking place on 18 and 19 May, before IMEX in Frankfurt, the focus will be on how AI can transform the way future leaders tackle issues from recruitment to hiring to retention, and more, all through the lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – and how, by using the latest incredible advancements of Artificial Intelligence technology, we can develop more inclusive meetings and events that better serve the overall goals of our industry to promote and provide opportunity for all participants in the space.

The workshop will cover all aspects of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings, and at the same time is a unique opportunity for suppliers to understand client objectives and business cultures, and for association executives to understand how to negotiate with and understand the objectives of suppliers, enabling both sides to establish stronger and more productive business relationships.

As part of ICCA's continued dedication to offering educational opportunities to young members of the meetings and events community, this dynamic session is designed for the under-40 cohort of future leaders who are involved with negotiating, planning, and running international association meetings and are interested in upskilling and gaining insight on how AI can transform the way we see business events and conferences.

Through small-group activities exploring how AI-powered tools like chatbots or AI-assisted scheduling can enhance DEI at a given event, participants will learn how to personalise experiences and create more inclusive formats. Experts will guide participants through exercises that focus on making meetings and congresses safer and more inclusive environments.



Moving forward

With the goal of equipping younger members of the meetings and events community with the crucial knowledge they'll need to move forward in the industry, the discussion will also focus on techniques for building trust, understanding different cultural and gender norms, managing microaggressions, and handling challenging conversations.

Participants will come away with an enhanced understanding of how AI intersects with DEI, solutions that can be applied to real-world challenges within organisations, and how to develop safe, accepting spaces in events, emphasising the importance of inclusive environments.

In order to effectively shepherd the upcoming generation of meetings and events professionals into the leadership roles of the future – positions that will require enhanced knowledge and understanding of a rapidly expanding and evolving global landscape – it's critical to continue to invest in up-and-coming technologies and realise the impact they have and will continue to have on our industry, both as individual members and as a whole.

Together we can move forward into this new reality with the clear-eyed perspective the moment requires, and fully embody our place in the industry as a vanguard and visionary ready to take the reins of technology and harness the power of its unprecedented power to transform us as individuals – and as a community.

More about ICCA and how your association can benefit from being a member: www.iccaworld.org

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By Vicky Koffa

ISHA Shapes Medical Meetings Outside the Conference Room

Boardroom sat down with Caroline Mackenzie from ISHA – The Hip Preservation Society, to discuss the association’s mission and its groundbreaking 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting in Cape Town. The event, which won the ABPCO Best International Conference Award – sponsored by Boardroom Magazine – set new standards in scientific excellence, sustainability, and long-term impact.



ISHA is dedicated to advancing hip preservation through education, research, and collaboration. Its mission is to promote early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention strategies to improve patient outcomes worldwide. The society brings together surgeons, clinicians, and researchers to share best practices and push the boundaries of medical innovation.

ISHA’s annual scientific meetings play a crucial role in achieving these objectives. These gatherings create a sense of community and shared purpose combined with research presentations. *“Hip preservation as a discipline has always attracted pioneers and innovators,”* Mackenzie notes. *“Our meetings reflect that spirit by offering cutting-edge scientific content, hands-on learning experiences, and meaningful engagement between experts and emerging professionals.”*

A Landmark Event in Cape Town

The 2023 ISHA Annual Scientific Meeting in Cape Town was a milestone

event for the global orthopaedic community. *“This was the first time an ISHA Annual Meeting was held on the African continent,”* Mackenzie explains. *“We deliberately chose Cape Town with the goal of creating a lasting impact on hip preservation in Africa.”*

The conference was designed to address regional challenges in orthopaedics, particularly the limited awareness, training, and access to hip preservation techniques in many parts of Africa. The Africa Day Forum, held before

the main event, brought together multidisciplinary stakeholders to discuss barriers to care and potential solutions. *“This was about understanding the real-world challenges that prevent access to hip preservation and working towards change,”* she says.

The event was also significant for its strong community engagement, with a strong presence of African healthcare professionals alongside international experts. *“We wanted to ensure that the meeting didn’t just serve ISHA’s existing*



network, but also extended its reach to new audiences who stand to benefit most from the advancements in this field.”

What Made ISHA 2023 an Award-Winning Conference?

Winning the ABPCO Best International Conference Award was a natural consequence for the 2023 ISHA Annual Scientific Meeting. The conference betted on its collaboration, sustainability and lasting impact commitment and won. “We wanted people to be part of the learning process,” says Mackenzie. “That’s why we focused on live surgical demonstrations, hands-on workshops, and discussions that encouraged real exchange. It made the science come alive.”

Sustainability was central to the event’s success. “We made a conscious effort to reduce waste, eliminate single-use plastics, and work with local suppliers. We wanted to run a responsible event ensuring our presence in Cape Town benefited the local community.”

But what truly set ISHA 2023 apart was its lasting legacy as two projects emerged from the conference:

1. The Mission Programme – a collaboration with the East African Arthroscopy Association, the South African Association for Hip Arthroscopy, and Mercy Mater Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. This initiative is training orthopaedic surgeons across East Africa in hip preservation techniques, bridging a critical skills gap.
2. The Early Adolescent Screening Pilot Study – a project that uncovered a 17.6% rate of undiagnosed hip disease in its initial phase. The study is now being developed into a global research initiative to improve early detection and intervention strategies.

Mackenzie reflects: “The Mission Programme is now training surgeons in East Africa, and the Early Adolescent Screening Pilot Study is shaping the future of early diagnosis of FAI Impingement, that



will be extended to a global reach. What we started in Cape Town is continuing to make a difference, and that’s what makes this award so meaningful for all those within the ISHA membership and partner organisations.”

Overcoming Challenges in Global Medical Meetings

Organising an international scientific meeting is never without its challenges, and ISHA’s global reach means navigating a landscape of different healthcare systems, cultural expectations, and logistical complexities. Ensuring the content remains relevant and valuable to a broad audience is key.

“We have to strike a balance between presenting cutting-edge research while making sure it’s accessible and applicable to professionals in different regions, with varying levels of resources and expertise,” she explains.

Engaging a diverse audience is another priority. ISHA’s meetings are designed to bring together professionals at all career stages, from early-career specialists to leading surgeons and researchers. “Hip preservation is a multidisciplinary field, and we work hard to make sure everyone who plays a role in patient care feels included and valued.”

Securing the right sponsors and industry partnerships is also critical. “We need to ensure that our partners align with our long-term vision; we look for

collaborators who want to advance the field alongside us.”

Despite these hurdles, ISHA remains committed to making its meetings scientifically impactful, globally relevant, and accessible to all who can benefit from them. “It’s a challenge, but it’s also what makes our work so rewarding,” Mackenzie admits.

The Future of ISHA’s Conferences

With the success of the Cape Town meeting and the ABPCO Award, ISHA is looking ahead to the next evolution of its conferences. One key priority is broadening reach. “We want to engage more physiotherapists, rehabilitation specialists, and professionals from related fields, ensuring that hip preservation is addressed in a truly multidisciplinary way,” Mackenzie says.

Additionally, ISHA is exploring ways to further integrate technology into its events, particularly through hybrid formats and digital education tools. “Virtual components allow us to connect with more people globally and ensure that the knowledge shared at our meetings has an even greater impact.”

Mackenzie is particularly passionate about ensuring that ISHA’s meetings set new benchmarks. “We need to move beyond the traditional conference model where everything ends once the delegates leave,” she says. “Our goal is to ensure that every ISHA event drives real change, both in scientific advancement and in the communities we engage with.”



FEATURE

Global Leadership Strategies for Associations

Learn all about how associations must embrace cultural competence, inclusive decision-making, and technology to engage a global audience effectively. By valuing diverse perspectives and leveraging digital tools, they can foster stronger connections, address international challenges, and build a cohesive leadership team ready to drive meaningful impact.



By Alain Mulder

Navigating Global Expansion: Getting It Right from the Start

As associations increasingly look beyond their home markets, the challenges of global expansion become more apparent. According to the Factum Global Business Survey (Athitakis, 2024), 77% of leaders plan to continue or expand their international activities within the next six months. While this growth presents exciting opportunities, it also brings significant complexities, such as leading international teams, addressing region-specific member needs, expanding product and program offerings, and collaborating with volunteers from different cultural backgrounds.

Going or further expanding internationally isn't just about reaching new markets; it reshapes an association at its core, where governance, strategy, and member engagement are all evolved in the process.

Success in this new landscape and mitigating risk of international operations requires three key strategies: 1. developing cultural competence, 2. fostering inclusive decision-making, and 3. strengthening global connectivity within associations.

Develop Cultural Competence in your Association

Successful global expansion begins with awareness and self-reflection: understanding your current leadership style, business model, and how you promote your association's benefits. Simply scaling your existing offerings, marketing, and communication strategies into new markets won't guarantee success. While these approaches may work well in your home market, adaptation and localization are essential for international growth.

Understand Cultural Nuances

To build strong relationships in new markets, start by navigating language differences, communication styles, and nonverbal cues. Effective cross-cultural

communication prevents misunderstandings and fosters trust at both the volunteer and member levels. It's also crucial to gain honest feedback from your local stakeholders about how well your programs, events, and professional development opportunities align with cultural expectations.

One of the most critical touchpoints for members is customer service, often their primary interaction with your association. What do your international members think about how your customer service team responds? Do they feel heard and understood? Investing in cultural awareness training for staff, board members, and volunteers can enhance their ability to collaborate effectively across cultures and better analyse market opportunities.

For example, communication styles vary across cultures. Some may express excitement openly, while others may take a more reserved, direct or indirect approach. Understanding these differences helps prevent cultural bias and ensures you don't misinterpret opportunities or risks based on communication styles.

Respect Cultural Traditions & Practices

Integrating cultural celebrations, norms, and ethical considerations into association activities is essential for fostering inclusivity. By respecting and embracing local customs, your association demonstrates genuine commitment to the communities it serves. This ties back to how you promote your association.

Is it culturally common to conduct onsite promotions at exhibitions and events, or is a digital approach more effective? If going digital, which platforms are most popular locally? Additionally, should you collaborate with thought leaders to enhance credibility? Are discounts valued or even necessary to attract and retain members?

Build Local Relationships & Adapting Your Approach

Once you've developed a foundation of cultural competence, the next step is to build strong local relationships with key stakeholders. Collaborating with local experts and partners helps you adapt your products, marketing, communication, and governance to align with cultural expectations, regulations, and member needs.

