



BOARDROOM

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

# THE EMPOWERED ASSOCIATION OF TOMORROW

— VOLUME 1 | VOLUME 2 | **2022 VOLUME 3** | VOLUME 4 —

THE EXECUTIVE  
BURNOVER

KEY COMPLIANCE  
UPDATES

BUILDING  
BACK BETTER

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# Is ESG the Way Forward?

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Since the “ESG” (environmental, social, and governance) framework first appeared in 2005, the acronym (and philosophy around it) has been steadily growing. One example speaks for itself: There has been a fivefold growth in internet searches for ESG since 2019, while searches for “CSR” (do we still need to explain what it stands for?) have declined.

Some people think ESG is simply another term for “sustainability,” but it is, in fact, slightly more comprehensive than that. Across industries, continents, and company sizes, it seems organizations have been allocating more resources toward improving ESG. After all, it’s a testament to showing how sustainable they’ll be in the long run, as well as a good benchmark to ensure accountability to your broad stakeholders’ chain.

## But what about associations?

Boardroom’s regular contributor, Vancouver-based Coro Strandberg, conducted a few surveys among Canadian and American associations to find out where they stand on the matter. What she concluded leads us to be rather optimistic: *“More and more associations will map and engage their broader ecosystem to create ESG transition pathways for their sectors and professions. They will recognize that most ESG issues are too broad to tackle on their*

*own and require collaboration with ecosystem actors.”*

However, for complex ESG issues — of which there are many — progress necessitates large-scale and long-term undertakings, which require collective action across multiple sectors. As Strandberg explains: *“This includes collaborating with other associations along your members’ supply chains and with peer associations, along with NGOs (non-governmental organizations), governments, and financial partners. To accelerate an inclusive, low-carbon, circular, and purpose-driven economy, collective action and transition strategies will prevail in the years ahead.”*

But the road is still a long one. A recent McKinsey survey we heard about during the last annual meeting of ASAE in Nashville found that for 56% of American associations, environmental issues are not a concern per se. This is a troubling number, which doesn’t reflect, it seems, what Europe-based associations say and do.

Could there be an opportunity here for European and international associations based on this side of the Atlantic to lead by example? To show how organizations should help build a better world that’s equally diverse, inclusive, social, and sustainable? This is a call to them. We do hope our Building Back Better series lays the foundation of what is at stake.



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# CONTENTS

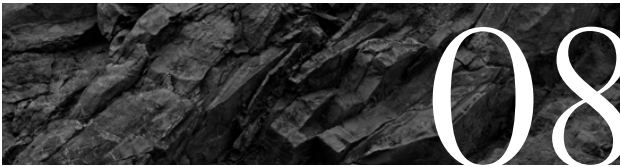
## BUILDING BACK BETTER



THE IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION

06

## EDITOR'S PAGES



THE EXECUTIVE BURNOVER

08

COMPLIANCE UPDATES FOR MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS

10

## DESTINATIONS



COPENHAGEN

28

NANCY

30

VIENNA

32

JEJU

34

TAIWAN

36

WELLINGTON

38

SEOUL

40

MONACO

42

QUEBEC

44

## SWITZERLAND



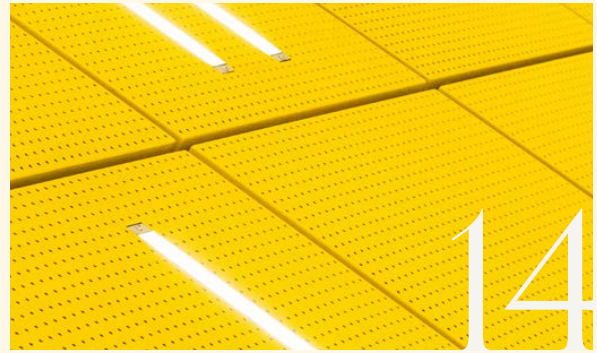
ZURICH

46

BERN

48

## THE EMPOWERED ASSOCIATION OF TOMORROW



THE ZONE OF GENIUS, EXCELLENCE & LEADERSHIP

15

Estefanía Zárata Angarita, Marketing Communication Manager at Kenes Group & IAPCO member, explores the ways leaders can recognize and set the strengths of their team in motion.

EMPOWERING SMES THROUGH A BRUSSELS-BASED ASSOCIATION

16

For ESAE, Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary General at the European DIGITAL SME Alliance, tells the story of how his association has grown, setting the narrative right and recruiting the right talent.

THE LIMITS & LIMITATIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

18

International Advisor to the Global Association Hubs Martin Sirk explores the very definition of empowerment and how it relates to international associations. But exactly how far are organizations willing to go in this direction?

MAKING IT ALL HAPPEN

20

For AC Forum, Cathy Weynants, CEO of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC), reflects on the many ways association CEOs can be empowered. Most of the time, it means involving the organization's whole team.

EMPOWER YOUR TEAM BY COACHING INSTEAD OF DIRECTING

22

An article, written by Eric Strafrel, founder of SUMMi7, a consulting firm in Dallas, which is part of a special partnership between Boardroom and ASAE.

BE OPEN TO UNCONVENTIONAL IDEAS

24

Stephanie Martin, Head of Sales and part of AIPC talent program, interviews Peter King, CEO of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. as he reflects on his 11 years of service.





Building Back Better Series

# The Irish Kidney Association

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By their very nature, associations represent groups of people with specific interests and goals, giving a collective voice that, if done right, can be heard more clearly and weigh more heavily with policy makers, increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful change. As part of our ongoing Building Back Better series we're looking at a specific example of how one association in Ireland took on the government on behalf of its members and applied a strategy that ultimately led to achieving the desired result of protecting thousands of lives.

*Words & Interview Marc de Faoite*



*Few associations focus as directly on actual life-and-death matters as those working in the field of organ donation. We spoke with Colin White, long-time National Advocacy & Projects Manager with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) to get some of his insights and hear how associations like the one he works for can be a literal lifeline for its members.*

### **Give our readers a little background.**

#### **How did the IKA come into being?**

Non-profits generally start at a grassroots level. In the case of the IKA, it was the wife of a kidney patient who decided that people living with end-stage kidney disease needed more than hospitals could provide. Living with a chronic illness is a 24/7 occupation. It can be all consuming and very isolating. A peer network can help put an illness into context and provide much needed reassurance and advice. It was with all this in mind that in 1978 the IKA was founded as an association of patients working together for other patients and their families.

#### **How do you see the role of non-profits in making the world a better place in this day and age?**

To bring about successful change in society there is often the need for a mediator role. In the case of the Irish Kidney Association, it has developed an understanding of the issues faced by medical professionals, whilst being rooted in the lived experience of patients. As a consequence, it has the opportunity to identify the pathways to change that are most likely to succeed.

#### **As an association what tools do you have at your disposal?**

In relation to campaigning, a non-profit like ours can be extremely responsive to opportunities. The ability to quickly leverage a grassroots network of people affected by the issue represented makes it very attractive for media coverage, which generally tends to highlight the emotional side of a specific issue. Meanwhile, having paid staff looking after the running of the organization gives us the ability to research and speak authoritatively on a chosen issue, as well as proposing and providing practical solutions.

#### **Can you give our readers a concrete example of how that works?**

Practically everyone has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, some more severely than others, but transplant recipients represent a particularly vulnerable population. Early on in the pandemic there was much worry within the community that at-risk people would not be prioritized for vaccination. Responsive to the urgency of this, the IKA used its position to lobby for change, ultimately convincing the Irish government and healthcare authorities to prioritize organ transplant recipients and people on dialysis (along with other vulnerable communities) during the first roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

#### **The pandemic is obviously a global phenomenon.**

#### **How did the international context play into this campaign?**

The staff of the IKA was able to use its contacts with similar associations in other countries across Europe and beyond, to

understand what was happening elsewhere. We then used the information gathered to produce an evidence-based argument for vaccine prioritization.

#### **And on a national level?**

At the same time, the IKA was able to mobilize its network of patients and supporters here in Ireland to put forward the emotional argument of the lived experience of fear in relation to COVID-19. This was done through an organized campaign, targeting all members of parliament, and resulted in emails from over 10,000 individuals being sent. The researched and data-backed case for priority, added to the groundswell of public pressure on the decision makers, ultimately led to the desired change.

#### **That's obviously a quite specific, if very inspiring, example. What lessons from the context of your association would you see as more broadly applicable to associations operating in sectors other than organ donation?**

If you are making an argument for change you need to be able to explain the current situation, then make an evidence-based case for the need for change. But just pointing at an issue isn't enough. Ultimately to introduce the change, you need to provide a proposal and underpin it with stories from the people who are going to be impacted by the change.

#### **So, to sum up, you are essentially using a two-pronged approach, leveraging evidence and emotions?**

In this case yes. You could say we are targeting the head and the heart. But not simultaneously. Each approach is focused on a different audience. You need to develop the ability to identify and distinguish between who are the influencers and who are the decision makers in your given field. The case you present to the public and the case you present to decision makers will necessarily be different in what they emphasize. It is essential to know and understand your audience and adapt your pitch accordingly.

*It is often said that you can judge a society on how it looks after its most vulnerable members. Anyone can be affected by organ failure. It cuts across all societal cleavages. But not everyone has access to the same healthcare. By supporting your local organ donation advocacy group, whether as an individual or as an association, you can help Build Back Better, while promoting empathy and compassion for those less fortunate. You could even potentially make a meaningful life-changing impact by signing up to become an organ donor today.*

This article is graciously sponsored by Business Events Scotland, whose values align with the Building Back Better concept.



# Burnout

## - The Executive Burnover

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In this first part of a two-article series, special Boardroom contributor **Ole Petter Anfinssen**, Vice President of EDBAC and DBA Research Associate at Henley Business School, UK, explains what overwhelming stress and pressure can lead to and how it represents an increasing risk in these unprecedented times.

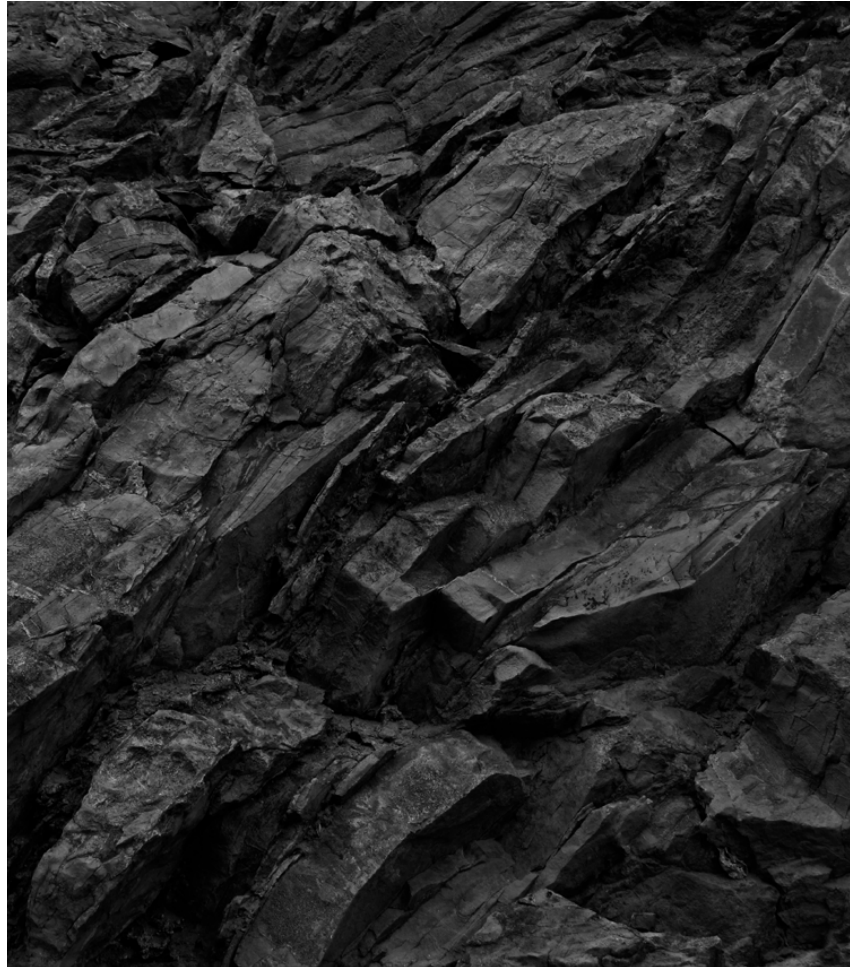
As we're trying to recover from the ashes left by the recent pandemic, faced with a high level of discontinuity and economic and political uncertainty, we are continuously taking some major health risks - not just for our organizations but also for ourselves. Every day we have to make crucial choices which have massive implications on health and wellbeing - some of which may bring us to the edge.

There are reasons why we are getting ill, and it all depends on circumstances of course. But looking at the senior executive role some of us lead and the complexity that sometimes comes with working in associations, one sees stress levels and pressure rapidly increasing as we manoeuvre the aftermath of COVID-19.

### THREE IS THE NUMBER

It is important to be aware that senior executives are often faced with three forms of pressures and stress factors in contrast to others. These are: *"isolation, the pain of downsizing and pace of work"* (Kneale, 2009), and they may cause severe pain and stress.

In times like these this may take some very dark turns with respect to mental health and psychological well-being.





People might find it much more difficult to maintain a healthy perspective in certain situations – which again may lead to things spinning out of control, leaving people with worries that, if not attended, can lead to emotional stress, anxiety and ultimately depression.

For example, something you previously considered as minor suddenly takes up a tremendous amount of mental space and creates worries beyond your own comprehension, and the emotional response might be overwhelming and very troubling to acknowledge and deal with. It often becomes a fear in itself – giving the inner saboteur too much space, which is that inner detrimental voice filled with self-doubt and fear. Even Sheryl Sandberg, COO at Meta<sup>1</sup>, has admitted having days where she is doubting herself – feeling like a fraud.

However, stress is a part of life – but, as mentioned above, the problem occurs when the emotional response to pressure gets out of hand. If not attended, this may lead to burnout (Valcour, 2016), which not only can destroy private lives and careers, but can result in severe depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation and/or even substance abuse.

## DARK TABOO

This has for too long been the dark secret of executive life and talking about something that slightly resembles mental health issues is sadly still considered a taboo – which again adds to the problem. It goes like this: we have a problem,

we have the cure, but we are not allowed to talk about or promote it.

