



IT&CM Asia **CTW**
Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings Asia-Pacific Corporate Travel World
IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific
November 18, 2020 • Virtual

Issue

2



Aligning stars for travel recovery

Travel desire is stronger than ever but restrictions continue to put a damper on recovery possibility



(From left) Benson Tang and Jeannie Techasiriwan

By Mimi Hudoyo

Government intervention to reopen borders and establish Covid-19 tests in place of compulsory quarantines, as well as travel stakeholders' efforts to rebuild travellers' confidence are needed to restart corporate and incentive travel, according to speakers on the Ready for the Road panel during November 17's CTW Asia Pacific virtual conference.

Benson Tang, executive director of Corporate Travel Community, said: "We now have (good Covid tests) with fast results that do not require travellers to wait (several) days, only two hours will do. So why do governments still need to quarantine people for two weeks? This will kill all businesses."

He added that "governments play very vital role" in facilitating travel and tourism recovery, and many travel associations have been lobbying the government for more appropriate actions to reopen borders.

Tang emphasised that a backlog of essential corporate travel activities is building up, and demand to get back on the road remains strong.

Agreeing, fellow panellist Jeannie Techasiriwan, special events assistant director of

Amway (Thailand), said the pandemic has failed to kill travel desire. Citing an example, Jeannie said she has "a happy problem" where an incentive trip for top achievers to Alaska in 2021 has attracted far more takers than pre-pandemic times.

"In the past, some participants, especially those who travel frequently, would rather take a cash alternative. But after 10 months of no travel activities, people want to (go on a trip to Alaska)," she said.

However, with travel logistics still a challenge today, particularly for large groups, Jeannie said Amway had to postpone the Alaska trip for 2,200 participants to 2022.

For now, Tang and Jeannie are hoping that the unique Singapore-Hong Kong Air Travel Bubble (ATB), which kicks off November 22, would make an exemplary case study for other governments.

The ATB is open to all travellers and does away with quarantines by relying on pre-departure and post-arrival Covid-19 tests.

And as companies begin planning their return to corporate travel, which includes transient trips and overseas MICE trips, Tang emphasised the need for travel management companies and corporate travel managers to become information centres to allay travellers' fears.

He noted that travel and tourism suppliers have done their part to establish health and safety protocols and new procedures to minimise contact for their customers, and are dependent on travel management companies and corporate travel managers to convey these assurances to their travellers.

Jeannie added that Amway would, more than ever, rely heavily on their travel agent network to provide real-time and accurate destination updates to help with future event planning and travel decisions.

TMCs get leaner and smarter

Global TMCs look set to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic in a better shape, as they move towards closer client partnerships, new pricing models that benefit all parties, and continued innovations.

Jo Sully, vice president and regional general manager, Asia Pacific, American Express Global Business Travel, observed that "a true partnership approach" by TMCs and clients is now key. "Objectives must align, risk must be shared and both must be adaptable to change," she said.

And with service needs changing, new pricing models have to be trialled.

Matthew Stewart, managing director, BCD Travel, Singapore noted a growing demand for information on health and safety measures by governments, airlines, at airports, etc – services that are not remunerated by the old model.

Observing the same, CWT is now testing new pricing models for various RFPs. Akshay Kapoor, head of APAC Sales, CWT, said the response so far "has been extremely positive" and the outcome would form the basis for future pricing strategies.

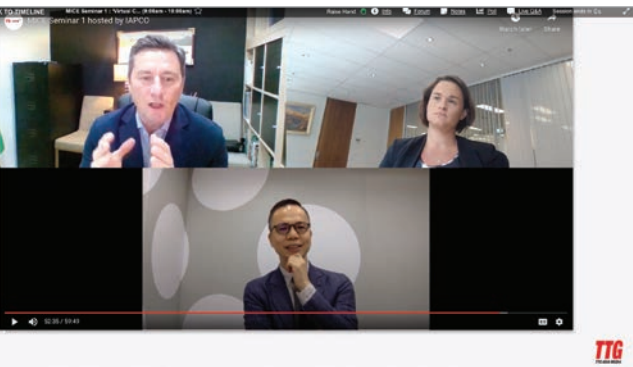
As outsourced travel enquiries begin to rise with travel coming back on, albeit primarily domestic, Bertrand Saillet, managing director, Asia, FCM Travel Solutions, said his team would continue to build client confidence by investing in critical activity, including product research and development. In July, it launched Traveller Hub, an interactive Covid-19 travel resource. In October, Flight Centre's Innovation Community launched the AI Reporting Tool to help travellers visualise information and turn it into actionable insights.

"We have also continued to invest in implementation and account management to really understand how our customer's needs hierarchies have changed due to the pandemic," Saillet shared.

Over at BCD, profits will continue to be reinvested into the company to birth innovative solutions despite a sharp drop in earnings. – **Caroline Boey**

Putting on the right virtual show

Varying formats, tech needs and strategies to note



Panellists share tips on making virtual events work

By Rachel AJ Lee

Correctly classifying an online event is crucial in allocating the best resources to design it, said speakers on the Virtual Congresses: What Works And What Does Not panel during IT&CM Asia & CTW 2020 virtual conference on Tuesday.

Nicole Walker, CEO of Australia-based PCO Arinex, suggested that planners first help clients differentiate between the types of online events.

"We have clients confusing a standard webinar with hybrid and satellite (or hub and spoke) events," she noted. Offerings on the platforms in the market also differ, so it is important that planners pick the correct one.

Digital event planners also need to avoid a one-speaker show or back-to-back sessions, with Walker warning that "Zoom fatigue" is a critical obstacle.

She suggested having polls and gamifica-

tion to keep the audience engaged, inject alternating content such as videos, and reduce presentations from an hour to 45 minutes.

