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NEWS

MakeMyTrip to expand its B2B offerings

The company is targeting large corporations and MSMEs via the Quest2Travel and MyBiz platforms. Through the MyPartner platform, the company engages with over 26,000 offline travel agents and powers online platforms such as Amazon Pay by using the capabilities of the company's MyAffiliate platform.



Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi opens doors

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has opened the Hyatt Centric Janakpuri New Delhi near the Janakpuri West District Center. This prime location will provide a launchpad for leisure and business guests.



St. Regis Goa Resort will have 1,183 sq. m., of meeting space and an additional 1,000 sq. m., of expansive function lawns

overlooking the Mobor Beach. Guests can expect modern, multi-purpose venues.



Tanuja Pandey
Founder & Director
MICE Online



M!CE is on the move, and the demand is global. Travel is the greatest motivator and I do not think virtual events can replace this entirely – now or in the future!



Seoul is strengthening its M!CE ecosystem

Seoul Tourism Organization is continuing activities to support the M!CE industry and recovery plans in preparation for the endemic. A meeting was recently held by inviting major DMCs of the Seoul M!CE Alliance, followed by a Seoul M!CE support briefing session.



PDMF 2022 to take place in Thailand



Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) will host the PATA Destination Marketing Forum 2022 (PDMF 2022) in Songkhla, Thailand. The event will increase the visibility and awareness of Songkhla and other regional M!CE cities as international M!CE destinations.

2023 business events revenue to surpass 2019 levels: IACC

According to the IACC's Annual Meeting Room of the Future Barometer 2022, two-thirds of venues expect to return to 2019 meeting revenue levels in 2022 or 2023, with Danish and Australian venues forecasting the quickest recovery. Respondents worldwide indicated that 2023 will be the first year to surpass 2019 revenue levels for meetings and business events. Predictions differed slightly by country, with Denmark expecting revenues to exceed 2019 levels as early as 2022, while the Americas had a slightly longer prognosis, with revenues not expected to recover to pre-pandemic levels until 2024.



ITILITE celebrates its suppliers in Bengaluru

On 25 March 2022, ITILITE conducted a suppliers celebration night in Conrad, Bengaluru. More than 50 airlines and hotels were invited for the gala night. ITILITE completed five years of its existence, and as a token of gratitude, all suppliers were invited to a Wine and Dine night. ITILITE is an integrated self-booking travel and expense management platform, empowering travel and related expenses for hundreds of enterprises and leading startups globally. It is recognised by G2, Wharton India Economic Forum, and SuperStartups Asia as the leading T&E platform.

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Gaining momentum

GBTA Business Travel Recovery poll reveals, as international travel resumes, travel bookings, spending, and willingness are rising, alongside policy, inflation, and sustainability factors.

Business travel is on the rise, international travel is back, and despite new challenges, the sector is on the mend. Furthermore, corporate travel policies are being revised, and employees are willing to travel for business.

This data comes from the Global Business Travel Association's April Business Travel Recovery Poll, the 27th in a series. The

LESS CANCELLING

Companies are continuing to resume international business travel, with just 45 per cent reporting that they have cancelled or delayed most or all foreign business trips, which is 27 points lower than the February figure of 71 per cent. One in every five respondents (20 per cent) reported cancelling or suspending most or all domestic business travel, compared



There is a high level of optimism and employee willingness to travel for business



travel managers report that the pandemic has resulted in changes to their company's travel policies, including 39 per cent fewer business trips overall; 37 per cent of employees taking fewer business trips but with more goals assigned to each trip; 24 per cent more trip approval requirements; and a 23 per cent re-evaluation of how employees travel.

IMPACT OF INFLATION

As a result of inflation, many companies are increasing their business travel spending. Employee travel expenses for air travel have increased by 41 per cent, hotel stays by 34 per cent, car rentals by 33 per cent, and ride sharing and taxis by 26 per cent.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Corporate travel managers recognise that sustainability will have an impact on their travel programme. Expectations include fewer overall trips per employee (54 per cent), longer, multi-purpose business trips (43 per cent), and more rail and multi-modal options (34 per cent). The majority of travel buyers (61 per cent) believe their company will not limit the number of times they fly in business class.

GETTING BACK THE KNACK FOR TRAVEL

GBTA stakeholders most often report that they and/or their colleagues have experienced confusion about travel restrictions or documentation, are more anxious or stressed about business travel, or have had challenges when navigating airports and security rules.



QUICK BYTE More companies are allowing domestic and now also international employee travel

following are some of the findings in the poll:

HIGH GROWTH

Companies that allow non-essential domestic business travel have grown to 86 per cent, up from 73 per cent. International travel has increased significantly, with 74 per cent stating that their firm now allows it, a 26 percentage point increase from February.

to 33 per cent in February. Companies that previously cancelled or ceased most or all travel to a specific region or country intend to resume domestic travel, while 52 per cent intend to resume foreign travel within the next one to three months.

CORPORATE TRAVEL BOOKINGS RETURN

The majority of suppliers and travel management

companies (TMCs) report an increase in reservations in the previous month (88 per cent). This is significantly higher than the 45 per cent who said the same in February. Travel buyers report that their company's travel bookings are presently at 56 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, up 22 points from February.

POLICIES CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

The pandemic forced many companies to rethink their business travel plans. A majority (80 per cent) of

An aerial photograph of Sydney, Australia, showing the Sydney Harbour Bridge on the left, the city buildings in the upper half, and the harbour water with several yachts in the lower half. The text is overlaid on the image.

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M!CE Travel Show

A roaring success

Two-day M!CE Travel Show, which recently took place in Pune, intended to stimulate market by fostering synergies between corporate buyers and sellers of travel products and services.

Hazel Jain

The seventh edition of the M!CE Travel Show 2022 concluded successfully in Pune recently by enabling more than 1,100 meetings between exhibitors and corporate buyers from across India under one roof. The two-day B2B tabletop event saw 23 exhibitors meet and interact with 45 key corporate buyers on 23-24 April 2022. Organised by DDP Exhibitions, the exclusive M!CE event plans to replicate this in other cities in India soon. Singapore Tourism Board, Oman Air, Oman Convention Bureau, and Shangri-La were among the key exhibitors, as were some luxury Indian hotel brands such as Ananta Hotels & Resorts and Truly India Camps & Safaris.

The event also saw a serious panel discussion on sustainable business travel on the first day, where panellists opined on the



GB Srithar
Regional Director-India Middle East, and South Asia, Singapore Tourism Board

“**For Singapore, sustainability has been on the minds of our leadership**”



M!CE
TRAVEL SHOW

possibilities of reducing carbon emissions while travelling and what entities such as destinations, airlines, hotels, and corporates can do towards this goal.

Moderated by Mritunjaya Chandra Mohan, Senior Manager-Corporate Travel, Palo Alto Networks, an expert on sustainability, the panellists included **GB Srithar**, Regional Director-India, Middle East, and South Asia, Singapore Tourism Board; Pratima Badhwar, Head of Commercial-India and South Asia, Accor; Ritam Saha, Manager, Passenger and Cargo Services-India, Nepal, and Bhutan, International Air Transport Association (IATA); Gaurav Shekhar Nagwekar, Head (Corporate Travel & Logistics), Reliance Industries; and Devendra Saraiya, Director-Procurement and Travel, Deloitte Shared Services India.

