focus mci

Is your organisation future-proof?

Technologies and digital innovations are transforming the way we live and work. Here's how some associations are ensuring their future potential.

As market conditions change, organisations are forced to continuously innovate and respond to the changing expectations of members, customers and delegates.

A recent study from the Association Innovation Benchmarking Report shows that out of 344 associations surveyed, 58 percent have put a focus on innovation while 42 percent have not. There is therefore a distinct line between associations that are innovative and those that are not. We've asked association professionals what digital transformation means to their organisation, what their biggest disruptor is and how they empower their leadership and community to take action.

Disruptive thinking

Disruption is everywhere. In June, CEO Update launched its Leadership Disruption Forum to explore how association leaders are reinventing, innovating and staying relevant in a time when the only constant is change.

Like any company, not-for profit organisations need to adapt their business model to their evolving environment, or they might face extinction. More than a marketing approach, disruption is a business model. *"We are obsessed with disruption right now, but what are we (the industry) doing about it? Not much,"* said Oscar Cerezales, MCI Asia Pacific chief operating officer, during his keynote address at the Singapore MICE Forum earlier this year. *"In most of our organisations, we do not accept the concept of failure and therefore innovation is not happening. We like playing it safe and being predictable. We are happy with incremental growth when we should concentrate on innovative*

business models—but it's painful and comes with uncertainty," he added.

To remain relevant, organisations must innovate and make sure they deliver exactly what members, customers and attendees want. *"Disruption is definitely a concern of our Board. However, we often discuss disruption with the intention of becoming a disruptor rather being the victim,"* noted Renata Lerch, CALI, CSM, CSPO, ICP-ACC, VP of Global Marketing & Communications (acting team CEO) at **Scrum Alliance**.

"…we often discuss disruption with the intention of becoming a disruptor rather being the victim…"

Technology first

Technology features in just about every form of learning. In a study by Tagora, *"Association Learning + Technology"*, less than a quarter of the 200 associations surveyed have a formal, documented strategy for using technology to enhance or enable learning. The survey shows, though, that 69.7 percent of organisations with such a strategy report an increase in revenue, versus 51.7 percent of all respondents.

Technology has made it possible for associations to reach new audiences, in many ways and be more interactive and simply more fun. >>

IN **focus**

Is your association endangered?

Leading the future of your organisation with digital technologies

Welcome to the digital era. By 2020, it is expected that at least 50 percent of the solutions offered to companies will be driven by technology. For associations, this means technology is offering a breath of new opportunities to remain relevant to the evolving needs and expectations of members, customers and event attendees.

Innovative solutions are there to help organisations anticipate needs and behaviours, save time and costs, reach new audiences, offer new delivery methods, and create opportunities.

But when it comes to innovation and change, there will always be scepticism. Like any other organisation, the challenge is to get the leadership buy-in to rethink the current model, create a plan for innovation and know how to turn the strategy into reality, and it doesn't have to be difficult.

In this issue read about organisations that have identified simple, efficient and flexible ways to integrate new technologies into the life of their organisation.

Be disruptive. Create the need. Shape your future now!

Richard Torriani
Vice President Global Congress Management, MCI Group

MCI founder receives lifetime achievement

On 17 May, Roger Tondeur, founder and CEO of MCI received the 2018 Expo-Event's Live Communication Association's Xaver Life Time Achievement award at the ceremony in Zurich, Switzerland. With his leadership and business skills the company has grown exponentially, offering organisations across the globe strategic engagement and activation solutions to build experiences with impactful and memorable conferences, congresses, meetings, events and incentive programmes.

Roger Tondeur (centre) and colleagues from the MCI Geneva office at the XAVER ceremony

Good things come in 3s

At Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) in Adelaide on 8 May, MCI Australia was recognised as one of the industry's 'Best in the Nation'. MCI Australia was crowned three times with the prestigious MEA National awards including Event Manager of the Year – Cindy-Lee Bakos, Association Event of the Year for the **Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)** 2016 congress, and PCO of the Year.