Professionally-delivered and high-quality content from expert speakers remain top of the checklist regardless of the event format. Martin Boyle, CEO of the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, said: "Delegates are willing to pay (for a registration fee) if the content is high-value. Don't assume content has to be free."

In utilising hybrid and satellite event formats, Jason Yeh, CEO of Taiwan-based GIS Group, warned that different strategies and additional resources are required.

Yeh, who was instrumental in the delivery of the recently concluded 59th ICCA Congress in Kaohsiung, which utilised a hub-and-spoke format, said planners would need a team staffed by people with IT experience in the backend as well as a camera crew familiar with TV programming to "make (content) more attractive for online viewers".

In creating spoke events to support the main hub, Yeh said PCOs might even have to act as content producers to develop localised programmes.

Providing further technical advice, Walker said planners would have to take into consideration the unique lighting requirements for virtual telecasts as well as other details such as screen backgrounds.

An ideal time to sell the appeal of a hospitality career

The IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum (FLF), which has been inspiring hospitality, event and tourism students since 2003, will continue to be relevant even as the pandemic decimates hospitality business.



Bauer: a fulfilling career

Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX Group, regards the tourism crisis as an opportunity to demonstrate industry stakeholders' continued confidence in the business while emphasising the efforts being made today to transform the industry for improved efficiency and resilience.

When asked if FLF would see challenges attracting new bloods into a hospitality career today and in the immediate future, Bauer said: "I don't see a tougher job in convincing students to join us in the mid-to long-term. Our industry is robust and business will come back when the pandemic ends. FLF and other initiatives around developing students will continue to show the breadth of our industry, from hotel management to event services and marketing, and the many career opportunities available to them." – Karen Yue

In brief

ASEAN travel bubble in the works

South-east Asian leaders have agreed to establish an ASEAN travel corridor arrangement framework to facilitate essential business travel within the region. It will build on existing bilateral travel corridors between individual member states, as well as those established with partners outside the region, said the regional grouping in a statement.

TTG Publishing
Travel Trade

TTG TravelTrade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media

EDITORIAL

Karen Yue Group Editor
S Puvaneswary Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
Mimi Hudoyo Editor, Indonesia
Rachel AJ Lee, Assistant Editor, TTGmice, TTGassociations
Therese Tan Assistant Editor, TTG Content Lab
Pamela Chow Reporter, Singapore
Cheryl Ong Sub Editor

Redmond Sia Creative Designer
Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Somanas, Caroline Boey

SALES & MARKETING

Pierre Quek Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions
Chimmy Tsui Publisher and Head Integrated Solutions (China)
Jonathan Yap Senior Business Manager
Shirley Tan Senior Business Manager
Seth Leow Business Manager
Cheryl Lim Advertisement Administration Manager
Carol Cheng Manager Administration and Marketing

Cheryl Tan Corporate Marketing Manager
Jade Ye Marketing Executive
Delia Ng Digital Marketing Strategist

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Kun Swee Qi Publishing Services Executive
Nur Hazirah Web Executive
Katherine Leong Circulation Executive

TTG ASIA MEDIA

Darren Ng Managing Director

For sales & marketing enquires, please contact
traveltradesales@ttgasia.com

All set for recovery sprint

The Iloilo MICE Alliance is raring to go, believing itself well-prepared to attract physical and hybrid events the moment it is possible, reports **Rosa Ocampo**



Iloilo's track record in delivering quality business events over the last few years will serve her well in the recovery phase

It was only at the end of last year that the Department of Tourism first launched the PHP50 million (US\$1 million) Iloilo City MICE campaign.

With the tagline *Meet you in Iloilo*, the campaign markets and positions Iloilo as a primary MICE destination in the country.

This movement was supported by the Iloilo MICE Alliance, a private-public sector collaboration formed in 2019. Before the pandemic struck, the alliance was preparing for 80 meetings and events to be held in the city in 2021.

The alliance had also produced a MICE Guide with an array of incentives for meeting planners and organisers, a directory of accredited tourism-related establishments in the city, province and neighbouring island province of Guimaras, and a marketing plan to grow the industry.

Right now, the city is waiting patiently, and making preparations for events in the new normal while awaiting for the country's green light to resume gatherings.

By December, there will be seven testing facilities for both the city and province of Iloilo. The QR Code facility is also be-

ing worked on by the city for more efficient contact tracing, shared Iloilo MICE Alliance chair, Cleofe Albiso.

Unlike urbanised vertical cities, Iloilo is not as populated, boasting a vast expanse of outdoor areas. There is good town planning, as buildings have height restrictions. And in such times where clean and green is more sought after and social distancing the norm, the city is able to stand out.

"Iloilo is a liveable city with good governance. Traffic is well-managed, there are dedicated bike lanes, and a beautiful river with a world-class eight-kilometre-long river esplanade," said Narzalina Lim, adviser to the Iloilo MICE Alliance and city government on the role of the city as MICE centre of the Philippines.

From 2018 to 2019, at least 66,000 delegates attended events in Iloilo. The destination also successfully hosted both the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Iloilo's transformation into a MICE City began seven years ago with the construction of the Iloilo Convention Center located within the 72ha Iloilo Business Park.

The Convention Center has a capacity for 3,500 pax and is ready to host physical conferences. In light of the current global situation, it has beefed up its technology facilities, and can offer broadcasting to support hybrid events.

Lim added the city's central location in the Visayas grants visitors easy air access from Manila, Cebu and Davao. Internationally, Cebu Pacific flies direct to Iloilo from the financial hubs of Hong Kong and Singapore.

On the hotel front, a 500-key Belmont hotel is currently under construction within the Iloilo Business Park, and is scheduled for completion in three years.

