

WHAT'S TRENDING

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HELLO.



scott
GRAF
Global President
BCD Meetings & Events

As you dig into our take on the state of the industry and what we're expecting in 2022, let me get the could-be-better news out of the way first: 2021 has been another year of extreme challenges for the meetings and events industry. Uncertainty regarding face-to-face meetings and business travel continues to linger across the globe with its severity changing country by country. We saw many organizations, including our own, restructuring to support changing demand, and we have no clear end in sight to the pandemic. My analogy of 2021 is that of a rollercoaster ride—with its ups and downs, fast turns and upside-down loops. We have had to increase our already agile approach to servicing our customers while keeping a keen eye on the ever-changing realities of COVID-19.

However, in better-than-ever news, 2021 has solidified the true business need of meetings and events and face-to-face interaction to drive business forward. We have relied on trusted partnerships more than ever and have seen our team members in all corners of the world show up every day determined to support our organization, each other and, most importantly, our customers. We have prioritized well-being, diversity and inclusion, and sustainability within our company as well as our industry. And we have, in a sense, gone back to basics to re-evaluate why we are in this business, why our customers need meetings and events to change behavior and the importance of engaging attendees while keeping them safe.

As we look forward to 2022, I see a stronger, more unified industry focused on the value of partnership across the board. We strive daily to be the most creative and trusted meetings and events agency in the world—that does not happen without the support and expertise of our partners. We have all learned a lot over the last year and a half. It will be by sharing these lessons that we all come out stronger and better positioned for future success.

Happy reading and thank you for your efforts in cementing the value of meetings and events.

Hilton

BCD is a leader in our industry, and we're grateful for their voice and expertise in guiding the meeting and events industry back on track, as evidenced by this Trends report. We wholeheartedly agree that a "back to basics" approach is required as groups start meeting or planning to meet. Face-to-face interaction will always be necessary to move business forward, no matter the waves we have to navigate. And, as in-person meetings begin again, Hilton also wants to recognize the tremendous pressure that event professionals have worked under throughout this last year. You carry the expectations of your clients within an ever-changing environment, and to that end, we say a profound thank you.

As you and your clients plan for safe and memorable meetings, we also know that transparency from your hospitality partners is vital. We are committed to that endeavor and making sure you are successful with your clients and projects. When you're ready, Hilton properties around the globe look forward to partnering with you.

Relationships are essential in our business. As leaders of Hilton Worldwide Sales, we know our ability to be a trusted partner with you is one of our best attributes. By listening "loudly" to our customers, we reflect the best of our shared values and goals. Our mission is to spread the light and warmth of hospitality, and that mission is now stronger than ever. And, because of you, our light shines brighter.

Sincerely,



frank

PASSANANTE
Senior Vice President, Hilton
Worldwide Sales Americas



gerilyn

HORAN
Vice President of Group Sales
& Strategic Accounts, Hilton
Worldwide Sales Americas

If you can believe it, this is our fifth issue of What's Trending. To celebrate the value of partnership, we are excited to stray from our typical course and feature a trusted supplier's perspective throughout. Hilton and BCD Meetings & Events joined forces to provide even more insight into our industry and what's to be expected in 2022. Read on for a glimpse inside our collective minds and to discover what to expect as you plan your programs next year.

FROM AROUND

THE WORLD

2021 proved to be another year full of ups and downs. With the Delta variant affecting the return of face-to-face meetings and events, each region (and even country) remains at various stages of recovery. But a recent traveler survey found that while virtual meetings and remote work are here to stay, business travel and face-to-face meetings remain extremely important.

Duty of care and safety are top of mind, but 76% of respondents said business travel helps them perform their work efficiently, and 66% believe the main weakness of virtual meetings and events is the lack of human interaction, highlighting the enthusiasm to meet in person. As meetings and events and corporate travel have continued to ebb and flow depending on the region of the world, we asked our global leaders for their take on where we are now and how things look for the future of the industry.



NORTH AMERICA



christine

ERICKSON,
*SVP, Experience & Event Solutions,
The Collective & Global Industry Relations*