Introducing the topic was industry influencer **Jyothi Varma**. She said, “Sustainable travel is a very relevant and important topic today. Everyone is worried about how to go about being sustainable. It is about the environment, it is about recycling and reducing our carbon footprint as a corporate wherever we can.”

Kicking off the discussion, the moderator of the session, **Mritunjaya Chandra Mohan**, said that sustainability has become a buzzword today. “The pandemic gave an opportunity to many corporate companies to rethink about the environment and sustainability, apart from the safety of employees and overall travel costs,” he said. He shared results of a survey saying that 36.2 per cent of corporates out of the 316 global travel buyers say that the commitment to sustainability has increased





QUICK BYTE Many large hotel chains are working on becoming eco-certified and green hotels

once the intensity of the pandemic subsided. However, 14.9 per cent of them say that their company does not have carbon reduction targets and does not expect to implement them, which means that they are still not ready to touch this topic.

Leading the conversation to hotels, Mohan added that a lot of big hotel chains have been working on becoming eco-certified and green hotels, which is now a necessity. Sharing initiatives from Accor, **Pratima Badhwar** said, "Nowadays every hotel chain has its own sustainability goal. And every hotel has to run its operations as a business unit. At Accor, we have taken up this initiative early on. We launched a project for it in 2005 or so. Cut to now, that initiative is called Planet 2021. We have a target of a net carbon zero footprint by 2050. We even have a Global Chief Sustainability Officer who looks after this."

WHAT ARE CORPORATES DOING?

Sharing some details about what Deloitte India as a corporate is doing towards this, **Devendra Saraiya** said, "There are two parts

to sustainability. One is that you just want to create brand value for your company, and the other part is that you are actually helping the cause. We are considering sustainability initiatives at Deloitte India, and travel is the largest contributor of emissions."

Sharing some insights on what Reliance as a corporate has been witnessing of late, **Gaurav Shekhar Nagwekar** said, "There was a recent study conducted that mentioned how corporate travel is going to evolve. Interestingly, it mentioned that 20 per cent of corporate travellers do not want to come back, specifically from the IT sector. The other 20 per cent of the sector—which is pharmaceuticals, banking, and the like—never left. The remaining 60 per cent are in a dilemma and are not sure if they want to have M!CE movements. These are the facts on the ground. For Reliance, we are also looking at mitigating our carbon footprint. With immediate effect, we have tightened travel restrictions

and will investigate how and which departments should actually travel. Secondly, we want to move to accommodation options that have sustainability goals. This does not just include star hotels. I have some disagreement about air travel being one of the largest reasons for emissions. I believe it is the ground transportation, especially when we speak about India."

WALKING THE TALK

Sharing ideas about how a destination can do its bit towards this goal, **GB Srithar** underlined what Singapore is doing in this area. He said, "It is a huge challenge. It is such a serious, necessary, existential topic of the hour. Thankfully, for Singapore, it has been on the minds of our leadership, both political and public and private sector partnerships. Singapore is the only country in the world to have a net zero vehicle growth rate as of yet."

Ritam Saha said, "What IATA and its member airlines have done today is that we have adopted a mission called Fly Net Zero and it is targeted at reducing carbon emissions to zero by the year 2050."

GOOD TO KNOW

The event saw a serious panel discussion on sustainable business travel on the first day, where panellists discussed the possibilities of reducing carbon emissions while travelling and what entities such as destinations, airlines, hotels, and corporates can do towards this goal.



We highlight key comments from some buyers and exhibitors attending the the M!CE Travel Show, organised by DDP Exhibitions.

BUYERS



Gaurav Shekhar Nagwekar
Head-Corporate Travel & Logistics, Reliance Industries

A recent study delved into how corporate travel is going to evolve. It stated that 20 per cent of corporate travellers do not want to come back, specifically from the IT sector. The remaining 20 per cent of the sector – pharma, banking, and so on – never left. The remaining 60 per cent are in a dilemma and are not sure if they want to have M!CE movements. For Reliance, we are looking at mitigating our carbon footprint. With immediate effect, we have tightened travel restrictions and will investigate how and which departments should actually travel. We want to move to accommodation options that have sustainability goals.



Shashi Kiran P
Global Front Office Lead, ABB

I am interested in understanding what's new in the market and how companies have evolved since the pandemic and what the future looks like. I am looking more at the logistics part of it. I see an upward trend in corporate travel. We are in an industry that is customer-focused. It is face-to-face and while we have done virtual meetings for over two years, we can see the fatigue setting in. A lot of things get done face-to-face, and so we see a lot of travel happening now. It may not be as much as 2019 – it may be 80 per cent of that but still, international corporate travel will happen. Of course, it does depend on the industry.



Manian SGS
Manager-Administration, Olam

Presently, corporate travel from a larger perspective, we see a lot of group meetings or bigger conferences with the leadership team taking place, where the teams are travelling from different origins to the destination city. This is where people can really meet one-on-one after a gap of almost two years to share their experiences of the growth of the organisation. There are a lot of employees who are keen to come out and meet and connect with people. We are currently looking at leadership offsites from Chennai to Singapore, where our company is headquartered. We are also looking at the UK. A



Gaurav Narula
Regional Category Manager-Travel & Marcom, GSC-Indirect Procurement, Schneider Electric

MICE and corporate travel have begun, but with some limits in place. We are now considering smaller events, but not any team trips just yet. There is no major scope for travel until Q2 2022. We may look at bigger events in Q3. We intend to go global soon. We also have plans for local MICE within India. There is no doubt that the sector is recovering. Looking at hotel prices, you will see that they are already at 80-85 per cent occupancy. The airlines are also doing well.



Sriram Seetharam
General Manager-Global Travel, Hexaware

As an IT business, our M!CE travel has been limited, and even if we do start, it will be in small numbers at first. There is movement within India. Of course, travel to the US, the UK, and Europe has surged. In terms of hotels, I see a lot of renowned names, since we have some specific destinations where these properties are located on our radar. We are seeing some progress in terms of conferences, but M!CE will take some time. But, we are working on a FIT movement to incentivize our staff. Our leadership offsites might take place in the US and Singapore. We are also looking at employee engagement right away, and we are interested in Singapore.



Beena Kokku
Head-Global Real Estate & Procurement, Excelity

We are seeking global contracts with hotels to provide consistency in guest service to travellers. While group travel has not yet begun, it is on its way. Ceridian acquired another firm, so we are undergoing an integration process. We are also integrating two teams into one space. As the firm comes together, we are planning world tours. This is followed by other team members who will begin to travel to other countries. We do not have any plans to travel within India. Going forward, we will see our company's outbound travel grow. Because it is a new business, short-haul travel will be used to train staff.

GB Srithar**Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia, Singapore Tourism Board**

It was important for us to communicate that Singapore M!CE is open to Indian corporates. We interacted with many key corporates and they have been asking how they can have meaningful, socially responsible travel. This demand for a sustainable option is a positive signal for destinations, including Singapore, planning meetings, and incentives. We are very deliberate in our sustainable efforts. We are making a lot of effort in the M!CE space as well. A lot of the stakeholders, whether it is Marina Bay Sands, Resorts World Sentosa or Gardens by the Bay, have implemented sustainable practices and that is set to grow.

