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The Greatness of Associations

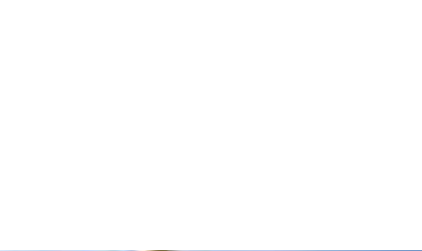
Meeting Virtually

Singapore
Business, Fun
and Beyond

Sarawak
Theme Party
and Incentive
Ideas



pg 24



reader's page



Dear Reader,

In the midst of the raging summer heat, I am sure you are planning your events for the cooler months to come. We focus on the East this time, covering MICE and Incentive opportunities in Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. We also talked to Cathay Pacific about the importance of MICE travel for them as an airline and their special offers for business groups. For those who still wish to travel westward, we have in-depth information on Turkey as a destination, with a sample itinerary to help plan an event there. And for a destination closer to home, we profile Amby Valley in Maharashtra.

Since associations are an integral part of the MICE industry, we asked the CEO of AMI Global to tell us more about the role they play in benefitting their members in particular and MICE activities as a consequence. Read about this in the cover story.

Our check-list in this issue covers the technicalities of your travel, including booking flights, acquiring visas and insurance and everything else you should have in place before your departure.

Enjoy reading and keep sending your feedback at editor@micetalk.com

Deepa Sethi
Editor

*This article has been contributed by Supratik Bhattacharyya
CEO, Association Management Initiatives*



The Greatness of Associations

Even during the recession years MICE travel and venues continued to get big business from associations with conferences, seminars and exhibitions. Supratik Bhattacharyya says, "If we are to remain healthy and relevant to the markets we serve, then it is time that each of us, an individual professional or an organisation, skill up and share best practices to be able to reach the next level of growth."



Mission
 To create an opportunity to enable every household in a village as a knowledge center

Vision
 To create a Premier Network of e-grama in Rural India by 2013



e-grama project benefits

- As of now 10000 families across Karnataka has been benefited with premium of Rs. 150 per year per family
- Accidental insurance of upto Rs. 10 Lakhs with family per year in association with New India Assurance
- Introduction of Tele-medicine in association with Ojus Healthcare for preventive and curative management

e-grama

Agriculture	Health	Education	Banking	IT Enabled Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on various agricultural products and services Market information Weather forecast Insurance services Government schemes Subsidy information Input supply services Extension services Training services Information on various agricultural products and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and family planning services Maternal and child health services Immunization services Family planning services Information on various health services Referral services Information on various health services Referral services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship services Training services Information on various educational services Referral services Information on various educational services Referral services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on various banking services Account opening services Information on various banking services Account opening services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on various IT enabled services Government schemes Information on various IT enabled services Government schemes



Now that was Jim Collins again! This time writing a foreword for a publication on greatness of associations: "Associations are the hidden glue of our society and economy..." sounds interesting and I smile. I read on, "Like the mortar that holds the bricks of a building in place, associations go largely unnoticed, yet they do much to hold the structure together."

A group of futurists get together, see the world in the way it'll look a generation from now and plan their footsteps to take their community to this future. That's what I guess is most appropriately called a "Centre of Excellence". Wisdom of sorts, power of intellect, and forces of unison... and an association is born.

The driving force has always been the same. That there are issues of common interest, and when handled well, it will propel the community to the next level of growth. That there is knowledge to spread, and as we share what we know, we go unhindered.

In democratic systems around the world, that's how industries have always got structured. Associations have had their roots through the years and stages of industrial and economic growth by addressing common challenges and supporting each other. Over hundreds of years,

associations have formed and pursued an enormous variety of purposes, and contributed to their members, communities and the society at large, through a range of products and services.

There is a sense of community at the heart of associations. In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville (French political thinker, historian and author, best known for his "Democracy in America" and "The Old Regime and the Revolution") remarked after his visit to the United States; that the country seemed to be succeeding so well at democracy because, "Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of disposition were forever forming associations! In democratic countries the science of association is the mother of science; the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made.

And here's what he goes on to say about the association agenda, "I have often admired the extreme skill with which they succeed in proposing a common object for the exertions of a great many men and in inducing them voluntarily to pursue it."

Clearly... associations, professional societies, foundations, charters, (or Guilds as the British called them) form the backbone of development. And

Weld India 2009, India's International Welding Exhibition drew the crème-de-la-crème from India's welding industry





when I look around me, it's almost fascinating to watch the impact that changing social, technological, economic and environmental trends are having on the association communities in India. This is an emerging market in the true sense of the word. Economic growth is reaching new heights and the growth story is here to stay. Associations are charting their course by analysing trends, issues and events that are likely to have a revolutionary impact on their existence. I can almost sniff the excitement in the air around me, as associations upgrade their member offerings!

I must tell you here that I'm a great fan of the association movement, and I have sometimes been asked about the reasons for my excitement... aren't associations primarily meant for lobbying? What's so promising about it... what's it got to do with development?



I guess it's the role that associations play in a democratic process that makes them vulnerable to this image. According to a study conducted by Harris Interactive Inc., lobbying (read "representation", and forgive me if you found "lobbying" as an objectionable word) forms only a section of an association's budget.

