

the **INBOUND** business magazine

M!CEtalk[®]

A DDP Publication

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

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‘Exhibitions
impact
**PURCHASE
DECISIONS**’

Building
‘**BRAND INDIA**’

Getting back
quite **‘M!CE’LY**

the business travel magazine

M!CEtalk

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The image displays a collection of 12 logos arranged in a 2x6 grid. The logos represent various countries and organizations:

- Germany:** Features the text "Germany" and "The best destinations" next to a stylized orange and yellow circular logo.
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- singapore:** Features a red square logo with a white "SG" circle and the text "singapore Passion Made Possible".
- VFS GLOBAL:** Features a white circular logo with "VFS" and the text "VFS GLOBAL".
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- Switzerland:** Features a red square logo with a white sun-like symbol and the text "Switzerland. Welcome to Switzerland".
- HAPPY TOURS:** Features an orange square logo with the text "HAPPY TOURS" and "Your Travel Companion Since 1978".
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- IATO:** Features a blue logo with the text "IATO" and "INDIA ASSOCIATION OF TOUR OPERATORS".
- andamans:** Features a blue logo with the text "andamans" and "Discover. Relax. And Go".
- UTAH:** Features a white logo with the text "UTAH" and "ELEVATED".

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**Picture on the cover:
Courtesy:**

AccorHotels



MOT

Building 'Brand India'



COVER STORY

'Getting back quite 'M!CE'ly



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Innovative solutions



EVENTS

A unique M!CE event



INTERVIEW

'A growing business'



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NEWS



'Wedding At Pride' is an initiative where memories will be created with grandeur and care. Pride Hotels has set the stage for weddings by offering venues located across India.



The Leela Group debut in Jaipur

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has announced the signing of a management agreement with Tulsi Palace Resorts Group to expand its portfolio to Jaipur in Rajasthan. The existing hotel in Jaipur, will undergo enhancements both in the product & its service offerings.



The new DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur Amer with its prime location, plenty of open-air venues and indoor spaces, is perfect for your next leisure travel or planning your dream wedding.

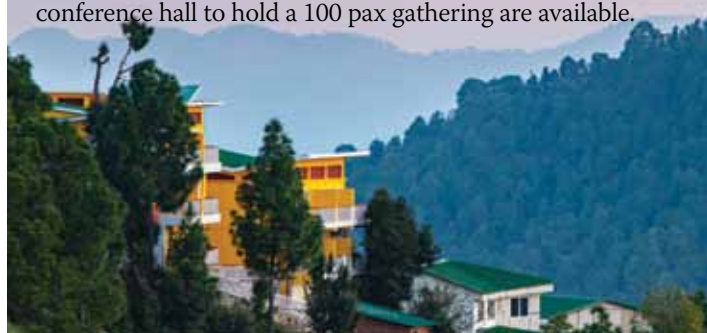


Increase in passenger traffic at CSMIA

The Restart Feedback survey conducted by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in September revealed a boost in passenger confidence towards air travel. Between May to September, the increase in the permitted flights per day has resulted in an increase in passenger traffic at the airport.

jüSTa Mukteshwar opens

jüSTa Hotels and Resorts has expanded its luxury, leisure, and wellness offerings with jüSTa Dignitii Retreat and Spa, Mukteshwar from October 1, 2020. Meeting, conference, weddings, and social event options are available at the spa retreat. State-of-the-art board room for a small meeting to a conference hall to hold a 100 pax gathering are available.



Gartex Texprocess India to take the hybrid route



In conjunction with MEX Exhibitions, Messe Frankfurt Trade Fairs India announced that Gartex Texprocess India will be the first textile sector exhibition to take the hybrid route. Scheduled alongside Messe Frankfurt's Screen Print India fair after a hiatus of one year, the much-awaited Mumbai edition is set to bring industry players face-to-face with new opportunities from March 18-20 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre.

Building 'Brand India'

MOT advocates that a stronger M!CE sector would mean a more competent tourism industry, a goal that would only be achieved if both govt & stakeholders work together

Nisha Verma



Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism and Culture, has said that M!CE helps create an ideal image of the country and also benefits all stakeholders while providing employment at various levels. The government has made some changes to conferences owing to the new SOPs, which include a reduced delegate limit from 500 to 250 and instead of allowance for one night, an allowance of two nights has been made – a benefit that can be availed by guests.

“The industry should look at conferences and events not only for corporates, but also for lawyers and doctors. We can provide a platform to explore such opportunities.

I believe that M!CE can be the biggest platform to attract international tourists and popularise India,” the Minister said in his address at the 13th Conventions India Conclave (CIC) by India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB).

Sharing a similar view, **Rakesh Verma**, Joint Secretary, MOT and Chairman, ICPB, claimed that growth of the M!CE industry is crucial for the growth of many other segments of the economy. “It impacts tourism, hospitality, event management and a host of other people in the supply chain. India has great potential for M!CE, the challenge lies in building a strong ‘Brand India’ for conventions and



Prahlad Singh Patel

I believe that M!CE can be the biggest platform to attract international tourists and popularise India

events, backing it up with delivering on promises. The government has to back the industry in bringing more events and conventions. The government and industry must together build India as a M!CE destination,” he said.

He added that the first step would be to tell the world that India is ready to welcome more events and conventions. Verma said, “We have to aggressively market India as a M!CE destination; our missions abroad can be of great help. ICPB, as a nodal body, can play a key role in securing support from various ministries and other organisations, both for winning bids and for subsequent successful organisation of events. ICPB needs to be developed as a single window for meeting such needs.” He added that simultaneously, the country needs to prepare destinations for holding conventions and events, and meet the needs of visitors.

“M!CE is a very dynamic industry and therefore, in order to stay in competition, it must constantly evolve and innovate. Digitalisation is a major challenge, and we must stay ahead,” he asserted, adding, “Having a stronger ICPB and good M!CE destinations are a few suggestions that have found place in our new tourism policy. Soon, we will formalise these policy initiatives which will give fillip to our efforts to strengthen the sector.”



Rakesh Verma

We have to market India as a M!CE destination; our missions abroad can be of great help

Getting back quite ‘M!CE’ly

Industry experts share their views with Charmaine Fernz on the how the pandemic has changed the M!CE business & what lies ahead



Courtesy: AccorHotels

According to Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, the global M!CE industry was pegged at US\$805 billion in 2017, and is projected to reach US\$1,439.3 billion in 2025, registering a CAGR of 7.6 per cent from 2018 to 2025. Going by earlier statistics, the year 2020 began on a very optimistic note, least to everyone's dismay a total washout. As **Jyoti Mayal**, President of TAAI and Vice Chairperson of FAITH, says, "The Indian M!CE market was worth as much as US\$2 billion, with growth marked at eight per cent per annum. The potential for growth was huge, even though many Indian business houses prefer foreign

These were substantial numbers which were completely wiped away in the last eight months. Robust growth plans came to a standstill when India like the whole world was engulfed in the pandemic. **Amit Saroj**, Chief Creative Officer and CEO, Indiattitude puts the situation in perspective. "The pandemic has had a major impact making most companies rethink their business models for survival. It has not been easy to survive the impact of negligible revenue and unfortunately, some players had to shut shop. In my view, revenue loss guesstimate is about 95 per cent over the last six months including support services," he adds.

industry witnessed training and development, launch of products, or even knowledge upgradation happening to a large extent on Zoom and tech platforms. This may have been a boon to the technology industry but pertaining to the tourism industry, it was restricted to only training and developing its stakeholders."