**Sunil VA****Regional Vice President-APAC, Oman Air**

Under the air bubble agreement, we had flights from Oman to India. And when the scheduled flights resumed, we restarted services to eight cities in India, first with Delhi in the north and following with Goa, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Cochin, Calicut, and Bengaluru. These cities have daily flights, and I am glad to say that demand has not dropped. We had a few corporate travellers resuming their travels. We have closed a few M!CE groups to Oman. We hope that everything goes well because travel was one of the businesses that was severely impacted.

**Gagan Katyal****Head of Sales & Marketing, Ananta Hotels & Resorts**

Hotel bookings used to be long-term, but they are now short-term. Wellness is a differentiator for us, and we are working hard to capitalise on it at our resorts. Fortunately, we have always had a strong hold on domestic leisure, which has only grown. When it begins, international inbound will fill the gap, giving a healthy mix. Competitive MICE packages are being floated to lure buyers. Participation in business trade shows, as well as a large number of sales calls and distribution, are beneficial. Multiple venues serve to break up the monotony of outdoor events. Big, fat weddings are making a comeback.

**Ankur Dhawan****Account Director-RSO India, Corinthia Hotels**

As per the hotel portfolio Corinthia now has, we are looking at traffic into London, which has slowed in recent years. I see a lot of demand for business-related travel. The corporate market is catching up in the incentive area, and while overseas travel may be a bit slow, we will recover in terms of big group incentives from this market. Given the demand for corporate FIT, we are exploring ways to drive business travel to London by working with corporates on top management trips, including long-stay options. So we are presently looking at creating demand for this before launching into a worldwide RFP programme and signing contracts.

**Ramnik Choudhary****Director of Sales & Marketing, Raffles Udaipur**

We are seeing a rise in travel spending in the IT and pharma industries. These are the two industries we want to focus on right now. Because we are a leisure destination, our key avenues are MICE, holidays, honeymooners, incentives, and the wedding sector, which is our largest. Luckily, all of these segments have resumed full-time travel. People just want to escape the routine of working from home. They like to indulge, and the Raffles brand is the ideal choice for them. Social events are doing well in MICE, but this is also due to the limits of overseas travel. We are now seeing NRI weddings return to India, which is a good sign for us.

**Amit Sidana****Vice President-Sales & Marketing, Pride Hotels & Resorts**

All of our business hotels are either in the city centre or near the airport. These are the two prime locations, and no company can miss them. We also have leisure hotels that can hold large MICE and wedding groups. While the last two years have been hard, the kind of business we are seeing now, the lost business of the lockdown, will be cleared within the next six months. The hotel sector will rebound, in terms of ADRs, price, or occupancy. Our corporate clients have all returned, and leisure is back on track. The group size for MICE travel is growing. They started with 20, then 40, and now it is getting bigger.



Lights, camera, action!

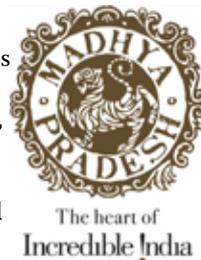
The film industry is one of the best ways of promoting tourism in the world. Keeping this in mind, Madhya Pradesh Tourism is heavily pushing film tourism.

The Madhya Pradesh landscape is truly a gift for everyone who enjoys capturing the beauty of nature with a lens. Natural beauty, historic landmarks, local traditions, and ways of life are all a shutterbug's dream! Madhya Pradesh has given some of the most unique and marvellous filming settings, ranging from regular sites to scenery amid the majestic hills. The splendour of the state could not go unnoticed by cinema patrons as long as the 'heart of incredible India' offers an enormous backdrop to whatever the case is. Various Bollywood films, from Dilip Kumar's *AAN* (1952) to Bhumi Pednekar's *Durgamati* (2020), were all shot in MP. The state has now become a filming hotspot, with a large number of filmmakers flocking there to shoot their projects. Over 150 projects have been shot in the state to date, including Hollywood blockbusters, other feature films, TV series, TVCs, and reality shows. Maheshwar, located on the banks of the Narmada River, has become a popular stop for Indian filmmakers. The landscapes of Khajuraho and Sanchi, the jungles of Kanha and



QUICK BYTE There is a provision for a subsidy for debut films, which would help start-ups and attract talent

Bandhavgarh, the forts and monuments of Gwalior, Maheshwar, Orchha, and Mandu, and the culture of Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, and Gwalior offer the most diverse filming experience in MP.



The film industry is one of the best ways of promoting tourism in the world. Keeping this in mind, MP Tourism has heavily pushed film tourism.

Following the execution of the Madhya Pradesh Film Tourism Policy, 2020, the government is encouraging film tourism by providing subsidies, all licences and clearances through a centralised online system. The availability of line producers, production facilities, local artists, and crew makes it cost-effective to shoot in MP's diverse and picturesque shooting sites. To promote film tourism, the MP government offers financial subsidies and

incentives to filmmakers who shoot feature films, TV and web series, documentaries, among others. The state also offers land allocation under the tourism policy for various film production projects such as film cities, film studios, pre- and post-production centres, VFX centres, SDCs, film and training institutes, incubation centres, and other start-up projects to develop the state's film industry and infrastructure. There is also a provision for a subsidy for debut films, which would help start-ups and attract talent from all across the country to come and shoot in MP. Some of the policy's highlights include:

- Encouraging private investment to make MP an attraction for filmmakers
- Special grants for more screen time for site promotion in MP

- Special perks for internationally recognised and South Indian filmmakers
- Grants, and land allocation on permanent infrastructure
- Providing services in MPSTDC units at concessional rates
- A dedicated film facilitation centre
- Participating in various film-related events
- Development of housing and transport
- Making available to filmmakers infra and services owned by the government
- Renovating single-screen cinemas, closed cinema houses, and upgrading existing cinema halls
- Scholarships to the students of the Film and Television Institute of India-Pune, Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute-Kolkata, National School of Drama-New Delhi, and other reputed institutions
- Special financial provision for the films securing special branding of MP



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A sustainable shift

Many corporates are now looking at having more meaningful, socially responsible travel, which offers Singapore an opportunity to showcase its sustainable M!CE options.

Hazel Jain

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is ready to offer the next level of M!CE travel options to corporates. It showcased this by participating in the M!CE Travel Show 2022, organised by DDP Exhibitions, that saw participation from 45 key corporate buyers. STB was also part of a panel discussion alongside the exhibition that focussed on sustainability tourism.

Sharing his views, **GB Srithar**, Regional Director, India, Middle East & South Asia, STB, said, "It was important for us to communicate that Singapore MICE is open to Indian corporates. We interacted with many key corporates and they have been asking how they can have meaningful and socially responsible travel. This demand for a sustainable option is a positive signal for Singapore planning meetings and incentives."



GB Srithar

We must practice sustainable travel, and we are making efforts in M!CE



He cited a World Travel and Tourism Council report titled "Destination 2030: Global Cities' Readiness for Sustainable Growth," in which Singapore ranked third in three of the eight pillars of business, urban readiness, and safety and security. "We are deliberate in our sustainable efforts. Singapore was previously a garden city, but now we



Renjie Wong

Tourism partners are re-imagining corporate travel experiences



GOOD TO KNOW

Sentosa aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and become a globally-recognised, certified sustainable tourism destination.

are a city in a garden. For us, it is important that we practice sustainable travel, and we are making efforts in the M!CE space as well. Many stakeholders, be it Marina Bay Sands, Resorts World Sentosa, or Gardens by the Bay, all of them have implemented sustainable practices that are set to grow," Srithar added.

