

ENITED Thought Leadership

Becoming SMART | The Future Role of Business Events in the Association World

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THE FUTURE ROLE OF BUSINESS EVENTS | Our understanding

Business events are about people. Period.

It is all about creating connections and building relationships. Those relationships are the key drivers for interaction and engagement in any knowledge sphere, science field or economic sector, creating learning opportunities and knowledge, and turning them into success stories.

The business events (BE) industry has been in a transformation process for quite some time. Ways of engagement have changed. Purpose, content, structure and formats of business events have evolved. “Live” and “virtual” channels have started to become one.

When information meets experiences, when knowledge creation needs engagement, when live & virtual becomes one habitat, what future role do business events play in the association “world”?

Turning challenges into opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has offered our industry a unique opportunity to finally dare and cleverly break old habits & structures.

Hence, now it's the unique moment and chance to re-think, re-define and re-design the purpose and value of business events. By doing so, we might also get finally rid of some very old and unfitting definition, wordings and alphabet soups.

But it's neither only about the so-called “virtual” revolution, nor the mere adaptation of its tech infrastructure & services for their event participants during the current and post-COVID-19 times. And it's not about finding the new normal.

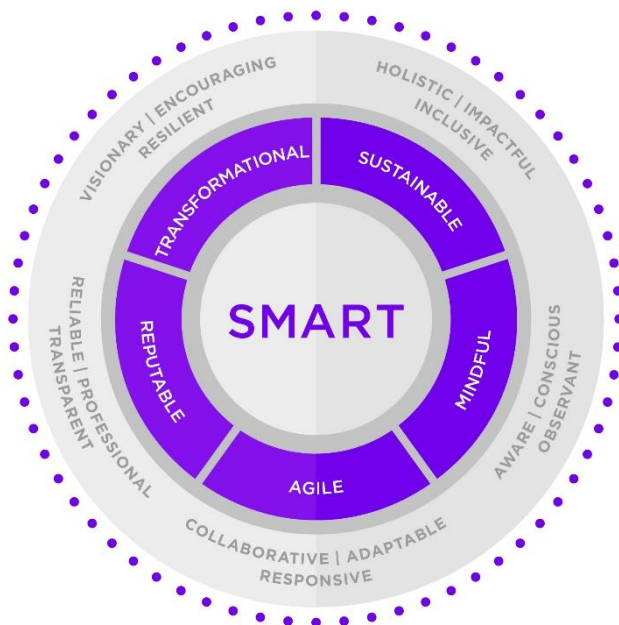
It's about creating the NEXT normal.

SMARTNESS | Our approach

The future belongs to the SMART ones.

The term **SMART** has, of course, great many definitions and meanings, as well as it depends on the context it is used in.

Our understanding for **SMART** is best defined by the following adjectives assigned to each of the words' five letters and based on an original quote by our ENITED network of excellence partner, Gerrit Jessen.



In addition, to create more purpose and meaning, we have designed a set of 3 attributes for each of those adjectives.

- ✓ **Sustainable** = holistic, impactful, inclusive
- ✓ **Mindful** = aware, conscious, observant
- ✓ **Agile** = collaborative, adaptable, responsive
- ✓ **Reputable** = reliable, professional, transparent
- ✓ **Transformational** = visionary, encouraging, resilient

Our definition of SMART requires, most of all, **a change of mindset, of principles and of behaviour from associations**, for their future purpose, design and application of business events. That will naturally lead to a review and an adaption of the “business tool-set” currently in use, to create those mentioned, new learning opportunities and success stories.

SMART ASSOCIATION | Our vision

Becoming a SMART association.

The future belongs to those associations who have understood that they are part of communities of common interest rather than of membership organizations only. Those who create benefits by engaging with peers in their fields of expertise, and not only by serving members.



- ✓ It's all about building and engaging whole communities of common interest rather than continuing to focus on membership growth.
- ✓ SMART associations need to be platform & community builders, with business events being their live communication stages.
- ✓ The focus should be on the design of engaging “working” environments for exchanging information, sharing ideas, creating new knowledge and initiating solution-based action for the individual benefit of every event participant.
- ✓ It's also about co-creating a business event, engaging the participants more effectively and more individually with a re-defined toolset of live communication, both offline and online.
- ✓ Becoming a SMART association is more than the adaptation of their business events structure, formats or processes. It needs the mentioned change of mindset, of principles and behaviour.