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

The lockdown though preventive had its impact on every individual and industry. The concepts of sanitation, social distancing and wearing a mask were ingrained in every individual psyche. However, looking at this adversity in an optimistic light, **Rohit Chopra**, Regional Director – Sales & Distribution, India



Jyoti Mayal

The Indian wedding industry is the second-largest in the world with a total value estimated at US\$50 billion



Courtesy: AccorHotels

locales. The Indian wedding industry, part of M!CE, is the second-largest in the world with a total value estimated at US\$50 billion. More than 10 million weddings take place in India each year; the value of the sector could well be over INR 100,000 crore, with growth rates topping 30 per cent."

Bustling events came to a standstill with technology being the only saviour. Industries had to abide by new norms such as social distancing, sanitisation, hygiene factors and a very prevalent fear psychosis. As **Guldeep Sahni**, MD, Weldon Tours & Travels, says, "The

QUICK BYTE The crisis has made most companies rethink their business models for survival

& South Asia, Accor, says, "The hospitality industry is operating in a 'new now'.



Courtesy: AccorHotels



Amit Saroj



Revenue loss guesstimate is about 95 per cent over the last six months including support services



Guldeep Sahni



Travel for MICE events will now be restricted to short-haul travel both within India and internationally



Social distancing is the norm with an increased emphasis on health and safety, resulting in contactless services as the foundation for operations. For MICE this translates into virtual events and weddings as the way forward, ensuring maximum social distancing is maintained and no buffets or minimal buffet set-ups are in effect.”

Elaborating further Mayal adds, “An industry cannot take-off where engagements and physical meetings of people are at the heart. But, as we embrace the new normal, it would be prudent to find practices that can work within given guidelines; rather than endlessly waiting for times to get better. MICE travellers will attach greater importance to hygiene and lead time for event organisation will be shortened.

The first stage of recovery will witness smaller MICE groups constitute a larger ratio in the industry due operational constraints. The ‘phygital’ hybrid model will become a rising trend in MICE events, integrating digital and physical interfaces. Convention and exhibition venue providers will have to put in place additional disinfecting equipment and have heightened screening arrangements to ensure public health safety.”

From an airline perspective, **Sanjay Kumar**, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo explains it will be no different. “The MICE industry will witness various

QUICK BYTE The ‘phygital’ hybrid model will become a rising trend in MICE events

shifts, while some changes may be temporary, there will also be some permanent new variations in business models. The fear of the virus has already brought in a lot of digital innovations which will continue to grow in times to come. Incentive travel will be largely domestic in nature, keeping safety and restrictions in mind. As an airline, we are enhancing our domestic network as well as offering charter options to cater to all such needs.”

THE INDUSTRY VOICE

Every industry has faced the brunt of the pandemic with tourism suffering a major bolt. As we assess how the industry emerging towards normalcy, we understand how some verticals are coping with the change.

Explaining the impact on the airline industry, Kumar says, “As we all know, the airline industry as a whole had a huge impact, leave apart any specific segments. Of course, all MICE movements were cancelled and are still going to take some time before we start seeing large MICE groups coming back. On our part, we have worked very closely with various stakeholders and government authorities in order to follow standard protocols post-resumption of flights. All new protocols are

aimed at bringing back trust and confidence among our customers. In addition, we have also reached out to our existing customer base and corporates, providing them with surety as to why it’s safer to travel via air. Subsequently, we are slowly seeing confidence coming back as more and more customers are flying every day.”

Sharing his views from a hospitality perspective, Chopra says, “Undoubtedly, every industry has been impacted by the pandemic. However, weddings have been resilient, with continuous demand. At several of Accor’s hotels, we witnessed a rise in demand for curated & virtual weddings. We are also expecting an increase in bookings of small meeting rooms. We have undertaken multiple initiatives to bring back MICE segment patrons.

We have implemented our cleanliness and prevention label, ALLSAFE at all our properties. In addition, across our properties, we have altered our meeting room capacity and re-arranged furniture to ensure minimum one metre distance between each participant to be compliant with govt norms. Our hotels have also organised a circulation path (one-way traffic) to access and exit the meeting rooms. We have also

initiated the 'Welcome Back Program' where we partner with airlines to reignite trust in guests by inviting them to showcase all safety measures adopted by the hotels across brands."

Sharing her views from an industry association's point

ease of business. Vocal for Local should certainly be our motto."

GOING BEYOND THE NORMAL

As the adage goes 'Change is the only constant', this is true for the tourism industry in India, including M!CE.

more in-person events will be possible and backlog will create a growth opportunity.

Another factor to watch out will be customer behaviour, as the shift from in-person to virtual was easy, but getting back to in-person, with cost advantages for virtual may be



Rohit Chopra



Weddings have been resilient, with continuous demand. We saw a rise in demand for virtual weddings



Courtesy: AccorHotels

QUICK BYTE The key factor in 2021 will be contactless experiences when it comes to events

of view, Mayal adds, "The M!CE industry entails many aspects of stakeholders. Every stakeholder is being educated on the new norms. We have been continuously in dialogue with various ministries for not just supporting the entire industry monetarily by offering reliefs and rebates but also pushed the government to open businesses, hotels, convention centres, even if it is with limited presence. Only if the country opens will the confidence and demand be generated. Most importantly, FAITH and TAAI have suggested lower taxes to lure more M!CE in India and for

Little did one expect that the turn of a new decade would shake things up so drastically. However, looking ahead with optimism, Sahni says, "There will be demand for smaller group events. Travel for M!CE events will now be restricted to short-haul travel both within India and internationally. In my view, revival will only happen by the end of 2021 or beginning of 2022."

Sharing a slightly different point of view, Saroj says, "We are already in the recovery phase and by April 2021, we should be expecting a growth phase. This is simply because

challenging," Chopra explains, "Trust is the new currency but the key factor in 2021 will remain hygiene & safety assurance with contactless experiences in conducting events. We have seen green shoots in a few industries such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, automobile, sports, movie production houses and social events and can expect them to drive M!CE demand in 2021."

"The new India (post COVID era) will be a more responsible tourism destination. The emerging M!CE tourism trends include one that promotes sustainability in travel, tourism and M!CE. One that works for promoting local communities and builds engagement," concludes Mayal.



Sanjay Kumar



We are slowly seeing confidence coming back as more & more customers are flying every day



Innovative solutions

It's important to show flexibility in terms of contracting & create unique experiences for guests, says Puneet Dhawan, Senior VP Operations, Accor India & South Asia

Nisha Verma



Puneet Dhawan

For Accor, India remains a crucial market, and hence it continues to focus on expansion in the country, while making sure that it sails through the distress COVID-19 has caused to the tourism and hospitality industry. **Puneet Dhawan** believes that it's important to focus on the wellbeing of their employees and the guests.

Dhawan claims that the impact of the pandemic on the industry has been brutal for all stakeholders. "From our end,

it was again to be agile and reacting fast on the ground to limit the impact of the crisis. As things are opening up gradually, we are working on various initiatives in terms of limited contact and use technology wherever possible, yet maintain that warm smile, which is the essence of hospitality," says Dhawan.