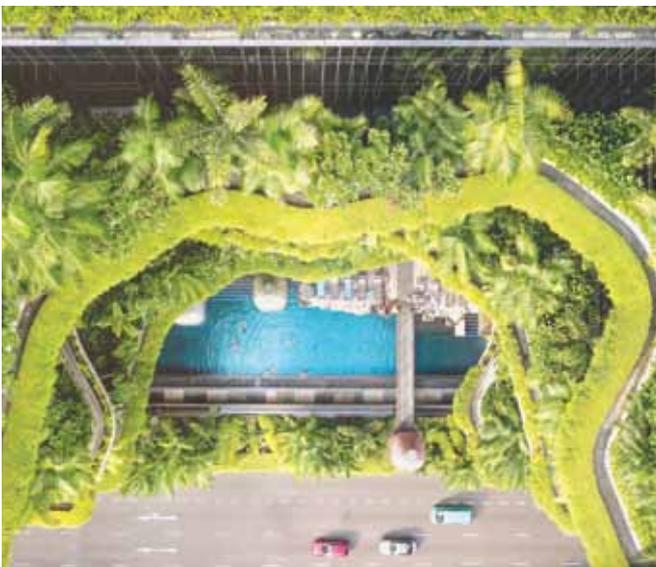
The timing of STB's participation in this M!CE Travel Show was perfect. STB is happy to announce that it is back to 'near pre-COVID-19' level and it no longer requires a pre-departure test for fully-vaccinated travellers. Several safety curbs have also been

lifted. For example, limit on indoor group sizes have been lifted. Outdoor masks are no longer mandatory, and TraceTogether is not required any more except at events with over 500 pax.

EASY FOR BIG GROUPS

Renjie Wong, Area Director, India and South Asia (Mumbai), STB, said, "Over the past two and a half years, tourism partners in Singapore have been busy re-inventing and re-imagining experiences for corporate travellers. From Marina Bay Sand's hybrid event studio with hologram capabilities to new venues such as the Museum of Ice Cream, we have a bunch of new, cutting-edge experiences to meet the needs of our M!CE visitors."

He added, "Singapore offers a range of venues, from its top convention centres such as the Marina Bay and the Raffles convention centres, to unconventional spaces such as Gardens by the Bay, where you can book out the super tree grove that also has a sound and light show. Or even the historic venues such as Clifford Pier, which have now been converted into a temporary fine-dining restaurant for events. Singapore is now fully re-opened and it is easy for big groups to enter Singapore and move around. We have a range of schemes to support corporate trips – whether it is free experiences or incentive grants. We want to reimagine what meetings can be in Singapore."



FOR INDIA MARKET

HOSTING YOUR BUSINESS EVENT IN SINGAPORE?

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PERKS for Corporates

Business Events in Singapore (BEIS)



FUNDING SUPPORT

for third-party costs such as professional services, networking events, content development, marketing activities, venue rental and meeting packages.

BENEFITS



MARKETING SUPPORT

including logo and event listings on **VisitSingapore.com/MICE**, facilitation to secure venues and hosting of site visits.

Plus 1 free experience under INSPIRE

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA



FOR LARGE GROUP

will be considered based on:

- Content / Brand
- Attendee profile
- Number of foreign delegates expected
- Duration

In Singapore Incentives & Rewards (INSPIRE)



CHOOSE FROM

>60

COMPLIMENTARY EXPERIENCES

from dining and networking events, to thematic tours and team-building activities.

Up to 2 experiences per group

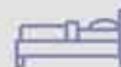


OR

FOR SMALL GROUP (≥ 20PAX)



FOREIGN DELEGATES



≥ 3 Days
stay in Singapore

PERKS for MICE Delegates

Singapore MICE Advantage Programme (SMAP)



EXCLUSIVE PERKS

- Shopping vouchers at Changi Airport or Jewel Changi Airport worth up to S\$20 per delegate.
- Discounted fares to Singapore on Singapore Airlines.
- Complimentary Sentosa Fun Pass tokens worth S\$10 to S\$20 per delegate.
- Other benefits from JetQuay, StarHub, Grab and NETS.

BENEFITS



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

CORPORATE MEETINGS AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL



≥ 50

foreign delegates

except for Changi Airport Group which requires ≥100 foreign delegates

WORLD CONGRESS & ASSOCIATION-BASED CONVENTIONS



≥ 700

foreign delegates

REWARDS for MICE Agents

Special Travel Agent Rewards Singapore (STARS)

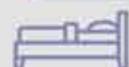


- A programme to reward MICE agents for promoting Singapore as a destination for MICE travel.
- For every 50pax group brought to Singapore, monetary incentive will be given to the agent.

BENEFITS



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA



≥ 3 Days

stay in Singapore

FOR ≥ 20PAX

For fly-cruise groups, to have at least one night's stay in Singapore.

Can combine groups to make up 50pax to qualify for reward.



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Find out more at
VisitSingapore.com/MICE/Assistance

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Published date: APR 2022

Any support offered by SECB and STB is subject to the assessment of the scope and merit of each project, upon the submission of a formal application. Terms and Conditions apply.



Exclusivity in demand

As part of our business strategy, we look for sellable locales such as Gir, Goa, and Bhimtal, says **Gagan Katyal**, Head of Sales & Marketing, Ananta Hotels & Resorts.

Lipla Negi

How is Ananta Hotels & Resorts faring in the current scenario?

We specialise in resorts that are well planned and have plenty of open space. These are the factors that have contributed to our success. Our pricing has been competitive, and our guest service has helped us earn referrals. We have been able to meet our budgets following the pandemic, and we are aiming for a full recovery in FY2022-23.

What are your expansion plans for 2022?

We have a resort named Jagira Ananta Elite in Gir, Gujarat. It is scheduled to open in June 2022. In terms of location, we are growing. Majority of our properties are located in the midst of nature and offer unique experiences. In Udaipur, for example, the entire resort is sprawled across 100 acres. We have created an exquisite jungle cottages amidst this vast space to provide our guests with a



Gagan Katyal
Head of Sales & Marketing
Ananta Hotels & Resorts

We will be expanding our footprint by launching a new 80-key resort in North Goa early next year

jungle glamping experience. Ananta gives you the opportunity to live in nature rather than in a box hotel. We naturally gravitate toward commercial and business-friendly places for business growth. However, we ensure

that our guests have an abundance of nature and luxurious hospitality in these prospective locations. As part of our business strategy, we look for sellable locales such as Gir, Goa, and Bhimtal, among others. In addition, we work on management and/or leasing contracts.

What new destinations are you considering?

Aside from Gir, we will be expanding our footprint by launching a new 80-key resort in North Goa early next year. Villa residences are a prominent trend in Goa. We are building a villa community in Goa that will function similarly to a hotel. We are also upgrading our spas and wellness facilities. We are going to be big on wellness. For us, 2023 will be a year of wellbeing.

What marketing strategies are you considering?

To win in this competitive atmosphere, strong marketing communication

and brand awareness are essential. We are strong in digital and will be attending shows for more B2C engagement.

In terms of M!CE, how is the brand trying to bring business back to hotels?