Consequently, it needs a **new framework of engagement** with **business events destinations**, which

- breaks the current practice of “commodity traders” for infrastructure, spaces and services, based on existing demand & supply.
- aims to improve the many times inefficient, inaccurate and standardized process of buying & selling.
- leads to a new form of collaboration, with common goals and by joint efforts, beyond the rigid “client & supplier” relationships.

It needs an association which **stays connected and be relevant** for their whole community of common interest, beyond their membership horizon.

The need to transform the association into a **community platform of knowledge & experiences**, making use of business events as catalysts for their development & growth, leading to a more sustainable future.

And **creating business events as live communication stages**, where people come together in inspiring surroundings, experience new ideas and innovations, and engage in the design of solutions.

JOURNEY | Our roadmap

Leading the way.

To embark on this journey, it takes willingness and courage, daring to open up the “membership fortress”. And it needs a clear & practical roadmap.

In corporation with our ENITED network of excellence partners, we have created that necessary roadmap, by defining a three steps' process in how to become SMART.



STEP I | Level-up your methods of engagement.

- ✓ SMART associations need to start engaging their stakeholders in a different way, adapted to the modern times of communication and engagement.
- ✓ The next generations and their very individual behaviour, how to consume & how to engage, are the driving force in building this new world of communities.
- ✓ It's all about co-creating knowledge and engaging with peers more effectively and more individually, through a re-defined toolset of live communication, both offline and online.
- ✓ It is all about building, maintaining and improving those personal relationships, with 360° approach.

Stay connected **and** remain relevant for your current & future members, your stakeholders and the global communities, at large.

STEP II | Dare to break some old habits.

- ✓ By starting with the “Why” (and not the “What” or the “How”) in the creation and conceptual design of a business event.
- ✓ By re-defining the business events' target group, structure and format.
- ✓ By focusing on an engaging “working” environment (both virtual and face-to-face) for meaningful conversations, exchanging information and sharing ideas. And as a result, creating unique new knowledge (also described as Wild Knowledge by Per Schlingmann & Kjell A Nordström) and initiating solution-based action for the individual benefit of every event participant.
- ✓ By re-thinking the relationship with the destination, from a supplier to a partner to a stakeholder.
- ✓ By widening the scope & scale of local involvement in the destination, beyond the infrastructure, logistic and hospitality providers.

Define a new generation of **business events** by engaging both association and destination “worlds” and by creating added value, together, for everybody involved.

STEP III | Set the new framework of engagement with the destination.

- ✓ **Sustainable** | Why, how & what can the destination contribute to achieve the association's and/or business event's sustainability goals, and vice versa?
- ✓ **Mindful** | How can the association and destination together maximize the outcome of the business event for the mutual benefit of the event participants and the association, by re-thinking and re-defining the possible, local stakeholders & speaking partners in the event?
- ✓ **Agile** | How can the destination act more as an active partner (and not just as a supplier) and contribute ideas (e.g., content, structure, format, target groups) to the planned event, with the need for more agile methods of business events management/organization?
- ✓ **Reputable** | What can the destination do to amplify the business events purpose, content & message within the local communities of common interest related to the association?
- ✓ **Transformational** | How can the destination support the transformation of a one-time event & experience into a truly lasting impact (legacy), both in the associations' and the destinations' communities?

At the end of day, it needs a new way of matching **associations' expectations** with **value propositions of destinations** and a new form of **collaboration** between associations and destinations.

RESULTS | Our take

Demonstrating professional expertise, showcasing engagement, creating impact.

The biggest challenge for every association is to be & remain relevant in their respective field of expertise, in an extremely fast-moving world of information & knowledge, with instant accessibility and while facing the individuals' scarcity of time.



Hence, the future role of business events needs to be re-written, to contribute successfully to the future sustainability, and at the end to the very survival of the association world.

So, what are some of the main benefits for becoming a SMART association?

In our opinion, it will give those associations who dare to set out on that journey, the decisive “edge” in that very competitive world of information exchange & knowledge creation.

With the necessary change of mindset (for their future purpose, design and application of business events), an association will

- ✓ **re-think and re-define the selection strategy & process for the right destination.**
 - Less work intensive, less time consuming, more cost efficient
- ✓ **build new and stronger relationships across and beyond the rigid “client & supplier” definition.**
 - Focusing on the right & fitting destinations in research
 - Finding & selection truly matching destinations
- ✓ **adding both content & value to the overall event development.**
 - Creating a better understanding for the associations' expectations, likes & needs
- ✓ **improve the individual event experience & gain for every participant.**
- ✓ **create additional stakeholder value & involvement in the association.**
- ✓ **(re)position itself, through thought leadership, for a more sustainable future.**

ENITED business events | Our company

We're strategists, mentors, and stage managers. Sometimes all at once.