He thinks that there won't be a permanent paradigm shift in the new now. "We are still in the business of hospitality, creating unique experiences and offering personalised service. While there is less contact, but that doesn't take away our responsibility of providing service in terms of innovation and creativity. A crisis brings about many changes as well as opportunities," he shares.

"Whether it comes to ancillary revenues coming up with vacation packages or staycations; or how the F&B teams have adapted to creating bespoke delivery services; chefs are doing online cooking courses; and how we are adapting to the new norms for wedding business – there is a lot happening while offering a safe and hygienic environment for both our employees and our guests," he says.

For M!CE and wedding business, Accor is coming up with new solutions. "We have 20 Novotel properties and one of the ideas that came from the hotel GMs, which we are executing very soon, is that one can have a wedding event at one of the Novotel properties, now with around 100 guests under the

new norms. While these guests can be catered at any Novotel, we can virtually provide the same food and wedding experience in the living room of any of the relatives or friends of the hosts in a city which has a Novotel property.

This would allow them to watch and be part of the celebration from their house via any virtual platform while experiencing similar food offerings," he says.

He insists that it's important for hotels to show flexibility in terms of contracting, number of guests, and create unique experiences to let guests have these celebrations. "Interestingly, we found a huge market for events in ibis also. Owing to the smaller size of the weddings, we have excellent restaurant space with Spice 18, present at every ibis property, and we have smaller banquet space as well, offering a great opportunity to cater smaller weddings of up to 100 guests," adds Dhawan.

In fact, at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity, they have done a permanent set up for events. Shedding light on the same, Dhawan says, "It's all about partnerships. We are partnering with key organisers in various cities. Pullman New Delhi Aerocity took the lead, but in Hyderabad also we are looking at new ideas and new concepts with the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Novotel Hyderabad Airport. They have expansive space, both indoor & outdoor. We must continue to adapt & provide experiences at various levels for all our guests."

QUICK BYTE At every ibis we offer a great opportunity to cater weddings of up to 100 guests

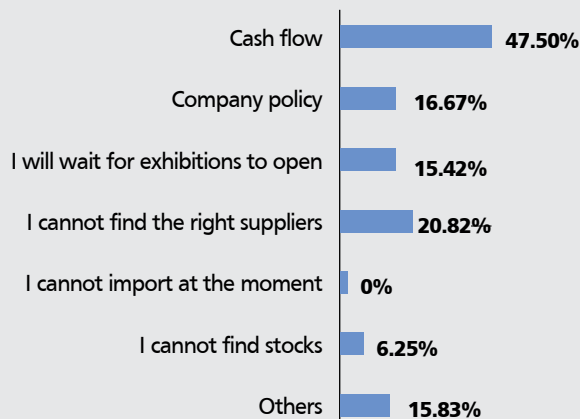


‘Exhibitions impact purchase decisions’

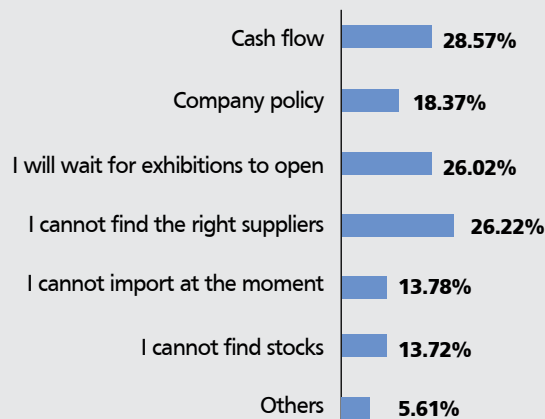
According to a study conducted by Messe Frankfurt Trade Fairs India, 88 per cent respondents relied on exhibitions to help them with their purchase decisions

BUSINESS & PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

JUNE 2020



SEPTEMBER 2020



As India moves towards a gradual removal of the lockdown, businesses are showing strong resilience in the face of crisis as they begin to re-start operations slowly. Assessing the impact of the pandemic on industries, the biggest challenge businesses will face is business continuity as several industries are reeling under the effects of a disrupted sourcing & supply chain.

The Messe Frankfurt Trade Fairs India study shares that those who held off purchases do so no longer due to cash flow issues – a prime consequence of the pandemic in the earlier months, but rather because they can't find the right suppliers (35.56 per cent).

A market survey of more than 1,000 professionals from across the country was conducted in June & September 2020 to examine the shifting business

climate and the state of mind of the most senior buyers at Messe Frankfurt India trade fairs during this period.

The key objective of the 'Senior Management Survey' was to gauge the business and purchase behaviour amidst the pandemic that has affected businesses of Messe Frankfurt India stakeholders and the cross-collaboration that Messe Frankfurt India can enable through its virtual tools through emphasis on sourcing alternatives or the need and intention to visit exhibitions for trading.

The study covered a wide range of industry sectors from the automotive, textiles, building technologies and consumer goods, showing that 88 per cent respondents relied on exhibitions to help them with their purchase decisions. Over 90 per cent respondents affirmed that trade

fairs allow them to touch and feel the product as well as to build a relationship with the seller which are key factors for making an effective purchasing decision.

While there has been a strong shift with regards to the purchasing behaviour from June (53 per cent) to September (63 per cent) with a rise of 10 per cent in purchasing activity, most buyers cannot find right suppliers while others cannot find stocks (12.97 per cent), cannot import (13.81 per cent), as per company policies (20.08 per cent), or would like to wait for exhibitions (24.27 per cent).

Even as other sourcing alternatives such as online events, webinars and WhatsApp are picking up, 59 per cent buyers are finding it difficult to make purchasing decisions during COVID-19. As purchasing activity has increased across the board, willingness to attend exhibitions also saw an increase with respondents looking at visiting the next exhibition "as soon as possible" registering the highest increase of 10 percentage points.

QUICK BYTE Over 90% respondents affirmed that trade fairs allow them to feel the product as well as to build a relationship with the seller

A unique M!CE event

Rishiraj Singh Anand, Joint Managing Director, Jagsons Travels and GPS, shares insights on how to make a hybrid event during COVID-times successful

Manas Dwivedi



Rishiraj Singh Anand,

As they say, nothing comes easy, you have to think out of the box and make things work for yourself, such as has been **Rishiraj Singh Anand's** belief and hard work which showcased there is plenty of opportunity to do business in the M!CE industry despite the pandemic. Sharing the idea and success story of the activity, which also indicates early signs of revival for business, Singh explains, "The corporate travel

one of our largest corporate events that, almost 1,000 delegates from across India participated where delegates were located in remote places as well, starting from the metros on the way up to tier-II, III and IV as well. We had delegates located at the branch offices of the corporate at these remote locations. We did conduct a full day corporate event with lot of activities for them."

Not only just activities, the team also organised

it was possible. In remote locations, we went in for popular local options. At the end, the client was really happy with our efforts and execution since they never thought that something like this can be done," he shared.

With this unique initiative, Singh feels they have set the tone for restarting business in the corporate sector. "With growing technology, I feel hybrid events are going to be the future. We are working on more technologically advanced, events and giving these ideas to the clients as well, so that we can do more of such events," he said.

