



We need to drive the proposition that convention centres are broadly impactful economic engines

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AIPC

Focus and flexibility

AIPC PRESIDENT **ALOYSIUS ARLANDO** SAYS FLEXIBILITY IS KEY TO TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE YEAR AHEAD



Aloysius Arlando

AIPC president Aloysius Arlando is also CEO of SingEx Holdings, which comprises several entities focusing on the MICE business; including the management of the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Was 2017 a good year for the 186 AIPC members? In most performance terms, 2017 was in fact a very good year as a continuation of a growth pattern, since the global financial crisis in 2008, at a rate that has even exceeded growth in global GDP.

However, it was also a time of many challenges as members worked hard to address to constantly changing organiser and delegate expectations. The very nature of events goes through a fundamental evolution that demands constant innovation and adaptation.

What are the biggest future challenges for the convention centres?

The need to generate increasing levels of flexibility in all areas – from spaces and technologies to services and event management – will continue to dominate our environment, as will the need to further enhance and diversify revenues to satisfy owner expectations and support needed new investment in our facilities.

We also face new challenges in responding to the increasing importance of digitalisation in the global economy in order to be seen as relevant to marketers and organisers who have many other options to choose from as to how they engage

with their members and customers.

At the same time, we are also increasingly challenged to compete with other sectors for the human resources we need to deliver service excellence – a challenge that needs to be met with increased training and retention measures as well as an effort to position ours as a desirable career path relative to others competing for the same talent.

Above all, we need to further drive the proposition that convention centres are broadly impactful economic engines whose real function is to support overall economic and community development agendas in their respective cities and countries. It is only with this kind of recognition that we will get the kind of support we need to prevail in an increasingly intense marketplace. This latter requirement will be demanding for many; however, it is a far more realistic picture of our true role and we need to be more active in promoting it.

AIPC will be 60 years in 2018. How does the organisation stay relevant?

AIPC is constantly researching industry needs and conditions and creating corresponding programming in response, as this is the only way for an organisation to remain relevant in a fast-changing environment.

However, our greatest strength – one that has shown its value over our history – is the knowledge, insights and experience of our members, so efficient vehicles for facilitating information exchange and collective problem-solving is also a big factor.

One of AIPC's greatest strengths has always been its exclusive devotion to the issues and opportunities associated with international convention centres, and we will maintain this focus going forward to ensure clarity of purpose.

We also believe that the industry in the future will require an even greater level of partnership between centres and their clients that we have seen previously in order to optimise the delegate experience. This means we need to know in more detail our clients' needs and opportunities and have the ability to actively and creatively support them in addressing these. That, in turn, requires a greater investment in joint activities and programming with the broader meetings and events community, so we will be moving forward on this on behalf of our members. ■

AIPC represents a global network of over 185 leading centres in 60 countries with the active involvement of more than 900 management-level professionals worldwide. Further information: marianne.de.raay@aipc.org or visit www.aipc.org