charlene

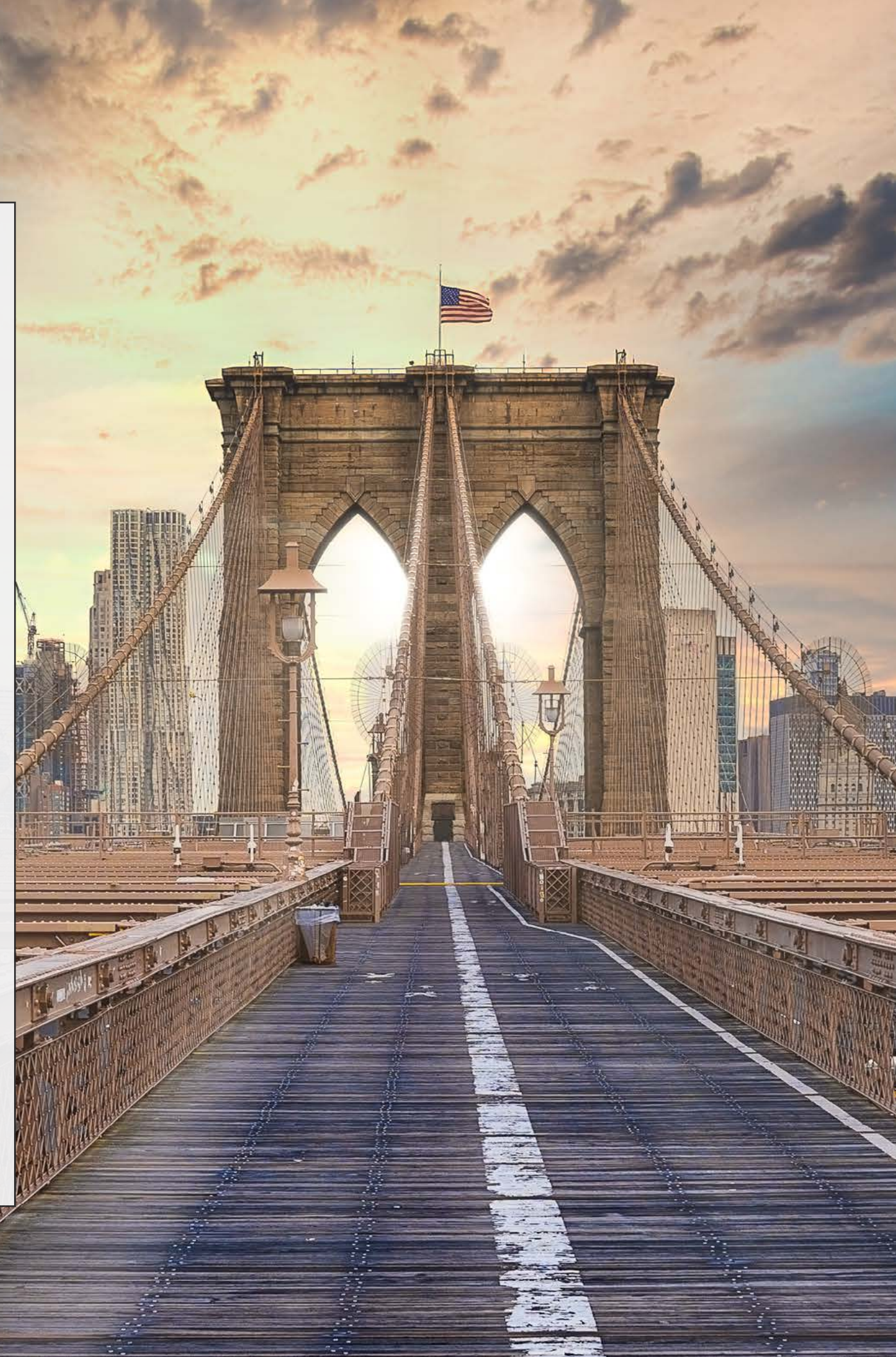
RABIDEAU,
SVP, Meetings Management

While trending up, the anticipated return of face-to-face meetings did not materialize as quickly and widespread as expected in 2021. As a region, NORAM has faced many challenges including delays in development of back-to-office/meeting policies, slower returns to live events, and cancellations and postponements. With virtual still top of mind, we are noticing a steady decline in hybrid event interest and a continued increase in face to face.

After the successful execution of live events where the right measures were in place, there is an increased preference for clients to pursue face-to-face formats. The majority (65%+) of our face-to-face meetings remain on schedule; however, they are smaller in size. Many larger meetings have moved into 2022 with hotel availability becoming more limited next year. We have seen strong indications that incentive programs will return with a force as companies are becoming more eager to connect in person to recognize and reward attendees. Many have expressed increased interest in exploring unique destinations within domestic travel.

This uptick in face-to-face meetings and events has also prompted customers' interest in revisiting and refreshing crisis management protocols and procedures. Best practices around duty of care and risk mitigation have been top of mind over the last 20 months and will only continue to become more critical to safe and successful event planning.

With the rise of virtual in 2020 and return to face to face in 2021, one thing has remained abundantly clear: We have a persistent and intrinsic desire for fostering human connection. Navigating the ramifications of COVID-19 has validated the importance of in-person experiences, and we are cautiously optimistic about the continued return of face to face in 2022.



LATIN AMERICA



ana paula

HERNANDEZ,
VP & Managing Director, Mexico & LATAM

Although vaccination rates are steadily on the rise (currently at 30-40% regionally) and continuing to increase across all markets, the onset of the Delta variant has delayed the rapid return of face-to-face events in Latin America. Markets in Brazil and Mexico are seeing an increased demand for proposals; however, digital components still comprise large parts of those requests. As the interest in live meetings continues to grow, we anticipate a continued decline in interest of hybrid event formats due to their costliness and complexity.

Currently face-to-face meetings in the region are small format and international activity is not yet on the horizon. International congresses, for example, continue to show heavy interest in virtual meetings. However, there is an increasing demand from clients to return to face to face as soon as possible when safe. This is particularly true among product launches, sales meetings and board meetings as well as for commercial teams who have experienced significant impact due to the lack of these types of events taking place. Additionally, when thinking through planning live events, clients have expressed prioritizing sustainability within both the planning process and event experiences.

As a result of the increased interest in live events, duty of care and risk management have become top of mind in the planning process, and liability will remain a big concern for clients until most of the population has been vaccinated. The risks associated with planning live events has also prompted a desire for more flexibility as well as the management of emotions and expectations when planning events. Clients want to feel comfortable booking with enough room to reschedule or adjust without the same stress experienced in 2020.

We anticipate that virtual events will remain prevalent through the end of this year and into the first two quarters of 2022. But with growing client interest in face-to-face meetings coupled with the consistent rise in regional vaccination rates, we are remaining optimistic about the return of live events in the first half of 2022.



EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

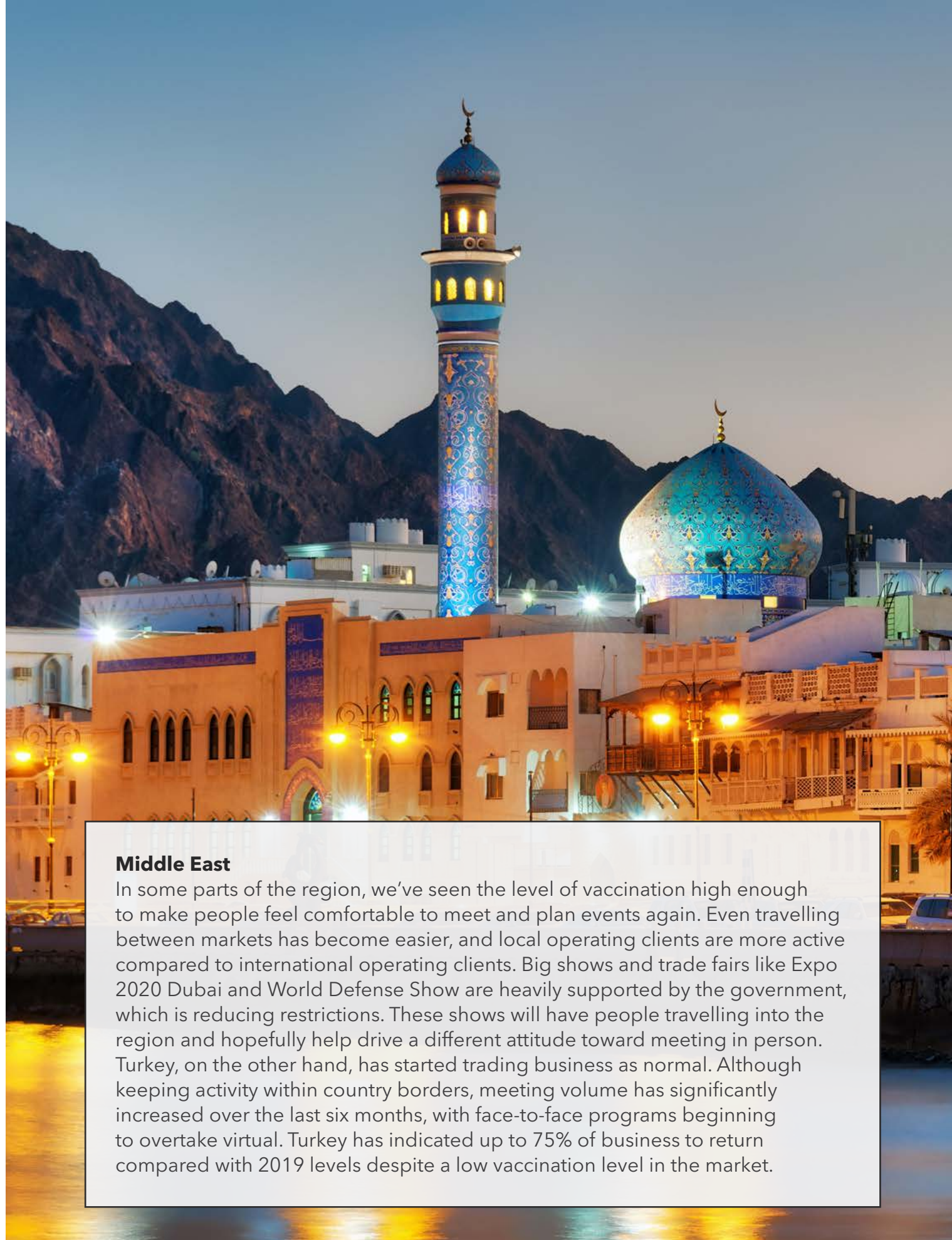


mikael

EK,
Managing Director, EMEA

Europe

In the European region (excluding UK), the vaccination program is overall positive with very strong development in certain markets. Travelling is now possible due to vaccination QR codes, making business travel much easier in-region as no further testing is required. However, the airline network is still not up to speed with only a few direct flights available and many last-minute cancellations, causing additional concern and uncertainty when planning meetings and events that require air. Overall, Europe is following in the footsteps of UK and the U.S. but with a delay. Given that the UK and U.S. will have limited ability to travel into the EU, meetings and events will likely focus on local and/or regional locations that can be more easily planned and executed. There is also an increased demand for SMMPs with focus on sustainability and risk mitigation, as well as understanding how meetings and events policies will need to change going forward. Additionally, the supplier network is changing as more partnerships are formed.

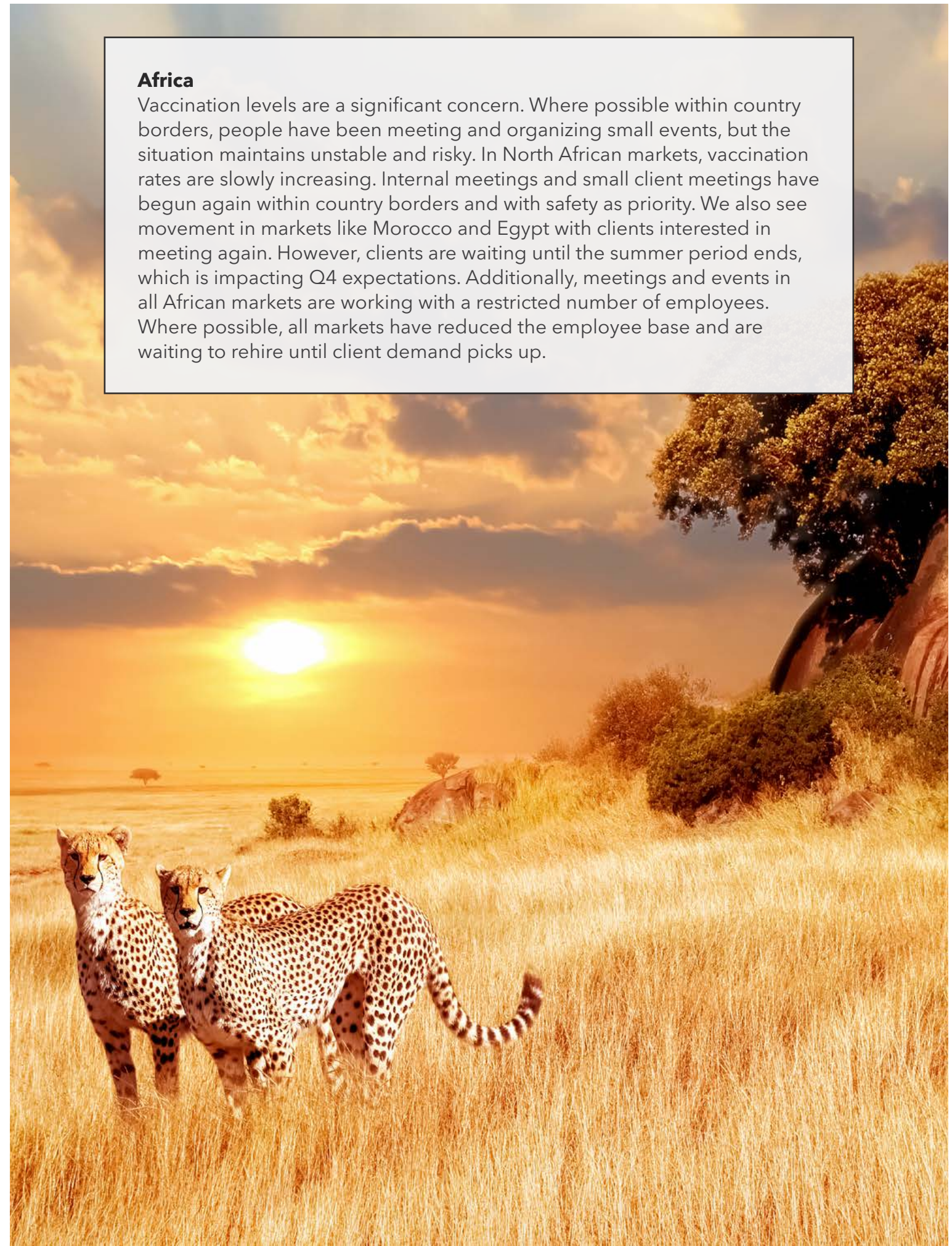


Middle East

In some parts of the region, we've seen the level of vaccination high enough to make people feel comfortable to meet and plan events again. Even travelling between markets has become easier, and local operating clients are more active compared to international operating clients. Big shows and trade fairs like Expo 2020 Dubai and World Defense Show are heavily supported by the government, which is reducing restrictions. These shows will have people travelling into the region and hopefully help drive a different attitude toward meeting in person. Turkey, on the other hand, has started trading business as normal. Although keeping activity within country borders, meeting volume has significantly increased over the last six months, with face-to-face programs beginning to overtake virtual. Turkey has indicated up to 75% of business to return compared with 2019 levels despite a low vaccination level in the market.