MCI Australia team members at the MEA award ceremony. Cindy-Lee Bakos, Director Special Projects in centre right

Enduring excellence for MCI Middle East

For the fifth year in a row, MCI Middle East was awarded the Superbrand title by the Superbrand's Council in the UAE. MCI continues to be the only event agency and association management company to be recognised and to enjoy this status.

MCI launches new website

MCI launched a new and vibrant rebranded website. It has targeted content designed to engage our key customers with new case studies, and new functionalities.

To discover MCI's new site visit www.mci-group.com and feel free to provide feedback to karine.desbant@mci-group.com.

Setting the trend for successful tech enabled events

The first edition of TechnOvation at IMEX in Frankfurt, Germany was an incredible success with more than 300 guests. Participants gathered for a unique night to network and share trends about upcoming tech challenges that the meetings industry will be facing.

Networking at the TechnOvation night

>> New technology opens doors for discussions that organisations wouldn't previously have been able to have.

It allows more interaction but requires more control at the same time. It gives members and attendees a voice via new means like games. Members and customers have become technology-savvy and they expect nothing less from their organisation. *"Since my first day here I have said ASIS will be mobile, global, digital and agile. That is, everything we develop will be built with meeting people where they are in the world, in a device-agnostic way,"* commented Peter J. O'Neil, FASAE, CAE, Chief Executive Officer at **ASIS International**.

The evolution of learning

Technology creates new ways of learning, forcing associations to rethink the different elements of the educational experience, the way it is delivered and the opportunities to reach new audiences. Online, on-demand, mobile learning and certifications have become more popular, and the traditional models of knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer are evolving.

At **Scrum Alliance** a series of key initiatives have been introduced to bring the organisation to the next level and use digital transformation to keep up with the needs and requirements of customers and members. New and creative engagement programmes targeting members and customers, and supported by the right digital platform, have facilitated ongoing user feedback and communication. Additionally, constant evaluation of what value means to members -through frequent iterations involving user feedback- has enabled the organisation to enhance the rigour and quality of its educational programmes, and increase the product suite to offer more options based on different requirements. The creation of an Agile structure utilising the Scrum framework -emphasizing constant learning, adaptation and quick iterations with user insights- has led to faster cycles of innovation.

A strategy for innovation

Some organisations are taking the lead to shape their future and anticipate membership needs, preferences and behaviours in terms of educational needs, networking opportunities, or new products.

"At ASIS, we orientated our Board a year ago to agree to a rhythm of strategic planning based upon foresight and what I have come to call "scouting the future."

Our foresight process puts us one year out of our budget development process, so we have a full year to storm and norm around our seven identified change drivers, evaluate member/customer need, and get development of products and services in to the pipeline," O'Neil continued.

Lerch added, *"Cultural change was really key for us. We implemented an agile framework, both from the mindset to the execution levels, across all layers of the organisation, including the work with volunteers and members. This exercise changed the dynamics of the teams to be very focused on user insights, creating quick cycles of iterations on services, product development, etc. We also embedded a culture of learning and adaptation, with a high tolerance for failures (fail quickly, learn and adapt)."*

Being disruptive at events.
What does that mean?

- **Pushing creativity through virtual & augmented reality**
- **Improving audience experience through data intelligence and insights**
- **Amplifying personal engagement through gamification and immersive technologies**
- **Extending event models & driving impact through robots, drones and artificial intelligence**
- **Bridging physical & digital through hybrid, live & social platforms**
- **Continuing the offline engagement, interaction and learning 365 days of the year online**

What's your next move?

Future-proofing an organisation is about finding the right people with the right skill but most importantly, it is about culture change. It is about taking actions to shape the future of the organisation, but integrating and empowering the community and leadership at all levels can be a challenge.

"Culture is king," O'Neil noted. *"At my last organisation and at ASIS I drive culture, eating strategy for lunch every day. Here, at ASIS, we strive to be transparent in all we do, set in a culture that embraces all the diversity and inclusion required such that we thrive. Culture changes and shifts are not easy. They are difficult. And often you have*

to invite people to leave who do not ascribe to what you are building".

