



Press Release

BOCOM's Premiere: Showcasing the Future of Events

Speakers and participants from all continents interconnected at a hybrid multi-site event

Frankfurt, 10 September 2020 – The hybrid multi-site congress "BOCOM - Experience Borderless Communication" on September 3rd showcased how innovative technologies and empathic speakers can be combined to create a unique event with a global community of participants.

At "BOCOM - Experience Borderless Communication" on September 3rd, numerous protagonists of Germany's meetings industry successfully demonstrated their readiness for future event formats – especially considering the current global pandemic – as well as their willingness to continuously drive forward these formats with innovative partners. The event market's hybridization is developing dynamically: As early as March 2020, 75 percent of organizers surveyed in the Meetings & Events Barometer rated virtual formats as expandable, and 60 percent of providers described hybrid and multi-site events as forward-looking. At BOCOM, several hundred participants met on-site at the central conference venue in Berlin, at the hubs in Amsterdam, Essen and Vienna as well as virtually from all continents to be inspired and to discuss how we may work and communicate in the future. „With its dual focus on face-to-face encounters and digital networking, the hybrid multi-site congress is an essential component of our recovery strategy ‚At the heart of future events‘“, says Matthias Schultze, Managing Director of the GCB German Convention Bureau e.V., BOCOM's initiator.

Room for ideas instead of „business as usual“

BOCOM's agenda was developed collaboratively with partners from the corporate, agency and science fields. The agenda put a special focus on reflecting on the past months' experiences and discussing new solutions. Throughout the morning and afternoon sessions, BOCOM featured speakers from very different backgrounds – from the corporate world, academia, city marketing organizations and hospitality to tech specialists, event professionals, start-up entrepreneurs, sustainability experts and artists. In addition to the Conference Area, BOCOM's Interactive Area provided all on-site and virtual participants with various opportunities for testing new formats in a Corona-compliant manner: Whether in the virtual reality workshop, experiencing virtual locations with VR glasses, during in-depth discussions in the Speaker's Corner or in the interactive engagement canvas workshop. Thanks to Remote Simultaneous Interpreting and the concept of Silent Conferencing, language barriers were of no concern at BOCOM. All live guests were equipped with headphones and a receiver to choose from different audio streams. Participants attending via the livestream also had the option of switching between German and English.

Test lab with a scientific foundation

One of BOCOM's essential building blocks is the scientific evaluation conducted by the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO. All participants – regardless of their location, on-site or virtual – were invited to express their motives for participating in BOCOM, their expectations and needs, and especially their assessment of the different formats of the hybrid multi-site congress by means of a questionnaire. The research aims at identifying, among other things, how the multi-site setup affects participants regarding the transfer of knowledge, interaction and networking as well as how the participants experienced different formats. Another key question of the evaluation revolves around BOCOM's ecological sustainability performance. The evaluation's results as well as recommendations for future actions will be published within a few weeks. In the spirit of constant advancement, BOCOM's initiators invite all guests and partners to share their experiences made on-site in Berlin, in the hubs or virtually even beyond the research process – they are invited to join the BOCOM community and to take new formats and experiences to the next level. With BOCOM's social wall, the worldwide community's contributions on Twitter, Instagram and Co. can be tracked and followed constantly: <https://bocom.online/social-wall/>



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About BOCOM

What will cross-border, effective and sustainable collaboration and communication of the future look like? Having taken place on September 3rd, the multisite conference “BOCOM – Experience Borderless Communication” enabled 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, robo.ai, Siemens, Slido, Ungerboeck, Urbanana, VR Business Club and weframe. The Association for Community Management BVCM supports BOCOM as Community Partner. The German Federal Environmental Foundation supports BOCOM in evaluating how sustainable a multisite conference can be.

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