The first signs of burnout seem to be cynicism, lack of presence, the constant feeling of inadequacy and not measuring up (Maslach, et al., 2001). Nevertheless, people handle stress very differently and those who are driven by intrinsic drivers seem to be better equipped to cope with high levels of stress and pressure, in contrast to those who are driven by extrinsic drivers such as status, money and material goods (Roche & Haar, 2013). In other words, if you are doing something you are passionate about, you are more likely to cope well and manage stress than if you are not.

I can only speak for myself, but I know that when I am passionate about something, time flies by and it does not really feel like work, even though I might be dealing with lots of pressure and challenging situations that requires clarity and focus. I'd rather say that it increases my senses and makes me more alert. On the contrary, if I work on something that is not of interest to me, I'm more inclined to get distracted, stressed and disconnected.

The best word to describe the level of burnout we are talking about in the context of associations and the executive sphere is *'burnover'*. For those who are not familiar with the expression, it is the way fire takes over and eliminates all routes of escape, which in this case is quite descriptive of what is going on in the professional arena, where it often forces

people to abandon ship. This is one of the greatest leadership challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and something we must learn to deal and cope with successfully.

Consequently, looking after one's health is crucial, and it is important to understand that health is significant to any stakeholder in any organization as people create, add value and have a direct impact on business and share value. Therefore, looking after people's health would be considered a good strategic move (Quick, et al., 2000).

In the next issue of Boardroom Magazine we will be looking at how to avoid burnout, what preventive measures one can take to support this and why investing in health provides a return on investment (ROI).

*Ole Petter Anfinssen is a new, special contributor to Boardroom. He is the Vice President of the Executive DBA Council (EDBAC) and a doctoral research associate at Henley Business School. He is also the founder of Anfinssen Executive Health and Performance (AEHP) and co-author of the book Quality of Life.*

[1] At the time of writing this article Sheryl Sandberg was still the COO at Meta.

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# Key Compliance Updates for Medical Associations

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As COVID-19 has had a big impact on the way medical congresses are organized, medical associations still need to give the utmost attention to Pharma and Medical devices codes, laws and regulations – and compliance in general. In this special contribution to Boardroom, **Yana Budel** from GCO Global, provides you with the latest updates on this delicate matter.

Now that the world of healthcare meetings has begun returning to live meetings, medical associations/societies may be curious to find out about any recent updates to the Pharma and MedTech compliance codes, regulations, and laws that might affect industry's behavior and decision making in the run up to and during medical congresses.

In general, before and during the first year of the COVID pandemic, a lot of the regulatory framework did not consider virtual channels of communication with HCPs. Now most European country codes or regulations have been updated (with varying details) to reflect the interactions with HCPs through digital channels or to at least acknowledge those. And this is as it should be, as virtual meetings are here to stay and are now intertwined with the live ones in what has become known as hybrid.

Let us start with the *Joint Guidance on Virtual and Hybrid International Medical Congresses* by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

The three associations lead the way when it comes to guiding healthcare meeting organizers and industry in relation to virtual and hybrid meetings. They indeed published the guidance only a couple of months after the first lockdowns were announced – it has since been updated to include information on hybrid meetings. Below, you will find a summary of the most relevant points for medical association/societies and medical congresses:

- When selecting the promotional label for an international virtual congress, pharmaceutical companies have been advised to consider the code of the region from which the majority

of delegates will be expected to come from, based on past experience. For example, if most of the participants come from the US or Europe, the industry will choose the USA or European label to be displayed respectively. For international hybrid congresses, the guidance suggests that the rules of the live location are to be considered.

- Companies are advised to base the selection of industry code (for international virtual/hybrid congresses) on industry practice, rather than relying on the code as selected by the medical association/society.
- Industry has been advised to work with medical associations in order to ensure that access to promotional materials is limited to HCPs only. Restrictions on non-HCPs attendees are not considered relevant in relation to industry representatives or third parties engaged by the industry.
- The importance of respecting privacy laws has been underlined as well, in two ways. First, the guidance document advises pharma companies to familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions and privacy statements which the registering attendees will need to sign/acknowledge. Secondly, it requires medical associations/societies to ensure that data privacy requirements of the European Union as well as other regions (where necessary) are embedded in the overall congress platform (e.g. registration, access controls to different sections like commercial exhibition or scientific sessions).
- Industry and medical organizations have been advised to ensure (as much as possible) that microsites and other related websites where materials for restricted access are placed should be accessible though the congress platform only and not through search engines or links.





The *MedTech Europe Code of Ethical Business Practice* had given some recommendations for virtual interactions before the pandemic started. That code was updated in March this year, and will enter into force in 2023: it provides clarity, additional guidance on Collaborative Research, new definitions in the Glossary and an explanation of the existing Code provisions, as well as the consolidation and clarification of the existing rules around Distributor Relations and Virtual Events.

Now let's move to the most important updates in the US, relevant to virtual meetings and medical congresses in general:

1. The AdvaMed code (the USA medical technology company code) that entered into force on June 1, 2022, has been updated to address virtual interactions, meetings, and programs. For example, it states that the delivery of food packages provided on the occasion of virtual meetings are allowed, which is in contrast with the standard in Europe - no meals to be provided during virtual interactions with HCPs.

2. The OIG Special Notice about speaker programs made quite a bit of noise and caused Pharma companies to noticeably alter the way they conduct meetings with HCPs. In fact, as a result of the alert, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) revised its code in January of 2022. Below is a summary of the updates to the code:

- It refers to speaker programs but, given their definition, in the context of a medical congress in Europe, this will cover industry symposiums with an American HCP speaker. Based on this, it's become a bit trickier for medical organizations in Europe to

hire American HCP speakers for industry symposiums, and if they do, then special measures may be taken by the industry to secure themselves against accusations of wrongdoing. For example, the speaker may be based in a different location than the attendees and he/she will present virtually.

- It is made clear that invitations to attend a speaker programs (also symposiums) should only be limited to those who have a bone fide educational need for the information presented in the program.
- It is stated that meals should be incidental business courtesies and no alcohol should be provided.
- It is also reiterated that repeat invitation to attend a program (which has already been attended before) on the same or substantially the same topic (where a meal is being served) is not appropriate. Speaking at a program and attending a program on the same or substantially the same topic is now also not appropriate.

Keeping up to date with the regulatory framework can be time consuming, and therefore, having a trusted partner who can help you stay well informed is essential. With its extensive experience working with Pharma and MedTech companies, GCO's compliance department has come to understand their motives, working methods and have insights in the latest industry trends.

*Yana Budel is Compliance Advisor at GCO Global and is based in the Netherlands. GCO Global is a full-service organization delivering strategic meeting management solutions for the Life-Sciences industry.*



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FEATURE

# The Empowered Association of Tomorrow

Great leadership is about understanding and activating the strengths of the people you lead. Consistently seeking, giving and incorporating excellence at every level of your organization will direct everyone towards common goals. In this special feature of Boardroom, our wealth of contributors, from ESAE to AC Forum, from IAPCO to AIPC and the Global Association Hubs Partnership, share their views on how to best ensure a sustainable future from a human perspective.

# The Zone of Genius, Excellence & Leadership

**Estefanía Zárate Angarita**, Marketing Communication Manager at Kenes Group & IAPCO member, explores the ways leaders can recognize and set the strengths of their team in motion.

Why would you make a great effort to do something that doesn't come naturally to you - probably not achieving satisfactory results - when there is somebody else out there who's a genius at it? The "zone of genius" is a concept often used in the field of human resources to highlight that everyone has a unique quality that makes them natural at achieving remarkable outcomes for specific tasks.

Understanding and activating the strengths of individuals within a team consolidates leadership that allows for the incorporation of excellence at every level. Being able to identify and put to great use these unique skillsets is a prominent characteristic of transformational leaders, who are known for having the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions through strong essential, interpersonal skills such as active listening, decision-making, rapport, assertiveness, and empathy.

In addition, having a clear strategy that is well communicated to the team brings a strong sense of connection among co-workers, who are then driven by a common goal. Overall, individuals who are seen and valued for their authentic gifts aligned by a *north star* with other team members and inspired by a leader who seeks to transform, are ingredients for excellence.

## NO PERFECT RECIPE

Nevertheless, there is no perfect recipe. Especially in an ever-changing market, being prepared to fail - and be okay with it - is key to driving innovation. To create new things is a process of exploration and experimentation that ultimately will bring in new knowledge and know-how regardless of outcomes. And this also is excellence.

Louise Gorrige, Director of Association Management at Kenes Group has vast experience leading teams. In the following short interview, she shared her views on how she does it.

*How to understand and activate the strengths of the people you lead? How do you identify them in the first place?*

Watch, listen and learn about your team. Give them the opportunity to give their input and feedback. Recognize that no one is good at everything, and everyone is good at something and try to harness that strength. Involve the team in activities and projects outside of their role so there is space for their light to shine and you can see beyond their day-to-day performance.

*How do you see, give, and incorporate excellence?*

Be clear about what excellence means for your team and share that vision. Lead from the front, reward efforts and strengths

- not just results. Recognize that sometimes people have made enormous efforts, but circumstances might have impacted the results. See and respond to the small things, the everyday impact, and the small improvements and impacts the team is making in their daily role. Take the time to listen to the team sharing their successes no matter how small, it is still progress.

*How to best direct everyone toward a common goal?*

Setting a clear vision and expectations. Imparting that responsibility and giving the team the freedom whilst reassuring that support is there should it be needed.

Transformational leadership is about inspiring others by example and leading from any seat. To get people enrolled and motivated in teamwork, make sure to give them the opportunity to tap into their zone of genius, to be of service naturally. Meet their expectations at a higher level: not only salary and benefits but emotional satisfaction. Put your heart into your leading and your team will put theirs into their jobs.

IAPCO represents today 138 companies comprised of over 9,900 professional congress organizers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 40 countries.  
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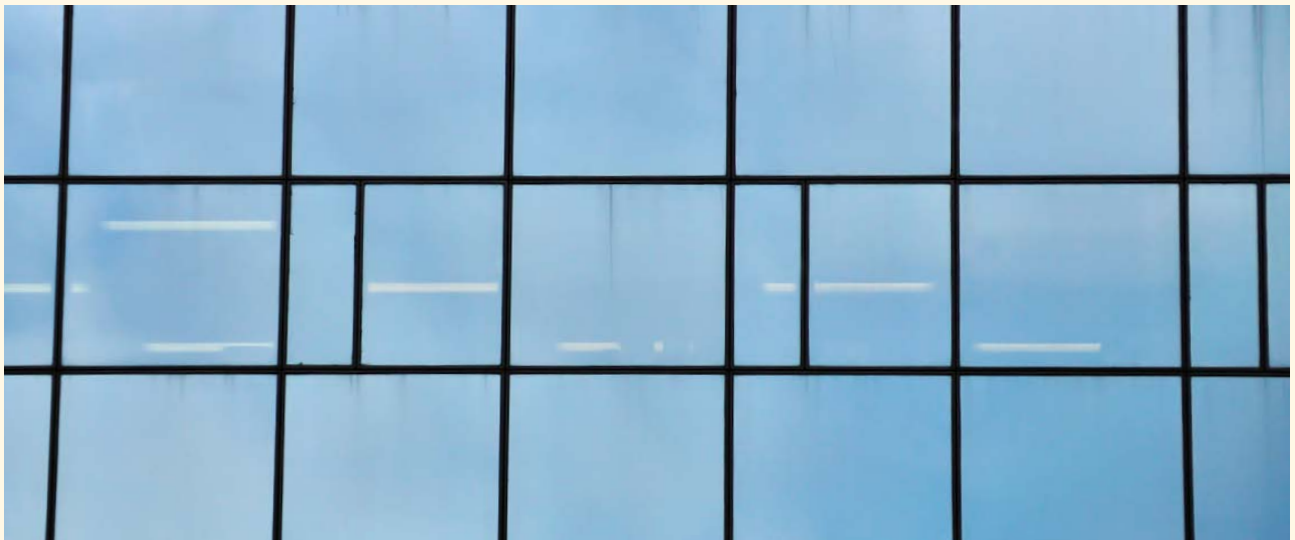


# Empowering SMEs Through a Brussels-Based Association

## Turning Weakness into Strength

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For ESAE, **Sebastiano Toffaletti**, Secretary General at the European DIGITAL SME Alliance, tells the story of how his association has grown, setting the narrative right and recruiting the right talent.



Among thousands of lobbying organizations and associations in Brussels, only a handful focus exclusively on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Professional lobbyists often claim to defend the cause of SMEs or start-ups because this argument alone yields support, or at least sympathy, from policymakers.

Running an association that only represents small and medium-sized enterprises is a difficult task. SMEs are many and everywhere; they represent 99% of all businesses in the EU, or **approximately 24 million**. While altogether they are certainly

a good pot of money for professional lobbyists, the economics of selling representation services are not that simple. Firstly, most SMEs do not perceive a need to be represented or even the possibility for them to influence EU legislation. Secondly, SMEs are a very diverse group, so it is hard to address them with a single selling proposition.

Even if an SME association manages to secure the budget, the recruitment of a skilled team is a challenge. You indeed compete against the other private employers on the market: the lobbyists



of Big Tech or associations representing big companies. That can only raise your bar because these companies and associations can offer competitive salaries, benefits, and visibility. The more EU legislators target a certain type of company, such as Big Tech to take one recent example, the more you can expect those companies to invest in attracting the best people.

### DIGITAL SME'S SUCCESS STORY

At the European DIGITAL SME Alliance, we have managed to do it right and today the association represents over 45,000 SMEs in Europe through over 30 regional and national member associations. We engage with over 450 experts through 10 working groups, and have been involved in over 100 projects. The organization has grown exponentially in every aspect - from membership to staff, from policy impact to projects acquisition. Today, DIGITAL SME has become the largest European network of small and medium sized ICT companies, without receiving any funding from big enterprises or other private investors outside the SME community.

A key to this success has been to set the right narrative. Europe's digital SMEs do not want to be seen just as users of Big Tech digital solutions, but rather as innovators and digital champions themselves. DIGITAL SME has leveraged the self-confidence of entrepreneurs to shape a positive message that European tech companies, especially SMEs and start-ups, are drivers of innovation and digitalization.

### BUILDING THE DREAM TEAM

To succeed in our ambitious goals, we needed to build a team of professionals that could make things happen. Leveraging the positive narrative of SMEs as champions of Europe's digitalization has been key not just outside but also inside our organization. On one hand, it served well to acquire new members and to enhance the association's visibility towards policymakers. On the other, the same narrative was important to attract the best talents, the professionals who are not just after a good salary but who also want to work for a positive mission.