> *"Our association is very global, and without a digital transformation we cannot properly engage members and customers."*

"Our association is very global, and without a digital transformation we cannot properly engage members and customers. Dealing

with very dynamic markets, governance and even data regulation like GDPR require fast decision making. We need to be strategic, agile and comprehensive in order to be engaging and innovative," stated Lerch.

MCI is developing a global research paper about "future-proof organisations".

To take part, contact karine.desbant@ mci-group.com. Outcomes and research results will be shared later this year.

Meet Smarter

When digital drives sustainability

For nearly a decade technology usage has increased exponentially and experience has shown that virtual connection increases face-to-face attendance and plays a very important part in meetings' sustainability strategies.

However, while many associations have incorporated new forms of online technology into their event, only a few are doing a great job at leveraging digital solutions to improve their organisational goals and to drive their sustainable performance.

Mélanie Delaplanche, MCI's Sustainability Services Director, shares tips for implementing a digital strategy that drives sustainability:

1. Start early: Virtual participation needs to be considered and planned from the outset

2. Hire digital experts and train the team to deliver spectacular online experiences

3. Meticulously design the online experience and audience engagement pre, during and post event; and make time for speakers and presenters to train and rehearse

4. Make sure the digital engagement strategy is integrated into the overall programme

5. Measure: define and consider social, environmental and economic indicators to measure and understand the impact of the event

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Experimenting with next generation badges

The 17th conference of the **International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG)** was delivered by MCI Geneva in Warsaw, Poland and gathered over 360 participants from 51 countries, and offered a total of 30 sessions and 189 presentations.

In one of the first meetings of the year in preparation for the event, the SIOG leadership commented, *"Every year, we try to add something new to our conference. We would like to make sure this year follows suit!"* Accordingly, it was decided to introduce the newest generation of electronic badges to the event – which would allow for comprehensive data on delegate-flow throughout the event to be captured. The badges could also be programmed to flash in different colours to signal the resumption of sessions or to differentiate between registration categories. In future, through pairing with an innovative app, the badges can be programmed to facilitate the exchange of contact information between delegates with one simple click.

Amongst other innovations introduced at the event was a Q&A system that enabled great interaction between speakers and delegates during and after the sessions. The event also took its first steps into the world of e-posters!

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Creating the ultimate learning experience

The importance of the XVIII **International Union of Phlebology (UIP)** World Congress of Phlebology is to provide a platform where global leaders and like-minded individuals can explore new knowledge, products and thinking, and share quality insights into the most recent advancements within the field.

The World Congress took place in Melbourne in early February and brought together over 1,200 experts from 67 countries in the field of phlebology. MCI Australia entered into the UIP partnership in August 2015 and worked closely with the local committee to not only create a successful congress in line with the UIP guidelines and expectations but also incorporating the creative and artistic flair the committee wished for.

The programme featured daily multi-disciplinary state-of-the-art keynote lectures focusing on new technologies and innovations, international guidelines, debates and consensus meetings.

For those seeking practical knowledge, MCI Australia introduced hands-on training sessions (HOTS), and a comprehensive Ultrasound Certification Program. Sessions of live demonstrations and live broadcasts of procedures were recorded and daily videos and workshops on a wide range of topics presented to the attendees.

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Young innovators boost their organisations

With the pressures of globalisation, increased competition, and the continually accelerating information explosion, the need for employees, customers, and partners to come together, exchange knowledge, gain fresh perspectives, build networks, and nurture relationships has never been greater.

To support the **American Society for Quality (ASQ)** in this effort, MCI Dubai started off by identifying the target audience from fields such as engineering, and healthcare and business administration,

established a student community/chapter, and regularly met up with students to identify their needs. In the second phase, the student case study competition was launched to motivate them to come up with innovative and creative solutions for their organisation.

Field trips to gain practical and hands-on experience were organised and students got even more engaged in networking and knowledge-sharing through monthly seminars. Young innovators were invited to share their best practices and learnings along with their innovations to industry professionals and their peers at the regional conference.

