

# THE FUTURE ROLE OF CONVENTION CENTRES

Newly elected AIPC president Aloysius Arlando shares his views on convention centres, AIPC's role and what the industry can expect in the future.



*In addition to his role as AIPC president, Aloysius Arlando is the chief executive officer of SingEx Holdings, which comprises several entities focusing on the MICE industry, including the management of the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre.*

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING CONVENTION CENTRES TODAY?** Convention centres today are no longer about the hardware or even the software. It's about user experience and how a convention centre's venues play a role through the various touch points it owns to create a customer journey – a delightful experience. A happy customer is always good for business. It's no longer about differentiating yourself from the competition but about putting yourself in a novel and different playing field, so that we are not just different but unique.

**WHERE WILL THE INDUSTRY BE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?** Convention centres will move beyond being venue providers or even partners and solution providers, to become community builders. They will be integral players

in a destination's brand positioning and deliver economic and social value to the destination.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME OF THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO CENTRES RIGHT NOW?** Centres are striving earnestly to adopt appropriate digital transformation initiatives that can help engage customers and grow the business. Digital transformation is not just about adopting new technologies. It is also about getting the right digital talents to support and be integrated into the organisation, while our existing talents must all be prepared to embrace the new direction moving forward through edification processes, as well as partnering with digital accelerators to ensure speed to market. Centres should capitalise or deepen their partnerships with their local governments, bureau and industry players, and forge a strong alignment to securing the (international) meetings business. This is the one and only advantage within their grasp to strengthen their collective ability to stand out from the competition.

**WE'RE LIVING IN A VERY COMPETITIVE WORLD. HOW SHOULD CENTRES COMPETE FOR BUSINESS TODAY?** By being adaptable, listening to your customers, being brave, focusing on the end game and being visionary. Don't look backwards (at your legacy, etc.) – don't even look around at the competition; look beyond it. The only way to revolutionise is to trail blaze, to walk into the uncharted with the belief that every potential failure is a stepping stone to success.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS MOST IMPORTANT ABOUT AN ORGANISATION LIKE AIPC IN HELPING CENTRES DEAL WITH INDUSTRY ISSUES LIKE THESE?** AIPC prides itself on being an authoritative source for convention centres all over the world in deepening their understanding of the changing needs of the market today. It offers wide access to over 900 industry professionals who can provide rich insights on markets and

operational excellence matters, as well as the strong ability for members to work hand in hand to confront these changes together and emerge as stronger players in their respective local destinations.

**HOW DO YOU THINK MEMBERS CAN BEST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS OFFER?** Being true to what we always believe in – that the most significant and meaningful business interaction that occurs during face-to-face meetings and informal networking platforms. Industry organisations that use professionally based social media like LinkedIn and through which subject-based or other specific communities are established, provide a good complement to face-to-face platforms, for knowledge exchange and growing networks.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH DURING YOUR TERM AS PRESIDENT? WHAT WILL BE YOUR FIRST PRIORITY?** For members: that every member derives value through their participation in AIPC and tapping into the collective wisdom of the association. I plan to better understand from members in the different regions what the issues, challenges and opportunities they face are so that we update or devise programmes that meet their collective needs. For AIPC: to position AIPC as a progressive thought leader in the global MICE industry. 

## DID YOU KNOW?

*AIPC represents a global network of over 185 leading centres in 59 countries, with the active involvement of more than 900 management-level professionals worldwide. It is committed to encouraging and recognising excellence in convention centre management, based on the diverse experience and expertise of its international representation, and maintains a variety of educational, research, networking and standards programmes to achieve this.*

For more information about AIPC, visit [aipc.org](http://aipc.org)

