

SEPTEMBER 2019

# TTGmice

Asia-Pacific's intelligent business events resource

New play  
on heritage  
Ayutthaya

Are business  
trips still  
relevant?

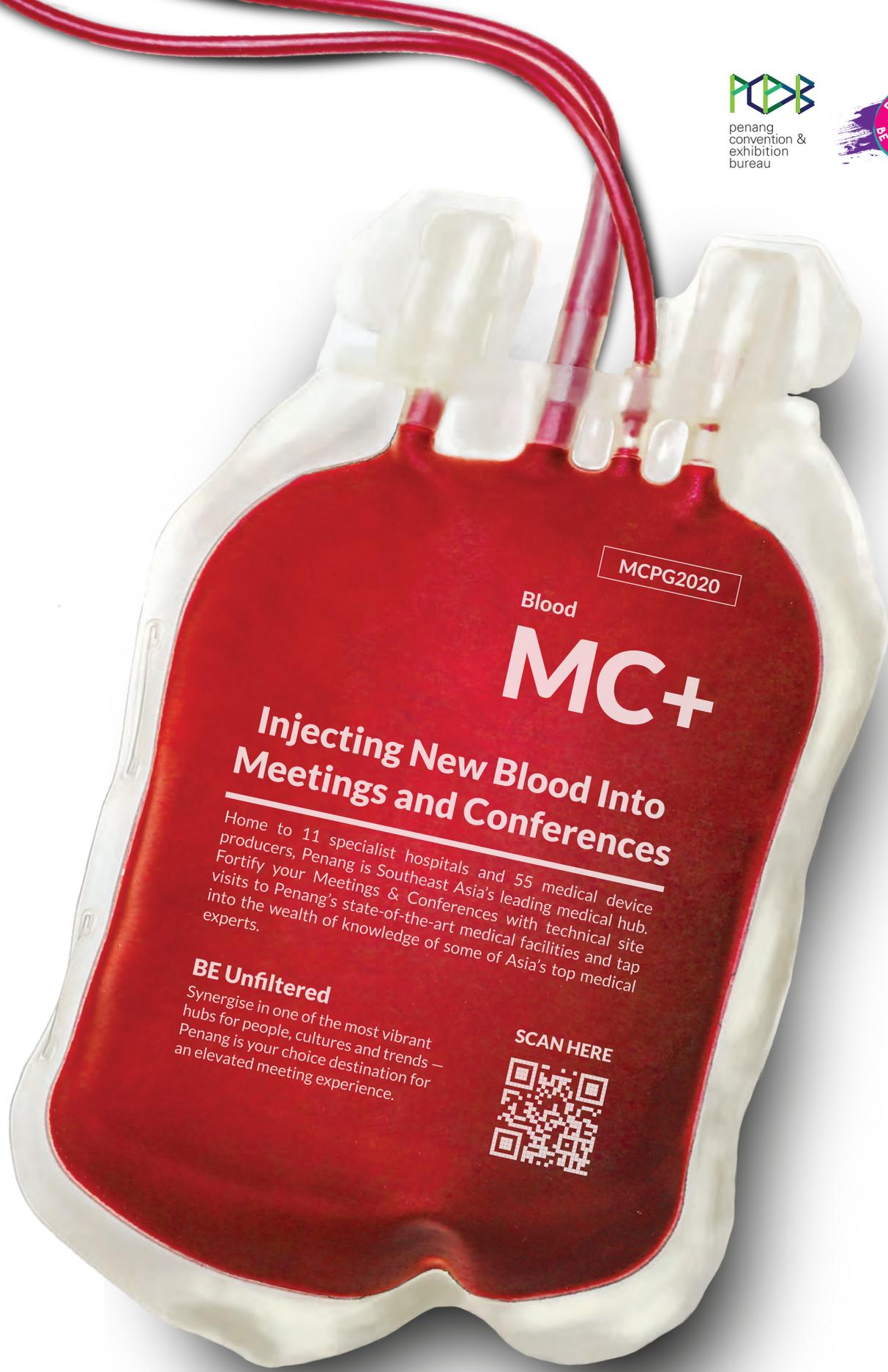
No stress in  
booking your  
headline act

## Event future now

Personalised apps, auto-refresh barcodes and mixed reality are buzzwords for events today. Find out what the other top event tech trends are and meet homegrown innovators in this space

TTGmice  
**TRAVEL JOURNALISM**  
BUSINESS ARTICLE  
2018, 2014, 2013, 2011 & 2009  
PATA Gold Awards

**TTG**  
**45G**  
TTG ASIA MEDIA  
Celebrating 45 Years



MCPG2020

Blood

# MC+

## Injecting New Blood Into Meetings and Conferences

Home to 11 specialist hospitals and 55 medical device producers, Penang is Southeast Asia's leading medical hub. Fortify your Meetings & Conferences with technical site visits to Penang's state-of-the-art medical facilities and tap into the wealth of knowledge of some of Asia's top medical experts.

### BE Unfiltered

Synergise in one of the most vibrant hubs for people, cultures and trends — Penang is your choice destination for an elevated meeting experience.

SCAN HERE



# Are we there yet (in tech usage)?

Once upon a time, I lamented that while there was a trove of fascinating technology available to enhance the event attendee experience, not all organisers were willing to try – especially not organisers of most tradeshows aimed at business events specialists, the very people who play an influential role in how event tech can be

used and should therefore have been natural event tech trend leaders.

Attendee registration is usually manpower-heavy, while destinations and activity providers at business event tradeshows are mostly relying on printed brochures and videos on tablets to educate potential buyers. Why not facial recognition to speed attendees through? Why not virtual reality (VR) for marketing, which would have told the story far better? Why not distribute information and share presentation slides almost instantly through NFC or VIRT (Video and Image Recognition Technology, a patented technology belonging to Singapore-based AIQ)?

While our industry isn't yet trend leaders in the event tech space, things are changing in a good way.

Singapore MICE Forum 2019, held recently in July, tested the silent conference concept. It ran three conference tracks simultaneously in the same room, with presenters speaking into microphones that directed their voices into headphones strapped to attendees' head. The audience got to choose which track they wished to listen to, and could switch around freely.

It is a smart, cost-efficient solution for organisers with multiple, interesting tracks to run in a venue with limited break-out rooms.

It is wonderful too for attendees who are torn between two or more concurrent sessions. Surely, you know that feeling! However, I cannot help but wonder how will our short attention span today cope with the lure of so many channels available to surf? Wouldn't you itch to switch over to that session that has just tickled its audience into boisterous laughter?

You can read more about how else Singapore MICE Forum 2019 used technology to deliver its content in our cover feature, *Event future now* (pages 12-16).

Silent conference is but just one event tech at organisers' disposal today. Event tech big boys – Cvent, Eventbrite and Jack Morton Worldwide – worked with us on the cover feature to identify even more top trends in the events space.

While there are always tech big boys to rely on, don't forget that homegrown talents – and this region has many – may just surprise you with what they can do for your events.



**Karen Yue**  
Group Editor



TTG Travel Trade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media

**EDITORIAL**

- Karen Yue**  
Group Editor  
(karen.yue@ttgasia.com)
- S Puvanewary**  
Editor, Malaysia/Brunei  
(puvanew@ttgasia.com)
- Mimi Hudoyo**  
Editor, Indonesia (idmfasia@cbn.net.id)
- Pamela Chow**  
Reporter (pamela.chow@ttgasia.com)
- Rachel AJ Lee** Sub Editor  
(rachel.lee@ttgasia.com)
- Cheryl Ong** Sub Editor  
(cheryl.ong@ttgasia.com)
- Adelaine Ng** Australia  
(adelaineng.abc@gmail.com)
- Marissa Carruthers** Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam (maris.carruthers@gmail.com)

- Caroline Boey** China & Special Projects  
(caroline.boey@ttgasia.com)
- Prudence Lui** Hong Kong/Greater China  
(prului@yahoo.com)
- Rohit Kaul** India  
(rohitkaul23@gmail.com)
- Tiara Maharani** Indonesia  
(tiaraul13@gmail.com)
- Julian Ryall** Japan  
(jryall2@hotmail.com)
- Rosa Ocampo** The Philippines  
(rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)
- Feizal Samath** Sri Lanka/Maldives  
(feizalsam@gmail.com)
- Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong**  
Creative Designers
- Lina Tan** Editorial Assistant

**SALES & MARKETING**

- Pierre Quek**  
Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions  
(pierre.quek@ttgasia.com)
- Ar-lene Lee** Senior Business Manager  
(arlene.lee@ttgasia.com)
- Jonathan Yap** Senior Business Manager  
(jonathan.yap@ttgasia.com)

- Shirley Tan** Senior Business Manager  
(shirley.tan@ttgasia.com)
- Chelsea Huang** Marketing Executive  
(chelsea.huang@ttgasia.com)
- Delia Ng** Digital Marketing Strategist  
(delia.ng@ttgasia.com)
- Cheryl Lim** Advertisement Administration Manager  
(cheryl.lim@ttgasia.com)
- Carol Cheng**  
Asst Manager Administration & Marketing  
(Hong Kong, carol.cheng@ttgasia.com)

**PUBLISHING SERVICES**

- Jonathan Wan**  
Head, Operational Support Services
- Kun Swee Qi** Publishing Services Executive
- Nur Hazirah** Web Executive
- Katherine Leong** Circulation Executive

**OFFICES**

- Singapore**  
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd,  
1 Science Park Road, #04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science Park II,  
Singapore 117528  
Tel: +65 6395 7575, fax: +65 6536 0896,  
email: traveltradesales@ttgasia.com

**Hong Kong**

- TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 8/F, E168,  
166-168 Des Voeux Road Central,  
Sheung Wan, Hong Kong  
Tel: +852 2237 7288,  
fax: +852 2237 7227

**TTG ASIA MEDIA PTE LTD**

**Darren Ng** Managing Director

**BPA** TTGmice, endorsed by the Asian Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, is published by TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, and is mailed free-of-charge on written request to readers Asia-wide who meet a set of predetermined terms and conditions. Annual airmail subscription charges are US\$70 (Asia) and US\$90 (elsewhere). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher.

MCI (P) 057/08/2019  
KDN PPS1888/02/2017(025626),  
ISSN 0218-849X  
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd  
16 Tuas Avenue 5, Singapore 639340



- 1
- 4
- 6
- 8
- 10
- 12
- 18
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 26
- 27
- 28

**To our readers**

**Connect**

**Marketplace**

**Tipsheet**

**Focus**

**Event future now:** Personalised apps, auto-refresh barcodes and mixed reality are buzzwords for events today. Find out what the other top event tech trends are and meet homegrown innovators in this space

**Thailand // New play on a heritage city**

Historical Ayutthaya, an hour north of Bangkok, is beckoning event planners with a new convention hall and ease of access from Thailand's main gateways, writes Suchat Sritama

**Philippines // Cebu shines through**

Events and tourism infrastructure developments in Cebu are boosting the destination's appeal in the eyes of international event planners, discovers Rosa Ocampo

**India // The place to meet**

Corporate meetings demand for the financial capital holds strong, but Mumbai needs to catch up on the conventions front. By Rohit Kaul

**Spotlight**

Nichapa Yoswee: The senior vice president, business of the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau, is leading a team armed with greater autonomy to realise Thailand's economic dreams. By Karen Yue

**Community**

**Cases**

**People**

# TOKYO

Exceptional Quality.  
Expanding Possibilities.