Another plus, Lim said, is that the province is known for its rich culture – a draw for incentive groups. Various tour options will be able to showcase Iloilo's deep historical and cultural ties with its century-old churches; ancestral homes and museums; as well as numerous a gastronomic and farm experiences. Knowledge exchange is also made easier for associations and conferences, as Iloilo is the centre for education in Western Visayas.

Readying for the future

The South Korean capital keeps busy during the downtime by hosting virtual events and beefing up safety measures at venues. By **Rachel AJ Lee**

Though South Korea's borders have not completely reopened, its capital Seoul has been actively preparing for more business travellers and international delegates to return once possible.

There are encouraging signs on the horizon. In early October, South Korea and Japan resumed bilateral business travel. This agreement followed similar deals reached with Singapore in August, and China in May.

Under the agreements, business travellers on short-term business trips will not be required to observe 14-day self-isolation periods if they test negative for Covid-19 and submit travel itineraries, among other measures.

To aid the beleaguered MICE market, Seoul Convention Bureau (SCB) currently offers support for international conferences and corporate meetings/incentives. In light of the current global situation, support for online and hybrid events has also been shifted to the top of the revised PLUS Seoul programme.

One such supported event was the UIA Associations Round Table Asia-Pacific 2020 which took place in mid-September in virtual Seoul – complete with historical buildings and landmarks that mirrored the South Korean capital.

Working with the Seoul Tourism Organization, UIA hosted two days of workshops, conference sessions and virtual tours in a number of the city's iconic venues. Tours of event venues featured real-life visuals and augmented reality that displayed venue information.

SCB also lowered the minimum number of participants for corporate events from 50 to 20, as group sizes for meetings have noticeably shrunk.

A *Discover Bleisure Charms of Seoul* was recently published to help corporate groups inject authentic local experiences into itineraries during the planning stages.

On the hardware front, Seoul has added several unique venues to its portfolio, such as Nodeul Island – an uninhabited island in the middle of the Han River that has been transformed into an Ecological Park. Other



Seoul (pictured) is ready to welcome business visitors back with open arms

venues with similar backgrounds include Seoulo 7017 and Oil Tank Culture Park.

South Korea's MICE authorities have plans to grow the number of qualified unique venues to 50 by the end of 2023, and invest in personalised support for existing venues to help them develop and improve the overall delegate experience.

Elsewhere in Seoul, the Jamsil MICE complex is currently under development, set for a completion date in 2025. When completed, the Jamsil MICE complex will cover an area of 334,605m², three times the size of COEX. It will comprise of exhibition space, sports facilities, and a new luxury hotel with 900 keys for visiting delegates.

There are more areas the government plans to gazette as MICE clusters in the fu-

ture, although *TTG show daily* understands from Seoul Convention Bureau they will be smaller than Jamsil.

Meanwhile, existing venues such as COEX Convention & Exhibition Center have stepped up sanitisation procedures, to provide domestic and future international delegates a peace of mind when visiting for conferences or corporate events.

These collective efforts include more frequent disinfection sweeps of the centre, as well as air quality checks four times daily. A range of temperature-sensing equipment is also in use.

Exhibition attendees may be asked to wear transparent gloves when using touchscreens upon entry, in line with local government stipulations.

Down the virtual track

Digital or hybrid events will continue to be a vital delivery channel after the pandemic, and no destination has embraced it better, writes **Rachel AJ Lee**

Taiwan was coming into its own as a choice Asian MICE destination, but Covid-19 brought an abrupt halt to that momentum.

One of the solutions the destination quickly deployed to help save its MICE industry was a quick pivot to meet the rise of virtual reality (VR) exhibitions, online webinars and hybrid events, believing that these will be a necessity in a pandemic era.

One of Taiwan's largest international exhibitions, COMPUTEX 2020, was a victim of the Covid-19 outbreak. To not lose touch with its adherents, Taiwan quickly launched a series of online events to keep the tech industry connected with COMPUTEX. The first-ever COMPUTEX virtual event debuted on June 2, where the live stream was watched by over 400,000 viewers.

The success of this event laid the groundwork for future events.

In September alone, about 20 international exhibitions took place, such as the Taipei Intelligent Machinery & Manufacturing Technology Show (iMTduo) and SEMICON TAIWAN 2020, all of which were hybrid. These shows benefitted more than 3,500 manufacturers across a range of industries.

In early November, one of Taiwan's MICE cities, Kaohsiung, hosted the 59th ICCA Congress, which also took on a hybridised format. This was complemented by regional hub events across the globe to share the experience with members unable to attend the main congress.

Themed Transforming Global Events Together, the congress brought the ICCA global community together to create the



Taiwan has successfully pulled off several hybrid events; Taipei 101 pictured

Kaohsiung Protocol, a framework that identified major trends and key strategies that will enable the international meetings industry to thrive, now and into the future.

Aside from Kaohsiung, Taiwan has four other MICE-designated cities – Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung and Tainan.

The Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) – Taiwan's main PEO and official trade promotion agency – has remained consistent in its message, informing the larger MICE community that Covid-19 is well under control in the desti-

nation. The government agency has also been updating the safety levels of its MICE environment and travel policies, and is actively sharing its experience in overcoming the pandemic.

When asked if any new government or CVB schemes will surface soon, MEET TAIWAN shared that new support and policies are under discussion.

MEET TAIWAN also shared that construction and openings for several MICE venues around Taiwan are on schedule. The most recent opening was the Taipei Music Center in September 2020, while in the pipeline are the Kaohsiung Music Center (end-2020), Tainan Convention & Exhibition Center (2021), and Taichung Shuinan International Convention Exhibition Center (2022).

Despite the bleak situation, MEET TAIWAN added that the destination has not lost sight of its global market, and the appetite to attract international events has not been diminished.

Since June 22, the government has allowed foreign business travellers intending to visit Taiwan for less than three months to apply for shortened home quarantine period, provided they meet the conditions set by The Central Epidemic Command

Center.