This will result in a higher chance of attracting new members in your community and keeping them. Having local partners right from the start is key.

Localize Member Engagement

Finally, successful international associations don't take a one-size-fits-all approach. They tailor their programs, events, and services to fit regional preferences and expectations. By embedding cultural competence into your association's strategy, you create a more inclusive, connected, and globally relevant organisation.

For scalability, you need a largely standardised ecosystem with room for select local adaptations. Think of McDonald's; They maintain a consistent global menu but incorporate a few local dishes, catering to regional tastes and dietary preferences. This balance ensures efficiency, brand consistency, and adaptability while accommodating local cultural and dietary requests.

Foster Inclusive Decision-Making

When your organisation faces a decision, there are likely to be differing opinions, potential conflicts, incomplete or inaccurate information, time constraints, and a lack of clear objectives. This challenge is even greater when launching your association into a new market or segment, as the opportunity to get it right the first time is crucial. Additionally, securing buy-in from staff, members, and volunteers is essential. To navigate this complexity effectively, it is critical to have a structured decision-making method in place.

In her article, "Inclusive Decision-Making: A Transformative Approach Geared to Unlock Hidden Opportunities," Ashley Wade describes the principles of the concept. She discusses the common issue of leaders making decisions based solely

on their formal authority and the immediate information at hand. This approach often leads to endless post-decision discussions, decisions that need to be reversed, and stakeholders feeling that their interests were not adequately considered, resulting in underlying dissatisfaction. While involving multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process may seem inefficient, research indicates that it leads to more comprehensive solutions, improved outcomes, and increased productivity, innovation, and creativity (Morley, T. 2018).

To achieve the best outcomes, it is essential to involve multiple stakeholders in the process. Engaging local staff, members, and forming a local committee or task force can provide a diverse range of perspectives, enriching the decision-making process.

Fundamental Principles of Inclusive Decision-Making:

A Transparent & Equitable Process:

- Ensure that the decision-making process is clear and fair to all participants.
- Provide equal access to information and opportunities to contribute.

Incorporate All Viewpoints & Interests:

- Actively seek and consider the perspectives and interests of all stakeholders.
- Value diverse opinions to enrich the decision-making process.

Foster Comprehension of Diverse Perspectives:

- Encourage understanding and appreciation of different viewpoints among participants.
- Promote empathy and open-mindedness to facilitate collaborative solutions.





Encourage Open Dialogue & Emotional Expression:

- Create a safe environment where individuals feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings.
- Facilitate honest and respectful communication to address concerns and build trust.

Aim for Consensus, Not Compromise:

- Strive to reach decisions that all parties genuinely support, rather than settling for compromises that may leave some dissatisfied.
- Focus on finding solutions that integrate the best aspects of all perspectives.

When the final decision is made by an executive team or board, additional challenges arise. A feedback loop is necessary, especially if the board decides to modify or reject the collaborative advice.

Transparent communication on the rationale behind such changes ensures that the involved teams remain motivated and committed to refining the plan.

When a decision is approved, clear feedback helps teams' transition effectively into execution mode, ensuring successful implementation.

Strengthen Global Connectivity

We need to distinguish between two key aspects:

1. How members prefer to communicate with your association.
2. How members like to collaborate with one another.

Adapt to Member Communication Preferences

It is crucial to align with the communication channels preferred by members based on their region or demographic. This could include WhatsApp, text, socials, email, live chat, and your internal system, all operating simultaneously. This multi-channel approach adds complexity for staff.

On the other hand, an omnichannel communication system can streamline interactions by integrating all platforms into a single view per customer in one system, ensuring seamless conversations regardless of the platform used.

For example, if a customer contacted us via WhatsApp and later continued through email or live chat, the conversation remained unified. This approach is widely used by organisations such as Saudi Airlines, enabling them to provide a seamless customer experience across multiple channels. It significantly enhances customer engagement and satisfaction, allowing them to communicate on their terms while simplifying management for staff.

Foster Collaboration with the Right Tools

To remain relevant, associations must be technology driven. Just as event planning prioritizes premier venues in preferred locations, selecting a member collaboration tool requires the same forward-thinking mindset. The key question should be: What system would we choose if we were building our association from scratch today? Avoid being constrained by legacy systems; focus instead on maximizing user experience within available resources.

By embracing the right technology and mindset, associations can create an inclusive and seamless experience for all members, fostering stronger global connections.

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To follow up, scan this QR code and read all about Factum Global's take on global leadership strategies.



Alain Mulder is Regional Director, Europe & Central Asia, at the IMA® (Institute of Management Accountants). This article is part of the exclusive partnership between ESAE and Boardroom.

For more information about ESAE, visit www.esae.eu



By Sylvia Gonner, CAE and Kelly Quinn

Eight Steps for Taking Your Certification Program International

Associations should consider expanding their credentialing programs to tap into new markets and grow revenue.

Expanding your association's certification program beyond your domestic audience can be a powerful strategy for growth. While many organizations begin their international journey by focusing on membership, credentialing programs can present a stronger value proposition in many parts of the world, particularly among professionals seeking an advantage or entry point with large, international employers.

Here are eight key considerations for taking a certification global:

1. Identify target countries for expansion so you can focus your association's time and resources where there is demand for your certification. Not sure where to start? Look at countries represented in your membership or leads database and consider countries that deliver a high volume of traffic to your website or social media following. Focus on countries in which language, economics, culture, and regulations are not barriers to entry and set official guidelines or metrics

for expansion to avoid the pressure of responding to ad-hoc requests.

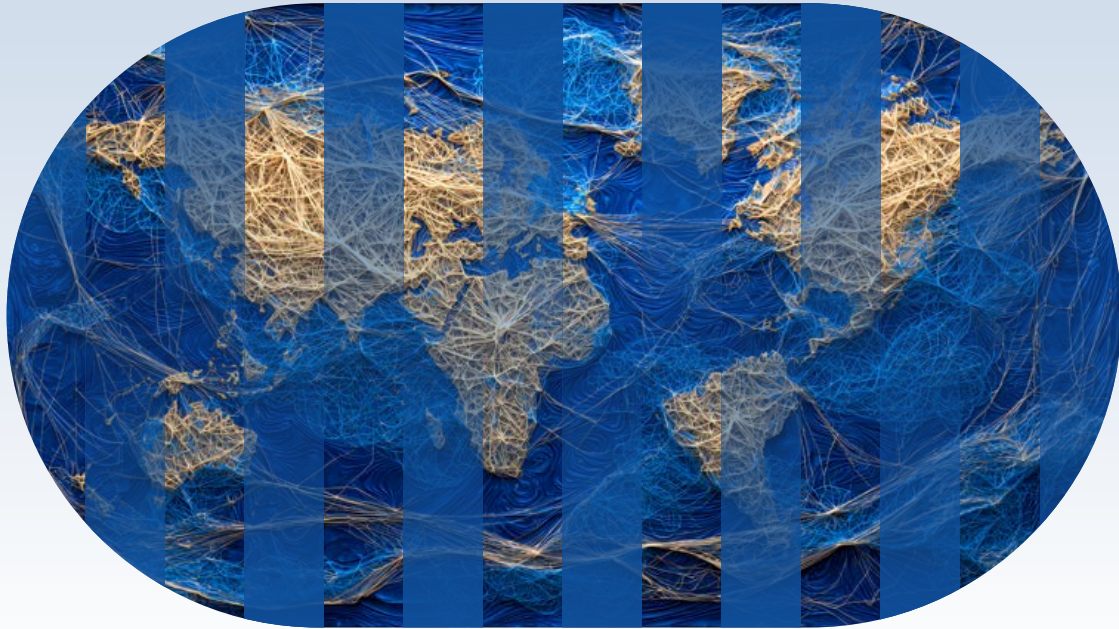
2. Perform a content readiness assessment to determine the extent of the localized content in your body of knowledge, such as country-specific laws and regulations. Anything over 10-15% will not be suitable for the international marketplace. If you have a significant amount of localized content, consider creating an international version with a more globalized viewpoint. Some associations offer a version of their exam that excludes U.S.-specific content and legislation. Others offer a specialty credential or micro-credential for specific regions to test concepts that are based on local laws, regulations, and practices.

3. Evaluate the need for translation. While English is a good baseline language serving more than 1.4 billion people around the globe, chances are other languages will be in demand once you expand. When it comes to exams, quality

translation is most critical. You will ultimately save time and money by working with reputable translation firms and expert quality reviewers. Also, be sure to translate your body of knowledge, exam syllabus, related standards, and codes of ethics.

4. Consider the administration and proctoring of your exams. If your exam requires independent proctoring, contract with a global assessment company that can administer your exams both online and at in-person testing centers around the world. Two of the biggest global players in the industry are Pearson VUE and Prometric. If you offer a credentialing program with an embedded online final assessment, consider the technology requirements and access to reliable internet in your target countries.

5. Develop certification study materials and training. The need for quality certification exam preparation materials and training is universal. They are proven to increase adoption,



generate revenue, and elevate exam pass rates. According to Holmes Corporation, developers of global certification preparation programs, candidates' pass rates can be expected to rise 20–25% with the right learning systems. Consider developing instructor materials at the same time since instructors and education partners can promote your certification while expanding the course portfolios in their local markets.

6. Review the pricing structure of your certification program — application and exam fees, study materials, retakes, and renewals. Is your program affordable to candidates in your target countries, where the purchasing power may be different than in your home market? If it's expected that employers will pay for the certification, there will be less price sensitivity. If candidates are the buyers, then you may consider country-based discounts or World Bank-scaled pricing.

7. Expand your marketing reach. If you want your certification program to succeed in new markets, you need to build awareness and demand. Whether through grass roots events with local chapters, employers, and industry groups or through digital marketing channels, such as Google Ads, LinkedIn, or other social media, there are plenty of options to target specific regions. CultureWiz, which specializes in intercultural communications, cautions associations to be mindful of terminology differences and preferences. Even words like certifications, credentials, designations, and certificates have different connotations around the world.

8. Turn to expert partners. You aren't the first association to expand your certification program

globally, and while there may be unique aspects to your program or market, there are experts who can make your expansion quicker, less frustrating, and more likely to succeed. From finance and legal issues to distribution, translation, and marketing, working with experienced partners on these tasks can help ensure relevance and quality. When working with a partner, be sure to establish agreements that protect your intellectual property.