## SPECIAL OFFERS

### SITE VISIT SUPPORT

Decision-makers for event destination for groups of **1000** or more visitor nights\*

Round trip airfare to Tokyo, accommodation fee and ground transportation within Tokyo

### SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Corporate events of **200** or more visitor nights\*

Giveaway item, VIP souvenir, party entertainment and more

Corporate events of **100** or more visitor nights\*

Giveaway item for each participant

\*A visitor night is defined as one person staying for one night in Tokyo. (e.g. 500 attendees x 2 nights = 1000 visitor nights)  
\*All offers and criteria are subject to change. \*Other restrictions may apply.

## TOP 5 HEADLINES THIS MONTH



ITB Berlin event held by Malaysia

### Malaysia hands out new RM5m tourism matching fund to private sector

A new RM5 million (US\$1.2 million) tourism fund announced by the Malaysian government is set to provide a much-needed boost for private-sector players in their destination promotion efforts, as the country works towards 30 million tourist arrivals for Visit Malaysia Year 2020.

### Public, private agencies in Indonesia take firm steps to develop MICE

Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency will, for the first time, play an active role in developing the country's business events sector into one of the key economic contributors in the next five years.

### Thailand lays foundation for Asian edition of Farnborough airshow

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's commission of a feasibility study on an Asian spinoff of the popular Farnborough International Airshow is now complete, placing Thailand closer to her goal of launching her own international airshow to emphasise the country's aviation hub potential.

### Macau rolls out official MICE branding

For the first time in its history, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) has unveiled an official MICE brand entitled MEET@Macao.

### SACEOS inks two technology partnerships, with another on the way

The Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers is walking the technology talk with their latest slate of partnerships that aim to raise the digital quotient of the MICE trade.



Farnborough International Airshow is preparing for an Asian landing in Thailand

## INTELLIGENCE

According to the sixth annual Global Travel Forecast by CWT and GBTA, prices in the global travel industry are likely to slow in 2020 – with flights rising a modest 1.2 per cent, hotels rising only 1.3 per cent, and rental car rates up one per cent (in US\$ terms), despite posting sharp rises this year.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING



**October 11-13**  
Cambodia Travel Mart  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia



**October 16-18**  
MICE Show Asia  
Singapore

## SNAPSHOTS



**July 16**

A new mobile app, support programme for events, a CSR initiative and an extended airline partnership are all part of a new campaign launched on Saturday by the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) to enhance the destination's appeal for business events.



**Aug 19**

The Darwin Convention Centre has developed Seven Season, a new menu inspired by the Gulumoerrgin (Larrakia) Seasons, where the Larrakia people are the traditional owners of the Darwin region. The seven-course degustation and three-course banquet menu combines local fresh produce and traditional indigenous food.



**July 25**

From an edible garden to silent conferences, connections are being made in unexpected ways at the Singapore MICE Forum 2019.

**August 14**

Andy Watson grants his first interview in his new position as senior VP and GM for SAP Concur, APJ and Greater China. He says travel management solutions today must serve both the CFO and traveller, and need automation to make processes more enjoyable.



**October 24-26**

Visit Japan Travel & MICE Mart 2018  
Osaka, Japan

## Q&A

As BESydney turns a grand 50 years of age, the organisation's bidding general manager, Kristian Nicholls, reminisces past achievements and industry changes, and cast his eyes on the future.



[Facebook.com/TTGmice](https://www.facebook.com/TTGmice)

[Twitter.com/TTGmice](https://twitter.com/TTGmice)

[Instagram.com/ttg\\_mice](https://www.instagram.com/ttg_mice)

Visit [TTGmice.com](http://TTGmice.com) for more exciting reads

## WE LOVE



### The grand dame of Singapore reopens

After 2.5 years of restoration work, the iconic property has reopened completely, now offering an all-suite concept.

There are 115 keys across nine suite categories, from the lead-in State Room Suites to the Presidential Suites. Recreational facilities on-site include the Raffles Spa, 24-hour gym and a rooftop swimming pool. There are 10 F&B concepts, ranging from the Long Bar and its most famous cocktail, the Singapore Sling; to French restaurant La Dame de Pic by Anne-Sophie Pic of three-Michelin-star Maison Pic in Valence.

The Raffles Arcade has also been newly outfitted with a Raffles Boutique and various retail brands. Event planners may avail any of the seven indoor and outdoor function spaces, where the largest is the Jubilee Ballroom which can hold up to 500 guests cocktail-style.

### Hiroshima takes events to the next level with new observatory

One of the newest – and most innovative – additions to Hiroshima’s skyline is the Orizuru Tower, which takes up a prime corner overlooking the Peace Memorial Park and The Atomic Bomb Dome.

Its Hiroshima Hills observatory is an ideal venue for corporate venues is also stylishly designed in wood, with pillars reminiscent of a traditional temple and perched 13 floors above the city.

The Orizuru Tower has a cafe, souvenir shop and information counter on the ground floor, with a spiral slope to the rear of the building that leads all the way to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. For anyone not up to the stroll, elevators will whisk you there far faster.

The 12<sup>th</sup> floor is given over to Ori-zuru Square, a cleverly designed open space that can be customised to a user’s needs and has interactive screens, seating areas, tables and spectacular views on three sides, including over the city’s most famous sights.

But it is the 13<sup>th</sup> floor that is the crowning glory of this venue. With a cafe and space to prepare a buffet line at the rear, the area has been cleverly designed to be flexible to a user’s needs yet remain impressive to the eye. The wooden floor slopes away to the outer edges, which are open apart from netting, allowing the wind to blow through the space; perfect on a hot summer’s evening.



## Next Story Group expands into Vietnam



Hospitality company, Next Story Group, has opened its fifth Kafnu-branded property in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City.

Members enjoy round the clock access to a range of work spaces including hot desks and private offices, high-speed Internet, a soundproof phone booth, and five meeting rooms with video conferencing capabilities.

Spanning 2,440m<sup>2</sup>, Kafnu Ho Chi Minh City also has a 180m<sup>2</sup> event space with multi screens, where members can host product launches, workshops, and other events for up to 150 guests. There are also eight ensuite hotel rooms that ensure members from out of town can rest in.

Members can also keep fit at the Virtual Fitness Studio, socialise at Habitat Cocktail Bar, and nosh on Asian cuisine at Soy Restaurant.

## New function space in the Gold Coast

The Island Gold Coast boutique hotel in Surfers Paradise, Australia, has a new event space.

Scheduled for launch in November, with bookings open now, the ground-floor Glasshouse will span over 600m<sup>2</sup>, allowing it to cater to 700 guests cocktail-style or 350 guests banquet-style.

Boasting glass-panel walls and extra-high ceilings, the marquee-style function space also

attempts to connect guests with the outdoors as it overlooks Bruce Bishop Park.

Besides boasting a state-of-the-art banquetting kitchen, the Glasshouse will also be decked out in advanced audio and visual capabilities and fitted out with a deck and a 12m-long alfresco bar.

With the Glasshouse, The Island Gold Coast now has a total of five event spaces.



## FCC Mansion now a part of Avani

An extensive renovation of one of Siem Reap's most iconic colonial sites has transformed the FCC Mansion into FCC Angkor, managed by Avani Hotels & Resorts.

Located across the Royal Independence Gardens and Royal Residence, FCC Angkor was once the residence of the French colonial governor as well as the Foreign Correspondent's Club – a favourite haunt among journalists during the war years which later became a popular meeting place for travellers from around the world.

The rebranded FCC Angkor now boasts the

restored Mansion restaurant, the Scribe bar, Visaya Spa, two outdoor saltwater pools as well as 80 revamped rooms and suites that feature vintage and local furnishings.



- Advertorial -

ONE MINUTE with IT&CM Events



## IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific 2019 Event Updates

### Daily In-Booth Activities

#### Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau

- Paint and personalise your business card holder with your name in Thai
- Enjoy Thai performances and receive a traditional Thai accessory
- Experience Thai Boxing and receive a traditional Muay Thai pants



#### Philippine Tourism Promotions Board

Complimentary sustainable Philippine Coffee sourced from suppliers practising Fair Trade

#### Sarawak Convention Centre

Stand a chance to win prizes by engaging in quizzes and lucky draws at Sarawak Convention Centre booth.

And more...

### Engagement Events

#### Brand Showcase Presentations <sup>NEW</sup>

Dubai Business Events • Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau • Royal Orchid Holidays • Japan by JTB • Taiwan • India Tourism • Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute • Chiang Mai • Phuket • Japan National Tourism Organisation

#### Exhibition Walk-About <sup>NEW</sup>

India Tourism • Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau • Japan National Tourism Organisation • Taiwan • Macao • Jeju



#### Meet-The-Corporates <sup>NEW</sup>

Dubai • India • Jeju • Macao • Taiwan • and more...

#### Luncheons, Dinners & Cocktails

Networking Lunch: Europe Cruise Preview Hosted By OMT Group • Networking Hosted Luncheon by AP MICE Solutions by JTB • Networking Hosted Luncheon by Marina Bay Sands • Networking Cocktail by Accor Bangkok & Hua Hin Hotels • Networking Cocktail by Conrad Bangkok • Networking Chao Phraya River Cruise Dinner Hosted By OMT Group

And more...

### Lucky Draw Prizes For Buyers

Win Flight Tickets, Hotel Stays, Attraction Passes, Dining Vouchers, and Travel Accessories.

Prizes presented by:



### Knowledge Sessions

Apart from the **Keynote Lecture** on Sustainability - Future Proofing Your Business, gain valuable perspectives from the best expert-led and peer-sharing platforms through **Association Days Forum, Asian MICE Cruise Conference, ASEAN MICE Forum, CTW Asia-Pacific Corporate Travel Conference**, and more...



Join Us At The Largest Showcase of Asia-Pacific MICE Destinations and Suppliers

itcma@ttgasia.com | www.itcma.com

24 to 26 September | Bangkok, Thailand

# Take the stress out of booking your headline act

CWT's **Sarah Sheehan** lists six things to do to ensure you pick the right keynote speaker or headline act for your next event



One of the most critical elements for an event is choosing the right keynote speaker or headline talent. Whether it's an entertainer, industry expert or author, selecting the right talent is a 'make or break' process. Here are five things to consider to ensure success.

**1. Use an accredited and trusted advisor.** Hire an agency with demonstrated experience in the events space to do your talent buying for you.

Working with a contact that artist agents know and trust gives you buying power, an opportunity to negotiate and an easier contracting process. A reputable agency can guide you in selecting the artist and they'll know which artists are more successful at working corporate events.

**2. Consider budget, topic, and genre.** Tick the boxes of these talent scouting essentials and you'll hit the nail on the head. Have a budget in mind or at least a range. Artist fees vary considerably and can be anywhere from US\$10,000 to upwards of US\$200,000 or more. It's imperative that your agency or talent buyer knows your parameters to recommend the right talent for your needs.