One of the requirements was that these travellers must arrive from low- or medium-risk countries/regions and they must have no travel history to other countries in the last 14 days before boarding the flight to Taiwan.

"With the partial reopening of domestic MICE, a full reopening is soon to follow. We warmly welcome event planners from all over the globe to Taiwan, and will wholeheartedly support them before and after the borders reopen," MEET TAIWAN stated.

Long return to travel

It is a long road to recovery for corporate travel, and how the journey pans out is dependent on government restrictions, confidence in travel suppliers, access to information and company directives. By **Rachel AJ Lee**

Corporate travel in 2019 was on an upwards trajectory, and growth looked set to continue this year, with Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) predicting that global corporate travel spend would grow to an estimated US\$1.6 trillion in 2020.

That prediction was tossed out with the onset of Covid-19 in early March and resulting border closures and restrictions. Worldwide airline capacity has fallen 80 per cent compared to 2019 levels; and almost 90 per cent for international flights.

A sliver of hope

At press time, green shoots of recovery have started emerging in markets with a large domestic base.

Greg O'Neil, president Asia Pacific of BCD Travel, expects the return to air travel "to be gradual and slow, starting with the domestic markets".

In a survey conducted with 100 travel buyers by BCD Travel, essential business travel is slowly resuming (73 per cent), with 25 per cent of respondents indicating they would recommend direct flights to minimise risk.

Jo Sully, vice president APAC, American Express Global Business Travel (AMEX GBT), agreed: "We are already seeing evidence of this demand in the business sector with an increase in domestic travel in countries including China, Australia and parts of Europe."

FCM Travel Solutions' State of the Market Survey also showed encouraging travel intentions – 70 per cent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they expected to increase business travel gradually over a period, with consensus peaking in business travel returning domestically in one to three months (40 per cent), and internationally in six to 12 months (32 per cent).



FCM Travel Solutions' general manager, Bertrand Sallet, stated that the speed to recovery was dependent on government regulations around border restrictions and quarantine measures.

"In Asia-Pacific, we already see great traction on domestic routes in most markets and particularly in China and Australia. International travel remains extremely limited," he added.

For business hub Singapore, where domestic business travel consumption is non-existent, rebound is dependent on four key factors.

James Chua, general manager of Singapore's Global Travel, said: "These concerns include the reopening of borders, lifting of quarantine measures, airlines resuming

their flights, and travellers regaining their confidence to fly.

"The quarantine of 14 days in the destination of visit will certainly be a deterrent to corporate travellers. Only if this is lifted or when a cure for Covid-19 is found, demands will be at a minimum at least for the next six months."

The government, which has expressed awareness of Singapore's vulnerability, as forged reciprocal green lanes for business and essential travel with six Chinese cities, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea. Singapore has also unilaterally reopened borders to travellers from Brunei, New Zealand, Vietnam and Australia.

In early October, transport minister Ong Ye Kung revealed that negotiations for travel

bubbles with safe countries and regions are underway. The arrangement will facilitate general travel and does not require a controlled itinerary.

New considerations

With health and hygiene factors a top priority now, corporate travel managers are expecting all travel suppliers – not just airlines – to provide reassurance of their safety and cleanliness protocols.

Another research with 1,260 business travellers that BCD Travel conducted revealed that top concerns included quarantine measures after travel, followed by social distancing and cleanliness of their environment during trips. Nine in 10 also rated frequent enhanced disinfection of airport and aircraft as extremely or very important, followed by new boarding procedures and empty seats on airplanes to accommodate social distancing.

The FCM survey found that 59 per cent of respondents regarded traveller and supplier health and hygiene factors as top priority. When asked what would trigger the prompt resumption of business travel, the easing or lifting border restrictions came in tops with 93 per cent of respondents saying it has significant or some impact.

However, the second trigger is the employer's travel direction, with 89 per cent of respondents saying that they would travel if their "organisation deems it safe to travel and this is reflected in our travel policy".

For those that are willing to travel now, Chua opined they will have expectations

such as "wanting to know the safety measures that the airline has put in place, and wanting to be updated on new travel requirements for the intended destination including transit".

Sully shared that her recent conversations with travellers found that "demand is strong". In fact, most would still consider travelling this year, but would want "to be armed with the right information at the right time". This is because "potential for disruption is now a constant".

"Airline schedules, processes and entry rules can change at a moment's notice in response to local government actions. We have already seen a government quickly responding to risk with the stopping and starting of travel most recently in Melbourne, Australia," she said.

To keep travellers informed, AMEX GBT developed Travel Vitals, a source of information for use before, during and after a journey. It draws data from hundreds of sources, including governments, airports, airlines, risk management partners and hotels, to provide advice on travel restrictions, and identify Covid-19 hot spots.

Similarly, BCD Travel also developed the Informed Traveler, where users will have access to real-time information such as destination risk alerts, airline and hotel policies, ground transportation protocols and travel restrictions.

FCM Travel Solutions has its own information resource too, in the form of Traveler Hub.

Two-way communication

Airlines are doing their part to keep TMCs updated, as well as provide as much flexibility as they can.

Chua shared that his airlines partners were supplying flight restoration updates, travel health advisory, and Covid-19 checklists.

Saillet added: "While airlines are making



“Past disruptive events have never delivered drops in capacity this steep or potentially this sustained or as global.”

Greg O'Neil

President Asia Pacific,
BCD Travel

a lot of changes for air travel in future for all travellers, we are seeing some airlines add specific measures to ensure their corporate clients are being looked after. For example, certain airlines are offering free name changes.”

AMEX GBT's Sully has also received regular communications from airlines that address the increased measures they are taking, ranging from new cleaning processes and contactless check-in procedures to change fees waivers and unlimited booking changes.