Successfully expanding your association's certification program to new markets requires careful planning and strategic execution. With the right strategies in place, your association can thrive in new markets, delivering valuable credentials that meet the diverse needs of a global audience.

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By Emily Blitz

Immunology Without Borders

Global Leadership Strategies for a More Inclusive Scientific Community

Under K.I.T. Group's stewardship, the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) has broadened its scope, extended its global reach, united immunological communities, and elevated its mission to new heights. This strong foundation has positioned IUIS as a leader in promoting immunology without borders—embracing digital transformation, inclusivity, and strategic global leadership.

The International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) has long been at the forefront of fostering collaboration and advancing immunological research worldwide. IUIS has been a cherished partner of K.I.T. Group for over a decade, working together to drive growth and innovation through conferences and association management services.

The IUIS is an umbrella organisation of regional and national immunology societies throughout the world. There are currently 84 Member Societies representing more than 60,000 immunologists worldwide. IUIS has a significant presence and impact in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Through initiatives such as travel grants and collaborative research projects, IUIS empowers researchers from LMICs to participate in immunology at a global level.

Knowledge sharing

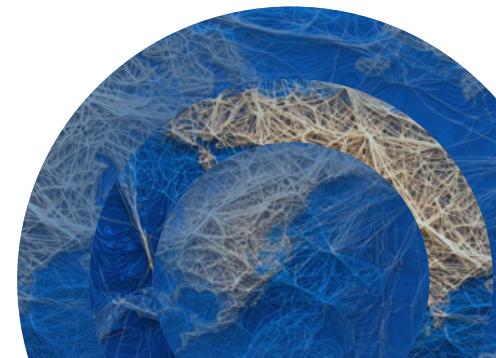
IUIS seeks to strengthen its role as the leading global organisation advancing immunology, research, and education by harnessing digital technologies. Through these efforts, it aims to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing among immunologists worldwide, provide broader access to immunological resources and educational materials, and integrate early-career researchers into the global community without requiring in-person meetings.

Additionally, IUIS is committed to raising public awareness about the importance of immunology, addressing the growing challenge of misinformation and disinformation in the field.

IUIS activities in LMICs include:

- **Capacity Building & Training:** The IUIS Education Committee organises immunology courses, workshops, training programmes, and educational activities to empower immunologists in LMICs. These initiatives address pressing health challenges such as infectious diseases, vaccine development, and immunotherapy.
- **Promoting Equity in Immunology:** A key priority of the IUIS Gender Equity Committee is reducing disparities in access to immunological education and resources. By supporting initiatives that promote equity and inclusivity, IUIS ensures the inclusion of LMICs in the global immunological community.
- **Immunology Awareness:** Each 29 April, the Day of Immunology (DOI), IUIS members engage their communities worldwide through dynamic local and online campaigns promoting immunology awareness and understanding. All member national societies can participate in a competition that rewards the most engaging DOI campaign.

Key initiatives driving IUIS toward its objectives include the expansion of the IUIS ImmunoHub, an e-learning platform which has improved global access to the latest



immunology research. Efforts are also underway to broaden the digital reach of immunological resources, including journals, articles, and datasets, while promoting digital equity by bridging the gender digital divide and ensuring accessibility for underrepresented groups, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Standardising immunological data reporting is another priority, with the development of guidelines to facilitate data sharing, analysis, and interpretation, fostering a common scientific language.

Additionally, IUIS is focused on raising public awareness of immunology's role in global health and integrating early-career researchers into a connected, worldwide scientific community—without the need for in-person meetings.

Digital transformation

IUIS leadership support comes through their engagement and endorsement of these initiatives and activities. The current President is a passionate advocate of the ImmunoHub and the Day of Immunology celebrations. In the coming years, the Executive Committee has charged the Secretariat and Education Committee with increasing the number and scope of the digital dissemination of knowledge and resources through webinars.

Digital tools – indeed – can bridge the divide between high-access and low-access settings and populations by providing increased and equitable access for immunologists from LMIC to education resources, mentorship, and job opportunities. It also enables broader inclusiveness and engagement with and within the immunology community. A crucial challenge for many early career scientists is mobility and getting funding to travel to in-person meetings (usually happening in the Global North), which are expensive and often require visa applications with long wait times and fees.

For many, attending in-person conferences without substantial financial support is simply not feasible. Yet, fostering connections among researchers from diverse backgrounds and fields remains essential to advancing the scientific community. To bridge this gap, digital solutions coordinated by K.I.T. Group's central office offer a promising alternative, enabling meaningful collaboration without the need for physical meetings.

Digital transformation is set to enhance access to immunology education and resources, particularly for researchers in low- and middle-income countries. It also strengthens global collaboration and networking, leveraging professional platforms and virtual events to bridge geographical divides and support early-career researchers.

Additionally, it plays a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusion by raising the visibility of underrepresented groups—such as women and scientists from LMICs—through online mentorship, social media campaigns, and virtual events. Improved communication and resource sharing will also be a

key outcome, with expanded digital platforms, automated newsletters, and social media integrations making it easier to access research, funding, and professional opportunities.

Specific initiatives IUIS is undertaking include:

- ♦ Developing and continuously expanding a database showcasing female researchers to highlight their contributions and foster greater visibility in the scientific community.
- ♦ Create and grow a dedicated database of female and minority speakers for international congresses and events, ensuring diverse and equitable representation in global scientific discussions.
- ♦ Establishment of well-structured databases to support mentoring schemes, providing a robust platform to connect mentors and mentees while leveraging these resources to address underrepresentation in science.

IUIS's vision of *"Immunology without Borders"* aligns perfectly with the limitless reach of digital technologies—and the global nature of diseases. By leveraging this synergy, IUIS can enhance the delivery of its objectives, expanding equitable access to research, education, and funding. Ultimately, this digital-driven approach strengthens global immunology research, improving both human and planetary health.

This article was written by Emily Blitz, Senior Strategist, K.I.T. Group, and is the result of an exclusive partnership between IAPCO and Boardroom. IAPCO is a not-for-profit membership association, registered in Switzerland. IAPCO members are Professional Congress Organizers (companies, not individuals) who have qualified for membership under the detailed application process by demonstrating that they consistently deliver PCO services to their clients and partners at high-quality standards.



By Sven Bossu

Associations Are Not That Different

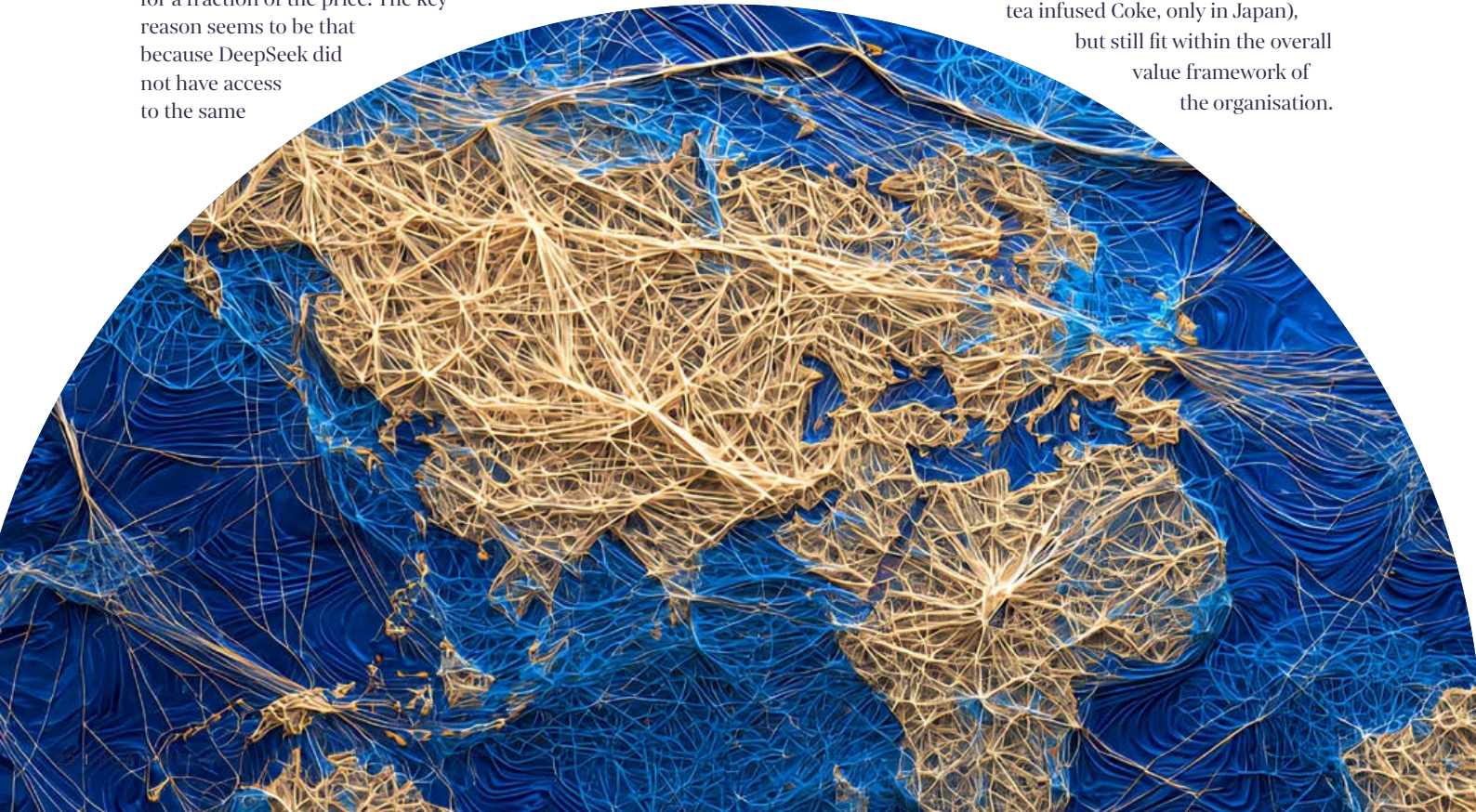
While Citibank has a different scale and purpose than most of the 42,000 international associations worldwide, there are more similarities than one would imagine when it comes to global leadership strategies. The key difference is that, given the limited means most associations have, they need to be more creative in applying these strategies.