**3. Prepare speaking topics and/or a musical genre.** Communicate your group demographic or psychographic, and your topic, goals, and objectives with your agency or talent buyer so they can identify the perfect talent for your event.

Are you looking for a motivational speaker? Are you interested in certain subject matter, or industry-specific topics like energy and renewables; a futurist/forecaster, or specialist in building high-performance teams? Would a rock band, country band or singer-songwriter be best for your audience? It's crucial to contribute to the creative direction.

We learned that having a motivational speaker at the end of a conference boosts audience engagement. It's

common for them to open a conference, but consider one to close the event. Ending with a motivational talk leads to higher audience satisfaction after a long day at a conference.

**4. Pay attention to your contracts and rider.** Until your contract is signed and you have paid your deposit, don't consider your talent booked. Riders are negotiable, but only to a point. There are two types of riders; the production rider and the technical rider. They sometimes come as one document embedded into the overall artist contract, but often they come as separate documents. The production rider will cover the artist's ground, air, catering, hotel, and personal needs. The technical rider will cover all of their technical requirements. Both riders and the elements within them can be negotiated.

Items that incur additional expenses include travel – often first-class air for your talent and potentially their manager – per diems, meals, ground transfers, hotel suites and technical requirements. Your agency or talent buyer will negotiate these expenses and details on your behalf, but it is always best to anticipate them and budget up front.

**5. Include meet-and-greets.** If executive meet-and-greets, photo signings or anything outside of the performance scope is required, they need to be written into the contract with details, timelines and numbers of people clearly defined in advance. Once an offer is accepted and contract signed it is very difficult to get things added or approved after the fact.

**6. Insure your artist.** It's common for headliners to request US\$5 million dollar insurance policies and to be listed as additionally insured. This is non-negotiable. Make sure you speak with your insurance agent or legal team to get the artist listed as additionally insured and give yourself at least two weeks turnaround time.

The main thing to bear in mind when booking an artist is the trust, reputation, and knowledge an experienced buyer brings. Many agencies can look up an artist agent's number online and contact them, or say that they can contact the speaker or artist on your behalf. But if they are unknown to the agent or artist, they may not be taken seriously.

Agents are highly protective of their celebrity speakers and headliners for obvious reasons, and putting their artist in the hands of someone they know and trust makes contracting a much easier and much more successful process.

---

*This article was first published on mycwt.com.  
Author Sarah Sheehan is the director for event strategy  
and design with CWT Meetings & Events.*

---

Galaxy Entertainment Group Introduces

# Galaxy International Convention Center

The Ultimate Integrated Resort & MICE Destination in **Macau**



Macau is set to welcome Asia's most iconic and advanced integrated resort come the first half of 2021 when Galaxy Entertainment Group opens Galaxy International Convention Center (GICC), the latest addition to the group's ever-expanding integrated resort precinct in the city.

### Best in class facility, functionality and technology

This world-class event venue can accommodate events of all sizes. Additionally, the 16,000-seat Galaxy Arena is widely hailed as the ultimate integrated entertainment venue, ideal for concerts and large-scale spectacular events.

Featuring avant-garde technology and facilities, GICC promises to elevate the MICE experience with its adoption of immersive technology, state-of-the-art audio-visual and lighting, latest communication systems, and flexible event spaces to cater to multiple configurations and set-ups.

### Integrated resort & MICE destination

The world-class events complex features a diverse selection of dining options and a 750-room luxury lifestyle hotel, while integrating seamlessly with Macau's largest collection of luxury hotel brands under one roof – The Ritz-Carlton Macau, Banyan Tree Macau, JW Marriott Hotel Macau, Hotel Okura Macau, Galaxy Hotel™ and Broadway Hotel.

The abundance of shopping, leisure and entertainment facilities at the Galaxy Macau™

will also provide guests a holistic experience that blends business with leisure.

### Bespoke experiences, excellence in execution

Setting a new standard in business events, GICC is all about customising and curating bespoke experiences – where every event is designed to the requirements of the meeting planner.

The highly creative and innovative EVENT STUDIO team in GICC will collaborate with the MICE organisers in ensuring that their vision is delivered, from venue selection, event theme, décor, entertainment and visual and lighting effects.

By providing the most luxurious settings while delivering the highest levels of expertise and hospitality, GICC offers unparalleled event planning to make guests feel special, staying true to their philosophy of a "World Class, Asian Heart" service.

### Transportation and advanced infrastructure

The newly opened Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge has improved transport options between mainland China and Hong Kong, substantially cutting the travelling time between Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai.

As well, three international airports make

Clockwise from left:

- Galaxy International Convention Center – Asia's Most Iconic and Advanced MICE Destination in Macau, with a breathtaking design, advanced technology, and flexible event space catering to multiple configurations and set-ups.
- Galaxy International Convention Center – Exhibition & Convention Hall, 10,000m<sup>2</sup> pillar-less space to accommodate up to 7,000 delegates, which is fully flexible for events of any scale.
- Galaxy Arena – The Ultimate Integrated Entertainment Experience, one of Asia's largest venues located in Macau, with a 16,000-seat capacity.

Macau an easily accessible destination for groups coming from South-east Asia.

### Macau as an ideal destination

Home to a melting pot of eastern and western culture, Macau is a charming world on its own where UNESCO World Heritage sites sit beside world-class hotels and resorts.

Officially designated a Creative City of Gastronomy by UNESCO, Macau has been recognised for its culinary legacy, celebrating the city as one of Asia's leading culinary destinations.

With the establishment of new infrastructure, facilities and entertainment options, it is not a wonder to see why Macau is rapidly emerging as Asia's favourite meetings destination.



# Incentives moving on with cautious steps

Economic concerns are causing corporates to approach their future incentive travel plans a little more carefully, writes **Karen Yue**



**B**usiness event planners in Asia are observing an air of caution surrounding clients' event plans as concerns mount over an impending global recession, with even shorter lead times, a preference for cheaper destinations and more free-and-easy elements a common occurrence now.

While CWT Meetings and Events, which started 2019 on a strong footing, has yet to see "any significant dip in the volume of meetings, events and incentives so far", its Singapore director, Petrina Goh, told *TTGmice* that "companies have become more cautious with their (events) spend".

According to Goh, notable changes to their buying behaviour include offering more free-and-easy time – which relieves the burden of cost – into their incentive programmes, especially when reward trips are bound for pricey longhaul destinations such as Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

As well, the trend of short lead time that has plagued the industry for years now, has worsened, observed Goh. As companies struggle to have their budgets confirmed, clients are now giving notice only two months or a few weeks ahead of the event.

Clients on a tighter budget are also favouring nearby destinations. CWT Meetings and Events has recorded "a steady increase" in programmes to Thailand and Vietnam, while

Dynasty Travel Singapore's MICE division is seeing South-east Asian destinations gaining in popularity.

Dynasty Travel Singapore's spokesperson Alicia Seah revealed that budgets for incentive events going forward are down from an average of S\$1,000 (US\$734) to S\$2,000 per person, to S\$800 to \$1,500.

Daniel Chua, founder and chief executive of Singapore-based conference management agency, Aonia, predicts that "internal and external" business events will shrink in the coming months, and he blames "perception" for it.

He explained that when a client reads about an impending global economic downturn and sees his business partners or peers cutting back on expenditure, he will likely mirror the austerity measures even though his business is still thriving.

While buying behaviours for business events will change in tough times, events specialists agree that incentive trips are unlikely to be frozen even during a recession.

"Incentive trips are compulsory for sales-driven operations," stated Chua, but added that budgets for internal incentive trips such as staff teambuilding programmes – as opposed to external ones that motivate and reward sales partners – would be manipulated more in a challenging business environment.

While agreeing that there is a firm need for incentive trips, companies today are also adopting non-travel rewards, such as gift cards, merchandise and points programmes.

Meanwhile, G2 Travel – which marked May with a massive 12,500-pax incentive event in Switzerland and Liechtenstein for Jeunesse Global's Chinese top achievers – is maintaining a rosy outlook for its business events segment, with Al Mullen, director of the Hong Kong office, predicting "comparable" business in 2020 to this year's.

Mullen said corporate business has not changed since the start of this year, and the company is still seeing emerging interest from Vietnam and Malaysia. Corporate clients in Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan are still set on longhaul incentive destinations, specifically the UK, Scandinavia, Italy and also Eastern Europe. Budgets for new events are also being maintained.



**"Companies, especially insurance and sales-driven ones, realised that profitable businesses must employ strategic use of rewards and recognition."**

**Alicia Seah**

Dynasty Travel Singapore's spokesperson

# Are business trips still relevant?

Technology improvement, fading lustre of business travel and uncertainties in the global environment are causing some travel managers to expect a decline in the number of trips. By **Caroline Boey**



**T**echnology innovation is disrupting business operations, and as such, corporate travel is changing, as industry members debate the role and importance of business trips and the impact on corporate travel policy.

At a recent ACTE Singapore Education Forum, panellist Bhawna Gandhi, head of human resources, Danone – who is also responsible for corporate travel – commented that “people today do not want to travel for work” and jobs that require travel do not have the same pull as before.

In his view, Frédéric Dumoulin, senior regional director of sales – South-east Asia & Pacific, HRS, said business executives who were travelling the world, prior to the 2000s, were seen as successful people. “But now with the democratisation of aviation, taking a plane is not as exclusive as before. Status is now linked with the travel class, category of hotels where you can stay, etc,” he said.

Another damper on work trips is the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment, with threats such as terrorism, natural disasters and geopolitics.

According to Jaime Wong, security manager, Asia Pacific International SOS and Control Risks, organisations are putting more focus on ensuring that they have tools and mechanisms in place to track employee travel, communicate with their employees during an escalated situation, and provide assistance to their employees wherever and whenever needed.

Gandhi believes that “well thought through travel policies” are key to hiring and retaining the best talent.

She elaborated: “The goal has changed and many of us have not realised that our policies are still supporting previous goals and we have to review holistically how our policies will deliver our employee value proposition.”

One corporate travel manager in the pharmaceutical sector

agreed with Gandhi, noting that she and her colleagues travel only when “absolutely necessary”.

“Technology is helping us to get things done, and trips are also shorter,” she said.

Travel managers recognise that an employee’s preference for work trips is entirely personal. At software company, Autodesk, its diverse global traveller demographic is not against business travel even though “technology allows us to work virtually from anywhere to exchange ideas”, according to Adriana Nainggolan, travel programme manager, Asia-Pacific.

Kelvin Li, regional procurement and travel lead, Asia-Pacific, AECOM, shared that some of his colleagues prefer day trips as much as possible, “even if it means a Hong Kong-Shanghai same-day return trip of four hours total flight time, not including waiting time at airport and travel to/from airport”.

A survey of more than 1,100 business executives in several Asia-Pacific countries – conducted by CWT and recruitment specialist Ambition last year – showed 78 per cent of respondents preferred meeting in-person instead of using technology-enabled communications such as video conferencing.

Those polled said face-to-face meetings helped build stronger, more meaningful relationships, and read a person’s body language and facial expressions. It was also easier to be more persuasive.

Meanwhile, those who said they preferred virtual meetings pointed to time and costs as the main reasons.

Paul Endacott, regional managing director, Asia, Ambition, commented: “In the face of a growing global talent shortage, attracting and retaining the right people can be challenging, especially if candidates are receiving multiple offers.