Africa

Vaccination levels are a significant concern. Where possible within country borders, people have been meeting and organizing small events, but the situation maintains unstable and risky. In North African markets, vaccination rates are slowly increasing. Internal meetings and small client meetings have begun again within country borders and with safety as priority. We also see movement in markets like Morocco and Egypt with clients interested in meeting again. However, clients are waiting until the summer period ends, which is impacting Q4 expectations. Additionally, meetings and events in all African markets are working with a restricted number of employees. Where possible, all markets have reduced the employee base and are waiting to rehire until client demand picks up.



UNITED KINGDOM



helen

MCCABE,
Managing Director, UK

The impact of COVID-19 continues within the UK; however, there are clear signs of a steady recovery. We saw increased demand from September 2021 for smaller, domestic meetings and events as well as a further upturn of larger face-to-face events taking place from Q1 2022. We have seen significant evidence of business diversification during the pandemic and continue to overcome new barriers arising from the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Sustainability, a deeper requirement for a wider delegate management solution, plus the continuation of both virtual and hybrid events impacts the future shape of our industry. We continue to invest in both proprietary and best-in-class external technology to meet the ever-evolving needs of both our customers and the meetings and events landscape. We have welcomed onboard a record number of new clients this year and are working with our existing customers to successfully expand their requirements to other BCD regions and/or additional services, which has resulted in improving client satisfaction results by 10% across the UK.



ASIA PACIFIC



Sanjay

SETH,
*Managing
Director, APAC*

Progress can be difficult at times, but we are certainly seeing a change for the better in the APAC region. It feels like we're in a bit of a tug-of war with COVID-19, managing constantly changing regulations by market where the ability to deliver face-to-face meetings is controlled. Optimism, however, is growing with increased vaccination rates. Collaboration between agencies, suppliers and partners has never been better. Clearly, we are ready to move on—and we are, slowly (read: cautiously) but surely.

We continue to be creative and agile in our solutions for customers across the region. Our virtual and hybrid executions amplify the customer message across multiple channels (including social media platforms), as we recently showcased for Michelin in Singapore. Customers in Australia have led the return to face-to-face meetings, which is encouraging for the region.

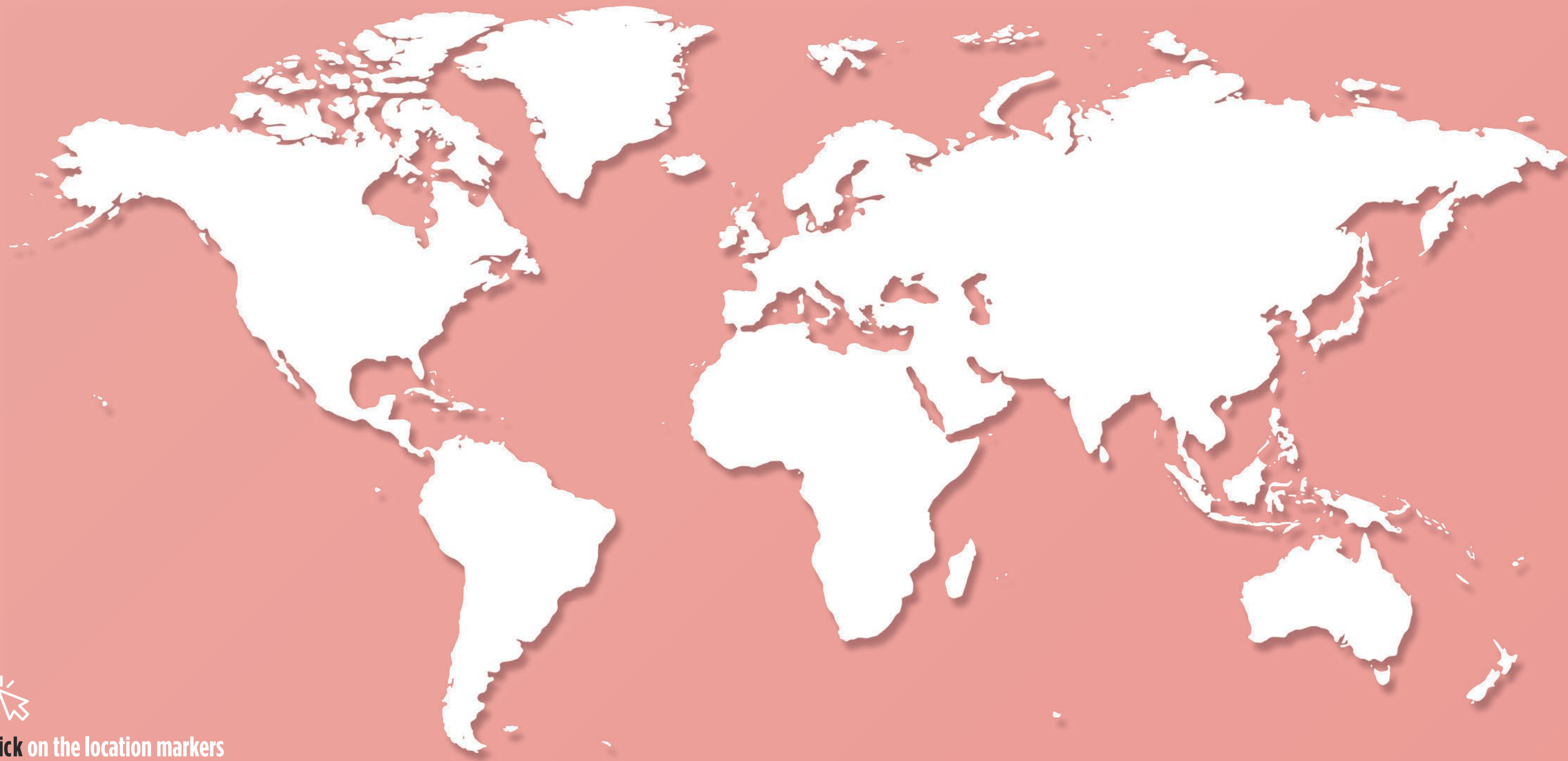
LET THE

GOOD NEWS

ROLL

The last couple of years have been difficult for meetings and events professionals around the world. While the industry may not be back to 100% yet, let's take some time to celebrate a bit of good news. We could all use some!