O'Neil noted: "Airlines need to think now how they reposition and market themselves as the industry re-emerges – messages showing a clear commitment to safety (and) hygiene will determine the winners.”

He further opined that for corporate air travel to reach pre-Covid volumes, recovery would probably take two to three years.

"Meanwhile, TMCs must reinvent themselves, adopt new technologies, and increase productivity to stay relevant as the landscape has evolved and will certainly involve further," Chua added.



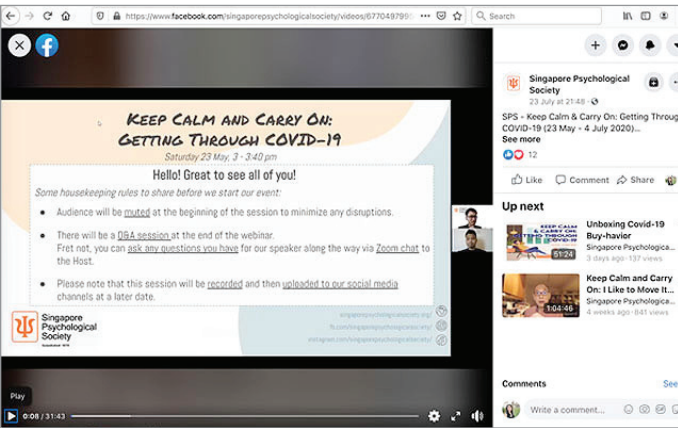
“Airline schedules, processes and entry rules can change at a moment's notice in response to local government actions.”

Jo Sully

Vice president Asia-Pacific,
American Express Global
Business Travel

Online lifeline

The online space has become the favourite meeting room for many associations that need to maintain engagement with members and the public, but risks of webinar fatigue need to be addressed. By **Karen Yue**



Singapore Psychological Society launched a series of talkshows for the public on Facebook during the lockdown

Associations that once had an array of face-to-face engagement tools at their disposal – conferences, meetings, training workshops, social functions, community volunteerism programmes – prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, have found themselves restricted to just online formats due to travel restrictions and event capacity limitations in many destinations.

However, for some association chiefs, this predicament has turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as moving communications and engagement online has resulted in richer exchanges with an expanded audience.

Prior to the pandemic, the Singapore Psychological Society (SPS) had never ventured online with its member activities. It followed the traditional route of face-to-face workshops and conferences, newsletters and emails.

Today, SPS conducts one or two member-facing special interest online events every month to maintain engagement and exchange, and has started a topical series for the public on social media platforms to address psychological issues arising from the pandemic and lockdown.

Going online has also allowed

SPS to avoid having to restrict its events only to days when rental rates were lower and space was available, said president Cherie Chan.

Another benefit of the digital event shift, according to Chan, is her team's new confidence in running online events.

Carlin Lee, SPS vice-president, shared that the team has since decided to convert the society's annual Student Research Awards into an online edition.

International Congress and Convention Association's (ICCA) regular Business Exchange, which once brought in small numbers of participants, has seen "huge interest" since going online, revealed Noor Ahmad Hamid, regional director Asia Pacific.

The online shift also brings additional revenue-generating potential, opined Octavio Peralta, secretary general of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific, and the president & CEO of the Philippine Council for the Advancement of Association Executives (PCAAE).

"The pricing model for a webinar will not be comparable to a face-to-face seminar because the organisational cost is different, but that is not to say that

a webinar will not make money. I believe associations now have the capacity to expand its reach beyond their members. There is also an opportunity for a recurring revenue in webinars as they can be recorded, repurposed and re-marketed in the future as an on-demand resource," said Peralta.

He shared that PCAAE's webinar offering strategy is two-fold – information-sharing webinars are free to the public to raise visibility and attract potential sponsors while unique content and certificate-granting webinars attract a registration fee.

Something old, something new

Long before online and hybrid events were necessitated by travel and event restrictions, the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) created Convening Leaders Live, an annual hybrid event that brought in strong online and offline attendance from around the world. It also maintained a digital strategy at a time when few other associations saw the need for one.

Since the onset of the pandemic, PCMA has intensified its online activities. Engagement with the board and members are more frequent through online means such as e-direct mails, Zoom meetings and focus groups, webinars and a bi-weekly Covid Recovery Dashboard survey. PCMA reports a 64 per cent year-on-year spike in website traffic through June, with over 300,000 views of its Covid-19 content alone.

The Covid Recovery Dashboard survey has proven to be "incredibly popular," said Karen Bolinger, PCMA's managing director



Content is now different...and delivered in bite-size because we recognise the issue of digital fatigue and distraction when one isn't attending an event in person.

Cherie Chan

President, Singapore Psychological Society



I believe associations now have the capacity to expand its reach beyond their members (through online events).

Octavio Peralta

President & CEO, Philippine Council for the Advancement of Association Executives



for Asia-Pacific, attracting about 1,000 responses each time.

Online trainings and meetings are not new to ICCA too, as these virtual options are held to encourage wider attendance by its global membership, revealed Noor. But he told *TTG Show Daily* that the organisation has never “gone to the extent of moving all events to virtual or hybrid (platforms)”.

“With this pandemic and since travel is not possible, all activities have gone virtual. For example, our annual Association Meetings Programme (June 29-30) was completely virtual,” Noor remarked, but added that as destinations begin to reopen for domestic travel, his organisation has been able to get some hybrid events off the ground.

“For example, the ICCA Congress in Kaohsiung this November and ICCA Asia Pacific Summit in Yokohama this December will be hybrid events,” he added.

ICCA Congress in Kaohsiung will act as the main event, with physical meeting opportunities, and will be supported by a six-week-long series of regional hub events around the world starting in September. Regional members can choose to participate in person or remotely.