“Fast-growing Asia-headquartered companies which are expanding internationally and trying to compete with established global players are acutely aware of this.

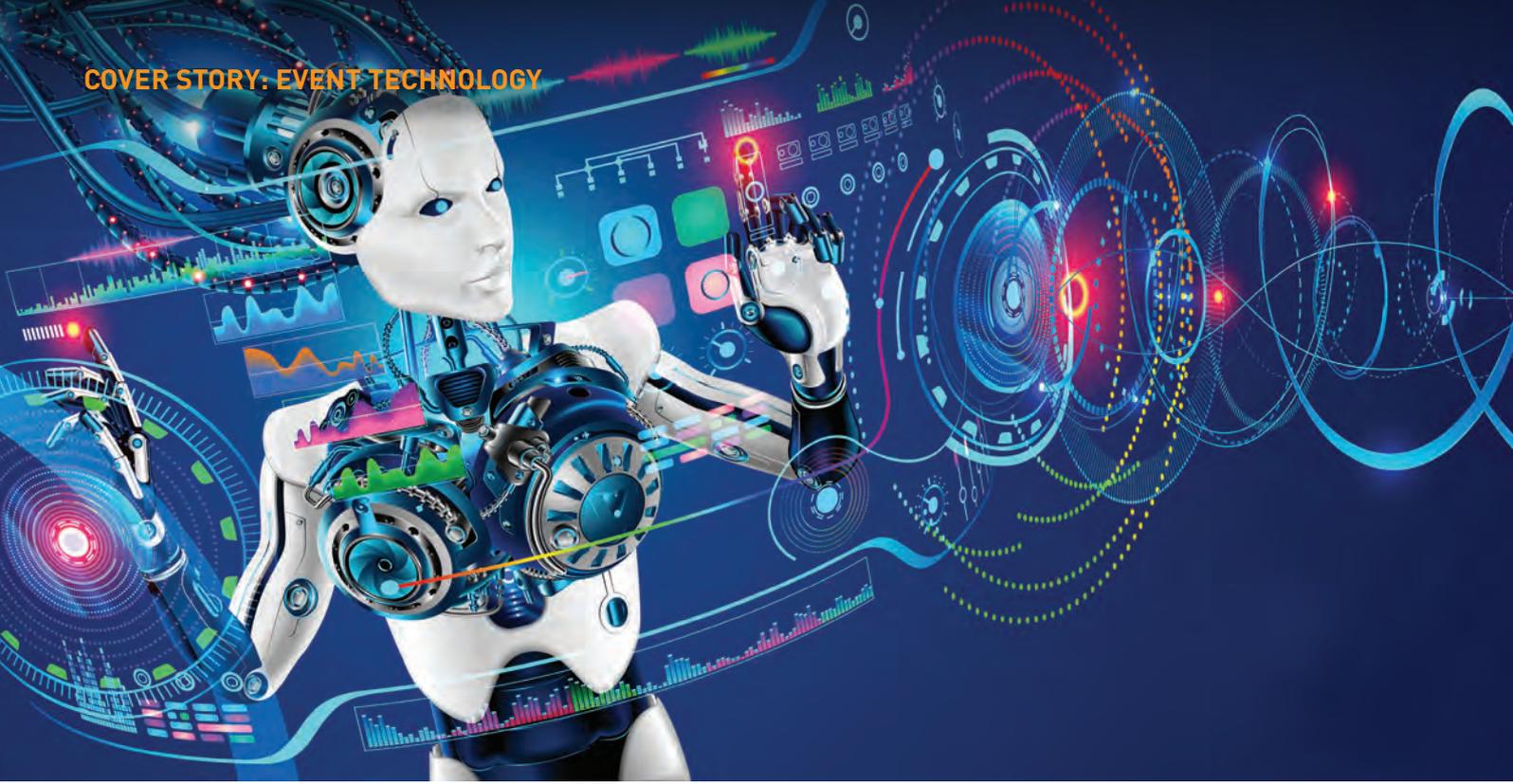
“Well-designed corporate travel policies can be a selling point and help these companies differentiate themselves to potential employees, particularly in industries which involve a lot of travel,” Endacott noted.



**“... we have to review holistically how our (travel) policies will deliver our employee value proposition.”**

**Bhawna Gandhi**

Head of human resources, Danone



# Event future now

Personalised apps, auto-refresh barcodes and mixed reality are buzzwords for modern events. Three event tech specialists point out even more top trends that should have organisers' full attention

## JOSH MCNICOL, APAC GENERAL MANAGER, EVENTBRITE

**Attendee apps:** Event apps put attendees in the driver's seat, empowering them to take control of their own experience and stay connected to all that an event has to offer. Using their own device, attendees can ask questions in real time, connect with other attendees and provide feedback while brands benefit from the opportunity to capture data and nurture a relationship with attendees long after the event is over.

**Mobile-first approach:** Asia-Pacific led the globe for transactions conducted on mobile devices in 2018, with sustained double-digit growth forecast for m-commerce between now and 2021. With more users than ever before shopping, connecting and discovering things to do on their devices, companies that optimise their ticketing checkout flow for mobile are gaining favour with consumers looking for a fast, secure and seamless purchase experience.

**Auto-refresh barcodes:** Auto-refresh barcodes are an exciting innovation which may prove to be a giant leap forward in tackling the issue of counterfeit tickets. These dynamic barcodes refresh every few seconds, eliminating the risk of duplication and offering a safe and verifiable way to transfer tickets.

## WILL KATARIA DIRECTOR OF SALES, EVENT ASIA

**Mixed reality:** Virtual and augmented reality will be combined to create mixed reality experiences that allow attendees to interact and engage with an event in a more personalised way. For example, conference attendees can use their phone cameras to find their next session via a 3D map of the venue. Mixed reality also offers a unique opportunity for attendees to participate in motion-capture installations or allow exhibitors to showcase their products. It can even be used to enhance networking opportunities through interest matching.

**Facial recognition and feedback:** Facial recognition is already being used at events to more quickly (and securely) register and check-in attendees. Next year, Tokyo will be the first Olympic host to introduce facial

recognition at its venues. Facial feedback offers a different use case for the same facial recognition technology. It allows organisers to capture attendee emotions in real-time. Imagine being able to monitor if attendees are bored, confused, happy or annoyed, and being able to intervene quickly.

**Voice interfaces:** It is predicted that half of all Internet searches by 2020 will be initiated via voice. This technology has so many use cases for events. Voice command devices can streamline event registration, help attendees find their way around exhibition halls, or learn more about the conference agenda or specific session. By automating these types of interactions, attendees receive timely, efficient support while organisers are able to reduce onsite staff and overall cost.

**Chatbots:** Chatbots that use artificial intelligence are the concierge of the future for live events. At South by SouthWest (SXSW) this year, a chatbot named Abby acted as a personal concierge for attendees and fielded 56,000 unique questions via Facebook Messenger and the SXSW mobile app, saving countless man-hours.

**Wearables:** The overall adoption of wearable technology has thus far been mixed. Smart watches have been hugely popular; smart glasses, not so much. However, this doesn't mean we should rule out the glasses technology. Smart glasses offer the ability to customise the event experience by providing delegates with personalised information about the event space, an upcoming session, or suggest which stand to visit – reducing the overwhelming feeling of a large tradeshow floor.

### BARBIE LAM CREATIVE COORDINATOR, JACK MORTON WORLDWIDE

**Virtual events:** Holographic projection is the new revolution in live event production, providing photo-realistic immersive experiences. It is most widely used in conferences and talks where companies are able to “beam” people as live holograms all over the world, capable of interacting with their audience in real-time. Holographic technology also provides a platform for virtual stars to connect with audiences in a live event setting. The possibilities are endless, such as making it possible for virtual Japanese idol Hatsune Miku to tour



**Will Kataria**  
Director of sales, Cvent Asia

around the world and perform live through holographic projection.

**Location-based VR experiences:** Location-based virtual reality (VR) experiences leverage the technology and provide users a fully immersive experience with a headset, haptic vests and a custom-designed space for the user to walk freely within their VR environment. This is unlike traditional VR, which is usually a solo experience in a limited space. The continuing advancement of VR allows creators to produce better and more tailored experiences. For example, agencies can bring a brand's story to life through gamification.

**Augmented reality:** Earlier this year at Mobile World Congress, our global innovation practice, Genuine X, helped raise awareness and drive a positive brand perception of Ericsson as a leading player in ICT, specifically in 5G. They did this by creating a brand presence through immersive technology, like augmented reality (AR). Complex technical information is normally challenging to explain particularly in a busy tradeshow environment, but AR allowed us to let attendees experience it in an interactive and intuitive way. We created a dynamic AR carousel that prompted magical animations when the iPad is pointed at an object on the display, informing customers about Ericsson's growing industrial applications of 5G.

## Setting a tech example for event specialists

Singapore MICE Forum (SMF2019) in July was used as a test bed for silent conference, which was introduced for the first time at a travel industry event in Singapore.

Event organiser SACEOS (Singapore Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers), also adopted facial recognition registration to expedite delegate badge collection and live streaming to reach a wider audience beyond the 550 registered participants.

SACEOS president, Aloysius Arlando, said “more relevant technology was used this year compared to SMF2018,” and what was introduced was aimed at addressing the needs of “time poor” industry practitioners looking for “maximum return”.

Arlando commented: “With silent conference (where concurrent sessions take place in one space and delegates use headsets to listen to different channels), participants are the decision-makers who are free to toggle and channel surf.”

He described silent conference as a “customer-centric” tool where “the priority is delivering content to the delegate”.

With silent conference, event organisers can weigh the cost of the gadget use per participant versus the need for breakout rooms and other costs, he added.

Apart from live streaming SMF2019 to target a wider local and regional audience, SACEOS is monetising data captured to generate revenue. Keynote and panel discussions can be broken into bite-size learning modules on a pay-per use basis, Arlando noted.

Bita Seow, executive director, SACEOS, added: “Other technology benefits included more predictive analytics which can indicate, for example, which speakers to invite back. Silent conference also addresses short attention spans and allows event organisers to explore different ways in designing a space.”



**Barbie Lam**  
Creative coordinator,  
Jack Morton Worldwide



# Innovators in our midst

Asia's thriving business events industry has created plump opportunities for homegrown event technology agencies to prosper

## Active Visual, Singapore

Active Visual started in 2004 providing audio-visual support to events and consumers. Over the past decade, the company grew its suite to include lighting and staging services, and the last three to four years saw the opening of a new team specialising in system integration.

It has accrued a clientele spanning government agencies, educational institutions and international event organisers. The company recently worked with Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre and Digimagic Communications to develop the ImmersiveAV Suite – a new audio-visual capability that makes use of holographic projection technology to create a more sustainable and immersive setting for experiential events.

Willy Bey, director for Active Visual, shared that the company focuses on building closer B2B relationships with its counterparts across the world – in countries such as Thailand, China, Cambodia, Japan and the US – as well as “collaborating hand-in-hand with renowned brands to provide more comprehensive and competitive solutions”.

Above: Active Visual lends its event technology expertise to Tat Hong 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



He added: “We will focus on improving on our current technologies, such as projection mapping, LED walls and more sophisticated system integration solutions for our coming projects.”