Click on the location markers
to see the good news around
the world!

WHAT'S TRENDING?

ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT: GETTING BACK TO BASICS

The pandemic taught us much about engagement. In shifting to virtual, planners had greater opportunity than ever before to collect data points on attendees. This enabled them to really understand how they were interacting with an event: what they were clicking and not clicking, what sessions they chose to attend and how long they stayed in them, how they interacted with others. Virtual also opened events to a global audience, enabling organizations to exponentially expand their reach and engagement.

Looking ahead to 2022, event planners will shift into a greater role of event designers. Looking at events from only a logistical perspective is out; event planners will need to consider designing an event to engage attendees along every step in their journey. Tracks for in-person, virtual and hybrid events will need to be carefully thought out from the beginning to develop an impactful experience for attendees while also delivering ROI to stakeholders.

Traditionally, we've created events based around different attendee types. With statistics from virtual accelerating how we look at engagement from each of those types, we can get back to basics, but with a data-centric approach. From the very beginning, planners must evaluate: What is the purpose of the event? Who is the audience? What are you trying to achieve? Understanding why you're holding an event in the first place and defining what success looks like will provide a greater vantage point from which you can leverage data gathered from your attendees pre-, during and post-event.

This is where technology comes in. Organizations should not overcomplicate how many tech tools are in the mix, but drive consistency by incorporating what tools attendees are using in their daily lives. The concept of using tech to create a year-round community will continue to grow in importance. Planners will be tasked with creating an online space that attendees can engage in throughout the year to get access to content, push out information and be part of an interactive community.

Overall, there is tremendous optimism surrounding the return to in-person events. With that comes fresh opportunity to build a content and engagement strategy from the ground-up that's rooted in data and that grabs and holds attendees' attention while creating value for them as well as your business and stakeholders.



Virtual meetings and events bring the user experience into focus in a different way, but it remains crucial to the overall success of a program. It's essential to map the attendee journey and create the right content mix to support it. [Learn how BCD Meetings & Events helped a global life sciences client achieve maximum engagement with its event strategy.](#)

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

NORTH AMERICA

Implementing strong risk mitigation and duty of care protocols and strictly adhering to regional and local guidelines is enabling event planners to get back to in-person events, leapfrogging the hybrid model altogether. They must cater to two types of attendees, however: Those who are eager to get back to face-to-face and those who want to participate but are not comfortable being in groups yet. Whether it's in-person, virtual or hybrid events, planners must create experiences that feel personalized to attendees and that meet them where they're at while also meeting the business needs of the company. Going forward, being strategic with your technology stack and content will be key to fueling engagement pre-, during and post-event.

UNITED KINGDOM

Planners in this region are cautiously optimistic. Virtual events are still strong, having realized the benefit of no travel, reduced carbon footprint, increased accessibility and greater work-life balance for attendees through the pandemic. Interest in live events is growing for 2022 and delegate confidence is building now that social distancing requirements have been lifted in the region. Hybrid models are making inroads and although the format comes with a learning curve, clients are embracing it as an option. Regardless of format, technologies like event platforms, apps and delegate management systems enable greater opportunity for audience interaction. Teams in this region have seen success in creating emotional connections with attendees through enhanced delegate profiling and registration procedures, leading to a more emotionally engaging experience.

LATIN AMERICA

Many in this region are jumping from virtual straight back into small in-person events, with fewer employing a hybrid model, realizing that face-to-face events help to develop a greater sense of belonging and human connection. Participation in virtual events has decreased here, but for those still taking place, planners must seek out new tech tools, such as augmented reality, to engage audiences through creative and innovative forms of entertainment. Emotional connection also plays an important role. Powerful storytelling makes a difference in engagement, as it enables brands to connect with their audience on an emotional level through sharing valuable insights and cultivating a sense of exclusivity.



EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Today's attendees demand personalized experiences with meaning, innovation, and insight. They're seeking event formats that foster personal and authentic engagement—with the brand, the content, the destination and each other. As such, every participant should have the opportunity to help to shape the event, and the digital world is enabling these individual experiences. While execution may vary depending on audience, the attendee journey is at the core of every event strategy. Before choosing engagement tactics and designing creative content, it's imperative to map out that journey through your event, including touchpoints in pre- and post-event communication.

ASIA PACIFIC

While there's an overall feeling of excitement about the return of face-to-face interaction, planners are still erring on the side of extreme caution to avoid putting attendees at risk. It's still unclear in this region as to how safe distancing requirements will hinder engagement at events. Some are implementing successful hybrid models, enabling attendees to still interact in a personal manner but through a virtual platform. Looking ahead, for both hybrid and in-person events, sessions must be delivered in shorter pieces, with less theory and more practical application, and give attendees ample opportunity to interact (i.e., through polls and trivia) and regular breaks. One-on-one sessions will enable greater sharing of experiences. This region will also continue home deliveries, such as bento sets or care packages, to extend virtual events into the physical.

Hilton

EVENTREADY

In today's new normal, we know event professionals are highly tuned in to their attendees' health and safety comfort levels, and that you need to report back to your business stakeholders with confidence that it's safe to meet. Hilton EventReady with CleanStay is our commitment to you that meetings can be held safely and effectively, and the Hilton EventReady Playbook offers guidance, inspiration, and tangible solutions for executing engaging, safe and socially responsible events. We are ready to welcome you back when you are ready and will work with you closely to elevate the event experience and design solutions that give you, your attendees and your stakeholders true peace of mind, from start to finish.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Use insights to inform event design. Higher attendee confidence leads to higher engagement.

- Poll your audience to learn how they are feeling about travel.
- Expand communications to drive higher comfort levels among attendees.
- Do a tech audit to determine how you can integrate technology your audience is already using.

WHAT'S TRENDING?

BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE FOR M&E PROGRAMS

DUTY OF CARE AND DATA ARE MISSION CRITICAL.

When the pandemic hit, planners found themselves in one of two scenarios. One: They had a strong handle on their meetings and data and were able to pull real-time statistics on what meetings were planned, what needed to be canceled, what budgetary risk was on the table, and, once a meeting was canceled, what they could save or leverage from that event. Or, two: They scrambled because they didn't know how many meetings and events were happening across their organization, what they were liable for and what risks existed.