To entice buyers, competitive M!CE packages are being floated. Participation in business trade shows, as well as a huge number of sales calls and distribution, are beneficial. Multiple venues help to break up the monotony of outdoor events.

When will big-fat Indian weddings return and with what changes?

Big fat weddings are making a comeback. In order to accommodate the pandemic-induced changes in business, we have created separate check-in areas, easy room allocation, and multiple venues so that people can be conveniently dispersed.

HOTEL Classification

Why do hotels need classification?

1. International recognition in more than 100 countries
2. Government recognition
3. Rank your hotel to project quality and service
4. Higher quality leads to higher pricing
5. For MICE RFPs
6. To avoid many corporate audits from aviation industry
7. Acceptance by domestic clients
8. One assessment covering all operational and statutory compliances
9. Benchmarking against the best in your category
10. Make you vigilant for excellence in service and quality

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your partner in success

Exhilarating hospitality

With unprecedented growth, Lords is well positioned to expand its portfolio in coming months, asserts **Rishi Puri**, Senior VP-Operations & Development, Lords Hotels & Resorts.

Janice Alysius

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Moving forward is the only way to survive, and we, at Lords, have moved forward full throttle, virtually. We have done it with extensive research of the market and worked our way up cautiously with the assistance of the virtual tools via Google My Business pages for customers to connect with, building brand awareness through virtual presentations complimented with offers. There is a trend of solo travel, as well as a rise in holistic hospitality, health and wellbeing. We are working to offer a digital guest experience for contactless service.

REGAINING THE MOMENTUM

Growth potential is huge for the hotel sector, and we have seen a slow



Rishi Puri



In recent times, we have seen 40 per cent occupancy rates



but steady recovery across our units. Lords is offering comfortable accommodations at reasonable rates, and we have seen 40 per cent occupancy rates, or at least a stable occupancy figure, and are regaining the momentum.

SETTING BENCHMARKS

Even though 2021 was a challenging year, we are now witnessing a paradigm shift in the popularity of staycations, hygiene protocols, and contactless technologies. The Lords is trying to maintain its popularity by offering sustainable, purposeful, and health- and well-being-centric services, which have become new benchmarks.

PROMOTING BRAND AWARENESS

We have invested time and money and have presented Lords Group with a virtual presentation of its respective properties, building brand awareness among prospective and existing clients. We are also promoting the properties through creative marketing messages, practical guidance for business travellers with regards to easy accessibility, conference and

meeting spaces to conduct business, featuring the USP of the properties, and popular recipes for which our said property is widely known for. If these promotions provide a clear takeaway for the viewer, they are more likely to remember us and connect positively with our brand's promotional messages.

PUSHING NEW FRONTIERS

Lords Hotels & Resorts, with its extensive portfolio of brands such as plaza, resorts, inns, and eco inns, is seeking more partnerships with private players and standalone hotel owners to enter into a management agreement to expand its reach across the globe and offer more exotic locations to its customers under a strategic alliance. Recently, Lords Hotels & Resorts signed a room sale agreement with Country Club, expanding business venues for leisure and pilgrimage locations for CCIL members. Under the agreement, the members would get to experience the Lords' hospitality at 25 of their exotic locations. This would mean more business for Lords Hotels units and also, at the same time, more destinations for CCIL members.



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Classification Body

we provide:

1. Mystery audits
2. HRACC checklist covers 140 touchpoints while QualStar checks more than 300 touchpoints
3. QualStar Certification recognised in more than 100 countries
4. Auditors are ISO17065 and WHO standards trained as per global requirements
5. Only experienced industry professionals as auditors
6. Unannounced surveillance to constantly monitor quality



your reliable quality partner



Convention centres of tomorrow

Convention centres have evolved over the years, be it facilities, technologies or even mere size. India today is looking to carve a niche on the map. However, the question that remains is, are we there yet in terms of building a world-class convention centre?

Charmaine Fernz

When you think of convention centres, the first one that comes to mind is Hanover Fairground, with its 496,000 sq. m., of indoor capacity and 58,000 sq. m., of outdoor space. Then comes the Shenzhen World Exhibition & Convention Center, better known as Shenzhen World, with a capacity of 1.6 million sq. m., including 400,000 sq. m., of indoor exhibition space and another 500,000 sq. m., in the plans. The question that arises is where does India fit?

According to **Rahul Joshi**, General Manager, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra, a world-class convention centre requires the right facilities to host successful MICE events. "Some key aspects are: accessibility via road, rail, or air; technology should be top-notch, especially the audiovisual conferencing equipment followed by high-fidelity recording, video projectors/graphs; and coupled with the right skilled manpower to create seamless events. There should also be adequate

provision of rooms and F&B outlets," adds Joshi.

Additional facilities, according to Joshi, would be appealing aesthetics and adequate space for large exhibitions and entertainment arenas, which is essential. He is also of the view that provision should be made for local transportation, i.e., cabs and parking facilities.

On a similar note, **Kush Kapoor**, Chief Executive Officer, Roseate Hotels and

Resorts, says that it takes a lot for a convention centre to be benchmarked as world-class. Location is key. Proximity to international airports and an efficient rail and metro network are a must. "A convention centre should be versatile. It should offer the flexibility to host events of varying formats and styles, from intimate cocktails to expansive international conferences and exhibitions. A team of trained event planners is essential, followed by award-winning culinary experts,

offering a fine and yet diverse selection of menus is a definite advantage," adds Kapoor. He further stresses that attention to detail is very important, such as perfect ambience in terms of lighting, elegant décor, and high standards of safety and hygiene to make the experience unforgettable.

However, **Manish Dayya**, General Manager, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), shares a rather interesting point. He says, "Convention business always depends on many aspects such as location, availability of space, the right infrastructure, and tranquil space for the much-needed relaxation after a hard day of work, good F&B service, and ample parking. During COVID-19, many convention centres have adapted the hybrid model. At NHCC and HICC, we have all the required essential elements and have collaborated with Microsoft to launch ALL CONNECT, a new hybrid meeting concept supported by Microsoft Teams. This concept enables guests around the world to adapt to the new ways of working that are expected to be an enduring legacy of COVID-19. In this era of rapidly changing technology, periodic upgrades are critical to being a world-class convention centre."

Thus, it is clear that several factors work towards making convention centres prepared for the future. The most important aspect is adaptability to change. The truth is that even our current convention properties are looking to improve their M!CE offerings and are optimistic about the future.

DIFFERENTIATING FACTOR

Every convention centre is unique in its own right.

Based on this fact, Dayya positively shares that NHCC is a unique hotel complex, as it is not only a flagship property of Accor in India but is also the national flag bearer in the convention space with HICC, with over 6,480 sq. m., of meeting and convention space built using international architectural standards with state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities providing functionality and ease of organising any event. From 37 breakout rooms, 288 guest rooms, and four F&B outlets serving global cuisine, the hotel caters to a very versatile audience.

"We have convention-driven traffic for corporate individual travellers, followed by guest-hosting weddings or other social events, or



Rahul Joshi
General Manager
Taj Hotel & Convention
Centre, Agra

There is a growing need for more collaborative environments and spaces



QUICK BYTE NHCC is a unique hotel complex, with over 6,480 sq. m., of meeting and convention space

even families looking for a safe and secure staycation. The hotel can accommodate the requirements of all discerning guests," he adds.