## Digimagic Communications, Singapore

Founded in 1999 as a multimedia and events agency, Digimagic found its niche in experiential media that was well-received by clients such as museums, corporate galleries, theme parks and events.

“One of our first experiential media projects was designing the visitor experience for the Housing Development Board’s gallery, where we introduced immersive theatre and interactive experiences like rotoscope and hologram displays,” explained Digimagic’s owner/founder Donald Lim.

Since then, the agency has worked on similar presentations around the globe. For example, in 2010, it supported the 4G network launch of telecommunications brand 3 in Indonesia with rotoscopes, holograms, projection mapping and drones across 28 cities.

Now, Digimagic provides an even wider range of technological solutions, such as interactive stations, immersive theatres, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality. Its team also serves as “turnkey consultants” who oversee every aspect of event technology, from set design to execution.

Later this year, Digimagic will launch the immersive and interactive exhibition Time Capsule at the Singapore Flyer.

## Encore Event Technologies, Australia

Previously known as Staging Connections, Encore Event Technologies has an established reputation for event production that has seen it grow from humble beginnings in Melbourne to branches across Australia and beyond.

It debuted in 1986 when technology was very different with the use of overhead transparencies, and VHS and Beta for video.

“We have been instrumental in bringing new products to the event services market,” said managing director of Encore Event Technologies ANZPAC, Tony Chamberlain.

“We have a team known as ‘PluggedIn’ who are dedicated to the discovery of new products and services as well as developing new technologies of our own. Our digital range includes everything from webcasting, to projection mapping, 3D renders of what events will look like, through to polling and conference apps.”

Encore’s services now include event styling and design, and in-house partnerships with premium hotels and venues within Australia, servicing their customers’ audiovisual and production needs.

The company has been expanding globally, with

“We have been instrumental in bringing new products to the event services market.”

## Tony Chamberlain

Managing director, Encore Event Technologies ANZPAC

VARIETY, EXPERTISE, CAPACITY

# Macao: Engineered for MICE

*Sustained investment in MICE over the last decade has transformed Macao into a business events powerhouse, where exceptional variety, expertise and capacity give planners the building blocks they need to design a truly extraordinary experience.*

## EASY ACCESS

Macao International Airport is served by 29 airlines, and is only **10 minutes** by car or shuttle bus to **Cotai Strip**, Macao's designated MICE district. Delegates can also fly into **Hong Kong** and take a 65-minute **ferry transfer** to Macao. With the opening of **Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge**, delegates travelling from Zhuhai or Hong Kong can now reach Macao in under 45 minutes. What's more, passport holders of no less than **75 countries and territories** now enjoy **visa-free** entry.

## VARIED EXPERIENCES

From its early days as the first European trading post on Chinese soil to its recent fame as the world's top gaming destination, Macao has always been a **crossroads of culture and commerce**. Today, its hybrid culture, leisure offerings, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and lavish integrated resorts are its greatest draws. Because Macao is so compact — nowhere is more than half an hour's drive away — you can visit a Chinese **temple**, bungee jump off the top of **Macao Tower**, savour the famous Portuguese **egg tart**, visit iconic **heritage sites**, dine in a **Michelin-starred restaurant**, and attend a blockbuster **theatrical performance** — all in a day!

## CAPACITY FOR EXCELLENCE

The Cotai Strip alone boasts no less than 20 hotels and a wealth of leisure and entertainment options. Many, like **Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel** (4,001 rooms, Macao's largest) and **St. Regis Macao** (400 rooms), offer a wide range of full-service facilities such as ballrooms, meeting rooms and indoor and outdoor reception spaces. These two hotels are also **linked**, so guests can freely navigate their way from meetings to the more than **850 shops** and **150 dining venues** nearby. A great advantage: Many MICE hotels have their own **dedicated event services teams**. Planners—and their groups of 10 or 10,000—can rest assured that they will be ably supported by professionals every step of the way.

## VALUE AND SUPPORT

Macao has grown to be a MICE marketplace full of **fresh ideas** and **excellent value** where hotels routinely offer **packages** that include discounts on rooms, transport and entertainment. Strong **government support** also makes a difference. The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) offers advisory services as well as incentive schemes to convention and exhibition planners, helping them achieve **outstanding returns** when they bring their events to Macao.



Taipa Houses Museum is a showcase of Macanese culture, history and creativity. One of the houses is available for private receptions.



Sheraton Grand Macao Hotel and The St. Regis Macao are linked and within walking distance of 850 world renowned duty-free retail shops and over 150 international dining options.



## CASE STUDY

**“We are a tough customer with very specific needs, but the Sheraton Grand Macao has a flexibility that is unparalleled.”**

**Carrie Santos**, CEO of Entrepreneurs' Organization, which brought its Global Leadership Conference to Macao for the first time from April 10–12, 2019. 2,000 delegates from around the world participated in a programme that included meetings, banquets and cocktails. Many extended their stay to enjoy Macao's many attractions.

## PROMOTION PACKAGE

### Meetings Beyond Imagination

**BOOKING PERIOD**  
Now to December 31, 2019

**STAY PERIOD**  
Now to December 18, 2020

#### OFFER DETAILS

- Book an event and enjoy all these benefits to bring your event to another level:
- 20% off audio visual equipment services
  - Special offer on entertainment and leisure activities
    - Up to 50% off selected in-house entertainment
    - 50% off Gondola Ride and Eiffel Tower experience
  - Special offer on selected wellness activities at selected venues
  - 15% off cocktail reception at selected venues
  - 20% off at selected restaurants at Sands Resort Macao
  - Special offer on Spa - extra 30 minutes at selected spa for any 60-minute body massage
  - Retail offer booklet with exclusive savings

Book more and get more of the following offers:

- Book 25–100 rooms daily and enjoy 1 offer
- Book 101–150 rooms on peak and enjoy 2 offers
- Book 151–200 rooms on peak and enjoy 3 offers
- Book 201 rooms or more on peak and enjoy 4 offers
  1. 5% off master bill
  2. One complimentary room for every 25 rooms booked
  3. One complimentary room upgrade for every 25 rooms booked
  4. 50% off Cotai Water Jet ferry tickets

#### CONTACT

Contact our sales team for details: Tel: +853-8113-0700 [Sales.macao@sheraton.com](mailto:Sales.macao@sheraton.com)



**Sheraton**  
Grand  
MACAO HOTEL  
COTAI CENTRAL



**STREGIS**  
MACAO • COTAI CENTRAL

teams from New Zealand to Mexico. It is growing its presence in Asia too, taking its venue model to countries like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand.

In other recent innovations, Encore has been using kinetic lights, which can be programmed to move in time with music or create visual experiences like wave formations, bringing an element of fun and theatrics to an event environment. Encore's latest version of their event app enables a vast number of features. The new holographic curtain creates amazing visuals to look as if content is floating mid-air like a hologram.

### Evenesis – Y Us, Malaysia

Yusno Yunos founded his company, Evenesis – Y Us in 2010 with an audacious vision to create a comprehensive cloud-based end-to-end event management system for event planners, participants and suppliers.

His inspiration was sparked when he could not find a local automated solution that could do event invitations, guest database management, floor plans and seating arrangements in a single application.

The software was called Evenesis, and it remains the core product for the company.

Last year, the company added the Evenesis Facial Recognition Check-In feature to its product. In mid-2019, an abstract management and business matching software joined the line-up. The abstract management tool allows conference organisers to manage their abstracts/ papers submissions on the same platform as Evenesis, while the business matching software intelligently connects delegates and exhibitors. Not only are trade visitors able to meet the right sellers in an event, conference attendees – specifically start-up founders – can now request for meetings at specific times with the closest matched potential investors.

Evenesis – Y Us is now working on an emotion analysis session tracking software that will enable organisers to analyse their attendees' moods/ emotions during

**“While (the global players) are well-known in the US, we have a better presence here (in Asia).”**

### Yusno Yunos

Founder, Evenesis – Y Us



an event. This product is scheduled to be in the market by 1H2020.

When asked how Evenesis– Y Us fares against major competitors, Yusno said: “We have the advantage of being able to fully customise our product to meet the needs of event organisers with dedicated local support in developing countries in Asia-Pacific. While (the global players) are well-known in the US, we have a better presence here. In fact, I would say we have a stronger brand reputation.”

Evenesis – Y Us was the event technology partner of the Singapore MICE Forum in July, organised by the Singapore Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers. The company handled online pre- and on-site registration with facial recognition capability, as well as business matching appointments.

### ThinkBIT Events, Philippines

CEO Jedd Timothy Lim, together with some university classmates, started out developing software for web and mobile app in 2014. A year later, they launched ThinkBIT Events, which provides technology solutions to business events.

The company debuted with Onsite solution for fast, simple, efficient and hassle-free registration using iPad. Added features are real-time attendee count, searchable attendees, customisable fields, and personalised cover and greeting.

Its Conference mobile app offers an immersive experience by enabling live Q&A between the audience and speakers, scans the event's programme, provides information about exhibitors and participants, and more.

It also offers a paperless raffle system and Quirk It, a self-service photo booth that adds personal touches with customised quirky GIF template that can include corporate branding.

Today, ThinkBIT Events handles a list of prominent corporate clients, and business is growing.

To keep pace with market changes, the company is innovating its existing products by enhancing and adding new features while working on adding on an RFID-based system (Radio Frequency Identification).



Above: ThinkBIT's hassle-free registration using iPad

# ibtm<sup>®</sup> WORLD

BARCELONA, SPAIN  
19-21 NOVEMBER 2019

## Inspiring events for better business results

### Find your inspiration here!

Let IBTM World help you find the right people  
to deliver exceptional events.

Registration now open

[www.ibtmworld.com](http://www.ibtmworld.com)



Connect with us    @ibtmevents

ibtm<sup>®</sup>

Organised by  Reed Exhibitions<sup>®</sup>

# New play on a heritage city



Above: Ayutthaya City Park shopping mall now boasts a convention centre

Historical Ayutthaya, an hour north of Bangkok, is beckoning event planners with a new convention hall and ease of access from Thailand's main gateways, writes **Suchat Sritama**

**P**hra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province – better known as Ayutthaya – was cast into the limelight in 2012 when the Thai government approved the destination's bid to host World Expo 2020. Although Ayutthaya lost the bid, the global media had done its job and the former capital of the Kingdom of Siam was

impressed into the minds of both local and international visitors.

Besides ancient allures at the Ayutthaya Historical Park, an archaeological site, the province boasts the Rojana Industrial Estate where high-tech productions reside. Ongoing urbanisation works are also helping to reinforce Ayutthaya's readiness for business events.

Ayutthaya City Park, the destination's largest shopping mall in operation the past two decades, expanded recently with a large convention centre. Simply named The Hall Convention Centre, the venue is about to begin courting international business events.

Somphon Rattchathapimolchai, CEO of Klong Suam Plu Co., operator of Ayutthaya City Park, said: "We are the first and only to operate a hybrid lifestyle centre in the province. Our new 2,000m<sup>2</sup> convention hall can accommodate hundreds of guests. We also offer four meeting rooms, as well as a large outdoor space for up to 10,000 attendees."