While we were still a "one-man show" half a decade ago, the DIGITAL SME team is now made up of 15 professionals. It is a very diverse group with varied backgrounds and 10 different nationalities, but all share a commitment to make SMEs the front runners of Europe's digital innovation. A significant part of this growth has happened during the pandemic. Remote recruitment and onboarding can be challenging, but also effective - although we were all quite relieved to be back to the current hybrid set-up!

One of the main issues we faced when onboarding staff remotely was the different perceptions of company culture and employee engagement. Despite providing regular occasions for meeting and discussing hot topics online (as well as company policies, HR procedures, etc.), the feeling that colleagues were less accessible

(and therefore less connected) was a hard one to fight. It took an intentional effort to schedule team and one-to-one meetings on a daily or weekly basis to build an open and welcoming environment while trying to avoid the infamous "Zoom fatigue".

One additional step we took was to organize little social outings (in compliance with current sanitary restrictions), such as team walks in the park, to discuss current projects or simply exchange life updates.

Of course, it was a learning experience for all of us and we are still on a path to improve, but it translated into a good retention rate, considering the overall challenging period!

We have now established a hybrid set-up where all team members are free to organize their time between the office and home depending on their tasks and personal preferences. The most common pattern is 3 days in the office / 2 days at home, except for newcomers, who are asked to spend more time in the office for the first 6 months of their assignment. This is not a way of controlling them, but simply to ensure optimal exchange of information and learning opportunities.

Of course, when you are a small, non-profit association working in the digital field in a market as competitive as Brussels, snatching (and retaining!) the right talent from the Big Tech competition is not an easy task. Having built an inclusive, supportive, and result-oriented company culture sets DIGITAL SME aside and allows professionals from different backgrounds and walks of life to find purpose and fulfilment in their daily work. We believe that we are at our best when we do a job we fully enjoy, therefore we encourage and support our staff to become real experts in their field and build on their talents, even when they fall outside of the scope of their initial job description.

One of our leading principles is "hire the attitude and train the skill", which proved to be an efficient way to gather a team of motivated self-starters. The fact that we have a strong community of experts and SME members, who invest their time and share their knowledge for our common cause and choose to support our team on top of their "day jobs", is an additional motivator for most of all of us.

### THE LONG WAY AHEAD

There is no doubt that we have come a long way since the association started 14 years ago, but there is still so much work to be done. Running an SME association and doing it right is a challenge and - at the same time - a unique experience which requires the right mix of ingredients to be successful - a strong ethic, team, and network.

For more information about ESAE, with which Boardoom has an exclusive partnership, visit [www.esae.eu](http://www.esae.eu).



# The Limits & Limitations of Empowerment

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International Advisor to the Global Association Hubs **Martin Sirk** explores the very definition of empowerment and how it relates to international associations. But exactly how far are organizations willing to go in this direction?

What's in a word? In the case of "empowerment", all too often a large helping of feel-good optimism with a side order of self-delusion! Let's face it, when was the last time you heard of any association (or company or other type of organization, for that matter) that was *against* more empowerment? It's like taking a stand against "progress" or "excellence".

Dictionary definitions identify two distinctive types of empowerment: the giving or delegation of power or authority, and the giving of an ability or capacity. Whilst distinct, the two are clearly interrelated: delegating without ensuring someone is given the tools and skills to accomplish the task or role is just as futile as developing capacity without allowing that person enough free rein to express their ability. Clearly, we are not dealing with vague, progressive values, but with a complex and challenging process.

Synonyms give us a few more clues to empowerment's true nature: enabling, equipping, enfranchizing, and perhaps most graphic of all, emancipation.

## WHEN IT HAPPENS

For empowerment only really occurs when leaders give up meaningful, emphasized, material power, otherwise it's simply looser-than-normal managerial supervision

of delegated tasks and roles (perhaps the most common misuse of the term), or an organisational reallocation of responsibilities. True empowerment is (and should be!) scary, difficult, and perhaps most importantly, unpredictable, because *you* are no longer making many of the most critical decisions.

Empowerment should focus on mission, goals and broader objectives, not processes and job descriptions. If it doesn't result in novel methodologies, new working relationships between involved parties, lots of experiments, increased risk-taking, and unexpected solutions, you're definitely not doing it right!

Empowerment when defined as giving ability is just as risky as passing over power. It requires giving time, space and budgets for personal development in a way that is not necessarily dedicated to delivering a specific task. It takes courage and confidence in your own organization's appeal, knowing that those staff could choose to use their new skills and capacity for other purposes and employers!

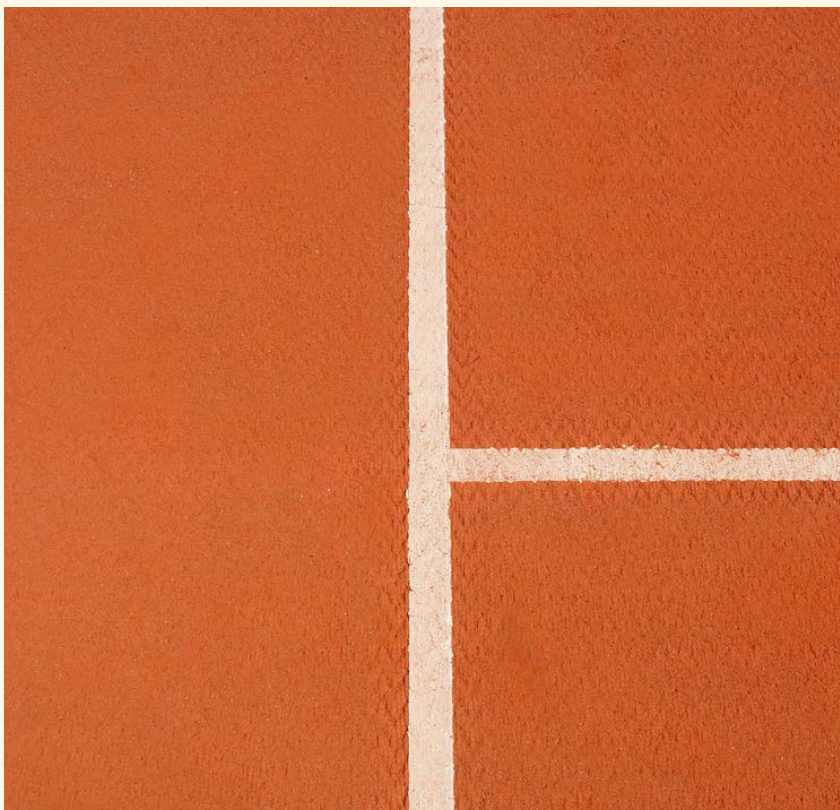
Empowerment isn't just the top-down process of a leader giving authority to management team members. It involves two-way power transfers between CEO and Board, lifting up new and young staff, enhanced roles and responsibilities

for volunteer members and the staff who interact with them. With relation to association meetings it means ditching top-down planning (and pre-assigned room set-ups - PLEASE!) and standardised paper/session acceptance-evaluation processes, and embracing an output-, impact- and objective-focused design ethos and giving more power and responsibility to the delegate.

But in all these changed relationships and power-dynamics, one thing needs to be a constant: without identifying and creating ability, capacity and resources, empowerment will inevitably be "talking the talk, not walking the walk"!

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

It's important for associations not to only apply this concept to their internal relations: building a network of empowered partners can also be extraordinarily valuable. Key cities that really understand and value associations, such as Global Association Hubs partners, Brussels, Dubai, Singapore and Washington DC comprise one obvious category with whom to build such trust-based relationships that go far beyond hosting meetings. Other associations that share your values and mission are another, but be prepared to give up a degree of sovereignty in return for



increased synergies and greater influence in your advocacy goals.

Empowerment came up as a hot topic in both keynote presentations and corridor discussions at this year's ASAE annual conference in Nashville, with numerous invaluable insights into how associations should think about this concept.

Reinforcing the high-level nature of empowerment, Jaime Nolan, President and CEO of National Speakers Association stated: *"My approach is to set the Vision, then apply loose or wide guardrails and provide budgets and other resources to create the right environment for success. We want to maximize the potential for different solutions to challenges and opportunities."*

Paul Bishop, President and CEO of Water Professionals International emphasised the organisation-wide cultural importance of empowerment, how it should become

a part of the DNA of the association, with a particular emphasis on learning from, and not penalising failure: *"My job is to simply remove the roadblocks. If staff fail, they should fail with a good safety net. I had a particularly proud moment in a tough week recently: my newest young staff member saying WPI is 'the most employee-centric organization I've ever worked at'. Empowerment has to be organization-wide, central to an association's culture."*

And the particular challenges of embracing empowerment when working with a global and diverse community were eloquently expressed by Allison Ferch, Executive Director of GALA, the Globalization & Localization Association: *"Working with diverse, globally distributed stakeholders creates challenges for empowerment, especially in the context of board and committee work. It requires cultural sensitivity and an openness to different understandings of authority,*

*participation, and duty. Any association that wants to empower its members or staff working in different regions needs a plan that includes clear expectations for engagement, a flexible attitude that allows for pivoting and adapting, and a mechanism for feedback that enables course-correction if things aren't working well."*

This year for the first time, ASAE organized a half-day Global Summit prior to the Annual Conference. The keynote presentation by Thomas Debass, Chief Partnerships Officer and Managing Director at the Office of Global Partnerships in the US State Department, illustrated perfectly a key challenge of true empowerment, that it represents a scary challenge to the status quo towards which we're all tempted to revert: *"Positive societal change only occurs when we set 'unreasonable goals' for our partnerships and our projects. Reasonable goals reinforce the status quo. George Bernard Shaw famously stated: 'All progress depends on the unreasonable person.' Allow talent to flow. Focus on problem-solving, not process or actors."*

## NOT AN EASY TASK

Empowerment isn't easy: I hope this article has made that clear. Nor is it a commonplace phenomenon, within associations or organizations in general or society at large. But any association that can truly embrace it will be setting up a strong foundation to survive and thrive in the uncertain future we all face.

One final observation, and a plea from the heart: the one thing a CEO should never delegate is "buck-stopping". Empowerment should never be an excuse to pass blame onto others!

This piece is part of the exclusive partnership between Boardroom and the Global Association Hubs, which comes as an innovative response to the increasing decentralization of international associations as they look to develop their activities globally.

[www.associationhubs.org](http://www.associationhubs.org)



# Making it All Happen

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For AC Forum, **Cathy Weynants**, CEO of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC), reflects on the many ways association CEOs can be empowered. Most of the time, it means involving the organization's whole team.

Empowerment can be defined in many different ways. To me, it's about trust, trusting your employees, giving them the autonomy to make their own decisions with minimal guidance and, equally important, being trusted by your leadership.

Like many other associations, the pandemic has impacted our daily work in many aspects. The business model which was working well for years had to be quickly adapted, projects had to be put on pause or simply stopped, and many events moved to the digital realm. Needless to say this required a new agile mindset, being open to change and the acquirement of new skills - all this while making sure everybody working in the organization stayed engaged despite limited face-to-face contacts.

What has been key to continue most of our activities was the spirit of making it all happen.

Surely there have been very difficult moments, but just like in any other organization. Nevertheless, we made sure operational progress kept going through genuine human connections, as we navigated these disruptive times. We did so by highlighting and promoting inclusivity and empowerment, by enabling and encouraging open dialogues, by sharing good and bad experiences, and offering room to authentic employee experiences strongly supported by our leadership. All this ensured the smoothest running of our organization.

The global pandemic compelled us to explore resourceful and new ways forward. The association successfully entered the EU Horizon and Grant program landscape which expanded our views and skills. This recent capacity-building experience, together with several new skills we had to learn, have clearly been instrumental take aways for the future.

## LOOKING AT THE FUTURE

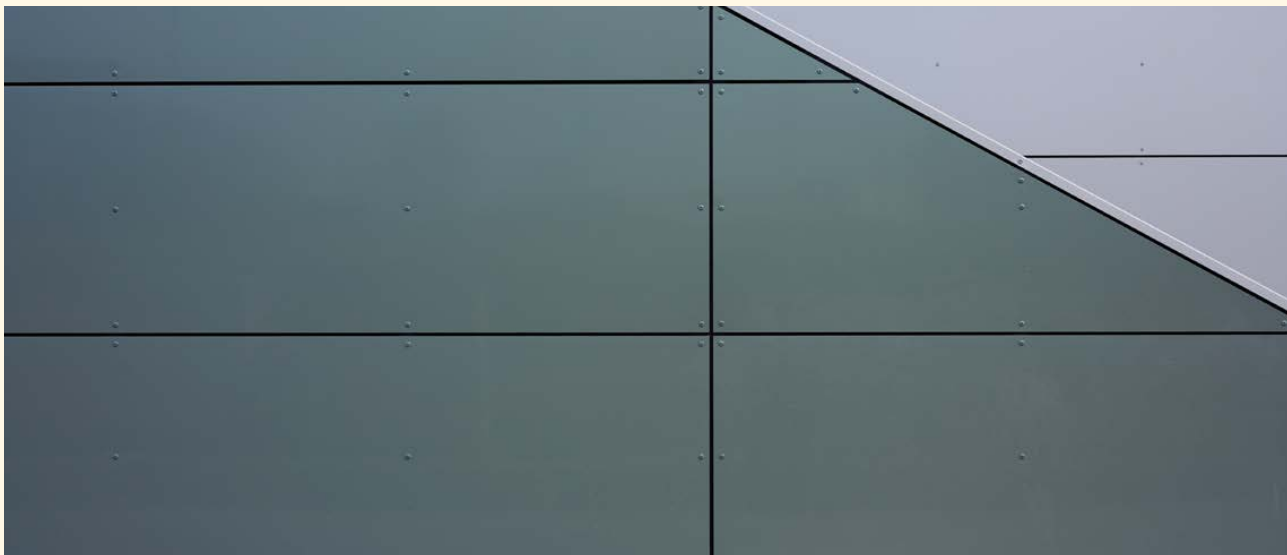
Recently, the environment where we operate in has changed significantly. We see a different behaviour in the membership community with decreasing numbers where an 'engagement' fatigue, if I can call it so, can be observed. At the same time, we are confronted with growing competitiveness.

