

# CONGRESSES 4.0

REDEFINING WORK, SOLUTIONS,  
ECONOMIC MODELS, AND STRATEGIES

An Insight into the  
Transformations of the Congress  
Industry in the 4.0 Era

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An Insight into the Transformations  
of the Congress Industry in the 4.0 Era

By Giancarlo Leporatti

## THE AUTHOR

Giancarlo Leporatti has dedicated over forty years to the congress industry, contributing to event organization, the management of Congress Centers, and the development of marketing strategies.

As CEO of EMI – Eureka MICE International Ltd, he has collaborated with institutions and destinations across Europe, consolidating an approach that integrates direct experience with strategic vision.

The treatise "Congress 4.0" reflects his in-depth knowledge of the market, offering tools and analyses to navigate the transformations of one of the most dynamic sectors in global tourism.

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## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

*This treatise is based on years of analysis and reflection, combined with continuous monitoring of the congress market, an activity I have personally conducted without interruption since 1992.*

*The experience accumulated over these years, along with the work carried out by Eureka MICE International, has led to the development of a unique approach to congress marketing. This approach is rooted in the integration of direct experience, long-term observations, and a constant focus on industry trends.*

*This document does not merely describe the ongoing changes but represents the result of a study process that intertwines theoretical and practical knowledge. It provides readers with concrete tools to understand and address the challenges of one of the most dynamic sectors in global tourism.*

*In "Congressi 4.0 – Rethinking Work, Solutions, Economic Dynamics, and Strategies," sector transformations are analyzed, offering a practical and in-depth perspective on the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary market.*

*Happy reading!*

*Giancarlo Leporatti*

# INTRODUCTION

## *THE CONGRESS MARKET: A RAPIDLY CHANGING SECTOR*

Conferences have always been a fundamental tool for disseminating knowledge, creating professional connections, and fostering new ideas. However, the global context and the needs of participants are undergoing rapid and profound changes, pushing the congress industry to completely rethink its dynamics and strategies.

The concept of "Congress 4.0" was born to describe this new evolutionary phase, characterized by an interplay of technological innovation, sustainability, and modern economic approaches that are redefining the rules of the game.

This treatise aims to explore the ongoing transformations with an analytical and forward-thinking approach. Through an in-depth analysis, it addresses crucial themes such as the strategic role of destinations, the importance of Congress Centers, the new skills required for professionals, and the economic policies needed to support a complex yet highly dynamic ecosystem.

The objective of this work is to provide a practical and stimulating guide for all stakeholders in the congress sector:

promoters, destinations, congress centers, hospitality structures, and professionals.

"Congress 4.0" is not just an analysis of the transformations taking place but an invitation to innovate, collaborate, and grow in a market where change is the only constant.

*TO ALESSANDRA,*

*Who, with dedication and passion, leads the wonderful team at  
Eureka MICE International, supporting my vision and  
contributing to making my projects a reality*

# THE ECONOMICS OF THE CONGRESS TOURISM INDUSTRY



The congress sector represents the segment of tourism with the highest economic impact and the greatest number of qualified employment opportunities (ICCA). Beyond these numbers, it stands out for unique characteristics that make it a strategic asset for businesses and destinations.

Among these, the extensive event scheduling allows for targeted investment and resource planning. Additionally, the very nature of congresses ensures high stability: although the

number of attendees may fluctuate, cancellations are extremely rare.

Another distinctive element is the ability of the congress market to evolve and adapt. Over the years, the sector has maintained stable growth, demonstrating resilience even during economic crises, such as in 2009, when it was among the few segments only marginally affected by global difficulties.

Even the severe slowdown caused by the pandemic had a temporary effect: many postponed events were concentrated in subsequent years, generating a true “tsunami effect” that further strengthened the sector.

## **Congresses as a Driver for Off-Season Tourism**

Anche se l'attività congressuale si è recentemente estesa a tutti i mesi dell'anno, la prevalenza a svolgere gli eventi nelle stagioni di mezzo è una tendenza che persiste.

Questa caratteristica rende il congressuale ideale per integrare la stagionalità con un turismo ricco e altamente qualificato.

In questo contesto, i congressi si configurano non solo come eventi strategici per la crescita economica e occupazionale, ma anche come motori di innovazione e cambiamento. Essi rappresentano una piattaforma unica per creare valore, ispirare nuove idee e promuovere una collaborazione globale.