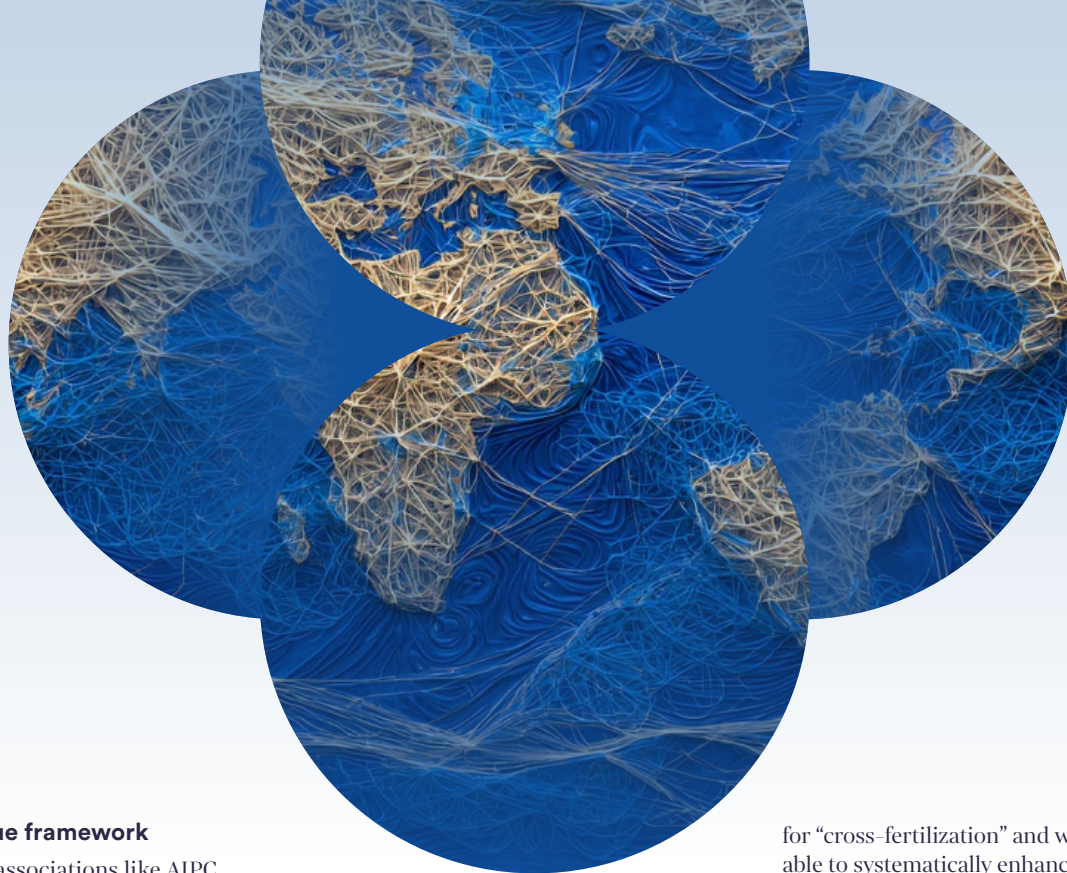
Sometimes you get inspiration from a very different industry, in this case AI and more in particular DeepSeek. This Chinese company managed to achieve the same outcome as the US based company Open AI, but – so it claims – for a fraction of the price. The key reason seems to be that because DeepSeek did not have access to the same

technology and capital, they had to be more creative.

It is a bit similar when it comes to associations and global leadership strategies. A global leadership strategy is

about having a structured approach, allowing to balance core values and adaptation to local differences. Big corporate companies like Coca-Cola, Citibank, etc. have products which are adapted to local market needs (green tea infused Coke, only in Japan), but still fit within the overall value framework of the organisation.





Core value framework

For small associations like AIPC, defining the core value framework is relatively easy. At the same time, AIPC is a truly global association, with members in over 60 countries and the ambition to grow both our geographical footprint and the number of members in countries where we are already present.

And while our core value proposition (supporting excellence in convention centre management) is applicable in all those countries, the needs with regards to – for example – professional education are very different, simply because the environment in which our members function is so different. So, similar to Coca-Cola, we need to adapt our “products” to local needs, but without the multi-million dollar budgets to define, test and roll out those adaptations.

Fortunately, small associations have a secret weapon: other small associations. AIPC took a first step towards a more regionalised approach with its alliance with the Convention Centres of Canada, which resulted in a co-created Academy in 2023. Until then the AIPC Academy – a five-day bootcamp for upcoming

leaders, touching upon all aspects of convention centre management – only existed in Brussels. At AIME 2025 in Melbourne, we announced a similar alliance with the Australian Business Event Association (ABEA), which will also include an Australia/New Zealand Academy taking place in June this year. And in parallel, we developed an African Academy, with a first edition taking place at the Cape Town ICC last year.

As a result, in 2025, we will reach over 140 upcoming leaders worldwide via 4 Academies and we will be able to offer them tailor-made programmes, leveraging both the AIPC experience and the local knowledge of our partners.

Significant impact

I do realise that the numbers look small. But the impact is significant.

Short term, we will now engage with four times as much upcoming convention centre leaders, we will have established a network of partnerships with other associations which allows

for “cross-fertilization” and we will be able to systematically enhance what we do by applying lessons learned in those different settings in a structured way.

Long term, we believe this will result in more member engagement at different levels within our member organisations and we also believe that the partnerships with the other associations will allow to elevate all the communities involved.

There are days when I really wish we had the multi-million dollar budget. But at the end, I do believe that by being creative and by collaborating with our peers, we can deliver more value in a far more cost-effective way. And that is what our members – both from AIPC and the associations we partner with – expect and deserve.

Sven Bossu is CEO of AIPC, which represents a global network of over 200 leading centres in 55 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide. www.aipc.org



By Remi Deve

CSI in The Netherlands: The Hague to Host Global Forensic Experts

The International Congress on Legal Medicine (IALM), a premier event in the field of legal medicine, will convene in The Hague, Netherlands, in 2027. This announcement marks a significant achievement for the Dutch forensic and legal medicine community, as it underscores the country's growing prominence in these disciplines.



Bart Latten

To understand the significance of hosting this congress in The Hague, Boardroom spoke with Bart Latten, a forensic pathologist at the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI). Latten, who chairs both the Expertise Group on Post-Mortem Diagnostics of the Dutch Society of Pathology (NVVP) and the Science & Education Committee of the Forensic Medical Society, played a pivotal role in securing the bid to bring this event to the Netherlands.

A Vision for the 2027 IALM Congress

According to Latten, the IALM Congress is not just a scientific meeting; it is a vital space for fostering international collaboration in forensic medicine.

"We have made significant progress over the years, and one of our key goals for the 2027 IALM Congress is to showcase how far we've come in legal and forensic medicine," he explains. *"This congress will bring together experts from around the world, creating a platform where scientific exchange and knowledge exchange can thrive."*

While offering a robust scientific program is paramount, Latten emphasizes that the congress's deeper vision is about strengthening connections: *"In today's interconnected world, it's crucial that professionals in legal and forensic medicine forge stronger connections across borders. We need to work together toward a safe and just world, particularly in the current global climate, where the stakes are higher than ever."*

Why The Hague?

The selection of The Hague as the host city was a deliberate choice, aligning with the event's core values and mission. Known as the "City of Peace and Justice," The Hague is home to institutions such as the International Court of Justice, EUROPOL, and the Netherlands Forensic Institute.

"As forensic professionals, we share a deep commitment to advancing justice. Hosting the congress in The Hague underscores the vital role of legal and forensic medicine within the broader framework of world peace, security, and justice," explains Latten.

Additionally, the congress will take place at the same venue as the NATO summit in 2025, further reinforcing The Hague's standing as a centre for diplomacy and security.

Strategic Support & a Winning Bid

A successful bid for an international congress requires meticulous planning and strategic partnerships.

Latten credits organisations such as NBTC and The Hague Convention Bureau for their invaluable support in making this bid competitive.

“Organising a large international event requires specialised expertise and a well-established network, both of which NBTC excels in providing. Their guidance was instrumental throughout the bidding process. Through NBTC, we were introduced to The Hague Convention Bureau, who assisted with crucial decisions such as venue selection and financial planning.”

Their insights into the city's infrastructure, budget planning, and logistical arrangements ensured that the bid was not only well-prepared but also aligned with the expectations of the international forensic science community.

Long-lasting legacies?

Forensic science remains a niche field within global research, and congresses like IALM serve as ideal opportunities for advancing the discipline. While academic journals provide a crucial platform for publishing new findings, international congresses offer something more.

“Conferences provide a unique environment where new research ideas are sparked, discussions flourish, and long-term collaborations are formed,” Latten says. *“These events create a space where professionals can share knowledge, debate ideas, and establish cross-border partnerships. Beyond knowledge transfer, international conferences also help build lasting friendships among professionals from diverse backgrounds, strengthening the international network of forensic experts working toward common goals in justice and public health.”*

Latten believes that the congress will serve as an incubator for new research initiatives and partnerships, particularly in the use of post-mortem (multimodal) imaging, and the use of big data in legal medicine.



© The Hague & Partners - Arjan de Jager

But beyond the immediate impact of the congress itself, Latten envisions a lasting legacy that extends beyond 2027:

“Our goal is to organise an informative and engaging congress that contributes to the success of future IALM events. By showcasing the Netherlands' commitment to advancing forensic research and fostering knowledge exchange, we aim to inspire long-term partnerships and continued innovation within the forensic science community.”

Hosting the IALM Congress in The Hague will not only cement the Netherlands' reputation as a leading destination for forensic research but will also contribute to its position as a global hub for knowledge exchange and innovation in the legal medicine sector.

The Netherlands as a Premier Conference Destination

With its excellent infrastructure, strong governmental and institutional support,

and deep commitment to international justice, the Netherlands has positioned itself as a top-tier destination for international conferences.

The country's focus on innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration makes it particularly attractive to scientific and professional associations.

NBTC's strategy aligns closely with attracting congresses that contribute to strengthening the Netherlands' position as a knowledge-based nation. The 2027 IALM Congress is a testament to this vision, reinforcing the country's role as a place where groundbreaking research meets real-world impact.

More info

On IALM: www.ialm.info

On the Netherlands as a congress destination:

www.holland.com/meetings

By Remi Deve

How Switzerland is Building A Global Stage for High-Profile Events

Switzerland, long recognised for its scenic landscapes, political neutrality, and innovation, has quietly but surely established itself as a premier destination for hosting a wide range of events. From cultural milestones to sporting competitions, the country's ability to host high-profile events is a testament to its capacity, infrastructure, and expertise.