"Corporate events can still take place, they need not be with physical presence at the venue. It can be done as a hybrid event as well. We are working on more technologically advanced events and giving these suggestions and ideas to the clients as well, so that we can do more of such events. Also in comparison to a larger event, if you look at the logistics and the finance part, these events work out much more economical than physical events for the clients and for the corporate as well. Clients with a smaller budget can opt for these hybrid events. This is going to be the future. I don't say that the onsite events won't happen, that industry will stay as it is because the human touch is always required, but this is going to be the new category of events in the corporate world," Singh concluded.



QUICK BYTE This unique initiative has set the tone for restarting business in the corporate sector



These events work out much more economical than physical events for the clients & for the corporate as well



movement, has taken a big hit, but since September, we have kind of seen a growth in movement. People are not traveling for business, taking flights or spending on hotels, so we had to come up with unique ideas using the technology and introduce the hybrid model of events to do business, virtually or through different other means. We recently hosted

meals for delegates in a unique way. "Apart from all this, we also arranged three time meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) as well as the evening high tea to be delivered in each of the branches across India. For this, we did a unique tie-up with Zomato to source food for us from nationalised and international food chains like Marriot, where ever

Luxury & M!CE decoded

The panel discussion on the sidelines of UNITE 2020 analysed the Indian luxury and M!CE outbound market

Hazel Jain



Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar
Chief Happiness Officer
NAGSRI

Luxury is very innate to the Indian community. It resonates with our culture, our heritage and even when we take a holiday, because we know how to appreciate and enjoy luxury. We as agents need to decide whether we talk about experiences or we talk about hotels or we talk about a combination of both. But, do not short-change the Indian clientele; instead, marry the right product to the right client.



SanJeet
Managing Director
DDP Publications

India is a unique market. Just because we speak English does not mean that we do business the English way. Many countries live within India; we have so many different cultures and it changes every 200 kms. Who is going to guide the suppliers? When it comes to M!CE, this becomes important especially for dealer conferences. Also, Indians are late starters and they don't book holidays like other markets do.



Mahendra Vakharia
Managing Director
Pathfinders Holidays

If you want to deal with the Indian market, you need to have a lot of patience and be aware of the nuances of our culture and our way of life. One segment which is very important and is fast catching up is luxury. The outbound traveller from India is also spending a huge amount of money – especially on shopping. Sometimes, shopping takes over the total budget of the trip.



Loveleen Multani Arun
Founder & Director
Panache World

There are a lot of myths surrounding this market. But, it is a very rewarding market once you get through this love-hate courtship that happens in the beginning. Get over this initial hurdle. India has a lot of people, and the good part is that a lot of them still book through travel agents. Approach the market slowly and steadily. Do your research and find a good partner in India.



Tanuja Pandey
Founder Director
MICE Online (MOL)

India is the second largest M!CE source market from Asia. The biggest challenge for the hotels and the suppliers who are catering to the Indian market is how to identify the right partner. We all talk about big groups from India, but that's not going to happen for the next one-and-a-half years. Also, it is going to be a mix of online and offline.

‘A growing business’

The big fat weddings are now substituted by highly experiential ones, says **Vikram Lalvani**, Chief of Sales, Revenue and Destinations, Sterling Holiday Resorts

Smita Kulshreshth

What trends are you seeing for destination weddings in India amid the pandemic?

Destination weddings are emerging as a trend amid the pandemic because a lot of new-age millennial couples value experiences over luxury. The new sense of luxury is in discovering something unique and memorable, while the quality of service and facilities remain spot on. With a limited number of guests, couples are now really focused on making the entire wedding an experience in itself that they can share with close family and loved ones; as a trend, this is expected to continue and even gain mileage in the years to come. For Sterling, weddings is a growing business segment that is almost doubling every year.

What is your USP when it comes to organising destination weddings?

At Sterling our resorts are blessed with stunning

locales, rich local culture for unique themes and cuisines, and the exotic charm as most of these destinations are still unexplored. Sterling understood the growing need to have an effortless end-to-end wedding planning and execution, interweaving the destination's ethos with that of the celebrations and creating a unique experience with lifelong memories.

Which are your most popular hotels/resorts for destination weddings?

Some of the popular resorts that have received a number of inquiries for destination weddings are in Mussourie, Puri, Palavelli Godavari in Andhra Pradesh, Jaipur, Lonavala, Kodaikanal, Ooty Elk Hill and Fern Hill, Darjeeling, Gangtok, Goa



Vikram Lalvani

and Guruvayur. They are at a drivable distance from key cities & towns. Additionally, several wedding parties are booking out the entire resort & conducting ceremonies, such is the case in Anaikatti, Thekkady and Corbett.

As of now, are clients looking at more cost-effective weddings?

People are now looking forward to discovering and experiencing their functions differently. We believe, the cap limit gives the families a chance to explore more of the destination, cuisines, thematic set ups – indoor and outdoor venues, enjoy the wedding ceremonies at a leisurely pace instead of rushing through, and with their near and dear ones. As a wedding is mostly a once in a life-time affair, families are more than willing to enjoy minimalistic weddings with maximum memories and the big fat weddings are now substituted by highly experiential ones.

QUICK BYTE Families are keen to enjoy minimalistic weddings with maximum memories

Movements in India



Charulata Sukhija
Deputy Secretary-General
Hotel Association of India

Hotel Association of India (HAI) has appointed Charulata Sukhija as Deputy Secretary-General of the Association. Her appointment is in line with HAI's overall strategic restructuring to strengthen the HAI secretariat in its effort to aid the survival of the hotel industry in India. Sukhija has been part of the hospitality sector since 1985, and started her career at the India Tourism Development Corporation. She joined HAI in 2008 and was holding the position of Director.



Anupriya Ghosh
Senior Director, The Leela
Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Anupriya Ghosh as Senior Director Revenue Strategy. She brings with her over a decade of focused revenue management strategy experience. Prior joining to The Leela she has worked with brands including Taj Hotels, Starwood Hotels and Marriott International in India. In her new role, Ghosh will be responsible for building & driving the overall revenue management strategy. She will work closely with all hotel revenue managers and guide them in driving the corporate revenue strategy.



Reuben Kataria
GM, The Leela Hotel and
Residences Bhartiya City

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of Reuben Kataria as the General Manager of the upcoming The Leela Hotel and Residences Bhartiya City Bengaluru. With more than two decades of experience in managing hotel operations for both business hotels and resorts, Kataria brings with him the ideal skillset required to help open, launch and position the hotel in a highly competitive market.



Rajat Tuli
General Manager
DoubleTree by Hilton Gurgaon

Rajat Tuli has been appointed as General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Gurgaon. He brings with him over two decades of industry experience having worked in several well-known brands such as Hilton, Taj, Marriott, ITC, and Radisson amongst others. From 2008 to 2015 he worked with Hilton India, across a number of their hotels. During this period with Hilton, a few notable positions he served were as the Commercial Director, F&B Director and as an Executive Chef.



Neha Chhabra
GM, Courtyard by Marriott
Bengaluru Hebbal

Neha Chhabra has been appointed as the General Manager of Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal. With over 18 years in the hospitality industry, she has worked with both, The Oberoi Group and Marriott International. Chhabra has been a pivotal team player with ideating and launching new F&B concepts, driving revenue and meeting guest satisfaction. Her previous position was at the JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar as the Director of Operations.