Continuous advancements, especially in the technology field, require new business models and increased versatility. The world of digitization has evolved, with hybrid events and more online education opportunities. Those digitally-fuelled changes in the offering associations can provide have transformed participating rates and revealed a number of new trends. In the very near future industry will make choices, our members will be more selective and so will we. Hence it's important to differentiate ourselves and look for new offerings and solutions. Most importantly, we will have to dare to stop projects and events which have become less strategically important.

## EMPOWERING STAFF & CEOS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

One starting principle is to make sure we know and understand ourselves, what drives and motivates us, what are our individual strengths and needs to perform well. I believe it is important to have individual development plans in place and regularly evaluate if things require a brush-up.

Spending time on how to nurture a growing mindset and keep the curiosity and energy high is equally important. With regards to individual development, I really support the 70/20/10 learning and development model, meaning 70% of learning happens



through on-the-job experience, 20% through social interactions with colleagues and peers and 10% via formal training experiences. This can of course change depending on one's individual needs but overall this works very well.

Within our association we strongly encourage employees to step in other departments when the opportunity arises. This not only helps the organization in dealing with high workload periods, but it also encourages employees to discover new roles and tasks, while supporting a process of a growing mindset and developing a new suite of knowledge, skills and behaviors.

### CONTINUOUS LEARNING

The next step is to make sure everyone is aligned with the strategy and business priorities. Clear communication across the organization and the willingness of our leadership to collaborate with staff, as well regular moments for brainstorming and feedback, can nurture a high level of engagement as it provides a deep understanding to what we offer and *why* we do it.

Operating in an ever-changing environment, all organizations must increasingly be versatile and have the ability to adapt to changes, which means continuous learning is key. Complex problems do not always have simple solutions. We must dare to try new things, sometimes fail and learn quickly, give feedback and learn from each other and most importantly recognize employees who continuously improve and gain knowledge.

No leader can do it all. Ensuring individual accountability and autonomy and making sure we keep questioning what is good, what can be improved, what to start doing and what to stop are key.

Involving the whole team in complex situations will drive value and partake of learnings and improvements.

### LOOKING BACK

Looking back at the last three years and reflecting on how CEOs can be empowered I rely again on the key principle of trust. A trusting, open and transparent business culture helps maintain strong bonds with the team.

Leadership is often about emotional intelligence, understanding empathy, and the ability to read the needs and desires of others and adapt to them. Continuous learning, repurposing, welcoming knowledge and investing in yourself are part of the process as well.

But leadership is also about guiding and supporting know-how for everyone to take greater ownership of their destiny. An association culture based on trust helps build a more resilient organization. The team has an essential part to play. An association is only ever the sum of its parts, and its parts primarily should be empowered people.

*Cathy Weynants is an experienced healthcare executive and joined ESAIC three years ago as CEO, leading a team of nearly 40 engaged and motivated employees. Headquartered in Brussels, the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care is the largest professional member community of anaesthesiologists in Europe.*

For organizations wanting to learn more about AC Forum and membership, please visit [www.acforum.net](http://www.acforum.net).

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# Empower Your Team By Coaching Instead of Directing

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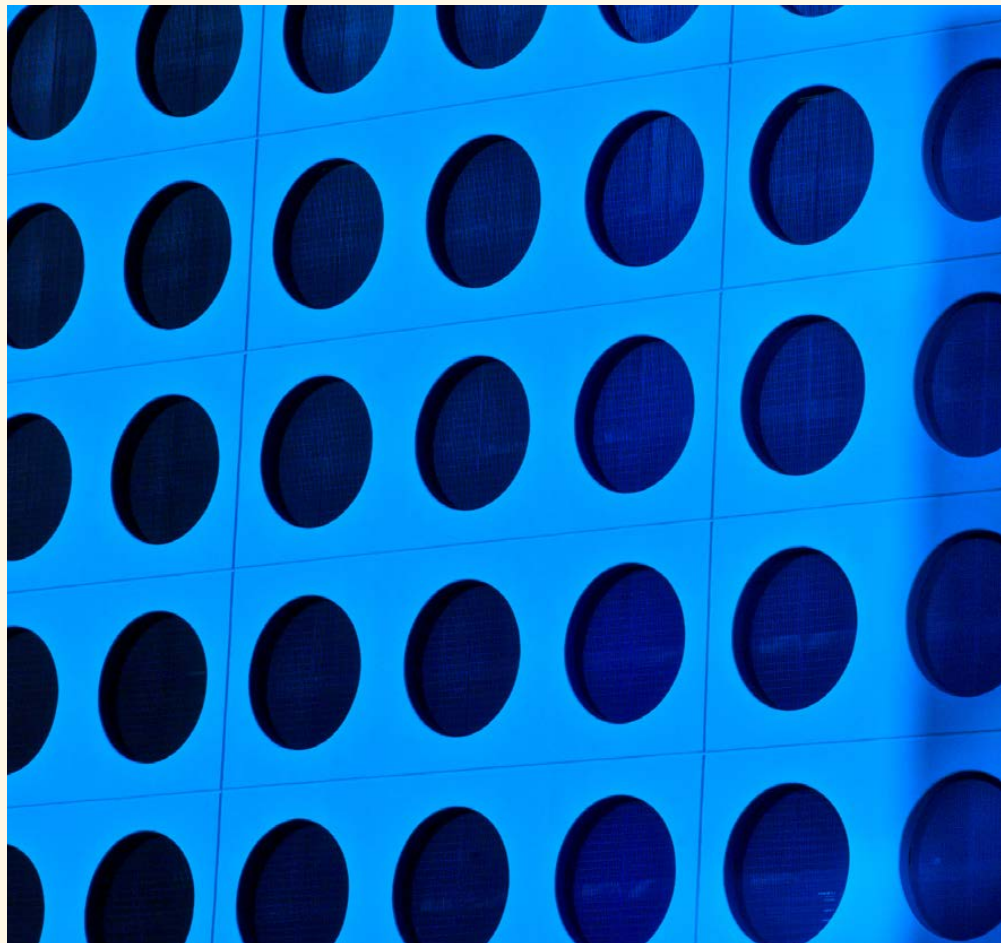
The outdated top-down model of leadership led to employees being more focused on blindly aiming to please rather than thinking for themselves. To get the most out of your team, train them how to succeed by showing you believe in them. This article, written by **Eric Strafrel**, founder of SUMMi7, a consulting firm in Dallas, is part of a special partnership between Boardroom and ASAE.

Empowerment is an ongoing process of learning and development for your employees. As a leader, you must create the conditions that allow this to happen, which requires a shift in mindset from thinking like a manager to thinking like a coach.

A manager usually delegates tasks, leads meetings, collects input, makes strategic decisions, and more. These are necessary, but a heavy-handed management style can stifle employees' development. They will become so accustomed to having you provide road maps or scheduling every aspect of their day that they will have a hard time thinking creatively on their own.

Instead of micromanaging your employees, empower them by providing clear direction and guidance on priorities. Set goals that align with company objectives, gain an understanding of their challenges, and enable them to work it out on their own. Be available to answer their questions but give them the space to make decisions. That gives them the opportunity to practice on their own and make mistakes—and learn from them—so they can grow.

Any sports fan knows that there are hundreds of different coaching styles. You can find success with the hyper-professional





Zen of Phil Jackson, legendary former coach of the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers, or the high-energy exuberance of Pete Carroll, coach of the Seattle Seahawks. No matter your style, there are two fundamental ways a successful coaching strategy is built. The first is setting a high, clear bar for your team members, which shows that you believe in them. The second is doing everything you can to help them achieve that standard, which demonstrates your commitment to their success.

### SET A HIGH BAR

Set specific goals with your team members. If the goal is quality, discuss what quality looks like for their position, what it looks like for the people supporting them, and what can be measured daily or weekly that would indicate how well they're meeting that objective.

When they know which metrics they're striving to improve, they can see more opportunities. They can find and fix design flaws in a product. They can say, *"Hey, maybe the material we're getting isn't high-quality enough."* Or they can find places to streamline the supply chain and automate processes. To take it a step further, encourage them to set their own goals. This will help them establish ownership and increase motivation to achieve those goals.

The high bar you set should include more than just quantitative individual goals. Be sure to make it also the quantitative and qualitative successes that the entire company is working toward. And then coach your team to help them achieve those ambitious goals. Remember, there are few things more toxic than a leader who asks a lot from their team, and then makes it almost impossible for them to deliver. If you do that, your employees will feel like you're just setting them up to fail.

On the other hand, if you set a high bar with your team and then support them by investing time and resources, you show that you believe in them. This belief alone is empowering, and makes employees

feel valued, challenged, and excited at work, even before they start to see their goals come to fruition. With your support, when they achieve those goals, that moment will significantly increase their own confidence and sense of empowerment within the organization.

### ENCOURAGE YOUR TEAM TO GROW

You can support their development in lots of ways. The most obvious are new training and skill development programs, or giving them the resources (money, technology, time, access, information) they need to succeed. For example, you could share aspects of your experience, or help them develop relationships within the company and the industry, so that they can expand their personal networks and learn from their peers.

A quick note: you can only ask your employees to do all this extra work to continuously learn if you make an equal, consistent effort to grow yourself. They are all experts at their jobs, and you can learn just as much from them as they do from you. You should also invest time in development programs for yourself, to embody a commitment to continuous learning that will inspire others to follow.

All of this is in stark contrast to the top-down model, which requires employees to fit a mold and be programmed into a machine. Doing that creates people who are expected to execute orders instead of contributing input of their own. Successful coaching not only requires you to challenge your employees to excel, but you must also demonstrate that you believe in them by supporting their efforts. It's a win-win situation for all.

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# Be Open to Unconventional Ideas

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Peter King has announced he is stepping down as CEO of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. For Boardroom, **Stephanie Martin**, Head of Sales and part of AIPC talent program, interviews him as he reflects on his 11 years of service.

*What are three things you have learned whilst leading the people at MCEC?*

I've learned that a place is made by the people inside it and that much can definitely be said about MCEC, my most prevailing memory will be the long line of great people I've had the honour of working with at MCEC.

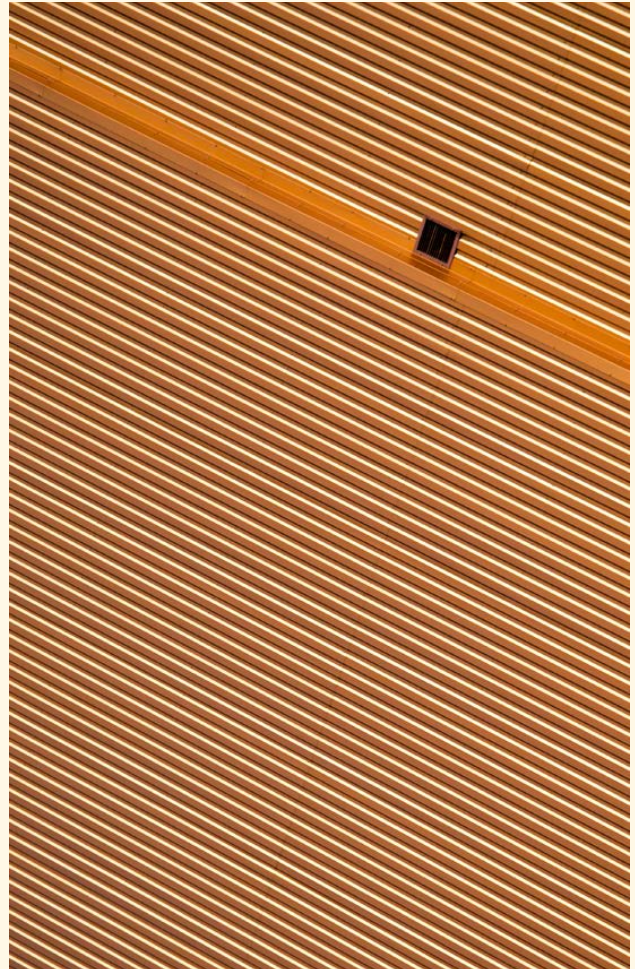
Secondly, I've learned that it's crucial to be adaptable in our changing world. Having led MCEC throughout the acute stages of the pandemic over the past two years I've seen the importance of thinking creatively and being open to new ideas. I know I have learnt a lot in this time and have had to be very adaptable.

Finally, I've learned that leading a business like MCEC is an immense privilege, one which is part of the broader ecosystem of the tapestry of Melbourne, what a wonderful place we live.

*Diversity of teams and leadership is more important than ever as we embrace workplace flexibility and design a new sustainable future. What do you think our industry needs to consider to remain relevant now and into the future?*

It's so important to remember now more than ever that the world is not as it was, and the workplace needs to be able to accommodate the new customer needs and to how the world is changing around us. Employees value flexibility and the ability to work in a way that compliments their lifestyles.

We've also transitioned to an Agile working environment, which sees many of our employees work in cross-disciplinary teams to work on a common project. This gives our people autonomy over their work and is a new approach to delivering events, allowing staff to collaborate outside of their immediate departments.



Our new business strategy focuses on four key priorities: business sustainability through the customer experience, activating pride in MCEC, and generating value for our community, continuing a commitment to being unconventional through exploring new markets and ideas and building a future-focused workforce and culture.

*Let's talk about net-zero greenhouse carbon emissions for MCEC in 2030. Are we going to get there and do you think our industry is doing enough to make a significant difference?*

The events industry is inherently wasteful, we must be honest about the impact our business has on the world around us and acknowledge what we can do to reduce this. We've championed environmental sustainability for a long time to intending to improve our performance year on year, we're proud to be the industry leader in our region.

I think the goal of net-zero greenhouse carbon emissions in 2030 is doable but relies on our employees, who continue to be advocates with a willingness to do things differently. There are undoubtedly global challenges, with COVID-19 putting pressure on environmental advances, particularly for to single-use items, but we will continue to make decisions that are both safe and sustainable. Through the targets in this strategy, we are sending a clear message. We can and will do more to provide better outcomes for our community, our customers, and our environment.

*Agile, innovation, and pivot are all hot buzz words – what do you think is going to be the new frontier for business events?*

When the pandemic first hit, we were faced with the fact our revenues had gone from a record year to zero. Once we had dealt with the critical incident elements we had two choices continue - BAU/sit and wait OR recover and reimagine.

We knew that when MCEC was able to reopen its doors, the world was going to be different and so too would be the needs of our customers.

We needed to unlock the power of our people, we created a new business relaunch strategy driven by putting people into multi-functional groups and throwing them new initiatives to explore. We decided that we needed to create new products and services - value-adds to our customer base - and build and discover new partnerships.