# THE NEW CONGRESS SCENARIO

## A SECTOR IN TRANSFORMATION



The congress market is currently undergoing a profound transformation, where tradition and innovation intertwine to adapt to an ever-changing landscape.

This sector, historically a privileged venue for exchanging ideas and building relationships, now faces new challenges and opportunities, driven by multiple factors. Key changes include reduced sponsorships and training budgets, signaling increased economic pressure that forces

organizers to rethink event sustainability models. Simultaneously, virtual meetings and hybrid events are redefining participation and interaction, highlighting the need for strategies that reestablish the value of in-person attendance.

## **A Market in Motion**

The rise of mass tourism during peak seasons (overtourism) is pushing high-spending travelers toward off-seasons, leading to a general price increase and the migration of tourist flows that traditionally favored certain destinations.

The congress sector fully reflects these dynamics, with events shifting to new destinations and alternative times of the year in search of solutions that meet the market's new needs. This phenomenon is opening doors for emerging locations that, through strategic planning and targeted investments, are quickly gaining prominence on the international scene.

## **Long-Term Planning as a Strategic Necessity**

In this landscape of profound changes, long-term planning emerges as a crucial strategic response to market instability. After years of pandemic-related uncertainty, many promoting entities are revising their operational methods to ensure greater solidity and predictability.

A clear trend is the increase in planning times for international congresses. Compared to the past four years,

there is a gradual return to long-term scheduling, especially for academic and scientific events. This approach allows organizers to mitigate risks associated with fluctuating attendance and respond more effectively to the growing expectations of stakeholders.

At the same time, early planning is crucial for destinations and suppliers, enabling them to develop tailored offers and integrate sustainability principles and technological innovation into their proposals. In particular, emerging destinations can leverage this trend to build strategic relationships with promoting entities, strengthening their competitive positioning.

## **Motivating and Engaging Participants in the New Scenario**

In an increasingly connected yet fragmented world, engaging and satisfying participants is a complex challenge. While the ability to attend events remotely has expanded access opportunities, it has also made it essential to rethink event formats to encourage people to opt for in-person experiences. Direct interaction remains irreplaceable—it creates meaningful moments, fosters networking, and offers immersive experiences that leave a lasting impact.

In this context, success depends on the ability to combine innovation and human connection, designing programs that not only meet professional objectives but also inspire and

evoke emotions. Advanced technologies, such as augmented reality and interactive applications, can enrich the experience, while engaging formats allow for a seamless blend of work and leisure, creating the perfect balance for bleisure travelers..

## **Making a Congress Unforgettable**

Organizing a successful congress goes beyond simply meeting high expectations. It requires attention to detail, sensitivity to individual needs, and a creative approach that transforms each event into a unique occasion. High-quality content, compelling design, and cutting-edge technology are just some of the essential ingredients.

Furthermore, modern digital tools allow event organizers to take on a more independent and strategic role, providing virtual environments that enhance in-person activities and facilitate interaction among participants.

## **The Destination as a Brand**

A congress is more than just an event—it is a journey, an experience that connects people to the place that hosts them. The destination thus becomes a protagonist, offering a unique setting that enhances the event's significance. It is not just a location but a cultural, social, and territorial environment that engages participants, immersing them in its identity and drawing them into a broader narrative.

Any destination aiming to establish itself as a brand in the congress tourism sector must develop an organizational framework that highlights its heritage and delivers unforgettable experiences.

## **Towards an Innovative Future**

Traditional organizational models are giving way to more dynamic and inclusive approaches, where experiential value takes center stage. Congresses are evolving into platforms for cultural, social, and economic growth, demonstrating how innovation and a strong focus on people and local communities can successfully coexist.

# THE TECHNOLOGIES REVOLUTIONIZING THE CONGRESS INDUSTRY

Technological innovation is profoundly transforming the congress industry, opening new perspectives for event organization, participation, and interaction among stakeholders. Digitalization, artificial intelligence, and immersive solutions are redefining the very concept of congresses, making them more accessible, personalized, and efficient. This chapter explores the key emerging technologies shaping the future of the congress sector.

## **Telepresence: The Evolution of Event Participation**

Telepresence is revolutionizing the way people attend events, providing remote participants with an experience that closely simulates physical presence. Advanced videocommunication systems, robotic devices, and interactive screens eliminate geographical distances and enhance accessibility to international congresses.