Regardless of which scenario you fell under, the pandemic helped drive the importance of building a solid business case for your M&E program. Many are eager to get back to in-person events, but now, there is greater scrutiny across all organizations about what needs to be a face-to-face event, what needs to be virtual and what might go away entirely. As teams begin to rebuild M&E programs, the safety of attendees is paramount. Whereas savings may have been the driving force behind programs previously, now, it's about fulfilling duty of care.

Technology and data play a key role here. Planners need to understand exactly where their attendees are and where liability lies. Many organizations have implemented new meeting standards and written playbooks on regulations and requirements to ensure they're not putting attendees at risk.

Sustainability is also coming back as a driving force in conversation and decision making; while it never fully left, other priorities edged higher during 2021. Assessing your company's key priorities and how those align with specific goals (such as reducing carbon emissions), then connecting those to the values of a meeting program will become a key part of planners' roles moving forward.



For the second year, BCD has earned the coveted Platinum distinction from EcoVadis, awarded to the highest-performing companies in an independent sustainability assessment. [Click here](#) to learn how our approach to sustainability supports you.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

NORTH AMERICA

From a duty of care and risk management perspective, there is a heightened sense of cautiousness. At the same time, the expectation for increased data around events is high. During months of virtual-only events, a rich data set enabled planners to better understand and share how their message and content was resonating. That expectation continues among stakeholders as live events return. Planners should focus on communicating to the C-suite how events are part of marketing and sales—a huge opportunity to connect with and collect data on an audience pre-, during and post-event and use those insights to inform future design.

UNITED KINGDOM

Safety and duty of care are driving the areas of risk that planners in this region are highlighting as a need for further and stronger consolidation of programs. C-suite leaders are far more involved in the assessments in this space compared to pre-pandemic. Currently, the focus is communicating how to hold safe face-to-face meetings and the steps being taken to ensure safety. Right now, internal meetings focused on getting people together, motivating and celebrating have a less formal ROI need because of objectives. Customer events, specifically those in life sciences space, are a different story. Content is king for these meetings; therefore, recording ROE (return on engagement) is the focus. Some of these programs are permanently moving to virtual events and creating an increasing need to move from basic metrics to full ROI and ROO (return on objective) plans.

LATIN AMERICA

Programs are being scrutinized more closely in this region, especially in the areas of budget, risk mitigation and duty of care. More than ever, data is critical. Companies are looking for data to measure KPIs and ROI to determine the success of an event and how it can be improved. They must closely review all data regarding safety and security measures and cancellation policies. One challenge this region faces, however, is data management; few have access to software to help manage data that would enable better decision-making for future events. Additionally, planners must perform due diligence in recommending vendors and suppliers, ensuring they comply with all safety recommendations and have duty of care plans in place.



EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Companies are diving deeper into collected data and supplier lists as well as duty of care strategy while simultaneously being scrutinized by more stakeholders—from procurement to legal, HR and security. In this region, there's a greater focus on generating savings, streamlining processes, mitigating risks, prioritizing health and safety, and increasing event ROI than ever before. As such, planners must better understand the advantages of setting up M&E programs and the steps toward implementing them. This may include steps such as consolidating suppliers, reevaluating budgets, creating or amending M&E policies, revising agreement clauses, integrating approval processes, and adapting M&E strategy to include virtual and hybrid formats. Not all are equipped to analyze relevant data, however. Maturity of EMEA countries varies widely on spend visibility, with some very fragmented in this area. Full visibility will be priority going forward.

ASIA PACIFIC

The C-suite is looking for more confidence to ensure ROO and ROI from M&E programs and are more hands-on with sign-off now compared to pre-pandemic. They also recognize that safety of attendees (along with compliance to local regulations) is paramount, with customer risk and safety protocols significantly increased. It's imperative that planners develop clear and measurable meeting program goals to understand where the value is. That can be cost savings, but it's also where they can leverage spend and find efficiencies in connecting events and audiences. However, amidst increasing legal requirements, planners must carefully consider how they are collecting and storing data. Overall, companies are seeking consistency in spend categories across APAC markets, with M&E a perfect example of this. Meeting programs are increasingly being launched into multiple markets to drive bigger returns and impact.

Hilton

LIGHTSTAY

Hilton remains focused on our bold **Travel with Purpose** 2030 goals and fully committed to leadership in environmental, social and corporate governance policies so travelers can enjoy our planet for years to come. By 2030, we will have doubled our investment in social impact and cut our environmental footprint by half. In fact, we track, analyze and report our environmental and social impact at each of our more than 6,400 hotels worldwide through LightStay, our award-winning performance management system.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Having a strong handle on ROI, ROO and ROE from your M&E program is no longer optional.

- Outline your company's key priorities, then connect them to the values and impact of your M&E program.
- Map out your M&E program to determine what can stay virtual, what could be hybrid and what should shift back to face-to-face.
- Implement a data management strategy to use what you've learned from past events to improve future ones.

WHAT'S TRENDING?

STRENGTHENING SUPPLIER RELATIONS

STRONG VETTING BECOMES PARAMOUNT, WHILE PARTNERS ALIGN ON GREATER OBJECTIVES.

Going beyond offering mutual support, the pandemic fundamentally changed the way the planning teams view meetings and event suppliers. Overall, the supply chain has been compressed. This has happened for two major reasons: First, a large group of mom-and-pop shops as well as larger agencies didn't make it through the pandemic due to financial constraints. Second, internal meeting teams are now more closely examining the suppliers in which they work, putting new preferred programs into place to streamline their suppliers.

Moving forward, planners are looking to work with reputable and stable suppliers who not only supply their needs but deliver top-quality service. More and more, suppliers that enter the realm of trusted partners will be the ones that planners work with repeatedly. Global firms are engaging in cross-company collaboration on supplier lists, consolidating and/or leveraging those buys through connecting the dots where they were disparate before. Tech tools are a critical piece of this work for developing preferred lists across company divisions.

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility are starting to play a larger role in supplier relationships, as well. While planners are not choosing partners over other suppliers solely based on sustainability commitments or diversity and inclusion efforts at this time, there's growing awareness to work with companies that share the same values. Looking ahead, this may well become a driving force in decisions when paired with top-quality service and need fulfillment as more planners integrate sustainability and D&I into programs and meeting strategies.



Sourcing: What to Know Now
Contract negotiations have always been crucial in mitigating risk during the event planning process. Now, with new considerations to include, they require more vigilance than ever.