A Year of Spectacles

Switzerland's 2025 calendar is packed with noteworthy events, including the Eurovision Song Contest in Basel this coming May and the UEFA Women's Euro (WEURO) across multiple Swiss cities in July. These events are more than just entertainment or sports; they are opportunities for Switzerland to showcase its multifaceted appeal to the world, underlining the country's readiness to welcome everything from international congresses to global entertainment spectacles.

The Eurovision Song Contest, known for its massive viewership and cultural significance, will provide Basel with a platform to demonstrate its modern venues and seamless organization. With over 160 million viewers tuning in globally each year, Eurovision is not just an entertainment event—it is a cultural phenomenon that unites audiences across borders.

"Switzerland is an incredibly well-oiled machine when it comes to organising international events, and Eurovision will put those strengths on full display," said a spokesperson from the European Broadcasting Union.

Similarly, the WEURO, hosted from Bern to Geneva, from Lucerne to Zurich and beyond, will highlight the country's capacity to handle large-scale, multi-location events. With teams and fans converging from across Europe, this championship is not just about football but also about showcasing Switzerland's connectivity, efficient public transport, and hospitality.

Building Momentum

Beyond Eurovision and WEURO, Switzerland's hosting prowess extends into elite sports. Events like the UCI Mountain Bike World Championships and the Laax Open, a Freestyle World Cup, emphasize the country's outdoor and winter sports heritage. These events not only attract global athletes and fans but also reaffirm Switzerland's position as a hub for sports innovation, from its alpine resorts to state-of-the-art arenas.

Such events are bolstered by Switzerland's strategic investment in infrastructure. For example, the Hallenstadion in Zurich has hosted everything from international concerts and sports tournaments to medical congresses, showcasing its versatility.



Lucerne, Romana Bachmann

© Switzerland Tourism/Colin Frei

Similarly, Lausanne's Swisstech is renowned for its state-of-the-art facilities, attracting thousands of delegates annually. These efforts reflect a deep understanding of the evolving demands of global events, where venues must be adaptable to host everything from dynamic sports to major cultural events.

A Conference Hub

But Switzerland's appeal goes beyond entertainment and sports, as demonstrated by its robust schedule of upcoming international congresses. In 2025, the country will host an array of conferences, including the 48th IHF World Hospital Congress, WordCamp Europe, DIA Europe, the XXIII International Congress of Analytical Psychology, and the CIRED Conference on Electricity Distribution. These events highlight the diversity of industries that Switzerland hosts—from healthcare and technology to engineering and psychology—and how the country leverages its knowledge-based economy to be even more attractive.

Moreover, these events inspire local innovation. By hosting technologically advanced congresses such as the 30th Congress of the European Society of Biomechanics, Switzerland fosters a culture of knowledge exchange and cross-industry collaboration. This, in turn, reinforces the country's image as a leader in science, technology, and education.

Additional factors

One factor that makes Switzerland particularly enticing to conference organisers is of course its geographical centrality and excellent accessibility. With major cities like Zurich, Geneva, Basel and Bern well-connected by international airports and high-speed rail, attendees can travel efficiently within the country. New this year is the SBB Congress Ticket for event planners hosting congresses with 300 or more delegates. This special fare allows participants to travel seamlessly from the Swiss border or airport to their event location and back.

Moreover, Switzerland's reputation for political stability and safety provides an added layer of reassurance for European and global associations in these times of geopolitical turbulences. In an era where security and predictability are paramount, the country stands out as a beacon of reliability.

Leveraging Local Expertise & Sustainability

Switzerland's success in hosting events is rooted in its collaborative spirit and local expertise. Cities like Bern are leveraging events like WEURO not only to attract international attention but also to engage local communities and institutions. For instance, the Belgian team's match in the region of Bern on July 7 offers a unique opportunity to invite associations to attend, fostering connections between local stakeholders and international participants.



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Daniel Loosli

If you're interested, drop an email to Myriam Winnepenninckx below.

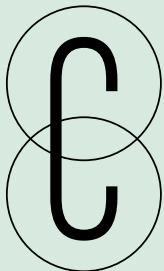
This collaborative approach extends to the planning of pre- and post-event tours, which allow visitors to explore Switzerland's cultural and natural riches while discovering its congress infrastructure. Whether it's a historical tour in Bern or a visit to cutting-edge facilities in Zurich, these experiences are sure to leave a lasting impression on delegates.

The country's commitment to sustainability further enhances its appeal, as more event organisers prioritise environmentally conscious practices. Venues across Switzerland incorporate green technologies, such as the energy-efficient design of the Palexpo in Geneva, which has installed extensive solar panels, and the Kongresshaus Zurich, which uses innovative systems to minimize energy consumption.

Additionally, public transport options like Switzerland's extensive train network further reduce the carbon footprint of large gatherings. According to the Global Destination Sustainability Index, Swiss cities consistently rank among the most eco-friendly event destinations in the world. *"Sustainability is no longer a 'nice to have'—it is a necessity,"* noted a report from the Geneva Tourism Board.

As it prepares for an exciting year ahead, Switzerland is proving once again that it is more than just a host—it is a global stage where industries, cultures, and communities converge to create something truly remarkable.

More info on Switzerland as a convention destination:
myriam.winnepenninckx@switzerland.com /
[Switzerland.com/meetings](https://switzerland.com/meetings)



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SPECIAL DESTINATION REPORT

The Berlin Blueprint: Where Ideas Meet Impact

Contents



Foreword



Sustainable Berlin



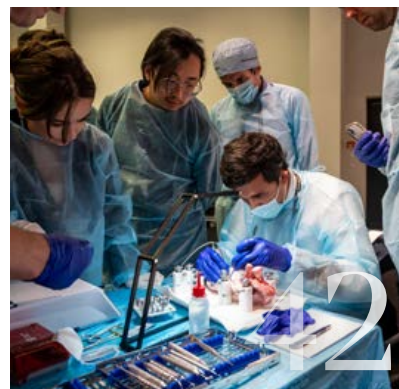
All-Round Innovation



Healthcare Transformation
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Berlin sculpture on the Tauentzienstraße of the German capital | AdobeStock © Hanohiki

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Foreword

A City of Boundless Transformation

It's been a while since Boardroom last focused on Berlin, a city that hardly needs an introduction yet constantly offers fresh perspectives. As a destination that refuses to conform, Berlin has always been synonymous with transformation and reinvention.

For the business events industry, the German capital presents a compelling proposition: a hub of innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity, where people come together not only to meet but to connect on a deeper level.

City of Freedom

Few cities capture the spirit of freedom as vividly as Berlin. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signified the end of decades of division, paving the way for German reunification. The Wall, once an image of oppression, now serves as a powerful reminder of Berlin's transformation into a global symbol of unity and liberation.

The historic event has recently marked its 35th anniversary. Celebratory commemorations, such as a 4km open-air exhibition and thought-provoking public art projects, ensured that the lessons of the Wall remain part of Berlin's living narrative. The city's past continues to be a guide for its present, as a leader in the journey for openness and inclusivity.

In 2024, Berlin's Olympiastadion, one of the event's key venues, hosted the UEFA European Football Championship, providing yet another platform to highlight the city's capacity to bring people together and host large-scale events flawlessly. Beyond the exciting matches, Berlin's 'Future League' initiative demonstrated how the event could focus on broader societal goals, such as sustainability and inclusivity.

Infrastructure projects such as photovoltaic systems on sports facilities and expanded bicycle parking showcased Berlin's (and the event's) commitment to sustainability. The city's forward-thinking mentality and its ability to innovate was also evident through climate adaptation initiatives, comprehensive carbon footprint assessments, and a human-rights-based participation concept leaving a legacy of positive impact.

Reinforcing its global image as a city for free thought and progressive exchange,

Berlin attracts like-minded business events. It regularly hosts transformative gatherings like the Ukraine Recovery Conference, which focus on its role as a high-level political event dedicated to the swift recovery and long-term reconstruction of Ukraine – or the 2024 International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. These events draw a diverse array of thinkers, policymakers, and activists, ensuring that Berlin remains a place where ideas are shared and celebrated.



City of Possibilities

Berlin is a city where diversity and innovation converge, creating an ecosystem full of limitless opportunity. Known for its cosmopolitan character, the city has long welcomed talent from across the globe. This inclusivity, combined with its commitment to free speech and cultural exchange, has made Berlin a magnet for creative minds and change-makers alike. But inclusivity is not a new concept in Berlin; the Rathaus Schöneberg, for instance, was the stage for John F. Kennedy's famous "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" speech, a symbol of opportunity and freedom.

A blend of German ingenuity and international expertise, Berlin has become a melting pot of talent. Institutions like Berlin Partner for Business and Technology serve as a bridge between science, business, and government to drive innovation. Through targeted initiatives, Berlin Partner supports companies in creating forward-thinking solutions that align with the city's goals for growth. Initiatives like the Smart City Strategy and AI-powered health diagnostics, for example, are results of Berlin Partner's efforts.

Cultivating young talent means a strong start-up scene. Berlin's start-up ecosystem is one of the most dynamic in Europe, with over 4,000 active start-ups transforming the city into a hub of entrepreneurial energy. The city's appeal lies in its affordability, well-connected infrastructure, and vibrant international community, which attracts innovators from across the globe.

Sectors like fintech, health tech, and sustainable solutions are thriving, supported by a strong network of accelerators, co-working spaces, and venture capital. Initiatives such as Talent Berlin provide essential resources to help professionals navigate opportunities through a dedicated online platform full of tips for a new professional beginning.

Berlin's cultural scene is as dynamic as its industries. Renowned artists like Jocelyn B. Smith prove the city's ability to attract and celebrate talent from diverse backgrounds. Smith's contributions to Berlin's musical landscape echo the city's openness to global influences and its support for artistic innovation.

Alongside world-class performers, Berlin's vibrant queer community has played a crucial role in shaping its cultural identity. From queer-friendly spaces in neighbourhoods like Schöneberg to the annual Berlin Pride (Christopher Street Day), the city champions diversity and inclusion as integral parts of its culture.