In a congress setting, speakers and attendees unable to travel can join events through digital avatars or remotely controlled robots. These devices allow users to virtually navigate event spaces, visit exhibition stands, and engage in real-time

conversations, significantly improving networking and overall experience.

## **HoloBox: The Power of Holograms in Congresses**

HoloBox technology enables the creation of immersive 3D presentations using holograms, making sessions more dynamic and memorable. By being visible from multiple angles, holograms captivate attention and foster a more engaging interaction.

One innovative application of HoloBox is the development of digital human figures that embody a brand's identity. These virtual representatives can be digitally "dressed" in corporate colors and programmed to deliver key messages, enhancing brand communication during congresses.

## **Artificial Intelligence: The Future of Event Personalization**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is redefining the congress experience by offering tailored solutions for each participant. AI systems analyze registration data, expressed preferences, and social media interactions to generate personalized itineraries, recommending relevant sessions, workshops, and networking activities.

During a congress, AI-powered virtual assistants can accompany attendees, providing real-time recommendations, managing personalized schedules, and offering instant

answers to specific questions. This technology optimizes attendees' time and engagement, making each congress experience more effective and satisfying.

Another crucial application of AI is post-event data analysis, enabling organizers to gain detailed insights into event effectiveness, participant preferences, and areas for improvement in future editions.

## **Biometric Technologies: Enhancing Security and Efficiency**

Biometric technologies are emerging as essential tools for improving event security and organizational efficiency. Identifying participants through fingerprint scanning, facial recognition, and iris scanning accelerates registration processes while reducing fraud risks and unauthorized access.

The implementation of these technologies requires careful data privacy management. It is crucial that biometric tools comply with existing regulations, ensuring their adoption is accompanied by specialized data protection consultancy.

A practical application of these solutions is automated check-in via facial recognition: registered attendees can gain quick access to the event without physical badges, simply by passing in front of a camera. This increases security while streamlining entry procedures.

## **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants for Real-Time Interaction**

The use of chatbots and virtual assistants is becoming increasingly common in congresses, facilitating interactions between organizers and participants. These tools provide real-time information on session schedules, venue locations, speaker details, and more, reducing the workload of support staff.

By integrating AI, chatbots can offer personalized responses and autonomously handle specific requests, improving service quality and participant satisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

Emerging technologies are redefining the congress industry, offering extraordinary opportunities to improve organizational efficiency, expand participation, and create more engaging and personalized experiences. The adoption of innovative tools such as telepresence, holograms, AI, and biometric technologies is no longer a futuristic vision but a present reality shaping the sector.

To remain competitive in the congress industry 4.0, organizers must embrace these innovations while maintaining a balance between technology and human interaction, between efficiency and personalization. Only then can events become increasingly inclusive, interactive, and aligned with the evolving needs of modern audiences.

# CONGRESS AGGREGATION: A WINNING STRATEGY TO OPTIMIZE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The trend of congress promoters collaborating with other organizations to aggregate events is becoming an increasingly widespread strategy in the congress market 4.0. This approach enables significant contractual and logistical advantages, enhancing the attractiveness of destinations and optimizing available resources.

## **Key Drivers of This Trend**

### *Greater Negotiating Power*

- By aggregating multiple congresses, event promoters can negotiate more favorable terms with congress venues, hotels, and service providers, securing better rates and exclusive conditions.
- Negotiating on larger volumes allows for a reduction in fixed costs per event, improving overall budget efficiency.

### ***Resource Optimization***

- Unifying logistics and services leads to more efficient management of budgets, personnel, and infrastructure.
- Technological and organizational resources can be shared, minimizing the need for duplicated investments.

### ***Increased Visibility and Event Value***

- A larger and more structured congress attracts a broader audience, enhancing networking opportunities and scientific exchange.
- A joint program makes the event more appealing to sponsors and institutional partners, increasing funding opportunities.

### ***Greater Destination Appeal***

- Host cities benefit from a larger influx of participants, generating positive economic impacts on tourism, hospitality, and transportation sectors.
- Some destinations offer incentives for hosting large-scale events, making strategic location choices even more advantageous.

### ***Benefits for Participants***

- Integrating multiple congresses allows for a more diverse and multidisciplinary program.

- Attendees gain access to a broader educational offering, with the opportunity to attend complementary sessions and workshops.

## **Application Examples**

Thematically related congresses: Associations or scientific organizations with similar interests combine their conferences to create a more structured and impactful event.