As a result, student membership was increased by 55 percent. The student participation to the regional conference increased by 40% and a student chapter was created, and three other potential ones to follow.

The student case study competition has grown year on year from 8 in year one to 14 universities taking part in year two, with entries coming from all the countries in the Middle East region.

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Solutions for tomorrow's mobility

Some 900 digital professionals and 20,000 citizens gathered in Rennes, France from 14-18 March to present, share and experience innovative solutions for tomorrow's mobility.

Co-created by **Rennes Metropolis** and MCI France, the IN and OUTdoor experiences transformed the city into a full-size playground and brought to life unique collaborative solutions for the future of mobility. Through practical demos, participants to the #inOut2018 were able to experience innovative and unique mobility experiences.

This initiative has allowed the city of Rennes to demonstrate its dynamism and advancement in the area of digital mobility. The event is an example of the openness and interest from local stakeholders to collaborate on offering tangible mobility solutions to users.

"This first edition was a real success and sets the ground for future events," enthused Laurent Riera, communications director at Ville de Rennes – Rennes Métropole. *"Rennes is a testing ground that will gradually improve every year thanks to inOut, to foster the emergence of an ecosystem where all the components of transport work together,"* added Jean-Marie Bonnin, President of the inOut Committee of Experts and teacher at IMT-Atlantique in Rennes.

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Top 5 Tips… to implement facial-recognition technology at events

Facial-recognition technology is becoming more and more popular at events. Organisations are starting to see its advantages as it ensures higher and greater security, it speeds up the process at registration desks, facilitates networking and connections between attendees and demonstrates cutting-edge technology.

However, some key elements must be taken into consideration for a smooth implementation:

1. Enable opt-out as some people may not allow their image to be used.

2. Ensure you have strong and reliable WiFi access for the system to work smoothly

3. Encourage delegates to auto-tag themselves to boost social media exposure

4. Make sure your system is GDPR-compliant

5. Consider maintaining your traditional reception desk for a while, as some attendees might not be well identified at first.

Balancing technology implementation with traditional ways of doing things is key to success.

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Technology, innovation and creativity

Campus Party is one of the largest global technology festivals, with over 60 editions held in the last 20 years, in more than 15 countries.

MCI Argentina, in partnership with Campus Hub, organised the 4-day-event, from 25 to 28 April in Buenos Aires. Some 10,000 'Campuseros' (as the attendees are known) enjoyed a huge variety of activities including workshops on topics ranging from robotics and rocketry, to creativity, technology and design thinking. Some eight hackathons were organised around topics like industrial parks, branding and sports.

Awards for the winning teams included trips to Campus Party in Mexico, Chile or Amsterdam or participation in various tech fairs, or even job opportunities! In the Open Campus the general public could explore new technologies with over 1,000 m^2 of corporate booths, including the National Geographic virtual reality space, 208 m^2 of entrepreneurs' stands and more than 350 hours of content on technology, innovation, creativity, science, entertainment and entrepreneurship with international keynote speakers from Linux, NASA, and Artista Cyborg.

Apart from the Campuseros, the event brought together the entire ecosystem: companies, government agencies, media, investors, chambers of commerce, associations, universities and communities who collectively constituted the soul of Campus Party.

Young innovator in action

"It is very important to have events like this, where we can share projects with people who have a passion for technology and innovation" raved one of the participants. *"Campus Party gives the tools and a wonderful space for young people to express themselves the way they want. It is a fantastic place for all the nerds like me,"* said another.