The Hall Convention Centre aims to capitalise on the province's rising popularity among business event

**"We are the first and only to operate a hybrid lifestyle centre in the province."**

**Somphon Rattchathapimolchai**  
CEO, Klong Suam Plu Co



# NO MORE BORING MEETINGS

## NEW AGENDA: MEETINGS REDESIGNED

Centara wants to make your meetings more stimulating and effective. So we developed a fresh new approach. It starts with out-of-the-box thinking about venues. How about a breathtaking rooftop above the city? A pavilion in a tropical jungle? A room on stilts above a Maldivian reef? Whatever your scope and purpose, we can suggest something unique.

Then we'll give you creative ideas for team-building and networking, all personalised to your needs by an experienced meeting planner who will be your one-stop contact before, during and after your event.

Think beyond tables, projectors, pads, and coffee breaks. Find out how we can re-energise your next meeting by visiting [centarahotelsresorts.com/mice](http://centarahotelsresorts.com/mice).



THAILAND

MALDIVES

OMAN

QATAR

SRI LANKA

VIETNAM



Above: Wat Chaiwatthanara, one of the many temples within the Ayutthaya Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

planners. So far it has been serving the domestic market, with events coming from neighbouring cities such as Ang Thong, Saraburi, Pathum Thani and Bangkok.

Although new, The Hall Convention Centre has earned its outdoor events space a Thailand Mice Venue Standard certification from the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. With this, the venue can expect to see more business event enquiries, especially from overseas markets.

Somphon believes that the new convention centre will be a game-changer for the province. He noted that Ayutthaya presently draws mostly small and medium-sized events through the Ayutthaya City Park, where 80 events were held in 2018. Those events included concerts, product launches, consumer fairs and seasonal events. With the new venue, the province will be able to gun for more large and international events.

It has a conservative target of increasing events

business by 20 per cent this year, which translates to hosting at least five international events. Within the next three to five years, Ayutthaya City Park aims to become one of the busiest convention centres in Thailand's central region, based on traffic and number of events.

Klong Suam Plu Co claims that Ayutthaya's location and transportation convenience are major factors that will attract multinational companies to use Ayutthaya City Park as a venue for their product showcases. It argued that Ayutthaya does not have the same traffic congestions that plague capital city Bangkok.

Business travellers landing at Don Mueang Airport and Suvarnavhumi Airport are able to reach The Hall Convention Centre within an hour by car.

Besides, with the closure of Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre for major renovations and Bangkok venues typically being overbooked, event planners can



**1,320,000**

Total number of international MICE travellers that Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau is expecting to welcome this financial year ending September 2019

**303,182**

The number of MICE arrivals from ASEAN+6 countries between October 2018 and March 2019, representing a 23.7 per cent growth over the same period last year

**85,498**

The number of Chinese visitors to Thailand between October and December 2018, making it the Kingdom's top MICE source market; Laos follows with 29,547 business event arrivals

consider moving their shows to Ayutthaya.

Rinyaphat Chaiaukkarawitt, managing director of Neramit Event Co, observed that more events are spreading into the provinces, especially favouring popular shopping malls. Such events are mostly marketing activations aimed at consumers.

As such, Rinyaphat believes that a mall and convention centre combination is the way to go for future event venues.

Sumate Sudasna, managing director of Conference and Destination Management Co, expressed confidence in Ayutthaya rising up in Thailand's business events arena, largely due to its close proximity to Bangkok. Both cities are linked by highways.

Sumate opined that a single day meeting in Ayut-

**Right: Riverside night markets are fun to explore for local snacks and handcraft**



**Below: Cycling around Ayutthaya's historical sites can be a recreational addition to a meeting programme**



thaya would be a viable option for companies based in Bangkok.

As Ayutthaya also offers many attractions and recreational facilities, planners have the flexibility to plan a programme as fun or as solemn as they wish.

An appealing way to bring groups to Ayutthaya is to cruise them over from Bangkok.

Fun additions to Ayutthaya include the Krunsrri Night Market where one could don a traditional Thai costume for just 100 baht (US\$3) and enjoy local food and beers.

The Ayutthaya Retreat may be favoured by hurried business event delegates. Built in Thai architectural style and boasting a soothing garden, Ayutthaya Retreat offers hotel rooms and a cafe that serves up healthy cuisine. It welcomes private social events too.

For staff retreats that include accompanying family, planners can consider the Rabbit Water Park. Foam parties can be arranged at this new theme park.

# SUCCESS

## MEETING PACKAGE

available till 30 September

**This is offered to groups of at least 100 people and min room rate @ THB 4,100**

- Upgrade to: Theme Suite 1 bedroom, Regency Suite 1 bedroom or Royal Wing Suite for 1 VIP room
- 1 Complimentary room for every 35 rooms booked
- 10% Food discount (all delegates)
- 15% Spa discount (all delegates)
- Tea and coffee throughout the meeting period
- 1 Extra dish for each coffee breaks (normally we give 3)
- High speed WIFI
- Complimentary fitness group class session
- Group rate is offered to all delegates 2 days for pre and post stay
- 2 Organizer staff rooms at 20% discount from group rate
- Private check-in area
- Event coordinator
- Welcome drink upon arrival
- Head and shoulder massage area during coffee breaks
- 2% Rebate on master bill
- Free Funtasea passes for delegates' children
- Cooking class at a special price of THB 1800 per person
- Green meeting options
- Discount on passes to our partner attractions
- Free shuttle service to downtown Pattaya for delegates

To book the **"Success Meeting Package"**, please visit <https://bit.ly/2QCgnTc> call (+66) 38 250 421 ext. 2845 or send an email to [success@royalcliff.com](mailto:success@royalcliff.com)



ROYAL CLIFF HOTELS GROUP  
THE SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE & FACILITIES  
[www.royalcliff.com](http://www.royalcliff.com)

PEACH  
PATTAYA EXHIBITION  
AND CONVENTION HALL  
[www.peachthailand.com](http://www.peachthailand.com)

Avalar Fortner/shutterstock

# Cebu shines through

Events and tourism infrastructure developments in Cebu are boosting the destination's appeal in the eyes of international event planners, discovers **Rosa Ocampo**

Above: Mactan Cebu International Airport's new international terminal improves global access to the destination

Cebu was already informed as the winner in the Philippines' bid for hosting Routes Asia 2016. The inspection team, however, changed their mind and chose Manila instead upon seeing ongoing infrastructure projects, including the skyway that now links Ninoy Aquino International Airport to various parts of the metro.

But the loss was reversed with Routes Asia 2019 going to Cebu three years later in March. Cebu's metamorphosis is palpable even though it is traditionally the Philippines' most popular business events destination after Manila.

International event delegates are now able to fly directly to Cebu, unlike in the past when they had to fly via Manila, as Mactan Cebu International Airport's (MCIA) newly minted resort-themed international passenger terminal 2 is the most modern and most efficient in the country, apart from being the most aesthetically pleasing.

The future augurs well for Cebu as more road and infrastructure facilities are under construction, new hotels like Sheraton and Dusit fill in the supply shortage, new attractions including the Temple of Leah are unveiled, and improved marketing spotlighting Cebu's rich culture, cuisine and entertainment options gets underway.

Colliers International Philippines forecasted that "these developments will attract more MICE organisers, specifically from (South-east Asia)....We see regional events further boosting Cebu's overall hotel oc-

cupancy in 2019 and raising Cebu's stature as a MICE destination in the region".

This outlook is supported by Bella Calleja, manager, corporate team 2 MICE, JTB Asia Pacific Philippines, who said: "The new airport is helping a lot. More Japanese people know Cebu as a prime destination than they do Manila. Another factor (in Cebu's favour) is the direct Philippine Airlines flight from Cebu to Tokyo and Osaka."

Besides Routes Asia 2019, other prominent Asian events held in Cebu include the PATA Annual Summit in May and the Center for Aviation's North Asia Summit in June.

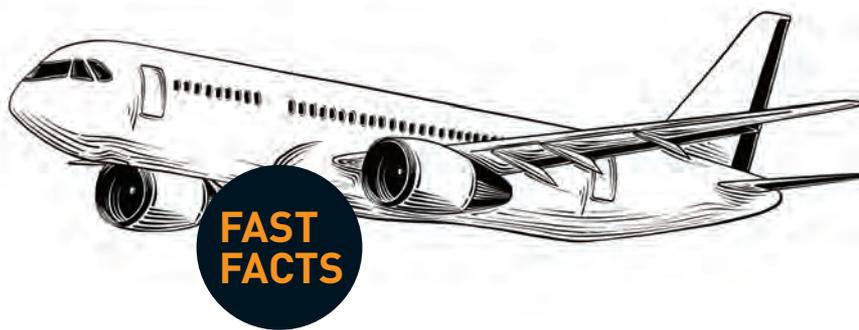
Most business events are held in hotels due to the absence of a proper convention and exhibition centre in the destination. The construction of the SMX Convention Center Cebu – touted to be the same size as SMX in Manila – is being delayed by local government issues.

Undeterred, SMX Convention Center vice president, sales and marketing, Agnes Pacis, said they are in the meantime focusing on their two existing properties, Sky Hall Seaside Cebu in SM Seaside City Cebu and Cebu Trade Hall in SM City Cebu, to meet the demand for medium-sized business events.

"While some of the existing hotel and non-hotel venues can take small to medium-sized events, there is certainly room for bigger players like SMX. Its arrival will only boost the city's competitive position as one of the top business events destinations in both the local and international markets", said Pacis.

Cebu is indeed enjoying a surge in inbound business events if the experience of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino – the hotel venue whose largest hosted business event numbered 7,500 pax – is anything to go by.

General manager, Anders Hallden, told *TTGmice* that his property is enjoying "record-breaking performance every year in both rooms and MICE," and especially so this year, thanks to much-improved events hardware and intensified marketing and promotions of the destination.



**4,500**

The number of delegates that attended the CFC Kids for Christ's first International Family Conference in May 2018 – one of Cebu's biggest events that year

**590**

The number of international flights that Mactan Cebu International Airport serves weekly as of January 30, 2019

# The place to meet



Corporate meetings demand for the financial capital holds strong, but Mumbai needs to catch up on the conventions front. By **Rohit Kaul**

As the financial capital of India, Mumbai is a natural magnet for business travellers and corporate events. Its appeal as a meetings destination is also built on its infrastructure – air, sea and rail access from places within and beyond the Indian borders and an extensive supply of business hotels.

And international interest in Mumbai appears to be growing.

Rohit Walter, brand leader with FCM Incoming, shared that his company has observed “substantial growth” in the city’s business events segment.

“Medical, pharmaceutical, auto and tourism are the industry verticals that are leading the demand for international business events and meetings in Mumbai,” he added.

Manufacturing, information technology, supply chain & logistics, and banking industries are important

demand drivers too, according to Mumbai hoteliers.

Walter opined that Mumbai has year-round appeal for business events, adding that even the Indian Union elections in April did little to dent demand from international organisers.

He said the Ministry of Tourism will be using business events as a way of developing India into a “365 days destination”.

Additional top-level support, through India Convention Promotion Bureau’s promotion of the country as a venue for international congresses and conventions, will also bode well for Mumbai, he said.

