

INDUSTRY VIEWS

Buildings that build legacies



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Letz! Legacy in Luxembourg

Sven Bossu and **Patrick Hoffnung** argue that convention centres play a critical and often overlooked role when it comes to creating lasting legacies.

When you search the web for ‘legacy of events’, you will get 1 340 million results in less than a second. Doing the same search for ‘legacy of convention centres’ will produce 49 million results. And yet, we believe that the buildings in which events take place can play a very important role when it comes to creating a legacy.

Event legacy can take many shapes and forms, but one of the most common ones is that organisers want delegates to go back home feeling inspired and energised. Having great speakers, stimulating interaction and facilitated networking are all crucial to achieve this objective; however, without an inspiring environment, it will be a lot harder.

KEEPING THE USER AND COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF DESIGN

That is why architects, such as the award-winning Luxembourg based Nico Steinmetz, focus on user experience and community building when designing venues. Delegates will no longer leave the comfort of their homes/offices just to sit in a large ballroom and listen to hours of lectures, an evolution accelerated by Covid-19 and its digital shift. Events need to be carefully designed, offering different types of experiences in function of the goal to be achieved and using all the assets the venue can offer.

The European Convention Center of Luxembourg (ECCL) – which reopened 10 years ago – was designed to offer such a range of user experiences for a very specific audience: the EU Council of Ministers, an audience with very diverse needs. There is the need to have formal meetings in an environment that feels ‘safe’ and offers all the facilities needed. There is also the need for discrete bilateral discussions, often far less formal

but not less important to make progress on the challenges the EU faces. And of course, not unlike any other event, there is the need for informal networking. The ECCL offers all the facilities needed but combine these with architecture that brings in lots of natural light and uses colours and materials to create a sense of harmony. Similar features can be found in other venues such as ICC Sydney or the BMO Centre, which will open its doors in 2024: a clear focus on user experience with lots of light, flexible use of spaces and a sober, streamlined design, offering organisers the ideal platform to achieve the objectives outlined above.

ARCHITECTURE INFLUENCES ATMOSPHERE, WHICH INFLUENCES LEGACY

Creating the right atmosphere has often proved crucial when it comes to legacy. A great historical example is the Solvay Conference of 1911, which brought 18 top scientists from across the world together for lectures, formal and informal discussions on science. The venue – the Metropole Hotel in Brussels – created an atmosphere in which the attendees felt comfortable in sharing their ideas, which was the key objective of the organiser. Now, this meeting is considered a turning point in science, when classical physics was about to give way to quantum theory, forever changing the field.

For any organiser, it is of key importance to have a lasting impact or legacy. We like to think that the convention centre design can play a crucial role in making this happen and invite you to discover for yourself at the 2023 AIPC Annual Conference, taking place at the ECCL from 16-19 July 2023. Find out more at aipc.org/annual-conference. 