



a success story

Design Thinking Supports Large-Scale Global Hybrid Event

The Situation

Remaining relevant and responsive to the times was key for the International Congress and Convention Association as they sought to host a forward-thinking hybrid event for their 59th annual Congress and, in doing so, write the playbook on future hybrid models.

The Approach

The Maritz Global Events team assisted in designing, planning, marketing and executing the transformative hybrid event. The work began in a design strategy session where the strategic event framework was set. Through two small words, yet one big idea: Guiding Light, the journey came alive. Both Maritz Global Events and ICCA shared a purpose—write the industry standard on hybrid events and make communication in a virtual environment fun, engaging and most importantly, impactful.

The Solution

Maritz Global Events proposed an extended timeline—opening the event six weeks ahead of the live three-day, multi-hub Congress. This extended timeline enriched engagement and facilitated guest-driven content. Inviting attendees to choose in-person or virtual personalized the journey and allowed greater ownership. A blend of Maritz Global Event services throughout the designing, planning, marketing and executing of the paid “hub and spoke” hybrid event enabled a cohesive experience for both guest groups.

Confident of the value of the virtual content, innovative engagement opportunities and overall “belonging” factor that each guest type was able to experience, a registration fee was applied to both in-person and virtual attendees, with the latter paying 80 percent of the face-to-face fee. Registration was flexible and attendees could select virtual or upgrade their package by opting to attend in person.

Continued next page...

The first-ever
hybrid event
garnered
1,500 attendees,
a 50% increase
over the traditional
in-person event!

The registration fee did not detour participation! The event garnered 1,500 attendees, the largest enrollment year-to-date for the Congress, which previously topped out at 1,000 guests for face-to-face attendance. While many attendees opted for a virtual Congress, those who opted for face-to-face experiences were placed in smaller groups (between 30-40 people in each location and 300 in the main hub), which eased meeting local compliance limitations as well as safety policies and procedures.

Safety and Security: Drawing on the expertise of Maritz Global Events' Planwell Meetwell® system, the team created an approach that was unique to ICCA and its guests—taking into consideration national and local guidelines as well as recommendations from the World Health Organization. We also included ways to have fun with distancing protocols and masked smiles, which included providing face masks with pre-printed smiles.

Virtual Experience: Reaching the audience beyond the screen was an enormous success as it broadened membership appeal for those unable to attend in person. The extended reach created endless possibilities including:

- Two-way connections through the portal at all global hubs to stream local programs during the Congress event
- Real-time keynote presentations to audiences around the world (both physical and virtual locations)
- Live Q&A with hosts in the studio
- Various live interactions across all hubs
- Networking virtual lounges that included 1:1 meetings using a photo avatar
- Expert Q&A sessions

The Result

The successful event culminated in what is now called the “Kaohsiung Protocol.” Named for the host hub city, the protocol is a framework for future hybrid events. Comprised of crowdsourced, collective insights regarding ideas and technologies, the framework will serve as a Guiding Light as the industry identifies new business opportunities to advance hybrid meeting models.



[Click here to watch highlights](#)

59TH ICCA CONGRESS 2020 KEY FEATURES

 1,500 Attendees

 100+ Hours
On-Demand Content

 220 Speakers

 100 Sessions

 6 Weeks of Programs

 Hub & Spoke Event

 8 Regional Hubs

 200 Associations

 Paid Registration
(In-person & virtual)