Also in Mumbai’s favour is the state government’s ongoing development of cruise tourism. Indian PCOs told TTGmice that such diversified product offerings of the city will boost inbound corporate demand.

Swadesh Kurn, founder of Shikhar Group of Companies, said: “The development of cruise tourism and the increase in cruise lines choosing the city as a port of call, has (enhanced) Mumbai’s value as an inbound MICE destination. International corporates looking to host their business events in Mumbai can organise some of their social gatherings on a cruise ship.”

However, there is still work to be done for Mumbai to count as a prime destination for conventions. The lack of large venues to support such events is the city’s Achilles heel, opined industry players.

“Mumbai attracts international business events with her good connectivity, presence of different industry verticals and vast business opportunities. However, other Indian cities such as New Delhi and Hyderabad have large convention centres, and that puts Mumbai at a disadvantage,” said Monal Prabhu, associate director, Magnifique Meetings, Sofitel Mumbai BKC.

As well, Chander Mansharamani, managing director, Alpcord Network Travel & Conferences, hopes that state government will have in place a policy to promote Mumbai for business events.



**23**

The position Mumbai takes in ICCA’s 2017 ranking of top cities for association meetings in Asia-Pacific

**119**

The position Mumbai takes in ICCA’s worldwide city ranking for 2017

# Nichapa Yoswee

The senior vice president, business of the Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), is leading a team armed with greater autonomy to realise Thailand's economic dreams. By **Karen Yue**

**There was a recent change in TCEB's status as an official government body. Tell me about this.**

In the beginning, TCEB was set up by the government to bring positive economic impact to the country using business events as a marketing tool. We acted as the facilitator and promoter, which meant we needed a local host to bring any event into the country.

A new government decree has fast-tracked TCEB's work. On top of working together with local hosts, we can now act as the host ourselves and bid for events directly. It gives us a lot of freedom, especially in acting as the official bidder for events relating to the 12 key industries identified by the government's Thailand 4.0 economy policy.

Because of global competition for good business events, TCEB needs speed to market. If we miss this turn on a convention, we may have to wait five or 10 years for it to rotate back to the region. So, the autonomy is good for TCEB.

I do not think there are other Asian CVBs with the same level of autonomy as ours, being legally authorised to bid independently.

**How does the 'Thailand Redefine Your Business Events' brand fit into this new environment?**

I launched this new brand, replacing Thailand Connect, to convey three layers of messages: to the customers, to local operators and to TCEB itself.

To customers, it is a promise to them that whatever business event they bring to Thailand, they will get a refreshing experience and engagement, and that their event will be very successful.

To local operators, the message is that they must be able to better themselves and be very creative in order to accommodate international events and leave a lasting impression.

And to TCEB, we need to step up. We are a very good facilitator but it is a safe role to play. I came from Reed, the private sector, so I don't like playing safe. We must be a co-creator, a thought leader, a good promoter and collaborator.

We need to raise the local capability to bring Thailand to the next level. We have been working hard with local MICE associations, which also have to step up. TICA (Thailand Incentive and Convention Association)



has been a great voice for the MIC segments, just as TEA (Thai Exhibition Association) is for exhibitions. TICA, TEA and TCEB together can allow Thailand to be a solid destination when we go out and pitch.

#### **How are you faring at capability development?**

We have been doing a very fine job. Thailand has the highest number of certified professionals in the exhibitions, meetings and incentives sectors. They are certified through international programmes. We also have the highest number of ISO certified venues.

Using these standards to raise the profile of Thailand and Thai MICE players is critical.

As well, TCEB has a close relationship with local universities. TCEB initiated the MICE Academy, and worked with MICE associations to develop curriculum built on international content with local applications. There are more than 200 local universities and vocational schools that teach these programmes. Graduates have basic MICE knowledge and understand the value chain of the industry, allowing them to fast-track into proper operations the moment they step into their job.

I believe that Thailand is the only country (in Asia) with the most number of schools that teach MICE.

#### **Do you think enough foreign organisers know about these strengths of Thailand?**

We are not so good at promoting ourselves. That is one of Thailand's weak points. Customers want a peace of mind and standards can help achieve that, but they ultimately want to work with an operator that not only boasts of global standards but also knows their needs.

Thailand now ranks fifth on ICCA's charts (2018 country rankings for Asia-Pacific, released June 2019), which is great (in demonstrating our capability).

This year, we managed to attract 17 new exhibitions. Usually, we get only five or six new ones. The leap in new wins is due to Thailand 4.0, which has given us a very clear focus on the type of shows we need to go for. With that focus, we are able to design a precise campaign and incentives to help organisers bring their shows to Thailand.

#### **Speaking of incentives – or subventions as they are also known, how relevant are they for foreign organisers?**

They are very important for certain industries, and especially for SMEs. We have different sets of incentives – financial and non-financial – to offer events of various sizes and purposes.

For instance, L and XL (in reference to size of events) operators do not need financial support. They need ease of doing business, access to relevant government agencies, and delegate boosting.

As well, different events have different needs. For exhibitions, TCEB's 360 Degree Exhibition Success provides support right from the start. That means subsidy for site inspection, setting up meetings with government bodies and local operators, and more to help them discover Thailand as a possible event destination. Once they decide on Thailand, we bring on the next stage of incentives.

#### **Do you think TCEB's generosity with subventions has helped to make Thailand this successful?**

Yes, I think so! We want local operators to step up and be ready for global competition. Their prime concern is

**“(TCEB is) a very good facilitator but it is a safe role to play. I came from Reed, the private sector, so I don't like playing safe.”**

always, if they invest this much (in attracting overseas events), what will be their returns.

As a government body looking after local operators, we need to help them invest. We invest by providing programmes that convince overseas shows to come here. Once they bite, local operators can focus on developing quality programmes that will engage the audience and show them the best of Thailand.

This isn't unconditional support. Their activities in Thailand must result in legacy for the local community. For example, conventions getting TCEB's support must announce certain collaborations or set up certain operations in Thailand, at the end of the event. Global exhibitions getting our support must work with local businesses, run at least three editions here, and partner Thai organisers.

When SITE Global Conference came (to Bangkok, from January 11 to 13, 2019), their promise was to set up SITE Thailand Chapter at the end of the event.

This ensures that money invested in attracting business events to Thailand will create a meaningful return for our local players. They cannot simply come here, make a profit and leave.

#### **Regional competition for MICE is so hot now. Is it keeping you awake?**

I see it as healthy competition which forces us to look carefully at what we can do better. But at the same time, we need to work as a team. TCEB has been talking with some ASEAN members about the possibility of bringing meeting groups in Thailand to other South-east Asian destinations for pre- or post-tours. We could rotate the programme, of course.

#### **This idea was once discussed at the first ASEAN MICE Forum at IT&CMA, but it has been slow to take off.**

I'd imagine that this would be very hard to execute across Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand because we compete like crazy. (Laughs)

TCEB is working with CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). Travelling to and from these countries are easier for delegates attending events in Thailand, and these destinations offer something very different from what Thailand has.

We are testing this concept. We have started a visitorship programme – the ASEAN+6 Privilege where all regional visitors attending an event in Thailand can be partially subsidised. If this is successful, we can organise trade mission extensions to nearby countries for groups bound first for Thailand.

So far, TCEB has organised roadshows for certain PCOs and PEOs to go onwards to CLMV cities.

Down the road, if Singapore or Malaysia likes this model and wants to work with Thailand the same way, great. Customers today want new ideas and variety, and there's nothing to stop us (South-east Asian countries) from working together to offer different experiences.

# A heart for community

Starlight children's charity will gain free event management and fundraising help from Arinex, an Australian event company that has made volunteerism a big part of its work culture, writes **Karen Yue**

**A**ustralian event and conference management company Arinex signed a 12-month partnership with children's charity Starlight in early July, a move which will see the former providing pro bono event management services and financial support through company-wide fundraising initiatives.

The announcement came after Arinex presented a cheque for A\$6,340 (US\$4,439) to Starlight in May, which was raised following its 2018 Christmas party raffle. The raffle consisted of prizes donated by Arinex's venue and supplier partners – such as a Qantas return airfare to Cairns and a stay at Pullman Cairns International – which were auctioned to staff across the country.

Arinex's community work isn't new; it stretches way back to the company's founding and is an extension of its founder's own devotion to volunteering time and energy to community projects. Arinex's founder and chair, Roslyn McLeod, has been volunteering since primary school and is an active Rotarian of 26 years.

Nicole Walker, Arinex COO, said: "The spirit of helping others has always been a focus of our company. Staff are encouraged to assist local clubs and charities, and Arinex has long supported not-for-profit organisations such as the Cancer Council."

In 2010 when the Rotary Club of Sydney decided to initiate the New South Wales Police Officer of the Year Awards, Arinex jumped right in with pro bono event management services. Ever since, staff dedicate about 1,100 hours each year to this worthy cause.

Arinex went on to contribute resources to the management of Rotary International Peace Conference in Sydney last year.

"The Conference had an important mission – to promote peace worldwide. It was our chance to do our part for the Rotary International president who was an Australian for that year," Walker recalled.

With Arinex's help, the Conference achieved its social and financial goals. Costs were minimised, allowing a profit that was channelled into a peace scholarship.

"It was gratifying for our staff, including myself who attended a number of organising committee meetings, to be a part of such an important conference with such a worthwhile cause," Walker said.

While Arinex rotated its charity beneficiaries every year, in



**Above: Arinex raised money for Starlight children's charity during their Christmas party last year**

2018 it decided to focus its fundraising efforts and community work on just one organisation, "in order to maximise our impact", said Walker.

"Starlight was selected due to its worthwhile mission of supporting the families of seriously ill children and leaving a positive difference in the community, which mirror our values. There are also many opportunities for us to lend our event management skills and services towards its numerous fundraising events and activities across the country."

The first of Arinex's work with Starlight was the Star Ball in Sydney in August. As Arinex continues to seek other Starlight events to support, efforts in the meantime will be spent on internal fundraising for the organisation and facilitation of staff visits to the Starlight Express Rooms to experience first-hand the work the charity does.

When asked how Arinex motivates staff towards the spirit of giving, especially when the business of managing events requires long hours and often physically exhausting work, Walker said no incentives have had to be offered.

"This is something we all feel strongly about and so staff very much motivate themselves. In fact, the partnership with Starlight and recent enhancements to our CSR policies have all been driven from the ground up.

"This work ethic that permeates our company is also driven by our ongoing work with our clients, who are all doing wonderful things in their various areas of expertise. When you witness the positive impacts they are making, it is hard not to become inspired," she explained.

Arinex has been successful in building lasting community legacies into client events. A recent example is its work in helping clients certify their events as carbon-neutral while also working with suppliers who have strong initiatives in environmental protection.

**"We recognise our responsibility to assist those less fortunate than ourselves; and what better way to do that than using our skills and expertise as event managers?"**

**Nicole Walker**  
Chief operating officer, Arinex



# Smells like team spirit



TTG Asia Media heads to Mauritius for a fun teambuilding programme that showcased the destination’s key attractions. By [Rachel AJ Lee](#)

### Hot idea

Go for an all-inclusive resort to allow dining flexibility and ease of managing a master bill for large groups of participants.