Radhika Dewan
DSM, Renaissance Bengaluru
Race Course Hotel

Radhika Dewan has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. Dewan's core responsibilities at the hotel will include planning and implementing the hotel's sales and marketing strategy, maximising the hotel's revenues, exploring business opportunities through events, setting annual budgets, forecasting, analysing revenue reports and strategy amongst others. She brings with her over 13 years of experience.



Sudeep Mukherjee
Market Director of Sales –
Indore
Sayaji Hotel Indore

Sayaji Hotel Indore has appointed Sudeep Mukherjee as the new Market Director of Sales – Indore. Mukherjee brings with him over 12 years of rich and varied experience in sales and marketing. He has strong sales and revenue management skills and a thorough knowledge of the hospitality market. Prior to this, he has worked with reputed brands such as Crowne Plaza Kathmandu Soaltee, Grand Mercure Bangalore, Marriott Hotels India, ITC Hotels Division, and many more.



Vijayender Nath
Operations Manager
Mourya Lords Inn, Kurnool

Lords Hotels and Resorts has appointed Vijayender Nath as the Operations Manager of Mourya Lords Inn at Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. He comes with a rich experience of over 32 years in Operations, specialising in front office and revenue management with Oberoi and Trident group to mention a few. His last assignment was with Daiwik Hotel, Shirdi – Maharashtra as Operations Manager. In his new role, Nath will ensure Mourya Lords Inn continues to make a mark for itself in the state of Andhra Pradesh.



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**Virtual
SEOUL**
Platform for
M!CE events

**Restarting
M!CE in DUBAI**

**KOREA all set for
INDIAN WEDDINGS**



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NTO

Restarting M!CE in Dubai



NTO

**Korea all set for
Indian weddings**



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**Shivani Misri
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organising business
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**Picture on
the cover: Freepik**

NEWS



87% APAC travellers may change the way they travel, while 60% of them increasingly use the words 'clean' and 'hygiene' in their search, according to Booking.com.



ITB Berlin to be held virtually from March 9-12, 2021

ITB Berlin 2021 will take place as an entirely virtual event. ITB Berlin 2021 and the accompanying ITB Berlin Convention will be open to trade visitors only. The trade visitor days will take place from March 9-12, 2021, adding an extra day to the event. Among other features, the virtual concept of ITB Berlin 2021 will include numerous live-streamed high-level panel discussions, digital networking opportunities, an intelligent matchmaking event & a virtual exhibition..



Hyatt's first dual-branded project in Europe

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has announced the opening of Hyatt Place Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport and Hyatt House Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. The openings mark the first Hyatt Place and Hyatt House dual-branded project in France. The hotels are located in Paris Nord 2 International Business Park.



Thailand MICE United

At TCEB's 'Thailand MICE United' event held in Bangkok recently, a highlight was the launch of two new M!CE cities – Songkhla and Nakhon Ratchasima. Having met the criteria for infrastructure, accessibility, range of delegate activities, and image, these two cities are now top-tier destinations.

Korea MICE Expo returns as a hybrid event

Korea MICE Expo (KME), Korea's largest trade show for meeting professionals and incentive planners, returns this year as a hybrid event for the first time, held offline at Songdo Convensia, Incheon with a corresponding virtual event from November 24-27, 2020. The event will provide a virtual gathering space for over 3,000 M!CE industry professionals.



Business Events Perth welcomes \$50 million stimulus



"The business events sector has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic and the announcement of grants between \$10,000 and \$250,000 to stimulate the sector is a significant step on the road to recovery," says Business Events Perth Chief Executive Gareth Martin. Funding will support exhibiting at events in 2021 and will remain open until all funds are allocated or until 30 June 2021, whichever is sooner.

As the city gathers momentum with the resumption of meetings & exhibitions, Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing has formed a Business Events Stakeholders Committee

MT Bureau



Restarting M!CE in Dubai

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai Tourism, chaired the committee's inaugural meeting on September 14 at Dubai World Trade Centre, updating members on the progress in reactivating the sector in the aftermath of the pandemic & facilitating discussions around opportunities & challenges.

Comprising key industry stakeholders, the committee, which will meet regularly throughout the year, provides a platform for two-way dialogue around the continuous strategic and operational development of Dubai's



Helal Saeed Almarri

We are working closely with stakeholders to ensure a framework is in place to resume business events

competitive position as a host city for international business events.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri said, "Dubai has steadily reopened key economic sectors, building on the support that was provided throughout the pandemic and the measures put in place to minimise its impact. In line with this, we have been working closely with industry stakeholders to ensure a framework is in place to resume business events that can be best-in-class while at the same time prioritising the health and safety of all participants."

"The formation of this committee underlines the collaborative approach we have sought to take across all our activities and in relation to all the tourism sub-sectors and reinforces our commitment to

supporting our stakeholders and ensuring Dubai leads the global post-pandemic recovery. Business events play a critical role in driving economic development and knowledge growth in Dubai and, with the city's status as the Middle East's undisputed hub for conferences, exhibitions and meetings, the resumption of activity here will have an impact on the wider region," he added.

Ajay Bhojwani, Managing Director, MCI Middle East, shared, "As the economy continues to open, allowing the M!CE and live events sector to resume activities, it is imperative that the events are conducted in the best possible manner with compete health and safety regulations in place, and which are followed by every single stakeholder in the industry."

QUICK BYTE The resumption of business events in Dubai will have an impact on the wider region

Korea all set for Indian weddings

South Korea is ready to host weddings and honeymooners from India, positioning Jeju Island as the perfect destination for this



MT Bureau

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) brought together representatives from Jeju Tourism Organization, wedding planners, Korea DMCs as well as KTO in an in-depth virtual discussion on the potential for weddings, honeymoons and celebratory events in South Korea, particularly Jeju Island.

The online event was attended by over 75 reputed wedding planners, wedding industry suppliers and honeymoon holiday planners. Apart from destination information, all attendees also received Korean luxury cosmetic souvenirs to physically experience Korea during this period when travel is not happening.

Jong-Ho Choi, Minister, Embassy of Republic of Korea in India, inaugurated the event with his welcome

remarks. To initiate Indian destination weddings in Korea, KTO is focusing on small boutique and themed weddings along with pre and post-wedding photoshoots at unique locations. The luxury honeymoon segment in Korea is also a prime audience.

Young-Geul Choi, Deputy Director, Korea Tourism Organization New Delhi office, said, "I was pleasantly surprised with the positive response from the market for weddings in Korea.

Now that we have got the ball rolling, we will be taking more steps in developing this market once actual travel begins."



Young-Geul Choi

Now that we have got the ball rolling, we will be taking more steps in developing this market once travel begins

"Destination weddings have been a very big industry in India for many years now, and Indians are famous for leaving no stone unturned when it comes to a destination wedding. For South Korea, this was its first step into this multibillion-dollar industry," he added.

The webinar brought together industry stakeholders from both India and Korea where they could discuss opportunities for collaboration.

From the Korean side along with Korea Tourism Organization, the panel comprised of Jeju Tourism Organization, the regional tourism board of Jeju Island and suppliers Jane DMC Korea and Shanti Tour. From the Indian side, the panel comprised of reputed Indian wedding planning companies Cosmic Light Events and Golden Aisle.