We found people who had never thought to talk to us and who we had never had to consider in the past. It remains an untapped source of future growth. While our doors were closed, we

launched new products including our new Virtual Events offering, we partnered with Film Victoria to film a Hollywood blockbuster in our bays and worked with Village Cinemas to host a drive-in cinema over the summer.

Previously we were so busy our team's time was occupied 110% by BAU and event delivery - we had no capacity to innovate. In 2020 we found ourselves with 100% of our time available to drive innovation. That's something that will be important to retain and balance alongside our BAU.

*What stands out to you as a positive impact of COVID – if there can be such a thing?*

When the pandemic hit in 2020, we knew we couldn't just sit still and wait it out so I'm very proud that MCEC embraced the challenges this presented to the business by managing the transformation and diversification of the business. This included supporting the Victorian State Government's vaccination rollout and adapting the space to attract partners such as The LUME Melbourne, Australia's first permanent digital art gallery, the drive-in indoor cinema, helping with space for Guide Dogs to train and the filming of a Liam Neeson film, Blacklight, in our venue.

While competitors paused during lockdowns, we had a comprehensive business transformation to an Agile operating model, to better position MCEC to serve customers in the wake of the pandemic. The organization will hopefully see the benefits of this legacy for years to come.

*What advice would you give to newcomers in the industry?*

Think creatively and be brave. New ideas are the most invaluable gift to our industry right now and for those on the ground who are working in events each and every day it's crucial that everyone remains open to unconventional ideas and see MCEC as a space where people can be brought together in any number of ways, not just the traditional business events.

This industry is so much fun. It is hard work but the more you put in the more you get back. Be honest, be vulnerable but be yourself and jump into any opportunity you are given.

AIPC represents a global network of over 190 leading centres in 64 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide. [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org).







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# Identifying the Foundations of Societal Transformation

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The business events industry is busy these days trying to bring meetings down to a low footprint level on the one hand and organize events with a positive impact for the community on the other. For Copenhagen the focus lies on maximizing long-term positive opportunities for the society as a whole, creating a pliable link between environmental sustainability and legacy matters where one compliments the other. The two interlinked notions have been emphasized with the launch of the [Copenhagen Sustainability Guide 2.0](#) - a pre-planning tool for organizing events supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The guide is a supplement to the recently awarded strategic initiative, [Copenhagen Legacy Lab](#).

*Words Vicky Koffa*





Copenhagen is innovating once again. Copenhagen Legacy Lab launched a **revised approach** to creating long-term positive impact from congresses inspired by EU Commission's work with impact assessments. The revised approach addresses how Copenhagen Convention Bureau selects relevant legacy cases and Copenhagen Legacy Lab measures both immediate outcomes and more long-term positive effects (impact and legacies) to accelerate societal transformation.

*"Data and know-how are key to understanding the most potential effects of an event and can help achieve the desired immediate meeting outcomes and more lasting meeting effects. To achieve a strategic and systematic approach towards creating long-term positive effects from congresses, we need to identify the objectives and main issues of the congress and the destination. The event can then act as a catalyst for positive change,"* says Annika Rømer, Senior Manager of Copenhagen Legacy Lab.

For Copenhagen it's about identifying the shared interest between the congress and the destination for the benefit of their customers, and eventually destination and global society at large.

#### GLOBAL DIY-SUMMIT

The 8<sup>th</sup> Global DIY Summit took place in Copenhagen from 8 to 10 June 2022. Approximately 900 delegates from 55 countries attended the congress which included over 280 of the top retailers in the global sector, bringing an international perspective to the local market.

Jointly hosted by the leading DIY professional organizations, EDRA (European DIY-Retail Association), HIMA (Home Improvement Manufacturers Association), and ghin (Global Home Improvement Network), the event came to the city with the ambition to increase awareness of responsible business models among their audience. *"We didn't want to just focus on sustainability, but on responsibility.*

*We named one of our education sessions 'The Age of Responsibility' which is broader, and I think that it's more accurate because with responsibility you cover many other topics,"* says Inaki Maillard, General Manager at Global DIY Summit.

#### THE LEGACY PROJECT

Copenhagen Convention Bureau and Copenhagen Legacy Lab got together with the Summit committee and specific local stakeholders to address challenges that the DIY Industry is facing: climate changes, tech revolution, and a lack of diverse labor force. Copenhagen Legacy Lab also engaged with DIY to design tailor-made activities addressing the ambition of supporting a more sustainable and responsible future. They came up with the 'DIY Legacy Project', which approached the challenge from three different angles: communication, education, and future planning. *"We invited expert speakers to talk about sustainability and the ESG purpose economy who tried explaining the meaning of purpose and consciousness in whatever business the organization is conducting. Then, together with two young minds and Copenhagen Convention Bureau we started organizing all the workshops in order to educate our audience on sustainability and social inclusion,"* says Maillard.

Part of the project was to showcase what successful businesses in the DIY industry are already doing in terms of sustainability. *"We wanted to become a messenger to the industry and highlight that sustainability and equality practices are vital and feasible. In the congress there was a stage set up to showcase just that and provide inspiration,"* continues Maillard. Building on that, the Summit will later publish a trend report with sustainable projects from the industry for professionals to use as motivation towards positive change.

A popular activity was the wish tree. Attendees hung a piece of paper on an actual olive tree with a note of one goal they had to improve in terms of sustainability.

*"Now we are collecting all this information and in our next conference, we are going to bring the tree again to compare the new goals and ask people to inform us which of these goals were actually realized. This way we can track and measure evolution in our industry supported by also member surveys,"* he concludes.

#### LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR LEGACY CREATION

The Copenhagen team will continue to provide their support to these associations post-congress, tracking the potential outputs, outcomes, impact, or even legacy these activities created and looking into future planning and activities. This falls in line with **the revised 7-step model** that will be instrumental in deepening the strategic approach towards long-term legacy planning and measurements from international congresses in the future. *"The new model identifies six barriers that society is facing when trying to accelerate a solid societal transformation. These barriers need to be addressed before you can actually speed up this transformation with the SDGs and our destination's priorities in mind. In other words, we must identify the main issue behind the problem to achieve the lasting effects we seek,"* explains Rømer.

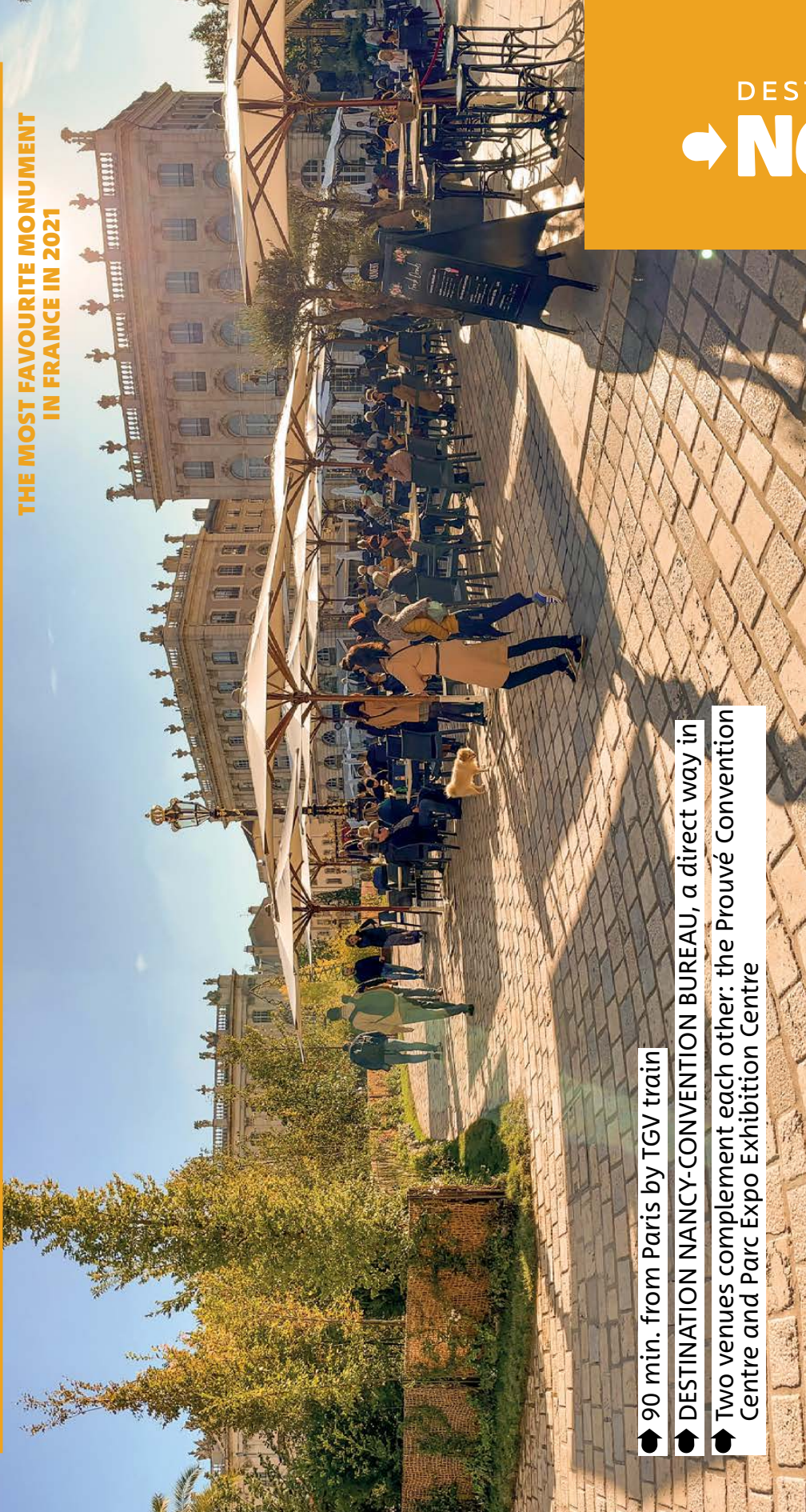
Conferences are attracted to the city based on a strategic plan. These events can help break down national barriers, just as local society can form part of the solution to a challenge the congress is facing. *"We use a platform and events to trigger other industries outside the hospitality sector to become even more environmentally and socially responsible to support resilient, responsible and regenerative business models,"* concludes Rømer.

**More on the Copenhagen Legacy Lab:**  
[www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/cll](http://www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/cll) / [anr@email.dk](mailto:anr@email.dk)



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# Innovation & Sustainability in Nancy

Known as the cradle of *Art Nouveau*, classified by UNESCO for its 18<sup>th</sup> century centre, Nancy, the capital of the Duchy of Lorraine, has a few assets when it comes to hosting association meetings – especially as a sustainable destination, which it is definitely, thanks to some initiatives clearly making it stand out.

*Words Remi Deve*

Considered by some to be the most Italian town of eastern France, Nancy is known for its famous Place Stanislas, one of the most beautiful royal squares in Europe, with its famous gilded wrought-iron gates. But beyond the old town and its many museums, Nancy quietly cultivates a certain *art de vivre*, and also demonstrate a sincere commitment to sustainability and the environment.

DESTINATION NANCY, the destination marketing organization of the city, wears four different hats: not only do they organize events at the Prouvé Convention Center and Nancy Exhibition Centre; but they also act as a convention bureau and dedicated tourist office for the whole metropolitan area. As such, they strongly believe that face-to-face meetings should have the minimum carbon footprint and they work closely with the whole stakeholders' chain to make this possible.

Since 2018, DESTINATION NANCY has been ISO 20121 certified, and they can offer guidance and best practice to help you manage your event sustainably. A pioneer in the sector, Nancy's CSR approach is more and more a differentiator for association planners. The city now aims to become an *international* green destination like a handful of its French counterparts, working within the confines of a program launched by France Congrès et Événements. In fact, Nancy Tourist Office was the first French Tourist Office that was certified ISO 20121 in 2020.

Moreover, DESTINATION NANCY was awarded 'Sustainable Innovative Destination' label in 2022, which covers both business and leisure tourism. Its greatest value lies in involving all the local stakeholders (visitors, businesses, residents) in successfully implementing the designated actions and achieving the targets set in the areas of sustainability and innovation.



© DESTINATION NANCY

Initiatives include at Prouvé Convention Center: managing food waste with over four tons of food donated to the Food Bank since 2017, the use of renewable energy thanks to photovoltaic panels on the roof of the venue, and a selection of caterers based on solid sustainability criteria; at Nancy Tourist Office: the promotion of soft mobility (Nancy is a destination where everything can be done walking and where public transport is free on the weekends), the Tourism and Disability label (Nancy is an accessible, inclusive destination), and the showcase of eco-responsible, local and sustainable craftsmanship.

#### Contact

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# Ongoing Projects in the World's Leading Meeting Destination

Earlier this year the 2021 ICCA rankings listed Vienna as the number one meeting destination. No wonder, given that the Austrian capital impresses with its excellent infrastructure, short distances, high hospitality standards and an outstanding range of art and culture. Also in 2022, The Economist's Global Liveability Index ranked Vienna first place once again and confirmed its role as "*most livable city in the world*".

But what makes Vienna so special?

Vienna sets the perfect stage for meetings of all kinds and sizes. A welcoming, multicultural destination in the heart of Europe, the city unlocks new synergies and guarantees the highest standards of accommodation, meeting locations, arts and culture offerings. Thanks to the team of the Vienna Convention Bureau who provides professional and tailor-made assistance, association planners are sure to be well taken care of.

*"As challenging as the past years have been, Vienna remains one of the world's leading meeting destinations. The first place in the ICCA Report 2021 proves this once again. This is a strong signal from Meeting Destination Vienna and is thanks to the tireless efforts and cohesion of Vienna's meetings industry,"* says Christian Woronka, head of the Vienna Convention Bureau and Market Management at the Vienna Tourist Board.

## GLOBAL RECOGNITION

The Global Liveability Index ranking of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which has been published annually since 2004, enjoys global recognition and compares over 140 cities

around the world. In June 2022, Vienna was voted into first place once again. In 2019 and 2018, Vienna was the very first European city to lead the ranking and has thus replaced Melbourne, which held the title of most livable city for seven years.

In addition to criteria such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and culture, Vienna scored particularly well in the areas of safety and stability.

## NEW PROJECTS

Many new hotel projects are revitalizing Vienna as a sustainable meeting destination. In Vienna, one can find more than 350 hotels and around 32,500 rooms to suit all tastes and budgets. The newest additions presented below all opened their doors in 2022 and have one thing in common – some Viennese great taste when it comes to design and style.