Battling fatigue

ICCA now hosts an average of four to five virtual meetings and webinars each month, excluding training programmes. The schedule was a lot busier in the beginning of the global travel freeze, with “quite a number of webinars” conducted for the various regions and sectors of its membership.

“However, as we are coming into webinar fatigue, we decided to only organise one if it is necessary. Online trainings are an exception – they have gone up dramatically because most members are investing this (downtime) into training and learning,” explained Noor.

Declaring that “webinars are one of the best options and means for associations to stay connected with our boards and mem-

bers” and that their benefits will ensure they became “part of a growing portfolio of standard service offerings to members, even after this pandemic”, Peralta said webinar fatigue would only set in when the attendee experience and content are “mediocre”.

Peralta pointed out that associations looking to engage with their audience online are not limited to just webinars.

“There are at least five different online event concepts – webinars; webinar plus interaction; content and connect, which are networking opportunities; online summit or conference; and virtual exhibition,” he explained.

Peralta added that providing “exceptional experiences through differentiation and diversity of these online offerings at varied levels or types of events” is key to maintaining member interest and participation.

Over at PCMA, online engagement is kept high with constant content evolution. It has introduced shorter, more intimate gatherings of audience segments to add specific value and to ensure attention is captured and maintained.

Some of the new online content are Chat & Learns, where an expert presents a specific topic with more Q&A time; and a one-day digital Brain Date event that allows audiences to connect in small groups or one-on-one about a specific topic.

“It is these member-only forum sessions that have been immensely popular and have given people the chance to communicate and stay engaged during this time,” said Bolinger.

SPS too, has learnt to keep its online content “bite-size”, each no more than an hour long, and to make them as conversational as possible so that attendees would remain engaged and awake.

Fitting in traditional media

Despite the heavier reliance on online media for association communications, Mathilde Gabriel, account manager of Chab Lab, an

Get smarter online

Mathilde Gabriel, account manager of Chab Lab, the digital events and marketing division of Chab Events, lays out some tips on keeping web events hot and interesting

Invest in building up a storyline. Quality content is a result of time and intelligent effort spent. Focus on identifying your event’s narrative and make it brisk and gripping; coordinate a rehearsal with the speakers or even invest in training for them.

Cap it at 60 minutes. With distractions all around, participants tend to lose interest if a webinar lasts much longer.

Make time for inclusivity and engagement. Interaction during online meetings has gone from nice-to-have to absolutely-must-have. This ranges from a simple icebreaker to an occasional pulse-checking poll to an open Q&A at the end.

Don’t skip the entertainment. An impressive opening and closing entertainment is as important as the core content delivered in a web conference. Consider visually-strong ideas such as sand art, live art painting, an impactful video as the opening or motivational one for the closing, or mentalists or online magicians.

agency specialising in digital events and strategic marketing, believes there is still a future for traditional media, such as printed or electronic newsletters and journals.

Gabriel said that these media help to maintain contact with members in between digital events and are better for targeting a wider audience.

Lee, too, believes that traditional media will not be phased out post-lockdown, “as our members enjoy reading” about the latest findings and issues relating to the field of psychology.

Late-2019, SPS revived the *Singapore Psychologist*, a quarterly flagship magazine geared towards education and public awareness around specific issues, such as depression and anxiety.

What needs to change with these passive media is the form of content they convey. Gabriel suggested that a short video clip could be embedded in an e-newsletter to help it stand out from other emails.

A breath of fresh air

Incentive travel will return with intimate groups, wellness activities and outdoor pursuits. Here are some ideas to get started. By **TTG Show Daily** reporters



Pure Adventure with Nature

This five-day, four-night programme in New Zealand's Queenstown is packed to the brim with all the adrenaline activities one could dream of.

Planners will have a slew of land and water activities to choose from, ranging from bungee jumping and skydiving to whitewater rafting and horse riding. Winners will also be brought to restaurants such as Waikatipu Grille and Colonel's Homestead Restaurant, to taste dishes made with locally-sourced ingredients.

There will be a chance to interact with the Maoris, and work with the Wakatipu Reforestation Trust, a volunteer-led community organisation that aims to protect and restore the native biodiversity of the region through revegetation projects.

Group sizes range from 20 to 120 pax.
connect@micematters.com

Sunrise at Mount Bromo and Breakfast on the Savannah

This two-day trip starts from Surabaya, where upon arrival at Juanda International Airport, delegates will be transferred to Cemorolawang Village near Mount Bromo for an overnight stay at the local hotel.

Guests will be then hop into a 4WD jeep at 03.00 to the Penanjakan view point to watch the sunrise, before continuing to the mountain's crater, followed by a pony ride before climbing 245 stairs to the summit. After that exercise, delegates will be brought to a quiet area for a freshly-prepared breakfast served picnic-style.

Under new health regulations, group sizes will be limited to 15, while the jeep will accommodate only two instead of four.
info@monastours.com

Wildlife Encounters in Sabah

This two-day programme by Borneo Trails to Sandakan and the Kinabatangan River in Sukau, Malaysia is ideal for those who want to get away from the city.

It starts with a tour to see two endangered species, the orangutan and the Borneo sun bear at their respective rehabilitation centres. At both centres, delegates will be briefed on what Sabah is doing to rehabilitate these animals so that they can be released back into the wild.

This is followed by a two-hour drive to Sukau, and a stay at the eco-friendly 12-room Borneo Nature Lodge, located along the Kinabatangan River. Guests can opt for a day or night cruise with an experienced guide to spot local wildlife such as proboscis monkeys, pygmy elephants, wild cats and hornbills.