Joint international meetings: National congresses merge with global events to increase their relevance and attract a wider audience.

Congress clusters: Organizations within the same sector plan their events in a coordinated manner to optimize locations and resources.

## **Conclusion**

The collaboration between event promoters to aggregate congresses represents a winning strategy in today's competitive landscape. This approach maximizes organizational efficiency, reduces costs, and enhances the overall experience for all stakeholders involved—from institutions to destinations, from participants to sponsors.

# PROFESSIONS IN THE CONGRESS MARKET 4.0: EVOLVING ROLES

The organization and management of congresses have undergone an unprecedented transformation, influenced by the advent of new technologies, the evolving needs of participants, and emerging trends in the events sector. This metamorphosis has not only given rise to new professional roles but has also required a deep and strategic adaptation of traditional professions.

In the past, the success of a congress was primarily measured through logistical and organizational parameters. Today, however, it is evaluated by the ability to offer unique, personalized experiences that integrate the latest technologies. Attending an event is no longer just about content—it is an opportunity for growth, connection, and discovery.

This new landscape demands professionals who can navigate both the physical and digital worlds, who understand the dynamics of an increasingly competitive market, and who can anticipate and meet the expectations of a highly demanding audience. Working in the congress sector today offers fertile ground for innovation, where creativity

merges with technical expertise to address present challenges and seize future opportunities.

## **NEW PROFESSIONS**

The Congress Market 4.0, shaped by the integration of technological innovation and new participation dynamics, has given rise to a constantly evolving job landscape. In this context, new professional roles have emerged, capable of meeting the increasingly sophisticated needs of organizers, promoters, and participants. These roles not only reflect the changes taking place but also actively contribute to redefining how events are conceived, designed, and experienced.

The new professions described in this chapter are the result of a global market analysis, with particular attention to emerging trends in the United States, a market that historically serves as a forerunner for changes that later influence the European landscape. However, it is important to note that the U.S. congress industry has distinct characteristics compared to the European market: larger event sizes, different organizational dynamics, and a more fragmented and specialized approach.

As a result, while some of these new roles may become fully established in Europe, others may undergo significant adaptations to better fit the specific characteristics of the European market. Additionally, many of the skills required for these new professions may be integrated into existing professional roles or combined to create innovative positions tailored to the needs of local realities.

In any case, these professions represent undeniable trends that will inevitably influence the global market, driving the congress industry toward a future that is increasingly integrated, personalized, and technologically advanced.

Below are some of the professional roles that embody this transformation.

### ***Hybrid Event Specialists***

Experts in combining physical and digital experiences, these professionals design events that seamlessly integrate advanced technology platforms to ensure accessibility, engagement, and smooth interactions between in-person and virtual audiences.

They focus on optimizing real-time interactions, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance the overall event experience and maximize participant engagement.

### ***Experience Manager***

Professionals who translate an organization's strategic and experiential goals into a cohesive and memorable experience for participants.

Their role covers the entire attendee journey, from pre-event planning to post-event follow-up, with a strong emphasis on creating emotionally engaging and technologically advanced experiences.

They also specialize in mapping the most suitable technologies and optimizing the customer journey, ensuring unique and successful events that leave a lasting impact

### ***Technical Production Manager***

An essential figure for the technical production of increasingly sophisticated virtual and hybrid events, aligned with the rising expectations of participants.

This professional coordinates all technical aspects of an event, meticulously planning transitions, visual cues, music, and timing of various phases.

They are responsible for creating a seamless event flow, ensuring that every element integrates perfectly. Additionally, the Technical Production Manager must be prepared to manage or quickly delegate the resolution of any technical issues, guaranteeing a high-quality experience for all participants.

This role is in high demand, especially as digital events have become a standard in the industry

### ***Event Data Analyst***

Professionals who analyze data collected before, during, and after events to optimize future editions, monitor ROI, and better understand participant needs.

Their expertise allows event organizers to make data-driven decisions, improve engagement strategies, and enhance the effectiveness of event formats over time.

### ***Augmented and Virtual Reality Specialist***

Experts in the use of AR (Augmented Reality) and VR (Virtual Reality) to create immersive event experiences, including virtual tours, interactive sessions, and realistic simulations.

These professionals design cutting-edge digital environments that enhance audience engagement, offering participants an innovative and interactive way to explore event content

### ***Motion Graphic Designer***

A key figure in ensuring that virtual and hybrid event experiences are visually compelling and engaging.