Interestingly, NHCC is also the founding member of the Hyderabad Convention Visitors Bureau (HCVB), so far the only state and city to have this bureau that makes the entire ecosystem needed to be M!CE-friendly and helps offer all solutions available, including tailor-made requisites, to attract all kinds of M!CE events to

the city of Hyderabad, which makes us the Convention Capital of India.

Kapoor, going into detail, says that the Roseate Hotels and Resorts brand is very conscious of attention to detail, which is key. "Our hotels offer an unparalleled, luxurious experience across the portfolio such as state-of-the-art banquet and convention spaces, bespoke dining and wellness concepts. Truly 'Experience the Unimagined,'" he adds.

Sharing details on the properties under focus, Kapoor says that the Roseate New Delhi is a leading specialist hotel for small to medium-sized meetings, conferences, and events. Well-appointed rooms, banquet spaces, and

picturesque outdoor settings offer a variety of options. The Ballroom can host 80 guests in a round table setting and 120 guests in a theatre-style seating arrangement. In addition to a meeting room for a gathering of 40-50 guests, there is a small meeting room and two well-appointed boardrooms. The unique architecture and green landscape also make

the resort a perfect location for weddings and memorable private events. The unique platformed water bodies of The Roseate New Delhi can accommodate up to 450 guests at their venue.

The contemporary upscale Roseate House New Delhi can accommodate 175 guests in a round-table setting and 450 guests in a theatre-style seating arrangement. The hotel also houses the 'Upstage Club,' a benchmark in contemporary co-working spaces. Upstage Club members have exclusive access to stylishly designed meeting and dining spaces, which include two compact meeting halls, a boardroom, and a bouquet of small meeting spaces and capsules. The Club also includes access to an auditorium cum an avant-garde 4K cinema hall, Upstage, offering an ultimate theatre experience.

Joshi proudly adds that the Taj Hotel & Convention Centre is situated in a landmark location and offers stunning views of one of the Seven Wonders of the World – Taj Mahal. It is the largest venue in the city with multiple breakout venues, outdoor venues, and boardrooms. There is an excellent configuration of a large pool of rooms and venues to support large scale, state-of-the-art M!CE. Natural light is available in pre-function spaces.

With the right facilities in place, the one highlight for most centres in today's work scenario is being technologically advanced.

TECH ADVANTAGE

According to Joshi, there is a global demand for cutting-edge technology as well as a growing need for more collaborative environments and spaces. The growing need for hybrid meetings has increased the need for



Kush Kapoor
Chief Executive Officer
Roseate Hotels
and Resorts



It takes a lot for a convention centre to be benchmarked as world-class



faster bandwidth, and the need for fast data transfer is skyrocketing due to the incorporation of streaming video, remote presentations, social media, conference apps, and webcasting.

"World-class convention centres should have 3D printers on board. Offering a virtual reality experience would be a differentiating factor and important if a convention centre is expected to host entertainment events. High-speed video conferencing facilities would also be key, coupled with strong cybersecurity measures. We also need to note that 4K UHD display screens are also the latest buzzword and the need of the hour," adds Joshi.

Kapoor shares that the world of business, hospitality, travel, and technology is evolving at an unprecedented pace. More and more advanced technologies are being deployed across convention centres. These could be focused on the Metaverse—surreal virtual reality experiences, smart building systems such as app-controlled facility settings, and cyber security tools. Moreover, state-of-the-art audiovisual technologies

offering bespoke and seamless experiences are extremely important to qualify a convention centre as world-class.

Dayya further adds, "In addition to location, area, and bandwidth, we also offer virtual experiences, smart building systems, convertible seating arrangements, and a virtual venue tour app, keeping ourselves ahead of the rest."

VARIED INDIAN EXPERIENCE

Technology is fast catching up in India and, as a country, there are varied experiences to offer, be it for leisure or even business travellers.

As Dayya states, in recent years, India has emerged as one of the most sought-after M!CE destinations. India provides an impressive combination of connectivity, accommodation, M!CE facilities, and other conference support facilities to hold a successful conference. High-tech facilities matching global standards are offered at conference and meeting venues in India.

"India is in a constant process of upgrading its M!CE facilities. To further strengthen our claim, the Ministry of Tourism has also announced some great initiatives in the form of an incentive to attract international M!CE

QUICK BYTE Ministry of Tourism has announced initiatives in the form of incentives to attract international M!CE

business post the pandemic, and this is a step towards strengthening the M!CE business," says Dayya.

Elaborating further Joshi statistically adds that within Asia, China has more than 68 per cent of total available space while India has only 4.9 per cent. India needs to create a state-of-the-art, world-class convention centre to promote M!CE activities in India. Spaces are now being engineered to support hybrid meetings in a post-pandemic environment. Immersive technological interventions are also critical for the advancement of convention centres.

On the other hand, Kapoor feels that many cities within India are excelling in their convention facilities. He adds, "India too offers state-of-the-art convention centres, especially in metro cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and beyond. Five-star hotels offer convention centres for small and medium formats, while destinations such as Pragati Maidan and Dwarka convention centres (the largest in India) are poised to be world-class convention centres for larger formats. Connectivity between these convention centres, airports and metro networks is well planned and efficient, which adds to the ease of doing business and leisure events. Without a doubt, there is promise and potential in public-private partnerships, and we hope we will see some traction and success there as well."

FUTURE REALITY

Having understood the key requirements for world-class convention centres, many cities are working towards this goal. As Dayya states that convention centres need to make hygiene and personal safety key



to conventions by using contactless technology and providing digital event communication solutions. The convention centres are now mandated by the client's demands to try out new seating styles to improve safety, incorporate outdoor event spaces, or even re-evaluate venue capacity. The disruptive use of technology to provide virtual tours of the convention centre will become critical going forward.

Virtual tours and interactive digital maps allow attendees to tour the event space ahead of time, find their way to a variety of event breakout zones, or locate specific vendors at large expos. These aspects could well help limit the congestion of breakout spaces and unnecessary movement of guests in the convention areas, ensuring safety.

"Lastly, as the world is moving towards reducing the global carbon footprint, events and conventions need to be sustainable. Convention centres will be required to commit to more sustainable business



Manish Dayya
General Manager
NHCC and HICC

Periodic upgrades are critical to being a world-class convention centre

practices and eco-friendly events. We are seeing massive support for a sustainable shift in the events industry as well," he adds.

Kapoor shares a more technological approach, saying augmented reality and virtual reality will make it possible to provide a more immersive virtual travel and hospitality experience in the future through the 'Metaverse'. Technology is fuelling the future of the hospitality sector.

He concludes by saying that there is an ever-increasing demand for eco-friendly brands that offer sustainable solutions to their guests, both in terms of amenities, services, and events.

Wellness has also become a big part of corporate events. Mindfully curated menus and wellness sessions such as fitness and yoga sessions alongside corporate events are increasingly becoming popular. The focus is on the moment right now and on an overall sense of spiritual, physical, and mental wellbeing.



Back on the road

Andy Finkelstein, SVP-Global Agency Sales & Corporate Solutions, Sabre, discusses trends in the corporate travel space, including blurred lines and strong recovery.