QUICK BYTE KTO is focusing on themed weddings along with photoshoots at unique locations

Virtual Seoul Platform for M!CE events

Seoul Convention Bureau has created a Virtual Seoul Platform as an essential source to be used towards holding more M!CE events in the digital world

Seoul Convention Bureau (SCB) has launched an innovative M!CE destination marketing campaign in response to the new era the industry is facing. Instead of holding the marketing activities back, Seoul Convention Bureau decided to take a big step forward. It has created a Virtual Seoul Platform as an essential source to be used towards holding more M!CE events in the digital world. This is the first case in the world in which a destination marketing organisation is presenting a virtual platform upfront in promoting the city as a striking M!CE destination.

The Virtual Seoul Platform is designed to accommodate various types of M!CE events. It portrays the actual Seoul in simpler 3D graphics showing close resemblance in locating the venues and nature. The web-based format allows the highest accessibility and a link is all you need to get in without going through downloading and installing a programme. It works on mobile devices with recent internet web browsers, such as Chrome, Edge and Safari.

There are five venues situated on the platform representing different charms of Seoul – a beautiful traditional palace, a modern cultural complex, an all-time favourite classic landmark tower, artificial islands, and a green space



surrounded by the city. They each transform into a conference hall, workshop rooms, a promotional booth, a VR theatre and a lounge area.

Customising the venue to serve different functions according to the specific needs of an event is manageable.

The attractiveness of Seoul's M!CE industry is carefully extracted into well-made VR videos. There are 360° VR videos on Seoul's landmarks, unique venues, teambuilding at the VR theatre and they are filmed in the first-person point of view to present them as if one is taking a virtual tour.

Riding a rickshaw to Hanok village, taking a glimpse of a temple stay programme and taking a site inspection of a cruise venue are some of the programmes on the list. The tour is extended to Seoul's

TECHNOLOGY The attractiveness of Seoul's M!CE industry is carefully extracted into well-made VR videos

partner cities, Gangwon and Gwangju, and an array of special tour videos with an Honorary Seoul Tourism Ambassador, Eunwoo Cha. The well-known Honorary Tourism Ambassador of Seoul – the most popular group in the world – BTS also welcomes the attendees with the official promotional video on the billboard at the lobby.

Jihyun Kim, a director at SCB mentions that the Virtual Seoul Platform is versatile. It has endless possibilities of being improved in the coming years by adding more venues or programmes and becoming a universal source for organising and hosting M!CE events.



This is the first case in the world in which a destination marketing organisation is presenting a virtual platform



Luring the **India market**

After months of lockdown and travel bans, the world is gradually opening up. Thailand-based hospitality group Cross Hotels & Resorts has also reopened a number of its properties

MT Bureau

Thailand-based hotel group, Cross Hotels & Resorts has opened a number of its properties with strict health and safety protocols in place. From the time of arrival of the guest at the airport to the time of departure, staff at Cross properties follows the guidelines religiously.

The group is offering flexible incentives to Indian travel agents. It has an extensive portfolio of properties in Thailand that include X2 Vibe Buriram Hotel, X2 Koh Samui – A Spa Retreat, X2 Kui Buri Resort, Away Chiang Mai Thapae Resort – A Vegan Retreat, Away Koh Kood Resort, X2 Vibe Chiang Mai Decem Hotel, X2 Vibe Pattaya Seaphere and Oceanphere and X2 Vibe Phuket Patong among others.

Katerawee Thepprachum, Director of Sales at Away Chiang Mai Thapae Resort – A Vegan Retreat, says that they have visible signage throughout the hotel, reminding guests of social distancing guidelines, personal hygiene and the importance of personal protection equipment. The hotel is suitable for leisure FIT, family leisure groups as well as business travellers, even buy-out groups looking for a private arrangement.

Based on static rate offers, most Cross Hotels could consider providing incentives to travel agents based on the number of room nights. For instance,



501-1,000 room nights get three per cent incentive. On working with Indian travel agents, Chayanisa Ruankew, General Manager, X2 Vibe Chiang Mai Decem Hotel, says, "If the agents book 15+1 rooms, they will need to pay only for 15 and the remaining room will be complimentary."

Steve Lockhart, Cluster General Manager, X2 Pattaya Oceanphere and X2 Vibe Pattaya Seaphere, adds, "X2 Vibe Pattaya Seaphere is fit for small M!CE and leisure groups. X2 Pattaya Oceanphere, on the other hand, is suitable for couples, a leisure group of friends, and families."

X2 Vibe Phuket Patong is suitable for leisure, FIT and

QUICK BYTE X2 Vibe Phuket Patong is suitable for leisure, FIT and small M!CE groups

INCENTIVES

Most Cross Hotels could consider providing incentives to agents based on the number of room nights. For instance, 501-1,000 room nights get 3% incentive. At X2 Vibe Chiang Mai Decem Hotel, if the agents book 15+1 rooms, they need to pay only for 15 rooms

small M!CE groups with 60-80 pax. "It is located close to key tourist attractions, a large shopping mall, and the beach is only a two-minute walk away," shares Ismet Isakovski, General Manager, X2 Vibe Phuket Patong.

Artana Komang, General Manager, X2 Bali Breakers Resort, adds, "We love to have all market segments from India. We have rooms and villas for the leisure guest, meeting rooms that can fit up to 100 persons for any M!CE request, and also varied wedding venues."

Shehara Rizly

‘Social distancing is key’

Caroline Thissen, Area Senior Director – Sales & Revenue Optimization, Africa & Middle East, Radisson Group, shares with us the new normal for the M!CE industry

Shehara Rizly

What will the M!CE industry look like in 2021?

We are expecting that as restrictions ease, we will see demand resurface for face-to-face meetings. These will start on a small scale and then increase to larger meetings as we get to Q3/Q4 of 2021.

Will there be a new normal for this segment?

Social distancing is going to be key. Hotels will need to ensure they have checked new capacities for meeting rooms allowing for ample space between delegates. At the Radisson Hotel Group we have developed a 10-step safety protocol across all our hotels specifically for meetings and events (M&E), these steps include; placing a ‘disinfect box’ in meeting rooms for used stationery items, F&B safety procedures and of course social distancing. We have a video that can be sent to our clients so they can see the new protocols and can rest

assured their delegates are in safe hands.

Will the requirements of clients change?

With restrictions on travel and the need to adapt, at Radisson Hotel Group we have brought a solution to the market for Hybrid Meetings. We have partnered with Zoom to provide a smooth experience for our clients’ virtual and hybrid meetings and events. Specialist in-house event teams will assist clients in delivering a range of events from hybrid multi-site meetings to broadcasting events.

Have you started promoting M!CE events?

Throughout the crisis we have had flexible M&E terms



Caroline Thissen

and conditions available in all our hotels, these include; in case of cancellation, event fees can be utilised for future events and you can reduce the number of attendees by 10 per cent per day up to arrival, free of charge.

We have also relooked at all meeting room capacities to ensure social distancing and have loaded these on online M&E portals. We have also introduced Hybrid Rooms which combine the facilities of a state-of-the-art office with the comforts of a hotel room to create a productive, dedicated, and quiet workspace for the business traveller, leisure guest, and local day-guest alike. Hybrid Rooms offer easy connectivity to second screen devices, video-conferencing facilities, wireless enabled keyboard, mouse and loudspeaker, printing services, stationery, access to on-site wellness facilities, and many other benefits.