ENITED is our response to the challenges and trends of the market and the times. Increasing complexity is creating a need for clarity, simplicity and empathy. A fundamental requirement is in-depth knowledge of our customers' needs, markets and industries.

Our mission: Sharing the idea of excellence.

It means both sharing and passing on the aspiration to achieve excellence – to ambitious companies, active associations and up-and-coming destinations.

It also stands for engaging with people of all segments in our business, sharing our ideas and solutions and creating learning opportunities and new knowledge. We believe that bringing people and experts together in inspiring surroundings gives rise to new ideas and innovations.

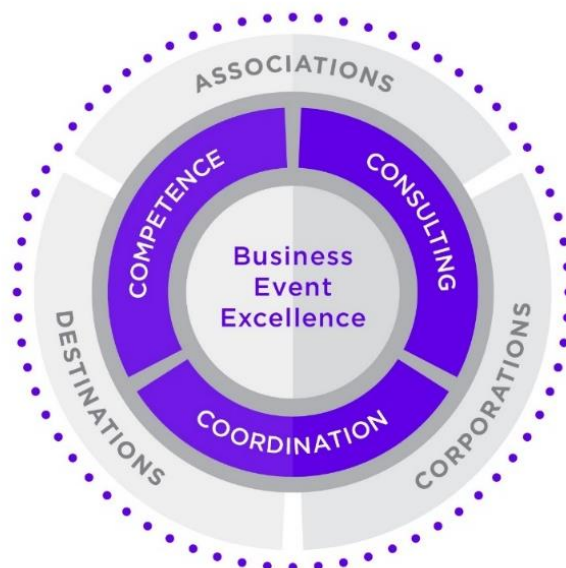
Our surroundings: ENITED network of Excellence.

We have been building continuously our extensive network, both by engaging in relevant international organisations and by inviting individual leading experts in their relevant fields to join us.

A network of knowledge and expertise with a global reach, connecting the dots in the business events industry.

In this context, ENITED introduces its latest thought leadership paper, **the SMART destination**, again in collaboration with our network partners.

ENITED Excellent.C Model[©]



ENITED Solutions[®]

Our answers for tomorrow. Today.

ENITED stands for engaging with people of all segments in our business, sharing our ideas and solutions with our clients and creating learning opportunities and new knowledge.

Our ENITED solutions are based on that engagement, based on the continuous process of listening and learning about the needs amongst associations, corporations, destinations and other involved stakeholders.

Here is our current list of solutions we have been designing and implementing over the last years.

- Hands-on lectures, workshops and training sessions providing essential insights on major trends and recent developments in our business, along with tips on smart, efficient organization
- Innovative Survey & research tools as well as benchmark studies (e.g., Mystery shopping) for destinations, convention bureaus & venues
- Market-relevant functionality studies for the validation and planning of convention centres
- Agile strategies to improve stakeholder involvement and cooperation in a destination
- Useful guidance on structure and organisation for CVB's
- In-depth product development for business networks & alliances
- Reliable support of venues in their marketing & business planning
- Creation & customization of a unique information & communication platform for associations & destinations
- ENITED Matchmaker[®] solution for associations, corporations & destinations to successfully navigate the complex supply & demand side of the international business event market
- Development of our ENITED Association Academy[®]
- Foundation of our own ENITED Network of excellence[®]

ENITED Facts & Figures

Keeping a high profile. And leaving a lasting impression.

The advantages of collaborating with ENITED.

- More than 40 years of experience
- International orientation: more than 40 international destinations
- Headquarters in Vienna: access to important local business contacts
- Knowledge of many industries and segments
- 360° approach
- Flexible and individualized services
- Access to in-depth knowledge & expertise beyond our industry
- Some 1,000 business event projects planned and held since 1990
- Multilingual team of employees
- Top-quality worldwide partner network
- Member of 27NAMES | EMBA | ICCA
- ISO/IEC 17024 “Event Marketing Expert” certificate

Anything’s possible. If you take the first step.
Contact us.

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Sharing the idea of excellence.