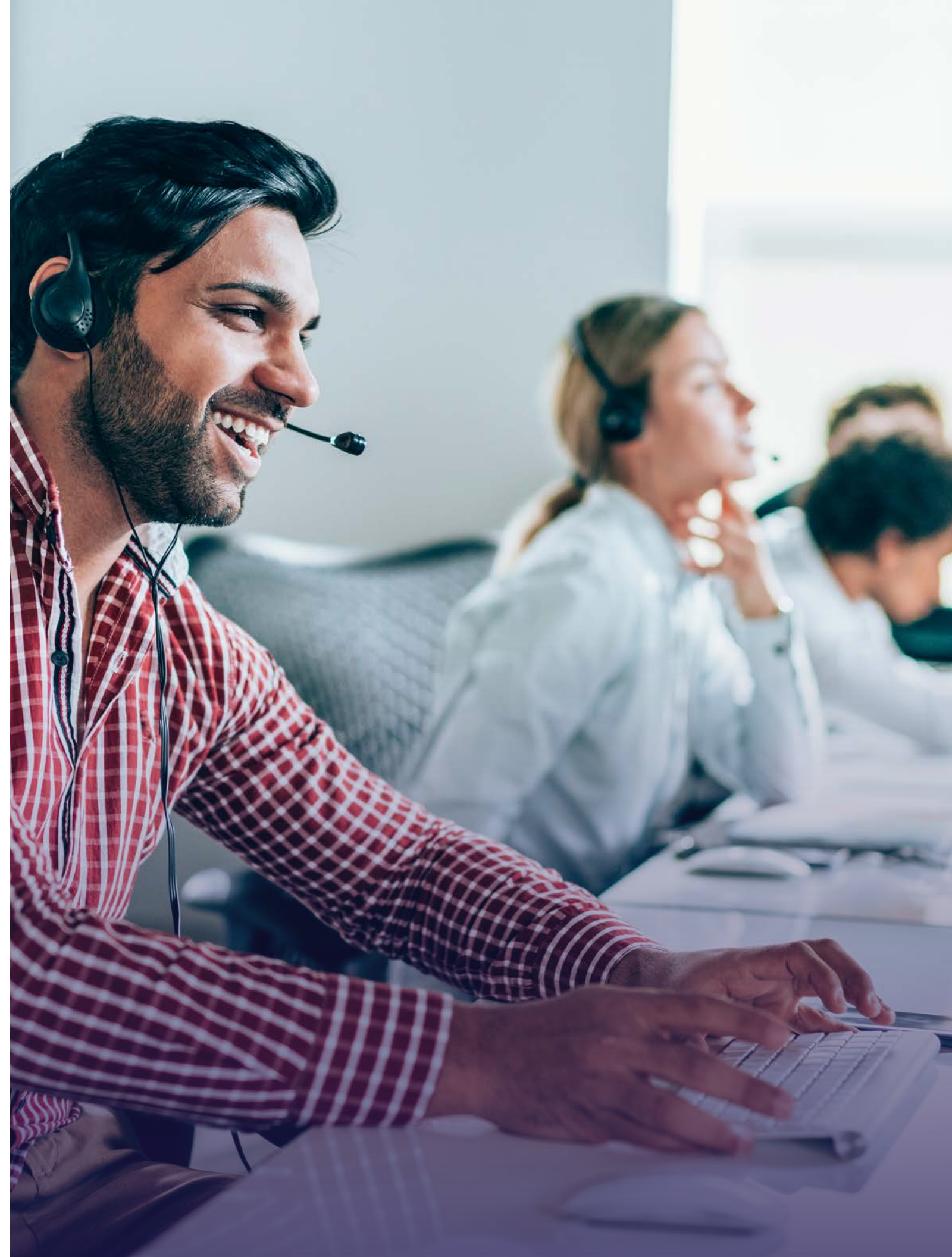
REGIONAL INSIGHTS

NORTH AMERICA

Many partners in this region are in various stages of the post-pandemic comeback journey, while many others are no longer in business. This has resulted in consolidation of the corporate supply chain and increased planners' reliance on external partners, such as DMCs and hotels, to vet new suppliers. Those with reduced in-house teams have also become more dependent on agencies to handle vetting and/or management because there are not enough hours in the day to do it all. The one area that's growing exponentially, supplier-wise, is technology partners. There is a huge need to implement niche technologies that provide event attendees the same frictionless tech experience they have as a regular consumer.

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA + UNITED KINGDOM

Initially, the pandemic highlighted the strength of relationships, favorable negotiations and support for one another amidst widespread postponements and cancellations. More recently, the industry here has been challenged with a reduced workforce and many changes in personnel. Risk mitigation has also been a major factor in supplier relations. Lead time is shorter and the process to sign a contract can be much slower, specifically with wavering confidence levels around terms and conditions, travel restrictions, minimum numbers, cancellation terms and force majeure. It's become increasingly important to align terms and conditions with partners to protect all parties in a fair and consistent fashion. CSR is also playing a greater role in supplier relations than before, with planners looking to work with suppliers who have "done the right thing" (i.e., housed medical professionals) through dark times of the pandemic.



LATIN AMERICA

In the past, contracts were based on volume. Now, planners in this region cannot estimate the volume they might have, so the focus is on safety and security, as well as flexibility in cancellation policies and services. When vetting suppliers, financial stability and sanitization protocols are required: No COVID protocol, no business. While global suppliers are comfortable with these new measures, local suppliers face compliance issues and struggle to give clients credit due to limited cashflow. Planners are increasingly looking to work with partners who share values around sustainability and diversity, as well, understanding that they play a key role in shaping long-term business.

ASIA PACIFIC

Staying in close contact with suppliers regarding continuously changing rules and regulations has been important, with the pandemic emphasizing the need to evolve together and collaborate to set standards for the new normal in events. Many suppliers have gone out of business in this region, so the stability of suppliers is being examined more closely. Those still around are being evaluated first from a safety and security standpoint; while these criteria existed pre-COVID, it is now at the forefront of the vetting process. Risk mitigation is fundamental, and most suppliers now will take responsibility within their control. Hotels and venues have held hybrid showcases for planners to demonstrate how first-hand how changes will impact future events as well as highlight safety measures. CSR and sustainability still play an important role, yet application remains different in each market. Supporting local supply chains and CSR organizations is the obvious choice currently given ongoing limitations in shipping and travel.

Hilton

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Many of our clients have told us that diversity and inclusion matter when it comes to choosing supplier partners, and Hilton is proud to have been recognized as the No. 1 company on the 2021 DiversityInc rankings. We also were the first hospitality company to make our gender and ethnic diversity commitments public, sharing specific data on where we stood at the end of 2020 and where we aim to be by the end of 2027. This data is readily available on our [careers site](#) now.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Put in extra effort to develop strong partners that will supply M&E needs and provide top-quality service.