City of Innovation

Berlin stands as one of Europe's foremost centres for research and innovation, driven by a robust network of universities, research institutions, and industry partnerships. Boasting as "Brain City," Berlin has over 30 higher education institutions, including renowned names like Humboldt University and the Technical University of Berlin, as well as over 70 non-university research organisations. This concentration of academic and research excellence nurtures an academic ecosystem ready for collaboration and discovery, making Berlin a magnet for scientists, scholars, and innovators from around the world.

The city is particularly distinguished in the fields of medical and life sciences. Home to one of the largest healthcare clusters in Europe, Berlin excels in areas like biotechnology, digital health, and pharmaceuticals. Organisations such as the Berlin Institute of Health and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin lead groundbreaking research, often in partnership with the city's dynamic start-up scene. Recent advances include AI-driven healthcare solutions and pioneering developments in personalised medicine (like organ regeneration and precision imaging for oncology),

cementing Berlin's reputation as a global hub for healthcare innovation.

The strengths of the region include especially the unique research and clinical landscape and the close networking between the worlds of research, clinical care, industry, politics, and professional associations.

In fintech, Berlin's status as the "Fintech Capital" of Germany is well-earned. With over 250 fintech companies and a supportive ecosystem of accelerators and venture capital, the city is shaping the future of financial technology. From blockchain innovations to digital payment systems, Berlin-based start-ups are driving advancements that resonate on a global scale.

Berlin's role as an innovation leader extends to its capacity to host major international gatherings. Events like the World Health Summit, held annually in the city, bring together global leaders in health policy, science, and industry to tackle pressing challenges. Additionally, FiBE (Finance in Berlin), a platform dedicated to advancing the finance and fintech sectors, is also held there annually. FiBE gathers financial leaders, technology experts, and start-ups to explore trends in digital transformation, sustainable finance, and blockchain innovation.

City of Green

'Green Berlin': The rhyming name was given to the city for a good reason. Renowned for its innovation and forward-thinking ideas, Berlin demonstrates how environmental stewardship can drive progress and enhance quality of life.

One of Berlin's cornerstones of sustainability is its emphasis on green energy. The city is heavily invested in renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, and biomass, which form a key part of its strategy to reduce carbon emissions. Retrofitting public buildings for energy efficiency, developing decentralised energy networks, and

incentivising clean mobility are just some of the measures driving this transformation. Complementing these efforts, Berlin's cycling infrastructure – one of the most extensive in Europe – promotes eco-friendly travel, while the city's expansive public transport network incorporates energy-efficient technologies.

Urban greening projects further prove Berlin's commitment to a sustainable future. Initiatives such as large-scale tree planting and urban gardening programmes enhance biodiversity, improve air quality, and provide residents with green spaces to enjoy. For instance, projects like the Tempelhofer Feld, a former airport now transformed into a vast park, highlight

Berlin's ability to creatively repurpose spaces for ecological and social benefits.

The city also excels in embedding sustainability into its meetings and events sector. Through platforms like Sustainable Berlin, organisers are equipped to host events that prioritise energy efficiency, waste minimisation, and social responsibility. "Meet and Change", for instance, enables venues and planners to donate surplus materials to local charities, adding a socially conscious dimension to Sustainable Berlin.

Berlin's broader sustainability efforts are guided by a holistic approach that involves local communities, businesses, and government working together. Events like the Berlin Energy Transition

Dialogue illustrate the city's role as a hub for global discussions on climate solutions.



Contact

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Convention Venues

- *Berlin ExpoCenter City*: 190,000 m² of hall space spread over 27 exhibition and event halls as well as the multifunctional *CityCube Berlin*, the column-free large hall *hub27 Berlin*, and the historic building ensemble *Palais am Funkturm*
- *CityCube Berlin*: two tiers with 6,015 m² of space each: the lower tier has space for up to 8 conference rooms for 400 – 3000 PAX and/or trade show space, the column-free hall of the upper tier can be used for large assembly halls, trade shows, concerts or caterings
- *Berlin Congress Center (bcc)*: Centrally located at Alexanderplatz, featuring 3,000 m² of space, 26 event rooms and a plenary hall for up to 1,000 participants.

Estrel – A Meeting District in Itself

The Estrel Berlin, Europe's largest hotel and conference venue (soon to be expanded with the Estrel Tower – an open concept to stay, work, meet and experience.), offers a unique 'all-in-one' concept:

- **Hotel**: 1,125 rooms and suites, ensuring convenience for delegates of the next door Estrel Congress Center.
- **Estrel Congress Center**: An impressive 30,000 m² with 85 meeting rooms, featuring advanced technology and

flexible configurations for diverse events. Capacity: 6,000 delegates in its biggest room.

- **Dining & Entertainment**: 5 restaurants, 3 bars, and regular live entertainment shows at the Estrel Show Theatre.
- **Connectivity**: Situated just 15 minutes from the city centre, 13 km from the airport and directly linked to Berlin's extensive transport network.

Hotels

Berlin offers a vast network of over 700 hotels with 145,000+ rooms, catering to all budgets, from luxury to mid-range options. Key hotel chains are concentrated near main venues and central districts.

Accessibility

- A major airport - *Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER)* - connects the city to over 200 global destinations.
- Extensive rail connectivity via the Hauptbahnhof, a modern train station built in 2006, linking Berlin to other major cities in under four hours.
- A seamless public transport system (U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams, buses) ensures efficient movement across the city.

Berlin's Mentality Powered by Green Energy

Berlin is not your average sustainable business events destination. The city's commitment to environmental responsibility leaves no stone unturned through detailed sustainability programmes, forward-thinking policies, and the active engagement of local businesses adopting green practices. This all-inclusive approach enhances Berlin's attractiveness as a conference destination for organisations that prioritise sustainability in their operations.

Sustainable Meetings Berlin

At the forefront of Berlin's sustainable conference initiatives is Sustainable Meetings Berlin, a comprehensive programme offered by visitBerlin and developed to assist event organisers in hosting environmentally responsible gatherings. This initiative provides guidelines and resources that encompass key sustainability areas such as energy efficiency, waste management, climate impact reduction, and ethical resource use. The Deutsche Bahn (German railways) event ticket, for instance, offers discounts for groups and individual travellers.

One of the programme's standout features is its certification system, which helps event planners identify Sustainable Partners across various service categories, including hotels, venues, catering, and logistics. Businesses participating in the programme undergo thorough evaluations to meet stringent sustainability criteria, ensuring transparency and accountability.

And if environmental responsibility wasn't enough, Berlin also offers the MEET+CHANGE concept, which enables events to take place in socially responsible venues such as community centres, social enterprises, and cultural institutions. visitBerlin's approach to sustainable events aligns fully with Germany's broader National Sustainable Development Strategy, which is designed to achieve long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A City-Wide Commitment

Beyond its role as a conference destination, Berlin has embedded sustainability into its daily life, offering numerous eco-friendly experiences for visitors and residents alike. Sustainable transport options are widely available, with Berlin boasting an extensive network of electric buses, bike-sharing services, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.



Koernerpark

© Dagmar Schwelle



© Christian Kruppa

For those keen on exploring Berlin's green spaces, the city offers over 2,500 parks and gardens, including the famous Tiergarten and Tempelhofer Feld, a former airport turned expansive public park, ideal for outdoor activities and eco-conscious recreation.

Berlin is also a haven for sustainable shopping. The city is home to numerous organic markets, upcycling boutiques, and fair-trade shops. Local initiatives like "Original Unverpackt", a zero-waste supermarket, reflect Berlin's dedication to reducing plastic consumption and promoting conscious consumerism. The Umweltkalender Berlin provides a guide to eco-friendly events, workshops, and activities, ensuring that residents and visitors can engage with sustainability-focused initiatives year-round.

Green Energy Integration

Berlin's sustainability initiatives extend to energy infrastructure, with the city making substantial investments in renewable energy and smart urban solutions. It aims to become carbon neutral by 2045, with significant strides already made in transitioning to clean energy sources such as wind, solar, and biomass.

A significant step towards this goal was taken in 2024, when *"the City of Berlin remunicipalised the largest part of the district heating network, which was an important step towards enhancing decarbonisation of heating,"* explains Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO of Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH. *"Berlin-owned utility Berliner Stadtwerke supplies green electricity from more than 400 solar systems and 16 wind turbines."*

Private sector players are also making strides in supporting these ambitious goals. *"BTB, a regional subsidiary of E.ON and the city's second-largest district heating operator, is implementing innovative technologies like river and wastewater heat pumps as well as aquifer heat storage,"* notes Dr. Franzke.

The Berlin Energy and Climate Protection Programme (BEK 2030) remains a cornerstone in the city's approach to sustainable energy. This initiative focuses on reducing energy consumption, increasing the share of renewables, and promoting energy-efficient building practices across Berlin. Companies such as E.ON and Kraken Technologies collaborate with local projects to develop intelligent energy management solutions that align with the city's ambitious sustainability targets.

Beyond infrastructure, Berlin is also home to some of the most innovative energy technology companies in Europe. Dr. Franzke says: *"Think of electrolyzers produced here by Siemens Energy AG, SF6 gas-free switchgear from Siemens AG, or GE Vernova equipment for long-distance transmission made in Berlin."*

CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE PARTNERS

A key element of Berlin's sustainable event infrastructure is its extensive network of certified Sustainable Partners, which includes venues, event agencies, caterers, and logistics providers.

Berlin offers a range of certified sustainable venues that combine historical charm with modern eco-conscious solutions. Notable examples include:

- **Motorwerk Berlin**, a former industrial site that has been transformed into an energy-efficient event space. This venue integrates sustainable solutions such as LED lighting, energy-saving ventilation systems, and eco-friendly waste management.
- **Tagungswerk**, a contemporary venue offering energy-efficient spaces that operate on renewable energy sources.
- **Mercure Hotel MOA Berlin**, which offers 40 event spaces featuring energy-efficient lighting and comprehensive waste reduction strategies.

Berlin's catering sector also embraces sustainability with partners such as:

- **FLORIS Catering GmbH**, which prioritises locally sourced ingredients and provides climate-friendly menus. The company holds a TÜV-tested climate certificate and offers services aligned with sustainable food trends, including plant-based options and minimal food waste initiatives.

Event planning agencies committed to sustainable practices include:

- **Berlin Event**, an ISO 14001-certified agency that incorporates eco-friendly concepts into all aspects of event planning, from logistics to execution.
- **MR Congress & Incentive GmbH**, which integrates sustainability into the MICE industry by focusing on eco-friendly materials, local sourcing, and emission reduction strategies.