We have had flexible terms and conditions; in case of cancellation, event fees can be utilised for future events

QUICK BYTE Hybrid Rooms combine facilities of a state-of-the-art office with the comforts of a hotel room

'Flexible event solutions'

Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh in the Cambodian capital gives us the opportunity to raise our flag in one of Asia's most fascinating cities, says Herman Kemp, GM of the hotel

Smita Kulshreshtha



Herman Kemp

Hyatt will be debuting its first hotel, Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh, in the Cambodian capital in the first quarter of 2021. What does this mean for the brand?

With its rich history and dynamic future, the Kingdom of Cambodia is an ideal place to expand the Hyatt Regency brand and this debut represents an important milestone in our global growth. With the ever-increasing desire for authentic travel experiences, Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh satisfies this urge while also giving us the opportunity to raise our flag in one of Asia's most fascinating cities.

Where is the property situated? What type of clientele are you looking at?

Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh is located in the heart of Phnom Penh's (Cambodia) cultural and business district of Doun Penh – a 30-minute drive from the airport and within a short walking distance to the Royal Palace, National Museum and the riverside.

The hotel aims to attract both business travellers and leisure guests as well as local Cambodians who are



looking to try out new F&B experiences.

What kind of M!CE facilities will Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh offer?

There will be nine multi-functional meeting suites, including the Regency Ballroom, which can accommodate up to 490 guests and is equipped with the only built-in full-colour LED screen in the city.

Additionally, Hyatt's new hybrid meetings packages will offer business travellers flexible event solutions during the pandemic and beyond. Hybrid meetings packages use multiple locations, either spread out through our hotel or across several properties, to accommodate social distancing and utilise state-of-the-art technology to combine virtual and in-person experiences. We have several customisable packages that include

QUICK BYTE We aim to attract business travellers & Cambodians seeking new F&B experiences

M!CE FACILITIES

At Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh there will be nine multi-functional meeting suites, including the Regency Ballroom, which can accommodate up to 490 guests and is equipped with the only built-in full-colour LED screen in the city

different technology options while also covering on-site attendees, such as room rates and F&B offerings, in order to make the planning process as smooth as possible.

Anything else you would like to mention?

We delayed our opening due to the impact the pandemic has had on Cambodia, affecting international travel and severely limiting the number of business and leisure travellers to Phnom Penh. This delay has positively impacted us by allowing additional time to put in enhanced hygiene and guest safety measures from the start, ensuring that all our guests feel safe when dining and staying with us.

'Mindful leadership'

What we do today as conscious leaders will determine if our guests and employees will keep coming back, says **Scott Knepp**, Management Analyst, Horwath HTL Atlanta

Staying in the present moment can be difficult for the hotelier (or any business executive). That said, we also know that the most rewarding moments of the job are the in-the-moment connections that we make with our team members and our guests. With all of the uncertainty, fear, and division that consume our landscape, these moments are more fragile & sacred than ever and must be navigated with thoughtful leadership.

Here are five present moment actions that you can take to have a significant impact on your guest experience and the morale of your team:

1. Practice what you and your organisation say you are going to do.

Your organisation has probably sent out an email outlining all the safety measures to keep people safe while they are guests in your hotel. You have signs in the lobby, plexiglass over the desks, payment screens pushed back. Those elements make a guest feel safe. The moment one employee does them half-heartedly or doesn't ensure that other guests are complying, that trust is gone and might not be rebuilt.

2. Your team members won't do it if they don't see you doing it, or if they don't understand why.

People need to understand clearly why they are doing something. Just telling them what to do is a great way to see it not, or begrudgingly being done. "Wear a mask

in guest areas and the break room" and "We all need to wear masks because we all have a commitment to show our guests, our employees, and you that we are making every effort to ensure your safety." These statements sound different, and they will elicit different levels of compliance.

to be. The more clearly you define your expectations, while still making room for your employee's goals, the more empowered your team is to meet expectations.

5. Keep conducting your team meetings, one-on-ones, and lobby walks.

Your scope of influence will



Scott Knepp



3. Put on a good show.

This is one of Disney's operational standards. A good show used to mean that housekeeping should be invisible, as if the property were always immaculate. Also, give your employees a script of what it sounds like to approach a guest who is not following the standards & let them role play with you.

4. Define and provide space for when it is ok to loosen on requirements.

I bet the first thing you do when you get to your office is to take off your mask. Your housekeepers are no different. If you don't find the time and place for them to do it safely, they will find it on their own, and it might not be where you want it

TIP Just telling team members what to do is a great way to see it not, or begrudgingly being done

not extend outside of your office if you aren't regularly checking in with your guests and team members. Circumstances may dictate that you do this differently, but find creative ways to maintain connection. What we do today as conscious leaders will determine if our guests and employees will keep coming back.

(The article has been written by Scott Knepp, Management Analyst, Horwath HTL Atlanta, the views expressed are the author's personal views.)



The most rewarding moments of the job are the in-the-moment connections that we make with our team members



Build a strong online presence

A personal brand or perception cannot be created, it needs to be built over time and nurtured with consistency, says **Shital Kakkar Mehra**



Shital Kakkar Mehra
Executive Presence Coach for
CEOs & best-selling author

A frequently asked question is, “In today’s world of social media, how important is personal branding?” My answer is always “More than ever”, as the importance of a distinctive personal brand has increased to cut through the clutter of social media.

At work, you are constantly creating your personal brand. Are you the ‘go to’ colleague for technology problems, the ‘go to’ colleague for personal advice or the ‘fun guy’ everyone wants to chill with? If you frequently reach office ten minutes before the official start time, you have a certain branding and if you reach office ten minutes after the day begins, you have the opposite branding.

Richard Branson famously remarked, “Embracing social media isn’t just a bit of fun, it’s a vital way to communicate, keep your ear to the ground and improve your business.” A personal brand or perception cannot be created, it needs to be built over time and nurtured with consistency. Personal branding on social media does not mean putting ten posts daily and commenting on every other article. Sometimes people try to show much more than they actually are. This is over-projecting or over-doing yourself that at times has an opposite impact and leads to negative branding. Here, quality is more important over quantity.

Let’s compare ourselves with a product. People lose confidence in the product and the same goes for a person if it claims more than

they are. Personal branding cannot happen in a vacuum. Intelligent and sensible people can easily look through your pretences however hard you try to portray otherwise. And once your image is impacted, it is very difficult to gain back the respect and trust. An authentic leader, who showcases himself as he is, puts forth his ideologies in a simple but effective manner, gives his honest opinions and never fails to recognise and appreciate others, succeeds in creating a perfect personal brand. Your personal brand can be marketed using the same principles used to market products & services. Assess your physical, emotional and mental characteristics. Notice which are contributing productively to your life and which are keeping you from developing in the way you would like. Decide which aspects of your current persona you would like to change and which you would like to keep.



QUICK BYTE Your personal brand can be marketed using the same principles used to market products and services



Business events amid **COVID-19**

It is never easy to cancel your business events. This is the time to follow Google's way and go completely virtual, says Shivani Misri Sadhoo

The world is going through some massive changes since the outbreak of COVID-19. As long as no vaccine is available, social distancing is the only way to prevent this pandemic from spreading. As a result, several organisations have adopted different mechanisms for working and also conducting business meetings. Now 'work from home' is a global trend. Similarly, conducting a business meeting, event or seminar has shifted more towards online platforms.