### Brief

TTG Asia Media took its employees from the Singapore headquarters to Mauritius – an island nation in the Indian Ocean off the eastern coast of Africa – for its annual teambuilding getaway. As this was a rare chance for many of us to visit the destination, the programme was a mix of scheduled team bonding activities and free time.

### Highlights

The programme in Mauritius started early on May 10, with a teambuilding session at an old sugar mill. Over an hour, our group of 44 took part in a treasure hunt and traditional games that required team work.

The highlight of my day – and probably of the entire trip for most of my colleagues – was a quad bike track. The two-hour ride on 450cc quad bikes took us on bumpy dirt roads through sugarcane fields, small river crossings, and vegetable plantations. The ride culminated in Pont Naturel on the southern part of the island. We spent about half an hour there, where we took countless photos, and admired towering waves crashing into the volcanic rock.

We were all famished after the ride, and the event organisers were well prepared for that – surprising us with a delicious barbecued lunch awaiting our return to the sugar mill.

A second teambuilding session followed after lunch, this time back at our base, Hotel Riu Creole. The high-energy session got us running around the resort to complete various

challenges. Kudos to the Hotel Riu Creole staff, who dressed up in character and drummed up excitement.

On the second day we called at the Casela World of Adventure – a safari-esque park – where we got up close and personal with giraffes, ostriches and ancient giant tortoises.

Lunch, kindly arranged by Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, was at the rustic Restaurant Varangue Sur Morne, where we enjoyed panoramic views of the surrounding forest, sea and mountains while tucking into local Mauritian dishes such as chayote squash in bechamel sauce.

Post-lunch sightseeing brought us to Rhumerie de Chamarel, where we learnt how sugarcane was distilled into rum; as well as took in views of the cascading Chamarel Waterfall, and Seven Coloured Earth.

On our final day, the group split up to do their own chosen activities. Some of us went for a laid-back cruise onboard a catamaran; others headed to the capital of Port Louis to take a look-see; and a good number hung out at the beach and kayaked in the calm waters just in front of Hotel Riu Creole.

### Challenges

To speed our group through flight check-in, Air Mauritius created a special lane for us at Changi Airport’s Terminal 1.

Due to the group size, there was a shortage of quad bikes. To get around this, we were put on double quads and everyone took turns to drive and pillion.

It was a challenge for the large group to navigate the tall sugarcane fields. One of the lead riders – an appointed participant in the group – lost sight of the guide, a group of us to go off track. Fortunately, we were able to retrace our tracks and a guide was already on the lookout for us. That said, it was a hitch that could have been avoided by having more guides familiar with the trail to lead segments of the group.

To easily feed 44 hungry bellies every day, the company put us up at the all-inclusive Hotel Riu Creole, which meant that all meals and drinks were covered and everyone could eat whatever they fancied.

## FAST FACTS

**Event**  
TTG Annual Teambuilding Trip

**Venue**  
Mauritius

**Organiser**  
TTG Asia Media

**Date**  
May 9 to 14, 2019

**Event company**  
Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

**Attendance**  
44

# Catch up: Vinij Lertratanachai

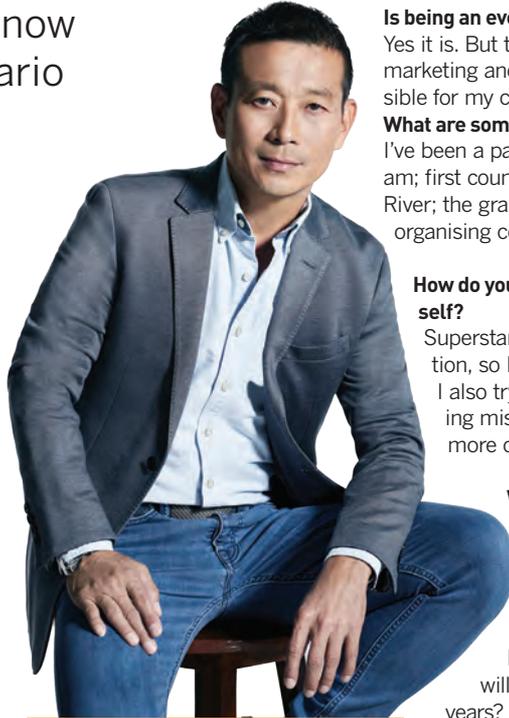
The ex-radio personality, now an entertainment impresario and businessman, shows how well he juggles the many hats he wears

## How would you describe your job as CEO, and founder, of production company Fresh Air Festival?

I am both an event creator and event promoter. Generally, I will not organise events that clients already have a structure for. Instead, I prefer to help them create something different and can achieve maximum impact.

## How was the jump like, from a radio celebrity to a businessman?

Having experience in the media business can help a lot. But understanding the customer is the key to success. I have to be aware that each customer comes with different requirements.



## Is being an event promoter tough?

Yes it is. But technology can help in this area. By combining marketing and technology, I can create the best event possible for my clients.

## What are some events you have organised recently?

I've been a part of the New Year Countdown 2019 at IconSiam; first count down at the Temple of Dawn on Chao Phraya River; the grand opening of the Mahanakhon Tower; and organising concerts for both local and international artistes.

## How do you manage celebrity clients, as a celebrity yourself?

Superstars and celebrities are not the general population, so I have to create a tailor-made service for them. I also try to help them to feel comfortable, while avoiding mistakes. Dealing with foreign celebrities is much more complicated than Thai celebrities.

## What do you do to unwind?

I love playing football. I also love most water activities such as sailing, jetskiing, and water cycling.

## Do you have a dream you're working towards?

I aspire to have my own football club but that will not happen at this point. Perhaps in the next 10 years?

– Suchat Sritama

## Appointment



**Beverley Williamson**



**Gareth Martin**



**Gavin Weightman**



**Nadia Yahiaoui**

### Beverley Williamson

The general manager of business development and bids at Melbourne Convention Bureau has been appointed to the role of chairperson for the BestCities Global Alliance Strategic Business Development group. She takes over from Karina Lance of Dubai Tourism.

### Gareth Martin

Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) has confirmed Gareth Martin as its new CEO. He has extensive business event, sales and marketing experience, and has held senior executive roles at PCB including director business development and general manager.

### Gavin Weightman

The Australian has taken the helm of Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort & Spa, Singapore as general manager. The seasoned hotelier was most recently general manager of Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa, Kota Kinabalu.

### Hiroko Seki

Royal Park Hotels has appointed Hiroko Seki as general manager of The Royal Park Canvas – Ginza 8. She is the first-ever female general manager in the history of the Japan-headquartered hospitality group.

### Nadia Yahiaoui

Amadeus has appointed Nadia Yahiaoui to head Corporations for Asia Pacific. Based in Singapore, she will focus on increasing Amadeus' regional footprint by helping Asia-Pacific-based corporations better manage business travel and expense.

### Tony Gardner

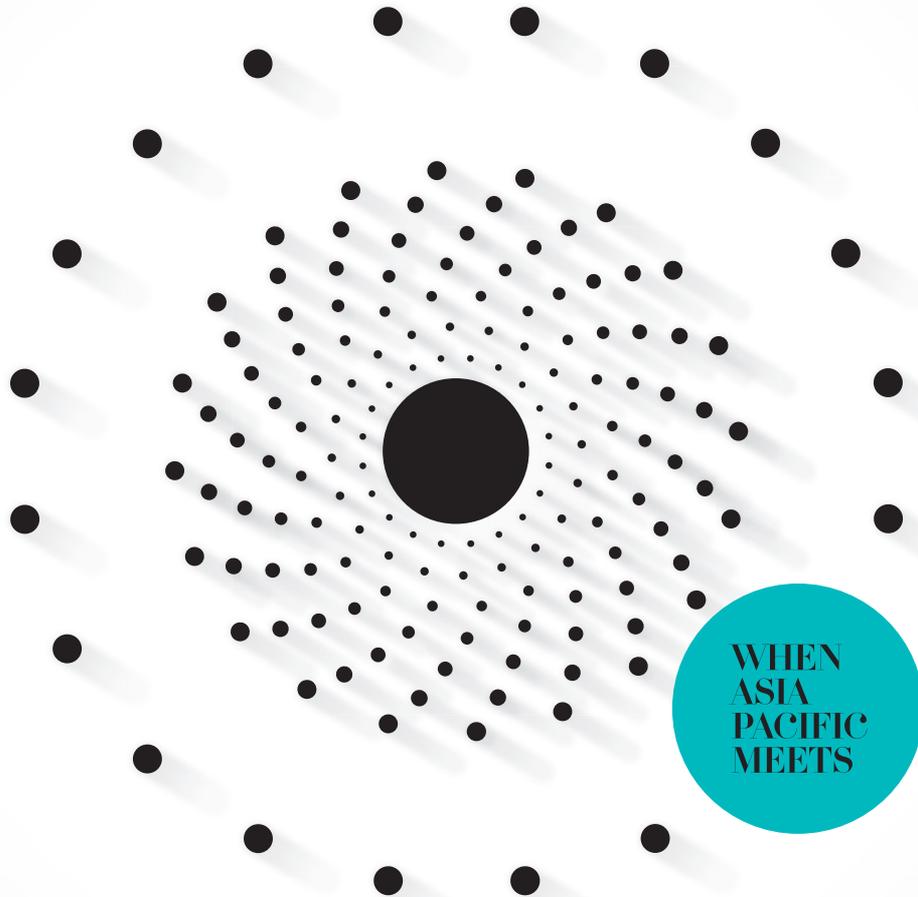
Tony Gardner has been reappointed as board chair of Conventions and Incentives New Zealand for another three years. He has significant industry association governance experience.

### Vikram Mujumdar

The Westin Desaru Coast Resort has appointed Vikram Mujumdar as general manager. He was previously the task force general manager at The St. Regis Vommuli Resort in the Maldives.

**MORE BUYERS  
MORE CONNECTIONS  
MORE BUSINESS**

---



---

**BE PART OF THE LEADING INCENTIVES & MEETINGS  
EVENT DISTINCTLY DESIGNED FOR ASIA PACIFIC**

---

**EXHIBITOR SPACE IN HIGH DEMAND  
DON'T MISS OUT.**

**HOSTED BUYER PROGRAM SPACES LIMITED  
REGISTER NOW.**

**[VISIT AIME.COM.AU FOR MORE INFORMATION.](http://AIME.COM.AU)**



# RISING ABOVE THE ORDINARY

At the heart of this city resides the Conrad Bangkok. With our versatile and high-tech meeting rooms and venues, event organizers will be perfectly placed to host a successful business event while accessing the city's charms to ensure that their delegates also enjoy an unforgettable trip.

Conrad Ballroom featuring 780 sqm of columnless space in a grand and sophisticated setting, The ballroom is able to host 1,200 guests and equipped with modular LED panels that can project images to all guests regardless of their seating direction.

CONRAD<sup>®</sup>  
BANGKOK

All Seasons Place, 87 Wireless Road, Bangkok, 10330 Thailand | **Phone** +66 (0) 2-690-9999 | [ConradBangkok.com](http://ConradBangkok.com)

ASIA EUROPE AFRICA MIDDLE EAST AMERICAS  
CONRADHOTELS.COM #STAYINSPIRED