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Resources you can't miss

Let's get focused at #ASAE18

If you are attending the ASAE annual meeting in Chicago (18-21 August) make sure to visit the new MCI booth (**# 717**) in the expo, and enrich your educational experience by attending one of the sessions MCI will present:

SUNDAY, 19 AUGUST

- 16.00-17.00 Leadership for the 'New Professional'

MONDAY, 20 AUGUST

- 09:00-10:00 Improve Global Effectiveness – Lessons Learned on the Ground

- 10:15-10:35 Education in Healthcare: The Next Fundraising Gold Mine

- 14.00-15.30 Engagement Strategies to Improve Relationship Strength & Deliver ROI

- 16.00-17.00 Build Your Professional Brand

- 16.00-17.00 Successfully Tailoring Educational Programmes Globally

TUESDAY, 21 AUGUST

- 11:00-12:00 Prioritise CEO Succession Planning

We look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

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Earline Spence
Manager, Print and Digital Production
National Education Association (NEA)

Interview with Earline Spence

Manager, Print and Digital Production
National Education Association (NEA)

The National Education Association (NEA), the USA's largest professional, employee organisation, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programmes.

NEA wanted to increase advocacy and engagement among its members, and at the same time reach new pro-public education audiences by expanding its digital footprint. To achieve this objective, it was decided the organisation needed an updated and more sophisticated app for its magazine. Earline Spence, Manager, Print and Digital Production, shares with us the strategy and process behind the launch of the upgraded magazine app and how it is making an impact in its community.

MCI: What prompted NEA to upgrade its magazine app?

Earline Spence: *NEA Today* is the flagship publication of our organisation. The quarterly print issue is sent to our 3 million-member base; and in addition to the print edition, the magazine is also available in an easy-to-read online version and downloadable app that can be accessed from any mobile device. Looking at the evolution of our member profile and expectations we felt the need to innovate and offer a more interactive version of the original app.

MCI: What are the main features of the upgraded app?

E. S.: In addition to articles and features from the *NEA Today* magazine, content from many *NEA Today* vehicles is integrated into the app, so that members and new audiences have access to continuously published updates and information.

MCI: How are you making the difference in your community?

E. S.: Since its launch in 2017, the use of the *NEA Today* app has been expanded to include access to association events and podcasts. Additionally, custom versions of the magazine have been developed and delivered via the *NEA Today* app to various NEA audiences, including students studying to become educators, new and retired educators, and higher education professionals.

MCI: What were your key requirements in the development of the app?

E. S.: The number one requirement was to ensure the app is consistent with the magazine's overall branding and that it responds to members' and readers' expectations. We also wanted the upgraded app to be simple, user-friendly and flexible.

MCI: What process did you follow?

E. S.: First and foremost, we listened to our members. Our annual readership survey results found that very few NEA members realised that an app version of the flagship magazine existed. The need for a new approach was clear. We wanted the new magazine app to fulfil and even surpass their expectations. Then, the key to success was to identify the right partner that could listen and develop a tool that matched our objectives within the allocated timeframe. In that sense, MCI USA (formerly Network Media Partners) has surpassed our expectations.

Scan QR code or visit
www.mci-focus.com
to read the full interview.

Insider's **view**

Jen Smith
Vice President,
Creative Strategy
MCI USA

MCI: What was your starting point?

Jen Smith: The original app was produced using Adobe's Digital Publishing Suite (DPS). That version lacked a number of components that NEA had envisioned, and with fewer than 1,000 downloads during the first 18 months of the app's existence, the project was only minimally successful.

MCI: How did you proceed?

J. S.: To boost results, we created a new content strategy with NEA and started work on a redesign of the *NEA Today* app. We chose Twixl Publisher as our platform and partnered with Managing Editor Inc. (MEI), who provided the TruEdit HTML workflow and Twixl Publisher platform. MEI worked with

us to integrate TruEdit and Twixl Publisher to build the new *NEA Today* app once our design and content strategy was in place. The results have been exceptional, and more than 1,800 downloads occurred during the first 3 months alone.

MCI: What are the main differences between the original and the new version?

J. S.: The new app is more intuitive, and we have been able to integrate content from many *NEA Today* vehicles—not just the print magazines. The redesigned app also includes a carousel on the home screen which allows us to continuously publish fresh content on a weekly schedule. Our strategy to publish continuously and integrate three

NEA Today titles and audiences was new to NEA. Also, we built content that is specific to each device, so the user receives the best experience for the intended device.