FOLLOW NEW EVENT ETIQUETTE

If you already have an event planned, look into the factors whether you must cancel it depending on local legal requirements and your own responsibility as an event organiser. If you decide to go ahead with your event, it is essential that participants follow best practices like maintaining safe distances, avoiding handshakes, and do regular hand sanitisation and washing. Bear in mind this can be difficult to enforce. You also have to be mindful to keep up with attendees post an event. They might become ill after everything has been done. As an organiser, it is your responsibility to inform those who attended the event & the relevant authorities.

HOST VIRTUAL EVENTS

It is never easy to cancel your business events. This is the time to follow Google's way and go

completely virtual. In the absence of in-person gatherings, virtual events are becoming more popular. Live streaming alone is projected to be a \$70.5 billion industry by 2021. Virtual events are economical, have high attendance ratio, and concrete, measurable results on ROI.

Keeping that in mind, an idea might be to live stream your event on a platform that provides moment-to-moment audience interaction. Failing that, you can record it as a webinar and send it out later, marketed as the entire event being accessible using a single click.

ENHANCE YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

Changes are never easy and it takes time to adapt to them. It means event organisers need to pivot from using events to influence audiences and instead aim at digital content. It may sound pretty basic, but ensure your website is up to date. Use your social media platforms to full effect now, even starting something as small as engaging with hashtags and addressing potential lead questions straightaway could have a large impact.



Shivani Misri Sadhoo
Founder, Saarthi
Counselling Services

QUICK BYTE Virtual events are becoming popular. Live streaming alone is projected to be a \$70.5 bn industry by 2021

NEWS



The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority has appointed Intrepid Marketing & Communications as its representative in India with the objective to establish Bahrain as Indian travellers' go-to short-haul destination.



Gangtey Lodge Bhutan enters India with One Rep Global

One Rep Global has partnered with Gangtey Lodge, Bhutan to represent them in the outbound tourism sector of the Indian market. India is already one of the largest markets for outbound tourism for Bhutan and once the current crisis passes, the number of visitors to Bhutan is projected to increase by over 10% from last year. **Hemant Mediratta**, the founder of One Rep Global says, "Gangtey Lodge represents everything that people are now looking for."



Indians can get e-visas to Saudi

Saudi Arabia will be extending its e-visa facilities for Indian tourists soon, revealed **Fahd Hamidaddin**, CEO, Saudi Tourism Authority (STA). Hamidaddin said that Saudi is home for nearly 5 million Indians, and the proposed e-visa facility will help in unlocking the huge potential that exists for Visit Friends & Relatives (VFR) from India to Saudi Arabia.

India will be key for Utah's recovery

Rachel Bremer, Global Travel Trade & Destination Development Manager, Utah Office of Tourism and Film says that the state will build its brand in India through its representative in the country – IndiJo Consulting. The FIT/ luxury segment is a primary focus for them in India. "Our immediate focus for India is on product development, brand awareness & education."



SpiceJet to fly direct London from Delhi, Mumbai

SpiceJet has announced non-stop flights connecting Delhi and Mumbai with London's Heathrow airport from December 4. "SpiceJet will operate thrice-a-week to London including twice from Delhi and once-a-week from Mumbai," revealed **Ajay Singh**, Chairman & MD, SpiceJet.



Air India, Lufthansa to connect three Indian cities with Germany

Sharing details about the India-Germany flights, Civil Aviation Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** said, "Lufthansa will operate 4 days a week from Delhi, 3 days a week from Mumbai & 3 days a week from Bengaluru. Air India will operate five weekly flights from Delhi & two every week from Bengaluru to Frankfurt."



Movements **Abroad**



Leanne Harwood
Managing Director, IMEA region
IHG Hotels and Resorts

IHG Hotels & Resorts announced the planned retirement of Pascal Gauvin, MD, India, Middle East and Africa (IMEA), at the end of the year. Leanne Harwood, currently MD of IHG's Australasia and Japan (AUJ) region has been appointed as Gauvin's successor. Harwood joined IHG in 2005 and embarked on a range of leadership roles in Commercial, Operations and Sales, paving the way for her appointment as MD, AUJ in January 2018.



Alka Winter
VP, Destination Marketing & Communications, RAKTDA

Alka Winter joins as Vice President, Destination Marketing & Communications, responsible for spearheading the authority's multi-faceted communications strategy at a time when effective multi-channel messaging and storytelling is critical. Winter has proven expertise in corporate communications, media relations, leadership positioning, reputation management and stakeholder communications. She joins RAKTDA from French hotel giant Accor where she was VP Global Communications.



Iftikhar Hamdani
AGM, Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel
& Coral Beach Resort Sharjah

Hospitality Management Holding family has appointed Iftikhar Hamdani as the Area General Manager – Northern Emirates handling overall operations of Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel and Coral Beach Resort Sharjah. He brings 22 years of experience in the field of hospitality and is often referred to as the pioneer of sustainability. Last year he completed 10 years as Cluster General Manager of three properties in Northern Emirates under R Hotels.



Nikhil Nair
Cluster Marketing Comm
Manager, Sheraton Grand

Nikhil Nair has joined Sheraton Grand Sheikh Zayed Road & Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel & Towers as Cluster Marketing Communications & Public Relations Manager. He was previously the Cluster Marketing Communications & Public Relations Manager for Delta Hotels by Marriott Jumeirah Beach, Dubai, Four Points by Sheraton Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai & Four Points by Sheraton Downtown, Dubai. He has been instrumental in the recent conversion into Delta situated in JBR.



Siraj Memon
Cluster DSM, Al Baleed Resort
Salalah by Anantara

Siraj Memon has been appointed Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing for Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort and Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara. He has been promoted in August 2020 to this new role from his previous assignment at the Salalah property as Director of Sales since July 2016. With over 15 years of experience in the MENA region, Memon has rich experience in enhancing sales, marketing and revenue streams.



**Salah Hamdan
Mohammed Al Mamari**
GM, Radisson Blu, Sohar,

Salah Hamdan Mohammed Al Mamari has been appointed as General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel, Sohar. He joined the hotel in 2014 as Rooms Division Manager and was promoted to Executive Assistant Manager in 2018. Al Mamari's promotion reinforces Radisson Hotel Group's commitment to nurture and shape careers of talented Omanis in the industry. In his new role, Al Mamari will continue to administer the entire hotel management and operations and set strategic plans.



Nader Ghosheh Sayfi
General Manager
Riu Dubai

Riu Dubai, Nakheel's 800-room joint venture with Spain's Riu Hotels & Resorts, is set to open in December 2020, bringing a new hospitality concept to Dubai and marking the 100th Riu establishment worldwide. Nader Ghosheh Sayfi is named General Manager of the resort, which will be the first attraction to open at Nakheel's Deira Islands coastal city. Sayfi has spent his entire 27-year hospitality career with Riu, running 10 resorts and opening several five-star properties.



Iyad Rasbey
Executive Director,
Destination Tourism
Development, RAKTDA

Iyad Rasbey takes on the role of Executive Director, Destination Tourism Development, based on his proven track record of successfully developing business from new and existing source markets in his previous position as RAKTDA's Director of MICE and leveraging his more than two decades of tourism industry experience. Rasbey joined RAKTDA in 2018 and has since played a pivotal role in the execution of key projects implemented by the tourism development, MICE and events departments. He will lead RAKTDA's tourism development strategy.

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