The 5-star **Rosewood Vienna** is the luxury hotel chain's fifth hotel in Europe and the first in the German-speaking region. With 99 rooms and suites, as well as several meeting rooms, the hotel offers several dining areas – including a rooftop bar and





an intimate garden restaurant – as well as private relaxation experiences at Sense, Rosewood Vienna’s in-house spa.

A few steps from St. Stephen’s Cathedral, we find a listed Baroque gem transformed into the **The Leo Grand**, a luxury hotel with 76 rooms and suites. With its unconventional location, the hotel combines the highest individual standards with contemporary luxury elements. The Leo Grand is also home to what is probably the most exclusive “Schanigarten” in Vienna, a winter proof inner courtyard with an elegant bar and several private dining areas.

Located next to MuseumsQuartier, **Hotel Gilbert** is a trendy 4-star hotel with a cosmopolitan philosophy, a strong environmental stance and top services. The green concept of the family-run hotel is evident in the hotel’s 57 flats, suites and lofts. In addition to a gym and sauna, there are also two meeting rooms, a thermal and anti-noise façade and several green spaces with an extensive indoor plant concept.

And there’s more. In addition to the numerous new hotels, Meeting Destination Vienna also offers some spectacular new event locations, which all deserve a focus below.

Top-quality facilities and infrastructure, leading security standards, and a subway connection: with **Ariana**, Vienna just got a new, attractive event venue. It is located in one of the largest urban development areas in Europe and Vienna’s hotspot for Smart City technology – the Seestadt Aspern.



© MICHAEL KOENIGSTOEPER

This fall, **Weitsicht Cobenzl** will open as a versatile and completely renovated venue with the highest design standards – and a long history. As early as around 1900, the Viennese made their way up the hill to enjoy the fantastic view of the city. Now the location makes up a great ensemble consisting of several sites, the highlight of them being the Kuppelsaal which offers space for up to 500 people.

**For more information**  
[vienna.convention.at](http://vienna.convention.at)





# A Handful of Unique Venues

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Located on the southernmost tip of the Korean Peninsula, Jeju is the largest island in South Korea. A popular tourist destination – the presence of the World Heritage Site Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes definitely helps – it has also a few assets up it sleeves when it comes to hosting international conferences, starting with a whole range of unique venues that will make any delegate’s experience memorable.

*Words Remi Deve*

Who said business events have to be limited to business in the convention centre? Authentic experiences leave a lasting impression with every delegate – and there is, in fact, no better way to enhance a conference than to include authentic local experiences.

Association planners can actually be the driving force behind developing these

creative events that inspire attendees to truly experience the local community within their event destination. And with the support and the expertise of the host destination which knows how to make it happen, it’s never been so easy. Jeju Convention Bureau has, in fact, selected some unique venues that can make any event a success. Below is a selection of them.

## HARMONY WITH NATURE

Jeju is known for being a UNESCO World Heritage Sites, so any place that features Jeju’s gifts of nature has double the charm. Opened 30 years ago, **Camellia Hill Botanical Garden** is the biggest botanical garden in East Asia, covering 60,000 square meters. Here, you will find yourself wandering around passing a very big collection



CAMELLIA HILL BOTANICAL GARDEN



of Camelia trees. Don't be fooled by the name, though. They actually have 500 different species of flowers that are imported from more than 80 countries is the world!

**Hwansang Forest Gotjawal Park**, a primeval forest also known as the 'Lungs of Jeju', is nestled on the slopes of Halla Mountain and one of the lesser-known tourist attractions in Jeju, where a variety of plants and animals cohabit on an unusual geography left behind by lava. Meanwhile, **Spirited Garden**, a garden with bonsais from around the world, will leave any visitor in awe. There is also **Hallim Park** which stretches over 3,300 sqm: as one of the most popular places to visit in Jeju, it has a great mix of nature and culture and is complete with caves, sculptures, a folk village, a bonsai and a bird garden... and more.

#### RELAXATION & HEALING

Some places are all about relaxation and healing and you just have to be there to experience it. And when you add a cultural element to them, you get a winning combination.

Strolling around **Bonte Museum** means entering the architectural dialogue between nature, concrete, water and light - all elements that are so characteristic of architect Ando's work. The museum is composed of two buildings - a triangular prism and a geometrical cube - which together create this architectural environment that easily harmonizes with the surrounding landscape. Organizing banquets there will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Sitting at the crossroads of some of Jeju's main attractions, leading resort venue **Drama 2015** is surrounded by natural scenery and overlooks the beautiful Aewol Sea, allowing visitors to feel the fresh sea breeze while enjoying their event. Its outdoor grass garden can accommodate 400 pax.

## 3 Questions to Kim Ae-sook, Chair of the Jeju Convention Bureau

### *What was the purpose of selecting unique venues in Jeju?*

An event becomes more special if it is hosted outside a sometimes dull conference facility, in a place which can showcase local culture and nature. Jeju is a great location for events, and its unique venues definitely add to the area's diversity and charm.

### *What do you look forward to the most when selecting unique venues in Jeju?*

In 2020, we were a bit disappointed with some unique venues not being as active due to COVID-19. This year, we are anticipating a full comeback with unique venues hosting various events, ranging from small seminars to large international conferences. At the same time, we are hoping to promote the beautiful charm of Jeju on a global scale.

### *What kind of support do you offer?*

When an event with over 10 people is hosted at a unique venue, we will provide an incentive of up to 10 million won (20,000 won per person.) Additionally, we will focus on creating promotional content and international marketing activities, so that the unique venues become well-known throughout the world.

Then there is **Sanghyowon**, a large scale botanical garden covering more than 260,000 square meters that you can travel to on a tiny train. With a wealth of outdoor beauty to enjoy, it boasts 1,200 species of flowers and plants, as well as a restaurant and two cafes. Events like luncheons and banquets are possible here - all of them with a special green twist.

#### PREMIUM EXPERIENCE IN PREMIUM HOTELS

And of course there are your expected high-class hotels which can be your preferred choice for events with their perfect capacities, service, and facilities.

**Lotte Hotel Jeju** is the biggest hotel venue in Jungmun, an ideal spot where the blue sea surrounding the island blends perfectly with the blue sky above. Its Crystal Ballroom can accommodate up to 800 people.

Providing a perfect mix of value, comfort and convenience, the **Seaes Hotel & Resort** is located in a century-old fishing village born anew, the the Baeritnae Sea Village. Its Kkotnang VIP Hall is widely sought after for cultural events but also international conferences.

Last but not least is the **Haevichi Hotel & Resort**, where you will be a few steps away from Pyoseon Beach and a few minutes by foot from **Jeju Folk Village**, a restored 1890s village featuring more than 100 structures and displays of period artifacts. With a modern atmosphere and beautiful views over the ocean, its eight meeting rooms can host up to 4,800 people.

Worth noting is that **9.81 Park**, a large indoor and outdoor recreation zone, and **SK Pinx**, which managing quality-hotel facilities, also provide a range of conference possibilities.

More information  
[www.jejumice.or.kr](http://www.jejumice.or.kr)

# Turning Risk into Revival

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Taiwan is about the size of the Netherlands, but with a population of around 23 million, it is more populous than three-quarters of the nations around the globe. Despite its large population, when travel and events were paused during the pandemic, Taiwan quickly controlled the virus from spreading, and, with high vaccination levels, returned to some sense of normalcy. Even under the continued threat and impact of COVID-19, Taiwan forges ahead with developing its meetings industry, transforming risk into opportunity.

*Words Lane Nieset*





In 2019, Taiwan held 291 international meetings and conventions, and while this number dipped to 103 in 2020, it was quickly back on the rise in 2021 with 175 events. The pandemic helped to increase the country's awareness of (and expertise in) risk management and pandemic prevention protocols. Thanks to these measures and established guidelines, when the virus had a resurgence earlier this year, it was quickly contained. Planners and participants are now also embracing the guidelines to help make events as safe as possible.

In addition to its own revival as a top meeting destination in Asia, Taiwan is looking to help boost the region as a whole. Taiwan recently joined the Asia Convention Alliance, which counts convention bureaus in Malaysia, Thailand and Seoul as members, and aims to promote and drive business events to Asia.

#### NEW & IMPROVED

In the wake of the pandemic, Taiwan is showcasing the resilience of its MICE ecosystem and spotlighting the latest developments through **MEET TAIWAN's** "Re-Fresh Taiwan" campaign. With four guiding principles—Revive, Reassure, Recover and Reunite—Re-Fresh is highlighting how conventions are slowly resuming, tourist attractions are being redesigned and re-planned, and border control is pending relaxation.

In terms of safety and sustainability, Taiwan has proven epidemic prevention measures in place, as well as incorporated the use of green building materials and green energy systems in convention and exhibition buildings. A great example is the **International Convention Center Tainan (ICC Tainan)**, which opened in Tainan in April next to the city's high-speed rail station and just a 15-minute drive from the Tainan international airport. As part of Taiwan's future-proofing plan, the venue is an EEWB-certified development, which is Taiwan's leading approval system for green buildings. With more than 10,600 sqm of exhibition space, the venue offers 10 conference rooms; the largest capable of accommodating groups of up to 1,000.

#### DIGITAL EFFECT

Taiwan is also showing its strength in terms of hybrid and digital events, especially with online conferences becoming more frequent. The digital infrastructure throughout Taiwan's major cities has grown to include 5G technology and a digital broadcast facility (iStudio) at the Taipei International Convention Center. Both halls of Nangang Exhibition Center and Kaohsiung Exhibition Center also feature high-speed Wi-Fi that enables planners to incorporate virtual reality, augmented reality, and image mapping. In addition, smart technology and big data analysis at MICE activities allow for more efficient events and improved business opportunities.

Although the pandemic has upset the global MICE industry, many important international conferences were still able to be held in Taiwan during the last two years. In November 2020, the **59<sup>th</sup> International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)** Congress took place at the **Kaohsiung Exhibition Center**. Real-time content was streamed to online attendees and eight regional hubs, where nearly 1,500 attendees met in smaller groups. This was a way for an association—and destination—to re-imagine global events in a post-pandemic future. Incorporating a mix of live broadcasts and localized content, regional hubs offered virtual programmes and ICCA president James Rees delivered opening remarks via holographic projection.

Since 2021, a new event, called Taiwan Incentive Talk, has been showcasing the island from north to south with a special opportunity for buyers to hold one-to-one online business exchange sessions with MICE suppliers. The aim is to become a TED TALK of Taiwan's MICE industry. The first event of Taiwan Incentive Talk in 2022, called **Taiwan MICE Industry Online Seminar** was held in June. It drew nearly 100 attendees from Taiwan and Japan to the bilingual, invite-only showcase that included one-on-one sessions via an interactive virtual platform with a real-time online live broadcast (suppliers gathered in person at ICC Tainan).

One more Taiwan Incentive Talk has just been held in Singapore in August; another one will take place at **IT&CM Asia** in September in Bangkok.

Over the next few years, Taiwan has already secured a few big bids, including the **Asia-Pacific Microwave Conference (APMC)**, the largest event of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region, which will be held in 2023 in Hsinchu with an anticipated 500-600 attendees. The International Particle Accelerator Conference (IPAC) is scheduled for 2025, which should attract around 1,200 attendees.

As this boost in development and proactive planning shows, Taiwan is well on its way to welcoming events post-pandemic and is geared up to help lead the industry-wide revival both in Asia and abroad.

**More information:**  
[www.meettaiwan.com](http://www.meettaiwan.com)

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# Nature, People & Innovation in Perfect Alignment

Beautiful landscapes, friendly people, progressive ideas, and innovative solutions: in short, Wellington, New Zealand's vibrant capital. With emphasis on climate action, natural habitat restoration, research, education and innovation, Wellington is the political and geographical heart of New Zealand where decision-makers gather to create positive change.

*Words Vicky Koffa*

Wellington is known for being compact, but with big ambition. With most of the country's central government agencies and many industry associations located there, it offers easy access to intersectoral collaborations. Described as a sophisticated city hub of industry and culture, Wellington has a strong presence in creative technologies, scientific research, and public and professional services.

Adopting an advanced view of the value of business meetings, the city strategically uses its key sectors to attract the right association conferences. Hosting international conferences supports New Zealand to achieve the ambitious agenda related to research, science, environment and innovation, all sectors which thrive within Wellington.

## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW SOLUTIONS

Innovation is at the forefront of New Zealand's master plan to deliver a productive, sustainable, and inclusive future, as per the 'NZ Research, Science and Innovation Strategy' established in 2019. Its mission is to address issues like the transition to a zero-carbon economy by 2050, growing, preserving, and protecting the environment.



creating fulfilling and high-value jobs, and increasing wellbeing for its people.

With financial support from the government, Callaghan Innovation (New Zealand's innovation agency) accelerates the commercialization of R&D - that is, the transfer of knowledge and intellectual property created in a lab into innovative products and services. *"More than 200 of New Zealand's leading scientists and engineers empower innovators by offering R&D funding, delivering innovation training and upskilling, and providing access to deep tech expertise. As a government agency, one of our core focus areas is enabling the private sector to lead in environmental and sustainable innovation. Their success is our success,"* says Stefan Korn, CEO of Callaghan Innovation.

Zincovery, a business on a mission to create the world's first waste-free galvanising industry; Envico Technologies (creators of seed pod technology that can drop up to 5000 native tree seeds by drone); and a partnership with New Zealand's urban development authority Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities, aiming to transform the construction sector through innovation, are all bright examples of the agency's initiatives for a more sustainable living.



JOHNNY HENDRIKUS

## KNOWLEDGE IS FUNDAMENTAL

As the capital and a hub for innovation, Wellington has attracted many educational facilities, spread out across the city. With a number of faculties in various sectors, Victoria University of Wellington is one of New Zealand's oldest universities and it ranks in the top 2% of 18,000 universities internationally (it has the maximum five stars plus in eight categories, including research). Wellington is also home to Massey University's School of Design (renowned for unique practical qualifications, ground-breaking research, and online courses) as well as Otago University's Wellington medical school campus.

Research goes hand-in-hand with education and is another key vertical for Wellington. There are seven government-funded Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) in New Zealand, all of which are either based in Wellington or have a facility there. They carry scientific research in areas like agriculture, environment, geoscience, food and land care, striving to improve sectors' productivity and the sustainable use of natural resources.