Until recently, travel recovery was domestic and leisure-led, but we are now seeing international and corporate travel recovery strongly begin to take hold. Sabre recently conducted quantitative and qualitative surveys with airlines and travel agents across the globe. Getting input from more than 500 respondents in eight languages and 20 countries provided a robust view on the state of travel. Below are the key takeaways from the research for corporate travel:

REVENGE TRAVEL IS REAL

With rules and regulations relaxing in most places around the world, the appetite for travel across all sectors is high. Latest data showed that Sabre's key volume metrics in April, namely distribution gross air bookings, IT Solutions passengers boarded, and hospitality gross CRS transactions, were at the highest level of recovery versus 2019 since the pandemic started; at 53



Andy Finkelstein
Senior Vice President-Global Agency Sales & Corporate Solutions, Sabre

With regulations relaxing in most countries, the appetite for travel across all sectors is high

per cent, 80 per cent, and 112 per cent, respectively. What is particularly positive is that we are not just seeing recovery, but a mix of recovery and a robust return of corporate and international travel. The overall recovery percentage versus 2019 was greatest in domestic markets for both managed corporates,

at about 66 per cent, and leisure travel, at about 73 per cent. International travel has recovered to about 58 per cent of 2018 levels, with short-haul travel the least.

So, our own Sabre data is showing a strong recovery, and many of our research respondents are equally bullish. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed expect to see a full return of travel to pre-pandemic levels by 2025. Since the time of the survey, the rebound has accelerated, and many agencies are becoming increasingly optimistic about an accelerated path to recovery. The return of corporate travel is being driven by a combination of restrictions relaxing and a desire to get back out to meet colleagues and clients face-to-face. While we have all found new ways of working remotely, there is no replacing the ability to build relationships, trust, and connectedness in person. We will see this strong corporate travel recovery continue in what will be an increasingly

competitive global business environment. When a competitor visits a top prospect in person, your firm will be back on the road or in the air doing the same.

BLURRED LINES

There was talk of blurred boundaries between business and leisure travel even before the pandemic, with terms such as bleisure and workation coined, and this trend is accelerating. Eighty-two per cent of airline and 59 per cent of travel agency respondents expect people to increasingly combine work and leisure travel. More than two-thirds of airlines and almost half of travel agents expect people to increase the length of their stay for future trips. With mental wellbeing becoming increasingly important in the workplace, the continued convergence of business and leisure travel has the potential to help people find more ways to enjoy personal time while meeting business obligations. The bleisure trend will provide

opportunities and challenges across the industry as TMCs and agents add value to a traveller's trip, while navigating who is responsible for each element of the journey, as well as implications for duty of care. Nurturing this desire for bleisure will require the evolution of policies, processes, and technologies.

PERSONALISATION

Personalisation has for long been a buzzword in the industry but has become increasingly important as trips are tailored to merge business and leisure. As we think about the evolution of new distribution capability, we are moving to a different paradigm of offer creation, meaning TMCs and agencies are going to be competing to show they have the most relevant content for the corporate buyer and are working with the right technology partners to facilitate this across the travel ecosystem. It is vital TMCs are aware of the whole travel journey to promote the right offer at the right time. Eighty-six per cent of airline respondents, providing personalised offers could be key to supporting the travel industry in recovery, while 84 per cent of travel agents agreed that access to personalised offers would enable recovery.

THE NEW COMPANY CULTURE

While we are already seeing the return of large



conferences and events across industry sectors and geographies, we may find that the mix of external and internal corporate travel changes as we move through the pandemic. In a remote team, the need to drive company culture and align on strategic objectives is challenging. Travel will be a



QUICK BYTE 84% of travel agents agreed that access to personalised offers would enable recovery

key enabler in getting team members together again and fostering the company culture that organisations aspire to achieve. Smaller companies are adapting to corporate travel faster than larger ones, which may need longer lead times to adapt their travel policies. As the world is opening up at a different pace across regions, with barriers to

Nurturing the desire for bleisure will require the evolution of policies, processes, and technologies

travel still in place in parts of APAC, we may also see new markets emerging.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

While travel demand is high, so is confusion and complexity. Travellers are considering more decision factors than ever before booking a trip and are seeking out expert advice. The uncertain scenario leaves an opportunity for TMCs and agencies to offer services to corporate clients who are looking for travel flexibility and help navigating the travel requirements of their destinations.

INVESTMENTS IN TECH ARE VITAL

Sabre is in the midst of a huge technological

transformation to move into the cloud, which will mean lower compute costs and increased speed of innovation so we can bring products to market sooner. We are also moving forward with our partnership with American Express Global Business Travel to create meaningful solutions for corporate travel. Technology is also top of mind for many of our respondents, with more than half of agencies globally saying they will focus on new tools, services, and technologies to aid recovery and growth. That sentiment was especially strong in APAC, where the figure was 71 per cent. Travel companies are investing in technologies that remove friction from the booking process and provide an optimised service experience through automation. Travel agencies are focused primarily on investments in web and PoS technology and CRM systems, while airlines are focused on investing in capabilities such as self-service, touchless travel, biometrics, and AI. In addition, many airlines are focused on investments around NDC as they expect this to help them deliver dynamic and personalised content as well as increase revenue, particularly from premium and ancillary sales. Airlines and agencies recognise the importance of cross-industry collaboration in managing the rapidly evolving landscape.

This new travel environment continues to change rapidly and demands fast adaptability. Our research has pinpointed the rapidly evolving nature of the travel ecosystem. Those who can address these dynamic trends and challenges through advanced solutions and innovation at scale and pace will be the winners in the corporate travel space.



The future of events

In-person events have begun to revive. With 2.5 trillion global events market eager to meet again. The future of events appears to be lot more lucrative, hopeful, tech-savvy, and green.

The events industry's future will be defined by the year 2022. New research papers, sentiment surveys, exhibition calendars, market trends and growth forecasts show renewed interest in the M!CE sector, which has reinvented and shown exceptional resilience in 2020 and 2021. The impact of business events on the global economy is estimated at US \$2.5 trillion, generating over 26 million jobs, and its impact can be tracked in over 180 countries worldwide. Meeting planners strive for responsible recovery, adhering to safety and sanitation protocols, social distancing, and capacity control in accordance with local, regional, and country level regulations. Regardless of the current easing of these measures in many markets around the world, this is an important topic because, as per a survey of event organisers, 65 per cent have explicit policies on safety and security norms for their events.



QUICK BYTE 2022 preliminary data indicates the return of in-person components to the events market

The ratio between in-person events, hybrids, and online formats should see further changes this year. While 2020 and 2021 have seen the pivot to virtual events and the rise of hybrid events, respectively, 2022 preliminary data indicates the return of in-person components to the events market. While online formats can be used strategically to increase key-message reach, in-person events are a sensory, live, real-world experience that can craft meaningful and long-lasting connections. According to recent data,

over 80 per cent of meetings and events should have an in-person component. Furthermore, technological advancements—online event platforms, event apps, and metaverse events—are driving a convergence to multiple event formats being used in different stages of the event – pre-event, during, and post-event—to maximise the user experience in a new omniverse event format that is data and on-demand content rich, pushing interaction beyond the single format to expand the single event lifecycle, build an online engaged

event community, and generate a revenue stream.

Incentives are designed to reward teams for achieving key performance targets—increases in revenue, company objectives, and project savings—and in particular for showing resilience over recent years. A recent study has shown that 81 per cent of surveyed companies consider incentives very or extremely important for their overall event strategy in 2022. Out of the four traditional event types, incentives have the key strategy importance of boosting the return of long-haul international business events and travel.