The Motion Graphic Designer is responsible for conceptualizing designs, developing storyboards, and producing high-quality visual assets.

They transform content and storytelling into dynamic visual elements, adding an emotional and captivating dimension to event presentations.

As content remains central to every event, the ability to bring these stories to life through engaging visuals is essential for success.

### ***Content Designer***

Professionals specializing in the creation of innovative and engaging content for sessions, workshops, and digital interactions.

They ensure that content is tailored to the event's audience and objectives, maximizing participant engagement and delivering a seamless, high-quality experience..

### ***Experiential Space Designer***

Specialists in designing and creating environments that promote emotional engagement, creativity, and learning.

They develop innovative layouts that encourage active participation, transforming event spaces into immersive experiences.

### ***Community Manager for Events***

A professional dedicated to building and managing event communities before, during, and after an event.

This role focuses on maintaining audience engagement through forums, social media, and dedicated platforms, fostering an ongoing conversation between participants and event organizers.

### ***Participant Engagement Manager***

A key role in ensuring effective and engaging interactions during virtual and hybrid events.

This professional is responsible for moderating chats, managing polls, and facilitating real-time interactions, enabling speakers to connect with participants dynamically.

Before the event, they define interaction guidelines and set up the necessary infrastructure to support engagement.

This role is crucial for the success of digital events and is sometimes referred to as a chat monitor or interaction moderator.

### ***Personal Experience Curator***

A professional who focuses on personalizing participant experiences, offering tailored itineraries, activities, and services to ensure a unique and memorable event journey.

### ***Diversity and Inclusion Strategist***

A specialist dedicated to ensuring that events are accessible and inclusive, representing diverse cultural, professional, and personal perspectives.

By fostering diversity and inclusivity, they enhance the attractiveness and reputation of events, ensuring a welcoming and enriching experience for all attendees.

### ***Sustainability Experts***

Consultants who develop strategies to reduce the environmental impact of events, from choosing eco-friendly venues to adopting recyclable materials and digital technologies.

Their expertise helps minimize waste, optimize resources, and promote sustainable event planning that aligns with global environmental standards

## **EVOLVING PROFESSIONS**

In the Congress Market 4.0, many traditional roles are evolving to address new challenges and opportunities brought by advanced technologies, changing economic dynamics, and increasingly sophisticated participant expectations.

This transformation is not just an adaptation, but an expansion of skills and responsibilities, making these roles even more essential to event success.

Evolving professions do not merely enhance existing roles; they reinvent themselves, incorporating strategic, creative, and technological aspects.

Below are some of the key roles adapting to meet the sector's evolving demands.

### ***Event Manager***

From logistics coordinators to strategic consultants, Event Managers now take on a broader role, including:

- ✓ Comprehensive event planning
- ✓ ROI monitoring
- ✓ Integration of advanced technologies
- ✓ Development of innovative and sustainable formats

## ***Audiovisual Technicians***

With the rise of Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and 3D content, audiovisual technicians now require enhanced skills, such as:

- ✓ Managing immersive and interactive systems
- ✓ Creating multisensory event experiences
- ✓ Collaborating with designers and creative teams to integrate cutting-edge technology into event programming.

## ***Marketing Specialist for Events***

This role has become more complex and technology-driven, focusing on:

- ✓ Advanced digital communication strategies
- ✓ Using analytics tools to measure campaign effectiveness
- ✓ Creating tailored content for different audience segments
- ✓ Leveraging social media and streaming platforms to expand event reach

## ***Logistics Operations Staff***

Once responsible primarily for physical event management, logistics staff now must:

- ✓ Integrate advanced logistics management software
- ✓ Plan sustainable logistics solutions (eco-friendly transport, resource optimization)
- ✓ Ensure efficiency in complex hybrid events

## ***Sponsorship Managers***

With traditional sponsorship revenues declining, Sponsorship Managers have evolved to:

- ✓ Develop tailored sponsorship opportunities for virtual and hybrid events
- ✓ Create innovative sponsor visibility solutions, including digital platforms
- ✓ Deliver measurable results to satisfy investors

## ***Hospitality Manager***

Once focused solely on guest reception, the Hospitality Manager role now includes:

- ✓ Designing personalized experiences for congress participants
- ✓ Implementing post-pandemic health and safety logistics
- ✓ Organizing integrated business and leisure (bleisure) activities

## ***Session Moderators***

Beyond facilitating in-person discussions, moderators now:

- ✓ Manage real-time interactions via virtual platforms
- ✓ Utilize live polls, Q&A sessions, and digital engagement tools
- ✓ Encourage active participation, even in hybrid settings

## ***Event Security Staff***

With growing concerns over both physical and cybersecurity, this role now includes:

- ✓ Monitoring health and safety protocols
- ✓ Managing cybersecurity for virtual events
- ✓ Coordinating crowd management strategies
- ✓ Overseeing proactive risk management for event technology.