Service providers such as **Party Rent Group** and **UCM – 2.0 Agency for Event Staffing** are also part of this sustainable ecosystem, offering environmentally responsible solutions for furniture rental, event staffing, and logistics.

The Innovation Capital Blending Technology & Purpose

Berlin is not afraid to break the mold and create the unexpected. A thriving ecosystem of startups, developers, and research institutions have all made a home in the city with a goal to shape the future of technology. This dynamic environment, complemented by forward-thinking policies and a strong commitment to sustainability, provides fertile ground for innovation across sectors like AI, digital health, and circular economy solutions.

Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO of Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH, says: *“What makes Berlin unique as a startup hub is its diversity in people and industries. The city fosters an open and collaborative culture that encourages experimentation and bold ideas, which is essential for entrepreneurship.”*

At the core of this innovation-driven landscape is a well-structured support system. Initiatives such as Projekt Zukunft, backed by the Berlin Senate, provide funding, strategic support, and networking opportunities to early-stage companies, helping them scale internationally. As a link between economy, science, and politics, Projekt Zukunft is a start-up’s go-to aid. Likewise, platforms like the Berlin Startups database serve as a vital resource, connecting entrepreneurs with investors and fostering collaborations across industries.

Startups Driving Change Across Industries

Europe-wide, Berlin is among the top 10 and internationally among the top 20 most important locations for startups and investors, with more than 3,000 startups founded in the last decade. Berlin’s startup scene is defined by its diversity

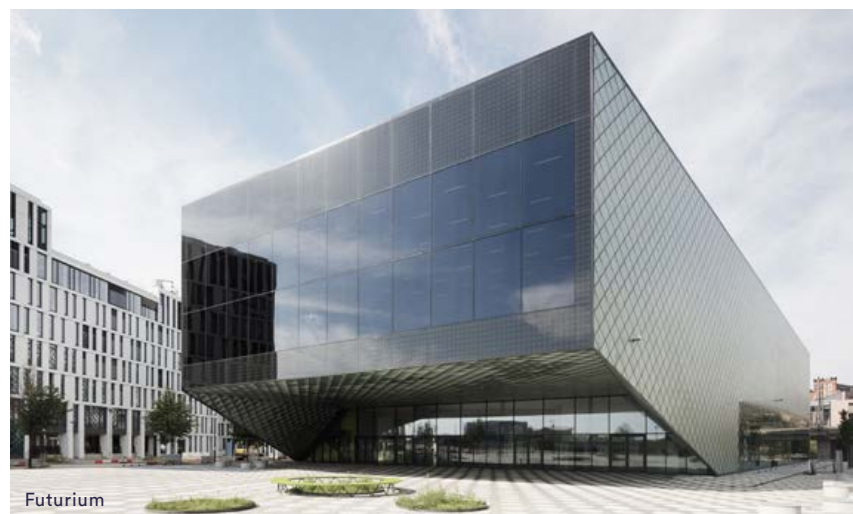
and ingenuity, spanning industries from food tech to health tech.

“Startups, established companies, and research institutions often work together on innovative projects,” Franzke explains. *“For example, Berlin’s Deep Tech Hub, launched in June 2024, aims to support startups, businesses, investors, and research institutions in developing cutting-edge technological innovations.”*

Berlin’s influence in the digital health sector has grown exponentially, with the city becoming a prime location

for companies developing AI-driven diagnostics, telemedicine platforms, and health analytics solutions. Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, one of Europe’s most prestigious research hospitals, collaborates with local startups to create innovative healthcare solutions that improve patient outcomes and streamline hospital operations (*Look out for more details in the ‘Life Sciences’ section of this feature.*)

Companies like Läkkerai, a food-tech startup revolutionising the culinary sector with its ‘digital sous-chef,’ point



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out how Berlin-based businesses are addressing market needs with smart solutions. By integrating AI into kitchen operations, Läkkerai optimises processes from inventory management to meal preparation, offering restaurants an efficient, cost-effective way to meet demand while reducing food waste.

Circular economy is at its best with startups like Reverse.supply, leading the charge in sustainable fashion. The company provides recommerce solutions for brands seeking to enter the secondhand market. The city's innovation ecosystem has also gained international recognition, with startups such as HOLOPLOT, a pioneer in 3D and tailored audio technology, winning the SXSW Interactive Innovation Award.

WeAreDevelopers World Congress

One of the most anticipated events highlighting Berlin's innovation leadership is the WeAreDevelopers World Congress 2025, scheduled to take place 9-11 July at Messe Berlin. As the largest global gathering for software developers, the congress will bring together tech leaders, software architects, and industry decision-makers to explore emerging trends and share insights on topics such as AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.

Key partners of the congress include Red Hat, a global leader in open-source solutions, and local tech communities such as PyBerlin, which promotes diversity and inclusion in programming. This emphasis on equality and sustainability aligns with Berlin's broader vision for the future of technology – one that is inclusive, responsible, and forward-thinking.

"In addition to the WeAreDevelopers World Congress, we are also looking forward to DeepTech Momentum, which will showcase innovations and connect deep tech startups with investors and industry leaders," Franzke adds. Other major highlights include GITEX Europe, in May



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at Messe Berlin, a large tech and startup event with over 2,500 exhibitors, 1,500 startups, and 500 conference speakers from more than 100 countries, and IFA Berlin, held annually in the city, one of the world's most significant trade shows for consumer electronics, home appliances, and technology innovations.

Smoothly integrating technology into society, GITEX Europe will spotlight Berlin's progressive approach to innovation through organisations like Female Founders and Psychological AI, which are dedicated to fostering social entrepreneurship and gender equality in the tech space. Psychological AI, a Berlin-based startup, leverages cutting-edge artificial intelligence to enhance human decision-making, providing businesses with tools to better understand cognitive and emotional behaviours. By integrating psychology with AI, the company aims to create a more ethical and human-centred approach to technology.

Berlin's tech landscape is further strengthened by its extensive network

of research institutions and technology parks. The Innovation and Technology Institute (IIT Berlin) provides valuable research and development support for startups working on next-generation solutions in robotics, materials science, and AI. The House of Finance and Tech (HoFT.Berlin), launched in April 2024, strengthens Berlin's position as a leading European FinTech hub, providing a central platform for collaboration between the public and private sectors. *"It offers resources and initiatives to support innovation and growth in the finance and technology sectors,"* says Franzke.

Collaboration, sustainability, and inclusivity make Berlin an ideal destination for entrepreneurs and investors seeking to shape the future of technology. Whether through digital health advancements, AI-driven solutions, or circular economy innovations, the city remains at the forefront of global technological progress, powered by a unique blend of creativity and technological expertise.

Berlin Means Patient-Driven Healthcare Innovation

Berlin is the heartbeat of health innovation, where cutting-edge research, groundbreaking startups, and global enterprises converge to transform the future of medicine. True to its inclusive mentality, the city puts patients at the centre of healthcare progress, using technology to address today's most critical healthcare challenges.

Bridging Research & Application

An important aspect of Berlin's healthcare ecosystem is the pursuit of translational medicine, where basic research is seamlessly connected to practical applications. The Berlin Institute of Health (BIH), an initiative of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, has long adopted this approach by bridging the gap between laboratory discoveries

and clinical practice. For instance, BIH's work on regenerative therapies has paved the way for new approaches to treating chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.

Adding to this legacy is Charité itself, Europe's largest university hospital with over 300 years of history. Charité is known for being the birthplace of countless medical advancements.

The hospital has been instrumental in advancing immunotherapy for cancer treatment, offering hope to patients worldwide by harnessing the power of the immune system to fight tumours.

Berlin's deep integration between healthcare providers and innovators is what makes it such a thriving hub for digital health solutions. Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO of Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH says: *"Our region's particular strength lies in its unique research and hospital landscape, as well as in the strong network of stakeholders from research, hospitals, and industry."*

A Nexus for Global Healthcare Enterprises

Berlin's appeal as a strategic base for healthcare companies lies in its access to talent, infrastructure, and research collaborations. Pfizer Pharma GmbH, which operates in Berlin, has contributed significantly to the development of groundbreaking therapies, including innovations in vaccine technology that have transformed the fight against infectious diseases. During the pandemic, Pfizer's partnership with BioNTech showcased the city's critical role as a hub for pharmaceutical advancements.



MEOCLINIC is a private medical centre located in the heart of Berlin.

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Likewise, B. Braun Melsungen AG, a leader in medical technology, has been driving improvements in patient care through innovations in infusion therapy and pain management solutions. The company's operations in Berlin are part of its global commitment to enhancing healthcare systems with reliable and advanced medical devices. Berlin-Chemie AG has also made significant strides in treating cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, addressing some of the most common health challenges facing populations today.

Startups Pioneering New Frontiers

While established companies provide a solid foundation, Berlin's healthcare landscape thrives on the dynamism of its startups. For example, Ada Health GmbH has developed an AI-powered health assessment platform that helps users identify possible conditions based on their symptoms. Available in multiple languages, this tool has already assisted millions worldwide and continues to evolve with the integration of more advanced algorithms.

Meanwhile, Aignostics GmbH is revolutionising diagnostics through artificial intelligence. Their technology enhances the early detection of diseases like cancer, enabling personalised treatment plans that improve survival rates. Another standout is Noah Labs, which focuses on developing digital

solutions for preventive healthcare. Their platform uses data analytics to predict health trends and encourage early interventions, reducing the risk of severe illnesses and lowering healthcare costs.

Startups like Digital Rheuma Lab are also making an impact by addressing niche areas, providing digital tools for patients with rheumatic diseases, including tailored exercise programs and telemedicine consultations. This not only improves the quality of life for patients but also reduces the strain on healthcare systems by offering scalable, remote solutions.

A Platform for Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing

Berlin's role as a global healthcare hub has generated a centre for thought leadership and collaboration. The city regularly hosts prominent medical conferences, including the World Health Summit (WHS). Each October, around 3,000 participants on-site and more than 10,000 online gather to tackle critical public health issues. Discussions at the WHS often shape international health policies, positioning Berlin as a city where ideas are transformed into action and inclusivity thrives.

In 2025, Messe Berlin will host several major medical meetings, including congresses focused on digital health, biotechnology, and medical technology. The ESMO Congress, a global oncology

platform, is already in the calendar and expected to advance Berlin's life sciences sector further.

