



## **Convention Bureaux of the future**

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**Customer orientation, introducing digital innovations and working in interdisciplinary teams. This will be the Convention Bureau of the future in the opinion of the Managing Director of the GCB German Convention Bureau, Matthias Schultze.**

European Cities Marketing (ECM) asked Matthias Schultze in the LONG THINKER PANEL cycle how the role of Convention Bureaux will change in the future. Today, the main tasks include relations with local suppliers and partners, as well as customers from home and abroad. What services will customers expect from CVBs in the future? What organizational structures and team member skills will be required to operate efficiently and be a pioneer?

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the event industry to cease to exist virtually overnight. After a gradual reboot, we will live in a state of "new normality." Several megatrends have been shaping the business events industry for several years, including digitization, sustainable development and increased demand for security. The crisis associated with COVID-19 now acts as a powerful accelerator - everything we anticipated for the coming years came in two weeks and, like many other players, Convention Bureaux is facing the question of how to shape their future role. Customers will expect services individually tailored to their needs. Among others, data analysis tools and conversational interfaces, such as chatbots, can help CVBs fully focus on needs. Regarding their local partners, one of the basic tasks of the future CVBs will be to make business intelligence services available to suppliers to help them better understand their clients' needs. This change requires new skills among CVB team members, including data skills, IT skills and IT security, as well as readiness to work in interdisciplinary teams.

Digitization and automation are just the beginning: in the increasingly complex environment, artificial intelligence can help us develop groundbreaking new business models and create new criteria for measuring success. Consistent customer focus is the key to success. Such a future requires an intensive dialogue between all stakeholders and great courage and readiness for change. The GCB is working in full capacity on innovative concepts and is looking forward to implementing them with its partners. Germany is number one among European congress destinations and ranks second in the world following the US. The main task of the GCB is to secure the position and work on improving it.