*Dr Prathap C Reddy,
Chairman of Apollo
Hospitals Group
felicitating a guest
speaker at the IAGES
2010*

It is seen in this study, that a typical association's budget is spread thus:

Education and public information activities	27%
Meetings and Conventions	17%
Lobbying	14%
Industry Research	8%
Defining Products and Service Standards	8%
Association Operations Expenses	26%

These statistics are American, but from my experience of what I have seen in associations in India, they are not going to be much different.

The time is most certainly right for most of us in the industry to be a part of the association traffic, and let me tell you why.

*An engrossed audience
at the IAPCO Regional
Seminar*



Lighter moments from the IAPCO Regional Seminar. Sixty two participants received the globally renowned IAPCO certification

It is widespread knowledge that associations have traditionally contributed to the MICE industry in a very large way. Sadly however, we tend to weigh this contribution in terms of revenues from hotel rooms and post event tours alone... unlike some other countries who have actually been able to establish the total value that a meeting of this nature brings in: through the research and innovation that is shared, businesses negotiated and transacted, fruitful global exposure to the country's youth, ideas and entrepreneurs created, and the total development potential that is unleashed. Let apart the impact on tourism... one of the earlier CRISIL studies indicated that 60% of conference visitors came back to the country with family and friends, and spent 9% more than what they did before.

India, being a consumption story (unlike China, which is more of an outsourcing story) is drawing the interest of international players trying to secure a footing in the Indian markets. The best of professionals from around the globe are vying for a position in India, for the sheer exposure that this market promises today.

The prominent Indian associations are already re-inventing themselves in their new avatars, and new ones are shaping up too. Consider these examples, and evaluate if you need a support of this nature in your own profession or business.

Faced with a rapid rise in demand for membership, content, and events from overseas members, international associations have been successfully developing customised content, events, and support structures for the Indian markets that they definitely wish to serve.

Consider this: IEEE is the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity. The organisation and its

The Indian Convention Promotions Bureau, which is an association sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism have worked through and successfully developed a special scheme wherein it assists a conference planners in India to go overseas and make bids for international events, and if required be given some financial support for that. Isn't this a great move? As the Vice Chairman of ICPB, Mr Rajeev Kohli, puts it, "this is a tremendous step in the right direction."

members inspire a global community through highly cited publications, conferences, technology standards, and professional and educational activities; and in effect, creates an environment where members collaborate on world changing technologies, from computing and sustainable energy systems, to aerospace, communications, robotics, healthcare, and much more. Seeing the huge potential of India in the emerging world, the organisation identified a major IEEE initiative for the year 2008-09 in the name of "Focus on India". In a landmark event, and true to what it stands up for, IEEE brought together the best of minds in the Indian industry to deliberate on the application of technologies for addressing societal challenges of India. What say? Are you beginning to change your mind about how associations contribute to our lives and to the society at large?

The organisation that I co-founded and work for today, is a strategic consulting and a professional services organisation. We work primarily with the non-profit sector on issues that are important to them, and as their integrated resource for growth. During one such meeting with an association volunteer leader, when we were passionately discussing membership, the topic of value came up. Unfortunately, I could not succeed in explaining that members and the larger community need to see value in the association's initiatives, without which programs will forever lack lustre. All this is to say, yes, we do have inward looking associations, but I am an optimistic man and believe that they will turn around in time.

As an organisation, we are driving the relevance agenda across a spectrum of associations, societies, special interest groups and non-profit executives. We also create events that act as a platform for the industry to come together, share best practices and explore avenues of growth. We were giving shape to our next big event on Hospital Waste Management, in association with the Indian Society of Hospital Waste Management, two of India's largest hospitals established contact with us, expressing their desire to associate, because they considered this to be of relevance. Long before the event (which is scheduled towards the end of this year), we are already exchanging notes; and the association, the hospitals

and us, all are benefiting tremendously through these interactions.

I am urging you to associate with an organisation that caters to your industry. If you believe that you belong to a profession that has none, get together and form one. In all probability, your organisation will support and we will help you. Whether it is an education program, training and certification, journals, industry standards, professional or ethical codes... there is a wealth of information available, and it's for you to ask. Participate in the relevant events that emerge, network and share best practices... the time is now.

If you're beginning to see newer ways through which you can contribute to your industry, then please accept my congratulations! 🌟

*Bottom left:
Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam
delivering the keynote
address during
the International
Symposium on High
Performance Computer
Architecture*



Supratik Bhattacharyya is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Association Management Initiatives, a strategic consulting and professional services organisation

committed to driving a sustainable impact to its client communities in areas of development.

Bhattacharyya draws upon a strong top management experience, with an in-depth exposure of around twenty years in solutions providing environments in the Indian and International markets. He possesses substantial experience in India, rest of Asia Pacific and Europe, and understanding of prevalent business practices in the state and private sectors in these regions.

Prior to laying the foundation of AMI, Bhattacharyya shouldered functionally diverse and large international roles within ExxonMobil Corporation, where he contributed significantly to Asia Pacific Marketing, Sales, Engineering and Operations, followed by heading the Strategic Initiatives Group and Marketing of the Indian Paper Manufacturing major JK Paper as the Vice President.

Chemical Engineer by qualification, he earned his MBA from the Maastricht University, the Netherlands. Bhattacharyya has spent considerable time in industry and community research.

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