MCI: You have been recognised by the 2018 Folio: Digital Awards for the digital design work of the app. What does it signify for you?

J. S.: We are thrilled to have our digital design work recognised and extremely proud that our creative work reimagining and producing the *NEA Today* app has helped the NEA increase advocacy and engagement among its members and related audiences.

Keeping association events safe from cyber threats

What are the cyber-risks for your organisation and how can you increase your cybersecurity safeguards?

Why would a hacker be interested in an event? Potential attackers will try to hack events and steal the data linked to it if they can identify any potential interest and source of revenue. This is why it is crucial to assess the risk by identifying who is coming to the event and whether they are high targets for hackers, what the event type is and the privacy level of the data related to it, where the event is taking place, and, finally, what the theme of the event is and why that could be of interest to hackers.

Understanding the context

In this fast-paced global business environment, events in general have been affected by the growing rate of Internet adoption and technological advancements, particularly in the areas of performance optimisation, product and service offering.

As organisations are increasingly interested in information regarding their attendees' profiles and improving the overall attendee experience, this has resulted in the frequent incorporation of technology to assist in gathering valuable data.

The rise of cybersecurity

With technology, connectivity and innovation on the rise, various means for greater engagement and impact are coming to the surface. Bespoke apps, wearable technology, radio-frequency identification (RFID) solutions and Intelligence Amplification (IA) are only a few examples of how pioneering technologies have become immersed into events.

The weight of such technological advancements falls upon both attendees and organisers: attendees can nowadays enjoy fully customised and unique experiences throughout the event's life cycle, whereas organisers are able to measure return on investment (ROI) more accurately and analyse data to make the right decisions concerning their future activities.

Innovative solutions

From third-party data exploitation, to data exchanges and an exponential number of entry points into networks due to the explosion of the Internet of Things (IOT), event organisers are now facing more complex challenges for securing their events and audiences from cyber-attacks.

As this type of conduct falls well within the 'cyber-crime' category, it should be addressed as an issue of the highest importance at the earliest stages of planning and production. Too often cybersecurity is considered an IT problem, not an organisational one, as highlighted in a recent research paper by the ASAE Foundation. Combating cyber-risks is actually a non-stop process, as there is a

> *"Cybersecurity is not only an IT problem, it's an organisational one"*

constant trickle of intrusions happening throughout the event's life-cycle (from initial registrations during the pre-event phase to social media interaction during the post-event phase). It goes without saying that these threats vary from 'simple' event data breaches to high-scale system attacks and potential acts of terrorism.

A 3-step strategy to the rescue

Often, avoiding a cyber crisis comes down to properly controlling a potential cyber-incident before, during, and after it unfolds. Based on the level of risk, there is a 3-step response to keeping on top of cybersecurity issues.

Teaching the basic principles of computer security is the first step. Attendees should be made aware of the risks revolving around their data and the organisers should ensure they suggest simple, straightforward actions to preserve data integrity. The second step concerns the protection of the data itself. And the third step is to ensure that the environment where the devices are located is safe.

Stay ahead of the game

As long as there is data that could be either sold or used to retrieve confidential information, events are running a great risk.

These are some key questions to have clear answers to, before mapping out and deploying a concrete event cybersecurity strategy:

- Is the event at risk?
- Is the event secured?
- Where are the event's vulnerabilities?
- Would you know what to do in case of a cyber-attack?

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Understanding the world of hacking

Hackers are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their methods. Various profiles exist:

- The Apprentice or "Newbie" who wants to "show off" his programming/hacking skills
- The Fisherman who's mainly interested in the financial gains
- The "My name is Bond, Hacker Bond" is looking for manufacturing specifications or intellectual property that could possibly create havoc, even warfare
- The "Less Than Perfect Employee" wants to create damage to his organisation, motivated by revenge or just for fun
- The Hacktivist: takes on issues that he believes need to be publicly addressed, and use digital methods to spread his word in the form of cyber-attacks

In the next issue…
read about association news and global trends

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