## MORE THAN JUST ENVIRONMENT

With a green focus from every angle, it is no surprise that Wellington has long been a leader in climate change and is already the lowest carbon city per person in Australasia. In 2019 Wellington City Council adopted Te Atakura-First to Zero, a blueprint to make Wellington City a zero-carbon capital by 2050. And it seems to be working: Wellington was named most livable city for two years in a row and is ranked first globally for environmental security. What's more, as a compact city it has high use of public transport, and relatively low car ownership.

Wellington is also one of the very few cities in the world that is experiencing an increase in biodiversity, credited to the creation of urban sanctuary Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne. As the world's first fully-fenced urban ecosanctuary, Zealandia is pursuing a 500-year vision

to regenerate the 225-ha valley that the fence protects. Dr Danielle Shanahan, Chief Executive of Zealandia, says: *"Our biodiversity is vulnerable to predators, which is why we established safe havens for biodiversity on off-shore islands and fenced sanctuaries on the mainland like Zealandia. These places stopped many species from falling off the brink and have given us the opportunity to start rewilding our forests."*

The work by Zealandia has motivated local communities across the city to contribute from all sides - native vegetation restoration, owning and managing backyard traps, community advocacy, all activities coordinated by the Wellington City Council in its program 'Our Natural Capital'. *"The birds are thriving and are now taking up residence in people's back yards. As a result, Wellington is now one of the only cities in the world where bird biodiversity is increasing. A remarkable achievement not only improving the fate of our species but also reconnecting people with the nature that was lost from this landscape,"* continues Shanahan.

## CONFERENCES & FACILITIES

Consequently, associations looking to advance their sectors bring their conferences to Wellington. The 2022 Congress of the International Institute for Conservation, the 2022 International Conference on Precision Electromagnetic Measurements, and the 2026 International Sedimentological Congress (to name just a few) will all enjoy Wellington's progress in research and innovation.

Business events will also get to experience the new purpose-built conference and exhibition space opening in 2023. Situated in Wellington's cultural precinct, Takina has a capacity of 1,600 and is designed with an immersive delegate experience in mind.

More information

[www.WellingtonNZ.com/Meet](http://www.WellingtonNZ.com/Meet)





# Beyond Recovering: Creating A Better Meetings Industry

Seoul finds its business events sector thriving after the pandemic with recovery numbers rising constantly to meet pre-Covid success levels. International association conferences seem to be attracted to the city thanks to its well-planned recovery strategy, including advanced virtual offerings as well as knowledge and financial support to local and international event organizers.

*Words Vicky Koffa*

## VIRTUAL SEOUL 2.0

With the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, Seoul immediately struck back with the creation of Virtual Seoul, an online platform for efficient business events planning. The demand and success of the platform led to the upgraded and renewed Virtual Seoul 2.0. The tool offers e-conference broadcasting (with break-out rooms running simultaneously), and a virtual exhibition function which includes shopping, storing visitor's business cards, and showcasing products. One-to-one meetings and networking and an event branding function also contribute to the high efficiency of the platform.

Boardroom met with Jin Hyeok Park, Director of the Seoul Convention Bureau, during IMEX Frankfurt earlier this year. He said: *"Part of our short-term recovery strategy is Virtual Seoul 2.0. We tried to create a digital tool that offers high quality hybrid solutions to the international market which is now reopening with advanced technological demands. Our efforts focus on offering the best of both offline and online worlds."*

## SEOUL MICE ALLIANCE & PLUS SEOUL

In the same framework of evolution towards an improved meetings sector, Seoul Tourism Organization has put together the Seoul MICE Alliance (SMA). This initiative was aimed at promoting Seoul's meetings infrastructure and advantages to buyers around the world by providing educational and financial support to members of SMA to join international meetings and exhibitions of the industry.

*"10 categories - 327 member companies to be precise - have been identified as falling under the SMA's support scheme: convention centres, hotels, unique venues, service providers, exhibitions, PCO's, DMC's, shopping, transportation, and entertainment. Besides financial support to develop their business models in a more sustainable way,*

*they also receive education opportunities on how to follow the latest trends of the market,"* says Park.

The Alliance is Seoul's way of educating and improving the local market. As a matter of fact, the city's attention is on advancing national conferences first. The reasoning behind this is that, in order to be better in the international market, they first need to stabilize and excel locally.

Of course, comprehensive support goes also to international associations interested in bringing their conference to the city. The PLUS SEOUL program offers international organizations financial and consultative help throughout the entire cycle of a potential conference, from bidding to promotion and hosting.

## LONG TERM INDUSTRY PLANNING

*"Financial support to our local professionals is a plan to recover now and fast; our long-term strategy revolves mostly around sustainability and legacy. As of this year we have established a full set of programs dedicated to promoting these topics within the local market. Example of an incentive is found among SMA members: the more sustainably a member behaves, the more merits it gets from the support fund,"* continues Park.

In fact, the convention bureau has changed its policy and is now evaluating members of the SMA based 50% on their sustainability efforts and the rest on financial returns. The focus is on how incoming events can positively affect the local community, how many local companies participate in some way or another in the event, as well as no paper or plastic use policies and waste management. Thinking long term again, Seoul is trying to change the tourism industry's ecosystem using sustainability and legacy efforts to attract a higher quality type of tourist, such as a business visitor.





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### THE RESULTS ARE ALREADY PRESENT: ACOMS 2022 CASE STUDY

The largest Asian organization of oral and maxillofacial surgeons, the Asian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (Asian AOMS), has concluded its 15<sup>th</sup> international congress on May 28 with a big round of applause from the participants from Korea and abroad. It was a successful case of an international medical symposium held in a hybrid format centering around face-to-face meetings held at the Osstem Implant's (Gangseo-gu) headquarters and Courtyard by Marriott Seoul Botanic Park.

With this success, ACOMS 2022 may have paved the way for hosting the next congress. The organizer went beyond the conventional purpose-built meeting facilities at the conference center or hotel and utilized an affiliated company's infrastructure. Its proprietary high-quality real-time streaming service and Virtual Seoul 2.0, the MICE platform developed by the Seoul Tourism Organization, leveraged at a lower cost, contributed to the success.

About 1000 oral and maxillofacial surgery experts participated from 30 countries worldwide. Scholars visiting from Austria, Spain, and Japan, introduced the latest research trends and had active discussions in the following oral and maxillofacial areas: transplant for the implant, tissue regeneration, temporomandibular joint, complex implant cases, congenital deformity, and genetic analysis and customized treatment for oral cancer. During the three-day ACOMS 2022, a total of 116 guest speeches and symposiums, as well as 250 oral presentations and e-posters, were delivered.

Outside the seminar rooms, a medical equipment exhibition attracted the visitors. About 30 reputable oral and maxillofacial companies, including Dentium, DePuy Synthes, Jeil Medical, and the hosting Osstem Implant, participated in both the on-site and online exhibitions. The online exhibition was hosted on the Virtual Seoul 2.0 platform, where companies displayed and promoted their new equipment and latest technologies.

*"The COVID-19 pandemic forced ACOMS 2020 Singapore to be held a year later in an online format. Consequently, we had to consider whether to postpone ACOMS 2022 to the following year. We had to untangle a series of issues from venue selection, hybrid event technologies, to the way we run the symposium,"* reflected Hyung Jun Kim, Chief Director of KAOMS. The organizers mulled over how to incorporate the face-to-face meetings as much as possible while the online format was inevitable. A solution turned up unexpectedly: unusual venues for online and offline events. The idea was to host offline events at the Osstem Implant headquarter and online events on the Virtual Seoul 2.0 platform.

Chief Director Kim said: *"Virtual Seoul allowed not only the online participants but also those who were on-site to watch the live-streamed presentations via their smartphones or laptop computers. Particularly, foreign participants were astonished to find that there was only a couple of seconds delay between the actual presentation and online streaming."*

And he concluded: *"Asian and European participants were impressed by the Korean IT capabilities. They were amazed by the ability to see the event in real-time by logging into Virtual Seoul 2.0 via their mobile devices while attending a seminar at the venue. We displayed Virtual Seoul 2.0 on the main screen of the seminar rooms. Social programs enlightened them about the cultural diversity of Seoul and Korea. We heard that they hoped we would host symposiums again. Our association plans to actively leverage the hybrid format in training programs such as fellowship and short-term courses, conferences, and seminars."*

**Contact**

convention@sto.or.kr / www.miceseoul.com



# A Principality's Path Towards a Carbon-Neutral Future

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The extreme heatwaves of the summer of 2022 have convinced all but the most hardened sceptics of the reality of climate change. Associations planners are all too aware of these fraught circumstances and the impacts and footprints implied when seeking potential conference destinations – like the Principality of Monaco who has committed to being carbon-neutral by 2050 . It is now a responsibility, not only to the association and its members, but to all who inhabit our biosphere, to choose wisely and tread lightly.

*Words Marc de Faoite*



Long a favoured conference destination, Monaco has been at the forefront of supporting and promoting climate science for many years. And it walks the talk as well, taking concrete actions to reduce its environmental impact. Sustainable development is firmly at the heart of its policies and planning. Now Monaco is betting on its sustainable credentials to develop its conference sector in a responsible manner, supporting conferences by giving them the benefit of a low-impact infrastructure... and even a CSR positive impact.

## AT THE FOREFRONT

Keeping in tone with its inherent dynamism, Monaco was at the forefront of the early adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). Rather than simply letting the market lead, the princely Government has ensured that the necessary infrastructure has been put in place. It is now estimated that the majority of Monegasques live within 250 metres of a charging station. Not only that, the new 'MONACO ON' charging stations now offer faster charging speeds at zero cost to users. All these amenities make



Monaco an attractive prospect for conference goers who have already gone electric.

But it isn't necessary to come with your own EV. Public transport is witnessing a similar shift towards electrification. Since July 2022 an initiative between different stakeholders has seen 30 new fully-electric taxi cabs take to the streets and roads of the Principality, with 8,000 trips made during an initial trial period, making it possible for anyone attending events in Monaco to travel cleanly and efficiently.

Meanwhile the CAM (Compagnie des Autobus de Monaco) operates 45 buses, of which almost half are hybrid, leading to a reduction of 50% in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, eight of the buses are fully electric, having been added to the fleet in March 2022 and inaugurated by Prince Albert II. These electric buses allow conference attendees to explore the Principality without putting unnecessary CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. As older buses are retired, they will be progressively replaced with new electric buses, with the entire network set to be 100% electric by 2025.

Transport represents 30% of Monaco's total greenhouse gas emissions (GGE), so it makes sense to use newly available technologies, but important as the electrification of transport is in terms mitigating climate change Monaco also offers potential conference-goers an even more eco-friendly and traditional way of getting around - walking. Many of Monaco's top hotels including the Meridien, the Fairmont, or the Monte Carlo Bay Hotel just to name a few, are just a pleasant five-minute zero-carbon stroll along the scenic seafront from the Grimaldi Forum congress centre, the Principality's purpose-built conference venue.

#### **BROADER & DEEPER**

Monaco's commitments towards systemic climate action are much broader and deeper than transport and mobility. In 2015, the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) chose Monaco to hold



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its 41<sup>st</sup> session, during which the Prince Albert II Foundation and the government of Monaco supported an initiative that eventually led to the publication of the IPCC Special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. In 2019, the report, the fruit of an international collaboration of 100 authors from 36 countries, which was unveiled at Monaco's Oceanographic Museum, incidentally a favoured down-time destination for conference-goers to unwind.

The Grimaldi Forum Monaco conference centre is committed to environmental excellence, having successfully qualified for the ISO14001 label since 2008, which sets out a stringent framework of criteria for environmental management. In its application to the Grimaldi Forum, a particular focus has been placed on waste management and lighting. 86% of the building's 18,000 light bulbs have been replaced with LED lights, which has created a saving of energy consumption of 35%, amounting to several million kilowatts per hours. Meanwhile, thanks to revised policies, water used by visitors to the convention centre has been cut in half.

By choosing this venue, associations can reassure their environmentally-conscious delegates and lower the carbon budget of their conferences.

By using these facilities associations can reassure their environmentally-conscious delegates and lower the carbon budget of their conferences.

#### **OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM**

All work and no play makes for a dull conference. Networking and team-building often happen in informal settings. There is plenty of activities and a lot for conference attendees to discover in Monaco's coastal waters. Whether out on the waves, or below the surface, it is possible to explore by boat the rich sea-life diversity of Pelagos sanctuary - a designated protected area whose plankton-rich waters regularly receive summer visits from several species of whales, as well as being home all year round to at least three different types of dolphins.

Monaco Convention Bureau allows associations to make the most of their conference while minimising their carbon-budget. For a cleaner and greener convention this year and beyond, Monaco, as a destination that specializes in excellence, should definitely be on your list.

#### **Contact**

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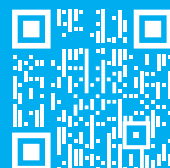
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# Feeding the World One Insect at a Time

In June, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of ‘Insect to Feed the World’ gathered academics and experts at the Québec City Convention Centre to discuss the latest advancements in the field of edible insects. Continuing its mission of facilitating the dialogue and the exchange of research on the use of insects in the context of food and feed security, toward building evidence-based legislation, advancing communal knowledge, and promoting innovation for the sector, it raised Québec’s profile as a leader in the fields of entotechnologies and food and nutrition.

*Words Remi Deve*

Together with Marie-Hélène Deschamps, another Québec champion, Grant Vandenberg, professor at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Université Laval and member of Québec City’s Ambassador’s Club, was instrumental in bringing the conference to Québec. He said: *“Hosting this meeting was important strategically to help promote this rapidly emerging sector and help put Québec on the map internationally - to promote academic networking for researchers and students and to consolidate activities related to industry development. We had over 30 industry kiosks set up during the meeting, and were able to demonstrate to governmental departments the great potential of this new industry.”*

The conference was a success on many fronts. Academics were allowed to present their latest work among multiple concurrent sessions over the course of four days. *“The industry showcase was a fantastic event to network with fellow industry colleagues, with academic research partners and students. Lunch based tech transfer sessions were extremely popular. Public showcase at the Grand Marché was instrumental in demonstrating insect consumption to the general public.”* said Vandenberg.

Indeed, besides the scientific content, the event also offered a culinary element, as the attendees got a chance to try new menus which combine local ingredients and specially chosen insects, created by Chef Joseph Yoon (culinary director of the event) and Chef Simon Renaud (the Convention Centre’s chef).

