

AIPC Operational Excellence Summit Barcelona, 20-21 November 2025 AGENDA

Theme: Future Ready Operations: Driving Efficiency and Sustainability in Convention Centres

The AIPC Operational Excellence Summit provides an engaging forum for issues and opportunities associated with a new era of growing digitization and sustainability in the industry — and the implications these have for centre management.

Amongst the areas to be explored will be what's trending in event logistics, risk and crowd management, security and cybersecurity, evolving tech requirements, responding to new event formats, and the reinforced importance of sustainable practices — now guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and high on the agenda for centres wishing to demonstrate their social responsibility credentials.

Sessions will also incorporate key discussion topics that have proven to be highly popular and of practical use in previous events, including:

- Our annual industry update with a focus on venue operation
- The hands-on venue experience and knowledge exchange
- A supplier marketplace featuring centre-specific products
- Future-proofing the handover from sales to event services

This event is a must-do for all centres needing the very latest insights into today's most pressing facility operations issues!

Day 1: Wednesday, November 19th 2025 (Optional)

14:00 - 17:00

Back-of-house visit IBTM (Fira Barcelona)

Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour led by Carlos Moreno, Head of Customer Experience at Fira Barcelona. This is a unique opportunity to explore the venue and learn more about its operations.

Day 2: Thursday, November 20th 2025

08:30 - 09:00	Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 09:30	Welcome & Icebreaker
09:30 - 10:30	How to be(come) Future Ready In a world defined by rapid change, disruption, and relentless uncertainty, the ability to navigate the unknown is your greatest leadership advantage — and a powerful antidote to stress. In this energising keynote, Sandy Kennedy, serial entrepreneur and investor, shares practical insights and proven strategies to help you, your teams, and your organisation be(come) future ready. Together, you will uncover how to cut through the noise, spot emerging trends, foster curiosity and agility, and build resilience. You'll also learn how to Presenter: Sandy Kennedy Strategy Director Intelligent Growth Solutions
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:00	AV has moved from backstage to centre stage This session explores the latest trends shaping event experiences — from immersive LED environments and multi-plane stage design to next-generation lighting, tracking systems, and the data backbone behind them. Discover how European venues and production teams are merging visual storytelling with advanced technology to create unforgettable moments. Through inspiring case studies and a hands-on group challenge, participants will gain practical insights on how to turn technical innovation into emotional impact and prepare their venues for the future of live experiences. Presenters: Zsuzsa Szégner Head of Sales Visual Europe Group (BUD)
12:00 - 13:00	The Future of Food Presenter: Joanna Slusarczyk
13:00 - 14:00	Networking Lunch
14:00 – 14:45	The Nordic Approach to Sustainability

	Sustainability and collaboration are deeply embedded in the Nordic way of life — values that naturally extend into how the region approaches business events. In this session, Guy Bigwood (GDS-Movement) and Malin Erlandsson (The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre Group) will share lessons from a recent collaboration with the European Association of International Education (EAIE), showcasing how cooperation between competitors can accelerate sustainability performance and strengthen business relationships across the global convention centre community Presenters: Malin Erlandsson Director of Sales, Corporate, Congress and Events Svenska Mässan koncernen, The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre Group Guy Bigwood CEO and Chief Changemaker Global Destination Sustainability Movement
14:45 – 15:30	Sustainability in Action: The Edinburgh Case Study The Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) has been leading the way in sustainable events for the past 30 years. Rob Turnbull, the EICC's Sustainability Manager, will share the Centre's journey, highlighting how it has reduced its carbon emissions by 60% over the past decade, even while hosting twice as many events. From smart energy management and low-carbon travel planning to responsible catering, community food redistribution, and inclusive initiatives, discover how the EICC creates events that are greener, more inclusive and impactful, raising the standard for sustainable gatherings. Presenter: Rob Turnbull Sustainability Officer EICC
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:00	Operational Excellence Keynote: the Nato Summit case study In 2025, the World Forum The Hague hosted a historic NATO Summit. We have the privilege of welcoming Michiel Middendorf, CEO of the convention center, as a keynote speaker to share what it takes to make such a high-profile summit happen. Presenter: Michiel Middendorf CEO World Forum The Hague

17:30 - 18:00	Where Sustainability Happens: A Backstage Tour of CCIB
18:00 - 20:00	Free time
20:00 – 22:00	Optional Tour: Barcelona Gothic Quarter

Day 3: Friday, November 21nd 2025

08:30 - 09:00	Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 09:30	The Power of Continuous Improvement Small changes can have big impacts. In this session, you will learn how you, your team and your organisation can drastically improved efficiency by taking very small steps. Something to be instantly applied. Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
09:30 - 10:30	Shaping Workplace Culture — One Dialogue at a Time In this interactive session, Angela Herberholz from Herberholz Mediation Services explores how everyday conversations shape workplace culture and team dynamics. Drawing on her mediation experience in the international business events industry and insights from her recent survey publication, she introduces practical initiatives that organizations can apply immediately. Through real examples from Boards, leadership teams, and project groups, participants experience how guided dialogue transforms collaboration and strengthens trust across all levels. Presenter: Angela Herberholz Founder HERBERHOLZ MEDIATION SERVICES
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:00	Beyond Reports: Data for Smooth Operations

	Operations teams spend hours helping exhibitors find information that should be at their fingertips. The problem isn't technology - it's the foundation: clear definitions, aligned processes, then tech that actually serves you. In this session, Lloyd shows how this three-part foundation transforms chaos into smooth execution, making customer response instant, reports automatic and useful, and your venue ready for AI and automation. Interactive session with real examples and practical next steps. Make data work for you, not against you Presenter: Lloyd Tan Consultant Tannovations
12:00 - 12:30	A short introduction in Cyber Security Presenter: Robert McClure Director Paratus The cyber security world is moving faster than ever before with considerable threats occurring across the association and member centers; most notably the rise of Artificial Intelligence threats; that are evolving by themselves to tailor their attacks to each centre; causing a considerable development in threat types. This summit will review these models, gauge the threat to our centres and in effect understand how we can resist and protect our centres against this innovative security threat that we have never seen.
12:30 - 13:30	Networking Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	At the end, it's all about Finance Eric Manganel, COO at the SwissTech Convention Center will demonstrate that Finance is not only key for managing a organisation, but also an exiting domain which feeds into many aspects of running events. Presenter: Eric Manganel COO STCC
14:30 – 15:15	Everything you want to ask a CEO Have you ever wanted to ask a question to a CEO? Your time has come. Three CEOs from very different venues will share their views on leadership and - most importantly - answer your questions. Presenters: Julianne Jammers Managing Director STCC Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Telus
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break

15:30 - 16:30	Optional: Connecting The Dots - Global Outlook lecture followed by a PESTLE workshop In order to understand the world around us and the impact it has on our organisations, it is important to connect the dots. This session is all about making connections and translating them into impacts analysis, which is then transformed into action plans. Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
16:30 – 17:30	Closing Words & Cocktail
17:30 – 22:00	Departures