Business events, in fact, have always contributed to the promotion of new services and innovative products. A well-executed and promoted product launch has the potential to redefine an industry, influence markets and set trends for decades to come. The original and iconic iPhone launch back in 2007 is still one of the most

viewed and utilised success cases to frame the potential these event types can have on an industry. Trade events and exhibitions can have a similar impact on SMEs, adding a valuable sales and marketing channel to bring these services and goods to the competitive marketplace. Business events are strategic macro-economic instruments to attract local and foreign direct investment, having a long-lasting impact on destinations, cities, and countries with a legacy that surpasses the event itself, from infrastructure development, increasing productivity, developing new markets, and boosting tourism. As travel restrictions are being relaxed, a rising number of destinations are pursuing and promoting the unique selling points of their cities with the aim of attracting large M!CE opportunities as a vector of economic growth and recovery. Destination stakeholders that are able to develop, market, and deliver a clear message will be able to attract more business as business travel resumes.

Another important factor is the growing trend toward sustainable practices. Green initiatives are being implemented as part of corporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategies. The events industry must be ready to attend to this increasing demand from an environmentally-aware corporate client audience and include carbon neutrality, offset or reduction of emissions in its overall event strategy. At the last climate conference, COP-26, an initiative called Net Zero Carbon Events was presented to lead the industry towards net zero carbon event emissions by 2050, with 83 per cent of survey respondents

indicating sustainability is a factor when sourcing partners for their events. This commitment to reduce carbon emissions impacts all event stakeholders. From organisers to partners, suppliers, clients, associations, and companies may consider carbon neutrality and carbon credit certificates as well as the conscious use of utilities and renewable energy to decrease event impacts in the destinations they choose for their events.

While the positive factors can drive the future of events, there are important barriers that may hinder

new technologies available. There are already indicators that the new entrants to the event labour market have less than 12 months of experience and are just starting their careers. As this has a dramatic impact on the event supply chain, the questions being asked in the industry are about the retention and attraction strategies to overcome this staff depletion scenario. In addition to this barrier, the rising cost of energy and food inflation also impact the total cost of executing events while budgets have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. When factoring that F&B costs are

event carbon neutrality awareness and promotion, and result analysis and future event evaluation.

In conclusion, with the forecasts, trends, research, and survey results, the future of events is starting to become clearer. The sector will still live with safety protocols, learn to maximise the opportunities and incremental revenue of multiple omni-event formats (online, hybrid, in-person, and metaverse), promote the inherent value of business events, face the current challenges, and show how sustainability can be a key driver. With



this acceleration such as staff shortages and rising production costs. Due to redundancies and layoffs in the last two years, there has been a shortage of events professional labour in several markets, as the experienced workforce has migrated to new industries, which are offering higher remuneration. Since this affects the overall event quality and execution as seasoned professionals are no longer available and the current ones need to adapt and learn how to execute multiple types of event formats without proper training for the

QUICK BYTE Destinations are selling their USPs for M!CE opportunities as vector of economic growth

rising, in some cases, events with F&B requirements are charging higher prices now than in 2019.

In order to foster this initiative, carbon calculators and neutral carbon event guides have been developed to support the event industry. The steps that are necessary to plan for neutrality are: event carbon neutrality planning, carbon emission calculation, carbon emission offsetting actions,

the return of in-person events, a solid roadmap for the industry is starting to be designed. With a 2.5 trillion global events market eager to meet again, the future of events seems to be a lot more prosperous, optimistic, tech-savvy, and green than two years ago.

Thadeu Araujo is a specialist in sales, hospitality, and events-M!CE and has organised over 3,500 events in several countries.

Movements



Himanshu Sharma

Multi-property DIR-S&M, The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi and The Westin Sohna Resort & Spa

Himanshu will spearhead the sales and marketing (S&M) strategy, as well as building and honing a strong team. He will focus on optimising hotel and resort revenue performance for the sales and business development verticals, as well as working closely with the F&B team to enhance the visibility of the different outlets and drive revenue. He has held key positions at Shangri-La Eros New Delhi, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, and JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity. He was formerly in charge of S&M of Le Méridien Gurgaon.



Pankaj Mishra

Director of Finance
Novotel Pune

Pankaj has over 18 years of experience in financial planning and analysis, financial control, taxation, and budgeting. He will spearhead the hotel's business strategy, developing innovative financial structures and mentoring the team to success. His expertise in the hotel sector, with over 18 years of finance and IT experience, will assist the property in terms of progress in operational and financial performance. He was previously the Financial Controller of Grand Mercure Gandhinagar Gift City, where he handled the company's operational control and risk assessments.



Mainak Ray

Director of Sales, The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat – Marriott Intl.

Mainak will be responsible for executing new sales and marketing strategies to boost hotel room and event sales. His key responsibilities include transitory and group pricing decisions, budgeting and forecasting, devising strategies, curating unique events to drive room and F&B sales, and marketing the hotel as a preferred wedding destination. He is lauded for his business acumen and people-oriented leadership style. He has previously worked with renowned hotel companies such as Hyatt, Accor, IHG, and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.



Rajesh Rajpurohit

General Manager, Radisson Blu Resort Dharamshala

A seasoned hotelier with a career spanning more than two decades in hospitality, Rajesh will lead the team at Radisson Blu Resort to position the property as a leading resort in Dharamshala, streamline hotel operations, align S&M strategies with the hotel's commercial objectives, and drive excellence in guest experiences. He began his career in hospitality with the rooms division and worked across prestigious brands such as ITC Hotels, Taj Hotels, Aman Resorts, Wyndham and IHG Hotels, amongst others.



Rahul Sharma

General Manager
Le Meridien Jaipur Resort & Spa

Rahul comes with two decades of experience in the hospitality industry. He was the Hotel Manager for Marriott Amritsar since 2019. He has spearheaded various initiatives that have resulted in enhanced guest and associate experiences, along with financial profitability during and after the launch of the hotel. With a sharp industry acumen, he has been acknowledged for his leadership skills, innovative strategies, and pursuit to achieve goals.



Hayesha Ahmed

Marketing Manager
Le Meridien, Jaipur Resort & Spa

Hayesha will be responsible for leading diverse marketing and PR activities. A postgraduate in Mass Communication & Journalism, she comes with over seven years of experience in hospitality, luxury, lifestyle, branding, media, publishing, communications, marketing, and PR. She lived in Bangalore for the past couple of years on her last assignment and loves travelling and exploring new places. People management skills play a very important role for her in developing meaningful connections.



Amrita Ray

Marketing and
Communications Manager
JW Marriott Kolkata

Amrita brings with her over a decade of benchmarking success in integrated marketing and communication projects with diversified industry experience in hospitality, automotive, and media. Her key responsibility areas include ideation and implementation of marketing strategies, marketing communication, content creation, digital marketing, establishing brand associations; and handling of media and public relations activities for the hotel.



Amir Badr

Resident Manager
Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa

Amir comes with a diverse background within the hospitality industry, having had a career in the industry in locations such as Malaysia, Australia, Oman, and Thailand. He joins the operations team at the resort with over 12 years of experience in hotel management. There are some new features coming soon to the resort that he is working on with the GM and the team to get them released this year to their guests. These include some new sports and recreation facilities and possibly a new marine experience as well.

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