- Reevaluate your preferred supplier list to see where you can consolidate.
- Review your tech stack and integrate those suppliers with your preferred list for M&E.
- Outline your CSR and sustainability goals and consider if/how you'll include those in vetting suppliers.



REMINDE
ME



WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT

Use insights to inform event design. Higher attendee confidence leads to higher engagement.

- Poll your audience to learn how they are feeling about travel.
- Expand communications to drive higher comfort levels among attendees.
- Do a tech audit to determine how you can integrate technology your audience is already using.

2

BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE FOR YOUR M&E PROGRAM

Having a strong handle on ROI, ROO and ROE from your M&E program is no longer optional.

- Outline your company's key priorities, then connect them to the values and impact of M&E program.
- Map out your M&E program to determine what can stay virtual, what could be hybrid and what should shift back to face-to-face.
- Implement a data management strategy to use what you've learned from past events to improve future ones.

3

STRENGTHENING SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS

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IN OTHER

NEWS



MEDIA & PRODUCTION

When it comes to content, clients are realizing the same strategies that got them through 2020 won't cut it anymore. 2020 was about connection. Clients were less focused on storytelling and more attuned to ensuring they had a workable engagement platform. After 18 months of virtual fatigue, clients are hungry for the new, the different, the better. We're often asked: "How do we make this less boring for attendees?" The answer: study the best practices of film and television and weave them into a dynamic, interactive experience.

The stories being told echo a little differently this year. Global social trends have inserted themselves more firmly in clients' minds, as D&I conversations become integral to the ways in which companies effectively express themselves. Segments that used be filled by motivational content now resound with messaging asking how we create more opportunity for more people. The ethos of inclusion has become a consistent piece of the guidance we receive from clients on how to tell their story.

ON-DEMAND MEETING SERVICES

Amidst COVID variants and lingering health and safety concerns around the world, planners are not committing to forecasting what programs will look like far into the future. As such, on-demand meeting services and scalable resourcing are taking center stage. Forming partnerships with outside providers to handle things like sourcing, program management, websites and potentially planning can provide some assurance, especially for planners who have emerged from the pandemic with skeleton teams.

If you're in this position and needing on-demand meeting services, be open to some shared risk and a mutual commitment to partner and grow with you. That may include some upfront financial commitment in order for the provider to be trained and ready will scalable resource options Partnerships with a dual investment and common goals will be more beneficial to both parties in the long run vs. a basic supplier/vendor relationship.



Our services are designed to meet you where you are at—from meetings management and program management to risk mitigation and duty of care protocols. [Contact us](#) to learn how we can provide assurance you're protected.

LIFE SCIENCES

The Life Sciences vertical has been in the spotlight more than ever recently. Here's what we know as we look forward to 2022.



MODALITY

In-Person meetings - In the U.S., Life Sciences customers were early adopters of the vaccine and as a result have been quicker to return to live meetings, mainly in the form of small, hyper-local programs. The value health care providers (HCPs) place on the opportunity to engage and exchange clinical information and insights with their peers is a crucial driver of this push to return to live meetings as soon as possible.

Virtual is here to stay - Life Sciences customers are likely to continue to have a healthy mix of virtual programs in their portfolio of meetings even after the pandemic subsidies, due to ease of attendance and broad reach of busy HCPs for manufacturers.



TRANSPARENCY

Legitimate interest vs. Informed consent - Countries like England and Ireland are increasing transparency reporting through the legal concept of "legitimate interest," which improves and increases individual HCP value transfer disclosure rates. Historically, HCPs had to provide consent to have their information made public.

As we mentioned in our 2020 report, APAC, unlike EMEA, lacks a regional code, which makes the ability to dictate standards on compliance norms and transparency a challenge. True to our forecast, we are seeing individual nations make progress to improve transparency. For example, the Medicines New Zealand and New Zealand Medical Association joint initiative that promotes public confidence in the industry through voluntary disclosures of transfers of value went into effect in January 2021 and will be reported out in June 2022.



SPEAKER PROGRAMS

2022 PhRMA Code changes to speaker bureau dinner meetings seek to more closely align with the guidance articulated in the OIG's 2020 Special Fraud Alert. Upcoming changes to the PhRMA Code include positions on what is generally appropriate for repeat attendance and venue selection, along with the elimination of alcohol being provided or paid for by the pharmaceutical manufacturer. Time will tell if AdvaMed will follow suit in bringing change for medical device manufacturers who host didactic dinner programs, but some of our customers are already discussing the possibility.



2022

LIFE HACKS

There's no doubt the last year (or two) have been tough. Here are a few professional life hacks to take you into 2022 feeling strong, well balanced and positive—or as close as you can get.





VALUE YOUR WORK RELATIONSHIPS

It's easy to lose out on true human connection when every communication or exchange is done through a screen. Taking the time to appreciate and recognize your colleagues will not only motivate and encourage them, but you as well.



PROGRESS YOUR EDUCATION

The industry had to adapt very quickly throughout the pandemic. Similarly, so should you. Staying current with qualifications and accreditations increases your knowledge and your confidence in your role, and enhances your professional and personal development.



SPLIT YOUR DAY INTO MANAGEABLE CHUNKS

Give your work day a structure to increase productivity by creating dedicated time to focus followed by short breaks. This enables you to fully concentrate on your tasks ahead knowing you've already scheduled time to get up, go for a walk, make a cup of tea or check your phone.



PRIORITIZE YOUR WORKLOAD

Find the best approach for you! That could mean beginning your day with the hardest task to free up your focus for the rest of the day. Or, you may enjoy getting easier jobs out of the way in the first hour to give you that sense of achievement needed to tackle larger projects on your to-do list.



FOLLOW THE 2 MINUTE RULE

We all know the feeling of putting off smaller tasks for hours or days only to feel overwhelmed as they add up and deadlines loom. Instead of pushing all the small stuff to the side, consider following this rule: Complete any task that takes less than 2 minutes to as soon as it comes across your desk. You'll get them out of the way early!



TAKE BREAKS

Setting aside time for yourself throughout the workday—particularly when working from home—can be easier said than done, but it's scientifically proven to boost your productivity. Whether you take a break to enjoy a snack, go on a walk or just breathe deeply for a few minutes to refocus, it will help ensure you have energy to power through your day.



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