This is suitable for small groups of up to 20 people, and with advance notice, companies will also be given the option to book the entire resort for the ultimate privacy.

bernadette@borneotrails.com



Xperience Singapore's Crazy Rich Asians Tour

While the hype surrounding popular film *Crazy Rich Asians* has calmed, tours inspired by the movie remain a wealth of rich cultural experiences for visitors to Singapore. In Xperience Singapore's take of a behind-the-scenes journey, participants will visit a number of movie locations that also hold historical and cultural significance. These include the Gothic chapel CHIJMES and Newton Circus Food Centre with its Michelin-listed hawker stalls.

Finally, in a rare opportunity, guests can also partake in a private mahjong session with an expert. A gamble between four persons, mahjong is no longer played in public, making it almost inaccessible to visitors. The two-hour tours are kept small and intimate, ranging from two to a maximum of five individuals at a given time.

contact@xperiencedmc.com

Geopark Wonders Walk

Sharp Island in Hong Kong – a UNESCO Global Geopark – is a long and narrow south-north island located a stone's throw from Sai Kung Town Centre.

A three-hour tour, led by a certified EcoGuide, will take visitors on a hike around the island to look at various kinds of igneous rocks, such as volcanic breccia, quartz monzonite and rhyolite.

Visitors will also get to see evidence of a huge ancient caldera – it is believed that around 140 million years ago a volcano was located in Sai Kung – and walk across a tombolo (a sand bar) to another smaller island.

The tour is available all year round, with summer tipped as a good season for photos and clear blue sky and sea. Group sizes range from two, to a maximum of 10.

derektse@ecotravel.hk



9 Hornbills Tented Camp

Probably no form of accommodation is more suited to social distancing than glamping, and the secluded, adults-only 9 Hornbills Tented Camp on Ko Yao Noi Island in Thailand will take all the bite out of the necessary health and safety measure.

The seven tented villas here open out to a view of the sea, and each dwelling boasts its own private infinity pool where floating breakfast platters and butler service are order of the day. Groups that book out the entire resort will have the property's private beach all to themselves.

Snooze in a beachside hammock, snag a kayak or paddle board and hit the water, or rent motorbikes or bicycles to explore the island. Teambuilding activities or local explorations can also be organised by the resort, or through its partner, Khiri Travel.

reservations@9hornbills.com



Local Alike “Covid Therapy” Activities

Ethically-conscious community-based tourism enterprise Local Alike in Thailand has debuted a series of six post-Covid therapy activities.

They are Aural Therapy through folk music and the sound of nature in Chiang Mai; Endless Horizon Visual Therapy in a village nestled in the mountains of Mae Hong Sorn; Breath of Life Oxygen Therapy in Chulapornpattana local community in Yala; Eat Well to Live Well Therapeutic Gastronomy at a community in Rayong; Forest Bathing to revitalise the body at Baan Rai Jai Kaew organic farm with an included homestay; and Spiritual Therapy Path to Peace in Lamphoon.

Each trip is usually 2D/1N long but can be customised according to a group's preference, and is limited to 20 pax or less.

sales@localalike.com



Khmer Party in Chhreav Village

The Khmer people hold a gathering every year in the countryside to celebrate the rice harvest. Asian Trails can arrange for groups of between 26 to 60 to partake in the outdoor traditional event in Chhreav Village, a 20-minute drive from Siem Reap. It will be an evening of gastronomic delights and local cultural experiences.

The group will be able to taste Khmer cuisine, where the dining area is set up around a local craft market with stalls in wooden cottages. After eating their fill, guests will be able to try their hand at a sculpture workshop, making baskets, milling rice, shadow-puppet making, or fishing. There will also be a Bokator – Cambodian martial art demonstration – and a chance to dance to traditional music.

res@asiantrails.com.kh



Jaya Catering, Siem Reap, Asian Trails



Soneva Fushi Island Buyout

Soneva Fushi, a luxury beach resort in the Maldives' Baa Atoll, recently released an Island Buyout Offer.

Prices start from US\$100,000++ per night, and are inclusive of accommodation in any of the one- to nine-bedroom villas for as many people as an event planner desires. However, prices do not include meals, experiences or transfers.

Guests will be able to watch films at the outdoor Cinema Paradiso, saunter into any restaurant at any given time of the day for a bite, head to the spa for a soothing scrub, cycle on trails through the island jungle, snorkel with manta rays, or just laze by the beach with a cocktail in hand.

reservations@soneva.com

The Vietage

The Vietage, a 12-guest carriage, has launched luxury railway journeys through the Vietnamese countryside linking Danang and Quy Nhon.

It journeys for six hours between Anantara Hoi An Resort and Anantara Quy Nhon Villas, passing through local villages, the rural countryside, and stops at a few stations on the way.

Amenities onboard the custom-designed carriage include a sit-up bar, and a dedicated area with spa treatment chairs. An à la carte menu also offers premium wines, champagnes and treats such as local caviar and cheeses, all available for pre-purchase.

The Vietage runs for 11 months each year, taking a break during the annual Vietnamese Tet holiday period.

vietage@thevietagetrain.com



Jetski Island Adventure Excursion

The four-hour jet ski excursion offered by Mega Water Sports explores the natural beauty of the southern islands of Langkawi, which is a UNESCO Global Geopark.

The experienced guide will share knowledge of what Malaysia's Langkawi Geopark is about, the limestone formations along the way, as well as point out wildlife sightings of eagles, hornbills, long tailed macaques and dusky leaf langurs. A stop at a secluded island for delegates to swim and relax on the beach is also included.

This activity can take a maximum of 40 people at one time, split into four groups of 10 people on five jet skis.

info@megawatersports.com

Lamma Fisherfolks' Village

Situated on Lamma Island, the 1,858m² floating exhibition area is the only venue in Hong Kong that preserves the local fisherfolk culture and history of the fishing industry.

