



Sven Bossu

planned to be in production only in a couple of years. The learning curve has also been steep

and has provided the venues with the insights and knowledge needed to offer tailor-made packages to organizers, consisting of both physical and digital components.

The key success factor however has not changed at all: a thorough and joint understanding of the goals and objectives that an event needs to achieve and an agreement on the use of all the assets available in the local event ecosystem (not limited to the venue!) to reach those targets. And these assets now include digital, which opens many new exciting avenues to explore.

Facing its worst crisis ever, the event industry has demonstrated in 2020 its resilience, its creativity and its ability to think fast and move even faster. It has been a tough year, and challenges remain, but I do join my beloved news anchor in stating that everything will be fine—in a different way. So here's to a new and bright future. ☺

Sven Bossu was named as AIPC's first CEO last May. Prior, he was the managing director for innovation at ESTRO, the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology and eight years at SWIFT/SIBOS conference.

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AIPC represents a global network of 190+ leading centers in 64 countries with the active involvement of 1,000+ management-level professionals worldwide. It is committed to encouraging excellence in CC management, and maintains a variety of educational, research, networking and standards programs to achieve this. For more info, visit aipc.org.

AIPC: Here's to a New & Bright Future

by Sven Bossu, CEO AIPC

On Nov. 30, a Flemish news anchor—Martine Tanghe—retired after presenting the seven o'clock news for 42 years on the public television. She has covered everything from royal weddings to natural disasters and every American president since Jimmy Carter. And her last words to her audience were: “Stay safe, take care—everything will be fine.”

Like anyone in the event industry, she most probably had different expectations with regards to 2020. And then she adapted to a new reality and provided us with daily COVID-19 updates for nine months. Similarly, event venues had to quickly adapt—first by becoming health and safety facilities and then by re-inventing themselves, both on a tactical and strategic level.

This transition is still ongoing and requires many difficult decisions, not in the

least when it comes to staff. And unfortunately, these hard times will continue for the next months. But the pandemic has made something very clear: the importance of face-to-face meetings cannot be overestimated. When attending the annual conference of several associations in the last months—including AIPC's—the message from the speakers was very clear: without face-to-face meetings, we lose the ability to truly innovate, collaborate and create welfare. Whether it concerned finance, cancer treatment or technology, each time the same need for bringing communities together surfaced.

And this will of course happen. China is already back in business, so is Dubai, and Singapore recently held its first major international event this year in a safe and secure way. In Europe, event organizers are firming up their plans to have meetings in the second

half of 2021, boosted by the news of the roll-out of vaccines as from the start of next year and similar news is heard on the other continents.

So, back to normal? Yes, but to the next normal. While we all want face-to-face meetings to happen, we also need to recognize the power of digital. A lot has been learned over the last year when it comes to organizing virtual events and some of the outcomes—especially in terms of reach—are truly impressive. As a result, in this next normal, event organizers will look—even more so—at the different purposes and dimensions of their events and select the appropriate platform accordingly.

This will be a challenge. Models, technologies, expectations ... everything is still in full motion. As a result, event organizers will be looking for trusted partners to help them deliver the best experience, via the most appropriate channel, to the right audiences.

Event venues, more than ever, are best placed to be that trusted partner. Over the last nine months, they have accelerated investments and put in place solutions which were