The two chefs even gave workshops and made culinary demonstrations to the public. With the goal to promote entomophagy and entotechnologies with the citizens of Québec City, activities were organized at the “Marché des insectes comestibles”

(market for edible insects) from June 16 to 18, 2022, at the Grand Marché de Québec and proved to be well attended.

All this would not have been possible without the support and commitment of the Québec City Convention Centre. *“They not only assisted us in submitting a full bid for the conference, but they were also particularly flexible when we had to move the event from 2020 to 2022,”* said Vandenberg. *“In addition to being very open to work with chefs to include insects in all food options, they showed excellence in logistic management: they simply made our life very easy!”*



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**More information**

[meetings.quebec-cite.com](http://meetings.quebec-cite.com) / [www.convention.qc.ca](http://www.convention.qc.ca)

# Zurich, A Future-Proof Sustainability Plan

Capitalizing on its expertise as a banking city, as well as its central location and easy accessibility, Zurich is emerging as one of the most sustainable convention destinations on the globe.

*Words Lane Nieset*

Zurich is considered the gateway to the Alps—in less than three hours, you can be skiing or exploring picturesque Swiss mountain scenery in towns like St. Moritz or Lucerne. Nature is certainly one draw to the compact metropolis, but so are its significant sectors like finance. Home to 500 financial institutions that are top-ranking in the banking world (including UBS, Credit Suisse, and Swiss Re), Zurich ranks most important financial centre in Europe after London.

Zurich may lead the list on the “Global Financial Centres Index” for mainland Europe, but it’s also developing into a European hub for life sciences, cleantech and ICT, drawing everyone from Google to Microsoft, IBM, and Disney Research Lab to set up headquarters in the city and pull talent from renowned institutions like the University of Zurich and ETH. Patrick Warnking, Country Director Google Switzerland, even said: *“We intend to expand further in Zurich.”*

In addition, the Greater Zurich Area and “Crypto Valley” (Blockchain, Bitcoin, and Initial Coin Offering are hot topics at the moment) are transforming the city into a serious FinTech hub. Prof. Dr Stefan Launer, Senior VP Science and

Technology, Sonova Group, provides further proof of the city’s growing sectors and knowledge capital, saying: *“Zurich is our strongest innovation centre by far.”*

## Zurich Fast Facts

- Zurich Airport was ranked No. 1 in Europe (2019)
- Direct flights to more than 60 countries and 170 destinations
- 15 minutes from Zurich Airport’s baggage claim to the city centre by train
- Unique venues accommodating 10 to more than 1,500 delegates
- 592 start-ups in 2018 and 133 new patents per year
- 32 Nobel Prize winners

### 360-DEGREE SUSTAINABILITY

Experience sustainability. This is the motto Zurich both champions and actively encourages. As one of the most sustainable convention destinations in the world, ranking eighth in the Global Destination

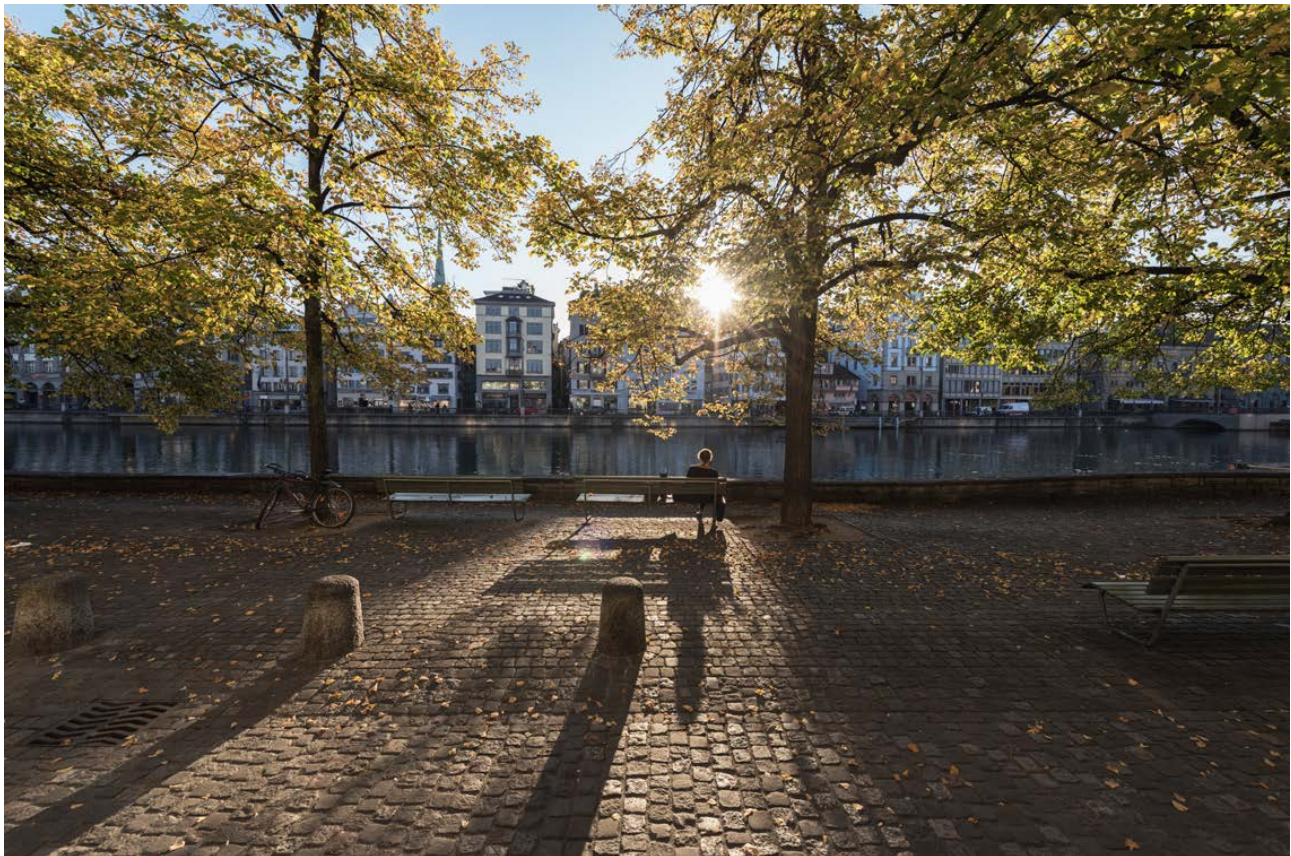
Sustainability Index (GDS) in 2021 and second in the Smart City Ranking 2021, Zurich is proving its expertise in the realm of sustainability, particularly in the meetings sector. The city is laying the framework for sustainable events through climate-neutral activities, sustainability-certified hotels, and a streamlined and effective transportation network.

During the recent The Green Mile event, 40 planners from Germany, Austria and Switzerland experienced the city’s sustainability practices first-hand, starting with the train ride to Zurich (an option half of the attendees took), which saved 32% in carbon emissions. One of the challenges was encouraging train travel from Germany and Austria, but Ricarda Jacomet, event organizer and project manager at Zürich Tourism, Convention Bureau, says the cost and amount of planning time paid off in the end.

### GOING THE GREEN MILE

Even for those who flew to the event, they still saw sustainable measures in place at Zurich Airport, one of the greenest in the world, with a sustainability commitment that includes flushing toilets with rainwater, solar cells, geothermal energy for heating





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and cooling, and R&D for noise- and air-cleansing activities—all part of the plan to reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050.

During one of the keynote speeches, the speaker even highlighted how you can be sustainable by flying: for example, by taking direct flights instead of stopovers (most fuel is consumed during take-off and landing) or by booking a flight on a newer plane that produces less carbon emissions.

The event took place at the opened congress centre Kongresshaus Zürich, on the lake, which is in the centre of the city, making it easy to walk to the venue. The congress centre also focuses on vegetarian and vegan menus, and has enacted green measures like cooling and heating regulated by lake water and

compensation of unavoidable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. By something as simple as serving a vegetarian dish twice during the stay, costs were reduced by 33% and carbon emissions by 12%.

At the Umwelt Arena, the world's first plus-energy (or zero-energy) house, keynote speakers like Sarah Sommerauer (2bdifferent) and Florian Haselmayer (AMEX Meetings & Events) shared tips for sustainable event planning, and activities focused on local attractions, like urban swimming on the river Limmat. *"The participants of such events don't just want to be fed information – they would like to contribute something themselves to make the event more sustainable, or even to leave a positive legacy for the host destination,"* Jacomet explains. *"Examples could be collecting garbage, rebuilding something or making it new and attractive, baking*

*bread for the homeless and distributing it, or promoting biodiversity by building a gypsum drywall somewhere."*

As the meetings infrastructure intertwines with the fabric of the city and its overall goal to reach smart status, events like The Green Mile show how important a role associations and attendees have in impacting Zurich's sustainably-focused future—starting with the present.

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**More info on Switzerland as a convention destination:**

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[www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings](http://www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings)





# The Swiss Capital of Sustainability?

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Switzerland's capital is the seat of its government, and while Bern is the second-strongest economic area in Switzerland, the sector where the city really shines is sustainability. Since 2017, Bern has been a **Fair Trade Town**—which showcases its commitment for responsible consumption in the community—as well as an Energy City Master and recipient of the **European Energy Award Gold**. Boasting modern forms of energy production and climate-friendly convention infrastructure, Bern is proving to be a stand-out choice for sustainability-forward meetings in Switzerland.

*Words Lane Nieset*



A GREEN CITY WITH A VIEW TO THE ALPS. BERN IS SWITZERLAND'S CAPITAL

In Bern, there are more than 400 companies with a combined 6,000 employees that are experts in the fields of energy and the environment, including the [Swiss Federal Office of Energy](#) and the [Federal Office for the Environment \(FOEN\)](#), both of whom have their headquarters here.

### CENTRE OF CLIMATE RESEARCH

It's also emerging as the centre of European climate research. Bern is home to institutions like the [Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research \(OCCR\)](#) at the University of Bern, which focuses on research revolving around the climate system and its interaction with society and the economy, and the university-founded "Wyss Academy for Nature," which is a globally-leading research and implementation centre in the field of humans and nature. "Sustainability is, on all levels, a trademark of the University of Bern. With its cutting-edge international research, the University of Bern wants to make a concrete contribution to the sustainable development of society," said principal Christian Leumann in an [interview with Unipress](#).

International energy and infrastructure company [BKW](#), which has been working on the first decommissioning of a Swiss nuclear power plant, has its headquarters in Bern. Visiting associations can tap into this knowledge bank through technical visits to the company's hydroelectric, wind and solar power plants. The energy and environmental sectors even intersect the city's strong economic infrastructure through initiatives like the [Mobiliar Lab for Natural Risks](#), a research project between insurance company Swiss Mobiliar and the Oeschger Centre that analyses climate risks and their effects. Institutions and initiatives like these are what have attracted events like the 700-person Open Science Meeting in 2019 and the 450-delegate Swiss Electricity Congress 2020.

### SWISSTAINABLE LIVING

Switzerland is in the Top 10 on the International Environmental Performance Index (EPI), which compares the environmental performance of countries and companies, but in Bern in particular, energy efficiency is an element built into the city's design. Thanks to its focus on regional resources and low waste—plus a sustainable, future-forward energy policy—Bern scored the highest-ever rating for an Energy City in the country in 2019, earning 87.2 out of 100 points.

This was a long time in the making, and the proof is in the numbers: The city has lowered emissions by one tonne of CO<sup>2</sup> to five per capita over the past eight years, and reduced heat emissions by 28% since 2008.

Convention centres are also helping drive forward progress in the overall effort toward sustainability. At [Kursaal Bern](#), the largest convention centre in the Espace Mittelland Region, attendees can find features like a KITRO scale (which increases kitchen efficiency by identifying and weighing food thrown into the bin), homemade honey from the venue's bees, waste heat recovery, and parking



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spaces with charging stations. The venue is so committed to helping reduce carbon emissions, it's even one of the founding members of the city's "Climate Platform."

Other venues across Bern are moving toward greener solutions as well. Take [Stadion Wankdorf](#), for example, which has placed solar panels on its roof and can produce enough energy per year to supply 200 households. To heat the field, the stadium has turned to a neighbouring biopharmaceuticals company's waste heat, and for food, the emphasis is on local, seasonal, and labels like Fairtrade. There are also hotels like [Sorell](#), which is ISO 14001-certified and part of [Swisstainable](#), a sustainability programme launched by Switzerland Tourism. In that regard, it closely cooperates with [myclimate](#), a nonprofit climate protection organization, and is also involved in the 'Cause We Care' climate protection initiative.

But the city is modernizing in more than just the greenification of its current infrastructure. On the horizon for 2025 is the [Neue Festhalle](#), which is considered a generation project for Bern. The multifunctional event hall will sit on the current BERNEXPO site, and replace the 67-year-old structure that was originally intended to be a temporary solution.

With a capacity of 8,500 spread across spaces like eight meeting rooms, a foyer, and two halls, this contemporary new addition to the city's landscape will allow the capital to host a wider range of events. It will also provide planners a full package for meetings, ensuring everything from accommodations to event space is forward-thinking and sustainably-driven to align with associations' commitment toward social responsibility and climate-friendly traveling.

#### Contact

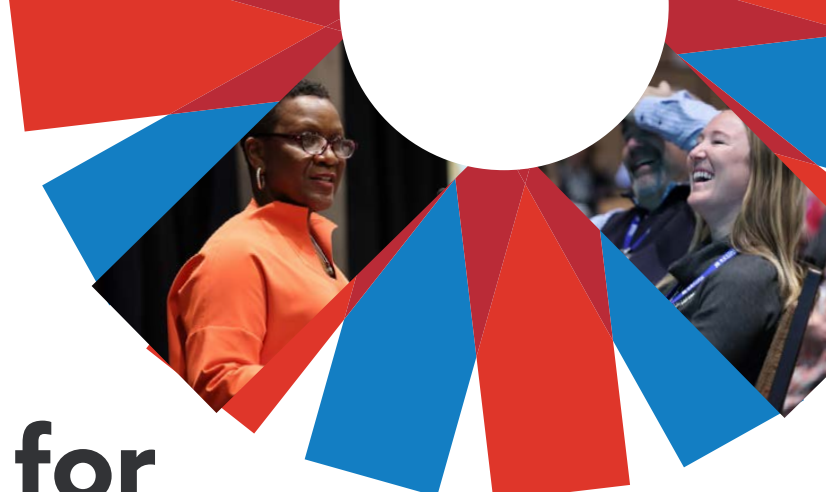
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