Participants can discover what life was like on the island, through various exhibits and activities such as hook-less fishing, traditional net fishing, cocktail mixing with preserved salted tangerine, or even Hakka tea pudding class in just half a day.

The open-air setting is a plus as groups can be split up and take part in different activities simultaneously. It should be avoided during the typhoon season, as well as on the weekends as it gets crowded with locals.

Sideline programmes like hiking and cultural tours at So Kwu Wan are also offered, while in the summer, guests can even try their hand at dragonboat paddling.

cs@rainbowtour.com.hk



A time to learn

Buyers are looking forward to new industry initiatives and trends that will light the way to business recovery



MARCIA MIRANDA

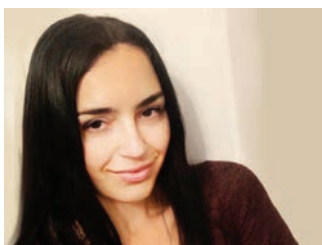
Director,
Luxury ID Travel, Brazil

We are looking for new suppliers and options for our future events and incentive tours. The brand showcase presentations, mini destination/brand roadshows, and procurement showcases at the virtual show will be a good point to start.

ALEXANDRA HENRIQUES

Marketing director,
head of operations,
TQ Travel Quality SA,
Portugal

I hope to connect with hotels as well as tour and venue operators at the procurement showcases and scheduled meetings. As our company deals with a lot of group travels and MICE programmes, I also hope to develop contacts with DMCs.



TOMOMI KONDO

Senior meeting planner, Alcon Japan

I look forward to destination and hotel updates as well as to understand ongoing industry trends. I hope to discover new destinations and hotels for our incentive trips in the coming two years at the MICE seminars, brand showcase presentations, mini roadshows and scheduled meetings.



SANJIV PODDAR

CEO,
Vasudha Travels, India

I hope to uncover insights and prospects on MICE and luxury tours in the new normal, as well as understanding operational concepts. I look forward to attending the virtual exhibitions as well as brand showcases and mini roadshows.

KUNWARJEET SINGH

Managing director, Green Chili Events & Entertainment, India

My priority is destination knowledge, and I'm keen to meet new local suppliers for the Indian market. Areas of interest would include dining, entertainment, historical tours, and unique venues for events and weddings.

PRACHA TRAKARNILP

Managing director, PCTS Co., Thailand

To remain relevant for the travelscape ahead, we are interested to hear about future travel trends at this event, especially in the areas of virtual conferences. We will also be connecting with new contractors for our corporate travel programmes.

DIEGO MARTIN SANCHEZ BECCHI

Executive director,
Sanchez Becchi MICE,
Argentina

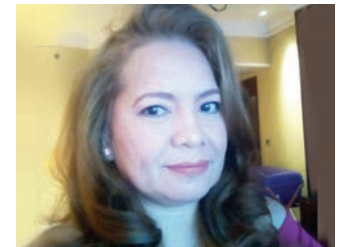
I hope to meet more tech and virtual systems suppliers at this year's ITCMA, and am paying attention to the future of event organisation. I am also keen on more insights on biosecurity.



CELIA MAGNO RANARA

Owner & president, Vanity
Travel & Tours, Philippines

I hope to be inspired by the seminars on how to move forward in this pandemic crisis, particularly in the areas of sustainable tourism. My take is, attending virtual events are helpful in updating ourselves, and portrays a message of hope that the industry is very much alive and is enroute to recovery. I'm piqued to see how virtual familiarisation tours will unfold during the mini destination/brand roadshows!



MANISH RAJ

Vice president – global sales
& new initiatives,
Moveinsync Technology
Solutions, India

I am looking forward to see how the incumbents have adapted to new norms, and if opportunities have arose for a new travelscape at this virtual event. As we progress in a cyber age, I hope to see more digital offerings making a difference to the industry. Segments that will appeal to me are interactive booths, brand roadshows, themed networking sessions and buyer procurement showcases.



Refreshing perspectives

IT&CMA 2020's virtual marketplace is buzzing with a variety of destinations and business events specialists from all over Asia-Pacific



CRIMSON RESORT AND SPA BORACAY

The third Crimson property managed by Chroma Hospitality, Crimson Resort and Spa Boracay is cloistered in one of Philippines' newest destinations, Station Zero.

A 3,400m² beachfront resort with pristine white sand and crystal clear waters makes for a unique incentive retreat or memorable venue for product launches and gala dinners. Guests can envelope in the charm of island living and unwind in one of its 192 contemporary rooms.

GROUNDK CO.

GroundK provides ground transportation services in Asia and 80 other global destinations.

Its unique selling point is a real-time based booking system which enables flexible and convenient bookings, especially in cases of flight delays.

Chauffeur-driven luxury vehicles can be arranged to support sightseeing and shopping tours.



MEET TAIWAN

With the partial reopening of domestic events in Taiwan, 4Q2020 is expected to see an estimated 70 events being hosted in the destination. These events span F&B, outdoor sports, gaming and other sectors.

Planners looking to meet in Taiwan can rely on MEET TAIWAN, an agency that offers professional consulting, subsidies and other forms of support for events and delegates.

THAI AIRWAYS

Thai Airways International (THAI) is more than just an airline, as it presents offers that promote Thailand as a choice destination for business events.

As the official and supporting airline for numerous meetings, conventions and exhibitions held in the kingdom, THAI dishes out discounted airfares for delegates. The THAI team is also able to create a range of exclusive teambuilding programmes on behalf of event planners.



MAHANAKHON SKYWALK

At 314m above ground on the 74th floor, Thailand's highest observation deck offers unobstructed views of Bangkok from an indoor observation deck.

A thrilling photo opportunity over a glass tray on the 78th floor is available for the courageous.

Visitors can also enjoy the city view via augmented reality as well as a virtual reality paragliding activity.