The strong networks within Berlin's Digital Health community are fostered by a broad range of events such as meet-ups, bar camps, seed camps, and hackathons. *"Also, Europe's leading event for Digital Health – DMEA, takes place in Berlin annually, enabling exchange across regional and national borders as well as across disciplines,"* says Dr. Franzke.

A Commitment to the Future

Berlin's healthcare ecosystem reflects a forward-looking vision that prioritises both innovation and inclusivity. Companies like Bayer AG, headquartered in Berlin, are pioneering solutions in precision medicine and agricultural biotechnology, addressing global challenges like food security and chronic illnesses. Additionally, the city's focus on digital health ensures that underserved populations have access to tools and technologies that bridge healthcare disparities.

Berlin's spirit of progress is reinforced by its research institutions, which work tirelessly to push the boundaries of what's possible in medicine. Collaborative efforts between academia, industry, and startups create an ecosystem where every stakeholder contributes to a shared goal: improving health outcomes for people around the world.

Zoom on Berlin's Pioneering FinTech Ecosystem

Berlin has established itself as a vibrant hub for financial technology (FinTech), positioning itself at the forefront of innovation in Europe. Known for its dynamic ecosystem, Berlin seamlessly blends technological prowess with entrepreneurial spirit, making it a magnet for startups, investors, and established financial institutions alike.

A Thriving FinTech Landscape

FinTech, short for financial technology, refers to the innovative use of technology to improve and automate financial services. It encompasses a wide range of applications, including digital banking, payment platforms, lending solutions, and investment management tools, aiming to make financial services more efficient, accessible, and customer-focused.

Berlin's FinTech sector is a testament to the city's reputation as a European innovation leader, with over city-based 250 FinTech companies, ranging from

early-stage startups to established firms that are redefining banking, payments, and financial services. In fact, Berlin is the leading FinTech hub in Germany, outperforming other cities like Munich and Frankfurt in terms of both the number and diversity of FinTechs.

Berlin's appeal lies in its accessibility to talent and funding in the sector. The German capital is home to a rich pool of skilled professionals, drawn to the city's vibrant cultural scene and cost-effective living standards compared to other major European

capitals. Furthermore, Berlin's strategic location and its connection to the broader European market make it a prime destination for investors and entrepreneurs alike.

A Magnet for Startups & Innovation

Initiatives such as de:hub, spearheaded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, have cemented Berlin's status as a digital innovation hotspot. The Digital Hub initiative connects startups with established players and promotes



collaboration to foster groundbreaking solutions in financial services and beyond.

Berlin's FinTech ecosystem benefits from the presence of industry accelerators, incubators, and co-working spaces designed to nurture startups. Organisations like DKB Code Factory exemplify this commitment to fostering innovation. As the digital think tank of Deutsche Kreditbank (DKB), the Code Factory develops cutting-edge solutions to digitize banking services.

Highlighting Berlin's appeal, Dr. Carolin Gabor, Managing Director at Caesar, which focuses on developing and scaling innovative FinTech ventures, remarks that the city *"has transformed into a much more structured and professional tech hub over the past two decades."* Miriam Wohlfarth, Co-Founder of Banxware, a Berlin-based embedded lending and payment solutions provider, adds that *"the digital industry has grown so much here to become the job engine of the city,"* attracting global talent and driving innovation.

Banking on Digital Transformation

Major financial institutions have also embraced Berlin as a centre for innovation. Deutsche Bank's Quartier Zukunft is testament to this trend, offering a glimpse into the future of banking. Located in the heart of Berlin, Quartier Zukunft serves as both a concept store and an innovation lab, exploring new approaches to customer engagement and financial services delivery.

Similarly, Berlin's homegrown DKB has established itself as a leader in digital banking. With a strong focus on sustainability and user-centric solutions, DKB's Berlin-based operations highlight the city's role in shaping the next generation of banking. From digital account management to innovative lending platforms, these institutions demonstrate how Berlin's FinTech ecosystem is driving change within the traditional banking sector.

The Role of Events & Platforms

Collaboration is a cornerstone of Berlin's FinTech success. The city hosts a plethora of events, conferences, and networking opportunities that bring together industry leaders, investors, and innovators. The SuperReturn International conference, for instance, is one of the leading global gatherings for private equity and venture capital professionals. Held annually in Berlin, it underscores the city's significance as a global financial hub and a nexus for deal-making.

Berlin also fosters collaboration through platforms like FinTech Berlin, which offers insights, news, and resources to support the FinTech community. In the words of Tobias Schulz, Managing Director at FinTech Berlin, *"Berlin has an unmatched ability to combine talent, creativity, and technical expertise. Our ecosystem thrives because of its openness and willingness to embrace change, making Berlin the epicentre of financial innovation in Europe."*

Despite its many advantages, Berlin's FinTech sector faces challenges, including regulatory complexities and competition from other European



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hubs. However, these hurdles are outweighed by the city's opportunities. Berlin's commitment to sustainability, as reflected in initiatives like Tomorrow Bank's innovative green financing solutions, aligns with the growing demand for ethical and sustainable financial services. Tomorrow Bank, a Berlin-based challenger bank, focuses on investments in renewable energy projects and sustainable businesses, providing a transparent and impactful approach to green financing. This alignment positions Berlin to lead the way in integrating sustainability into the FinTech narrative.

In essence, Berlin's FinTech ecosystem serves as a model of how a city can harness its resources, talent, and vision to redefine an industry. But this success is just one facet of a city that thrives on its ability to innovate across disciplines. From fostering cutting-edge technology to championing the arts and sustainable urban development, Berlin embodies a true spirit of progress, creating the world of tomorrow.

Case Study

The European Association for Osseointegration at CityCube Berlin

The 30th Annual Congress of the European Association for Osseointegration (EAO), one of the leading organisations within the field of implant dentistry, was a landmark event that underscored the city's appeal as a world-class congress destination. With over 3,000 delegates and 140+ expert speakers, the meeting provided a dynamic platform for discussing cutting-edge advancements in implant dentistry, AI integration, and peri-implantitis research.



Vincent Laudun

Berlin's vibrant atmosphere, seamless logistics, and commitment to sustainability played a crucial role in the event's success, reinforcing the German capital's reputation as a premier hub for international and European conferences.

Vincent Laudun, Congress Project Manager at the EAO, shares his insights into what made

Berlin the ideal host city and how it elevated the congress experience for attendees.

A High-Tech, Interactive Experience

One of the standout aspects of the EAO Congress, which was held in Berlin's CityCube in September 2023 in partnership with the German Association of Oral Implantology, was its focus on technological innovation, with AI-powered live translation offered in 26 languages through Wordly. This forward-thinking approach ensured accessibility for a diverse international audience, fostering more inclusive discussions and knowledge exchange.

"The AI-powered live translation was a game-changer," says Laudun. "It allowed us to break language barriers and engage a truly global audience, reinforcing our mission of international knowledge-sharing in implant dentistry."

In addition to high-tech enhancements, the congress featured an interactive programme that encouraged debate

and engagement. Attendees benefited from a mix of live demonstrations, panel discussions, and networking sessions that blended scientific rigor with practical applications.

A Strategic & Practical Choice

Berlin was chosen as the host city as part of the EAO's European rotation strategy, but its selection was far from arbitrary. The city's strong collaboration with the German Association of Oral Implantology (DGI) helped attract a significant number of German professionals, enriching the event's impact and regional engagement.



“Berlin is a city that seamlessly blends history, culture, and efficiency,” argues Laudun. “It offers everything a congress organiser looks for: excellent venues, strong infrastructure, and an unparalleled international appeal.”

CityCube Berlin, the venue for the congress, proved to be an excellent fit for the event’s needs. *“The CityCube was ideal—compact, efficient, and well-connected. Attendees and exhibitors could move smoothly between sessions and exhibition areas, creating a fluid and engaging experience,”* Laudun explains.

A Strong Support Network: The Role of Local Stakeholders

The Berlin Convention Office (BCO) played a crucial role in ensuring the event’s smooth execution, providing logistical support and connecting EAO with key local service providers, venues, and accommodation options. Their expertise significantly reduced planning time and ensured a seamless experience for delegates.

“They were invaluable,” says Laudun. *“From venue selection to accommodation coordination, the Berlin Convention Office helped streamline the planning process, allowing us to focus on delivering a high-quality scientific programme.”*

Beyond logistical support, BCO helped EAO to include free public transport for all attendees—a highlight of the event’s sustainability efforts. *“Providing delegates with free transport was a fantastic initiative,”* Laudun notes. *“Not only did it make navigating the city easier, but it also aligned with our commitment to sustainable event practices.”*

Additionally, the Berlin Convention Office suggested a cargo bike info point, reinforcing the event’s eco-friendly approach. These sustainability measures were widely appreciated by attendees, further solidifying Berlin’s reputation as a forward-thinking congress destination.

A True Berlin Vibe

Beyond the scientific sessions and networking opportunities, Berlin’s cultural and historical richness played a key role in enhancing the congress experience. One of the social highlights was the Members & Faculty Dinner at Motorwerk, a historic industrial venue that encapsulated Berlin’s distinctive blend of past and present.

“Motorwerk provided an incredible setting,” Laudun recalls. *“It had that unmistakable Berlin vibe—an industrial aesthetic combined with a warm and welcoming atmosphere.”*

Berlin’s world-class public transportation system, diverse cultural scene, and renowned culinary offerings provided attendees with ample opportunities to explore the city beyond the congress walls. From historical landmarks like the Brandenburg Gate to modern cultural hotspots, delegates had no shortage of experiences to enrich their visit.

A Model for Future Congresses

The success of the EAO 2023 Congress in Berlin highlighted the city’s strengths as a premier congress destination. With its strategic location, top-tier infrastructure, and a strong commitment to sustainability, Berlin continues to attract leading associations seeking an exceptional event experience.

“The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive,” says Laudun. *“Attendees appreciated the city’s organisation, accessibility, and overall energy. Berlin truly provided the ideal setting for advancing our mission and strengthening our global community.”*

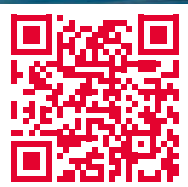
Looking ahead, the EAO Congress will take place in Milan in 2024, but Berlin has undoubtedly set a high benchmark. As associations worldwide consider destinations for their flagship events, Berlin stands out as a model city—a place where scientific innovation, seamless logistics, and rich cultural experiences converge to create truly unforgettable congresses.



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