



## Press Release

### Reflecting on the new normal: BOCOM on 3 September 2020

*First hybrid multisite conference embedded in scientific study*

**Frankfurt, 6 August 2020 – Originally planned to take place on 23 April, the hybrid multisite conference “BOCOM – Experience Borderless Communication” will now take place on 3 September with a new concept. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerates the digitalisation of communication and collaboration in unprecedented ways. Experiences with new virtual and hybrid formats see a rapid increase. In this context, the BOCOM conference is more relevant than ever as a platform to reflect these experiences, exchange know-how and generate new ideas. In addition, BOCOM will provide an opportunity to, for the first time, scientifically evaluate a hybrid event that takes place in different locations. For details on the agenda and registration for the live stream please see [www.bocom.online](http://www.bocom.online).**

The corona pandemic has propelled the world on a new level of digitalisation, in particular with respect to communication and collaboration. During the last months, most of us have made experiences with virtual and hybrid formats or tried new tech solutions. However, what does really work and which formats are really helpful from a user perspective? On 3 September, the BOCOM conference provides a chance to reflect on existing approaches, discuss insights won in recent months and jointly work on new solutions. BOCOM is the first hybrid event to be scientifically evaluated: The Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO will assess how a multisite conference affects attendees, e.g., with regard to knowledge transfer or networking, with the aim of generating recommendations for action and supporting the creation of agile and customer-focused future event formats. BOCOM will also be analysed from the perspective of the ecological sustainability of a conference that takes places in different locations. This part of the research is supported by the German Federal Environmental Foundation and carried out by CO2OL, a specialist sustainability consultancy.

#### **Combining face-to-face meeting and virtual event**

The agenda of “BOCOM – Experience Borderless Communication” covers four main topics, which play a key role for future human communication and collaboration and have in recent months become even more relevant, i.e., “Overcoming Borders”, “Human Machine Interaction”, “New Work & Collaboration” as well as “Sustainability”. The practical set-up of BOCOM digitally connects locations in the Netherlands, Austria and Germany. Attendees in local hubs in Amsterdam, Vienna and Essen tune into key notes and discussions broadcast from BOCOM’s central hub in Berlin’s Design Offices Humboldthafen. Some speakers are digitally connected from other physical locations. Alongside the main stage in Berlin, parallel lab sessions enable attendees to meet in smaller discussion groups and to try new technologies. A “Speakers Corner” feature allows for follow-up conversations with some of the keynote speakers, a “VR lab” showcases 3D visualisations of venues and in a “chat lab”, innovative start-ups and technology providers present their solutions for the communication of the future. More details on speakers, presentations and the full BOCOM agenda can be found on [www.bocom.online](http://www.bocom.online).

#### **Corona-compliant set-up**

As the number of attendees had to be limited due to Covid-19, attending the event in Berlin or in one of the local hubs is only possible on invitation. However, registration to follow the BOCOM live stream is now open on [www.bocom.online](http://www.bocom.online). To ensure safe proceedings for everyone attending the physical event, BOCOM implements corresponding hygiene and safety measures, such as a one-way system between floors or a separation of the conference space and the space assigned to interactive event formats. Participation in the individual labs can be



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booked in advance through the event app. To enable as many guests as possible to attend BOCOM on site, the event is divided into a morning and afternoon session with alternating groups.

**ENDS**

### Notes to the Editor

#### About BOCOM

What will cross-border, effective and sustainable collaboration and communication of the future look like? Taking place on 3 September, the multisite conference “BOCOM – Experience Borderless Communication“ enables attendees to experience and test new technologies and ideas in an innovative, accessible and participatory way. BOCOM grew out of the “Future Meeting Space” (FMS) innovation network, which was founded in 2015 by the GCB German Convention Bureau and the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO with the aim of defining technical, organisational and spatial conditions for successful events of the future. The multisite conference format taking place at different locations was one of the first future meeting scenarios identified by the FMS research initiative. This idea has led to a partnership between the GCB, the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, c4 Berlin (formerly TRIAD) and the visitBerlin Berlin Convention Office to initiate the first test lab for borderless communication in the digital age – BOCOM.

Alongside the initiators, the following partners support BOCOM: Accor, AllSeated, deinCHATBOT, Design Offices, gamelab.berlin, IMEX Group, instaroom, KFP Five Star Conference Service, Neumann&Müller Veranstaltungstechnik, nomtek, robo.ai, Ungerboeck, Urbanana, VR Business Club and WeAre. The German Federal Environmental Foundation supports BOCOM with regard to evaluating how sustainable a multisite conference is.

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