### ***Speaker Coordinators***

Previously limited to logistical management, this role now:

- ✓ Provides technical support for virtual and hybrid presentations
- ✓ Ensures speakers have optimized materials and engagement tools
- ✓ Trains speakers to enhance their effectiveness in digital environments.

### ***Organizational Secretariat Staff***

From administrative figures to strategic event support, they now:

- ✓ Utilize advanced management software to automate tasks (registrations, communications)
- ✓ Manage complex databases of attendees and sponsors
- ✓ Facilitate digital interactions and track event activities before and after the event

## ***EVENT PHOTOGRAPHERS: FROM TRADITIONAL SERVICES TO VISUAL STORYTELLING***

The role of event photographers is shifting to meet the demands of a market increasingly focused on personalization and technology.

The focus is moving beyond standard photography services to a more creative and integrated approach, where storytelling plays a central role in capturing an event's essence.

### ***New Skills & Technologies***

- ✓ **Drone Photography:** Capturing breathtaking aerial images, adding a unique perspective to event documentation.
- ✓ **Augmented & Virtual Reality Content (AR & VR):** Creating optimized visual content for immersive event experiences.
- ✓ **Visual Storytelling:** Developing a narrative structure to connect key event moments, evoking emotion and engagement.
- ✓ **Multimedia Integration:** Collaborating with videographers and marketing teams to produce content suited for digital campaigns and social media platforms.

### ***New Roles in Event Photography***

 **Branding Photographers:** Specialists in visual content creation to promote destinations and event brands.

 **Event Content Creators:** Professionals delivering complete visual storytelling packages, optimized for digital marketing campaigns.



Post-Production Specialists: Experts in image enhancement and editing, ensuring high-quality outputs tailored to multiple formats and media.

## **Strategic Contribution of Event Photographers**

Event photographers no longer simply document events; they act as strategic partners for organizers, shaping a compelling visual identity for the event, engaging audiences, and maximizing media impact..

## DECLINING PROFESSIONS

The evolution of the congress industry, driven by automation, digitalization, and shifting market demands, is leading to the progressive disappearance of some traditional professions.

Roles that were once essential to event management are losing relevance, as their functions can now be performed more efficiently, cost-effectively, and at scale through advanced technologies.

While this trend signals the decline of certain job roles, it also opens the door to new skills and opportunities, redefining the employment landscape in the event industry

### *Traditional Logistics Staff*

 *Reason:* Logistics management, once handled by dedicated staff, is increasingly automated through AI-driven software that optimizes transport, schedules, and resources. These automated management systems can plan and monitor logistical operations more efficiently than human teams.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Transport planning*
- ✓ *Standardized setups*
- ✓ *Material handling*

### *Traditional Administrative Secretaries*

 *Reason:* Tasks like participant registration and email communication are now automated through self-service

platforms and advanced chatbots. Robotics and automation software are replacing the need for dedicated administrative personnel.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Participant registrations*
- ✓ *Personalized email campaigns*
- ✓ *Paper document management.*

### ***Travel Coordinators***

 *Reason:* Attendees can now organize their own travel arrangements through automated portals and AI-powered booking systems, which offer personalized solutions based on their preferences.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Flight bookings*
- ✓ *Transfers and accommodation arrangements*

### ***Basic Audiovisual Technicians***

 *Reason:* The increasing demand for immersive technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) requires specialized skills, making traditional AV technician roles obsolete.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Setting up projectors, microphones, and basic screens*

## ***Manual Setup Support Staff***

 *Reason:* The rise of robots for stage, booth, and equipment setup has significantly reduced the need for manual labor. These robotic systems can perform installation tasks faster and more precisely.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Assembling furniture*
- ✓ *Arranging promotional materials*

## ***Front Desk & Welcome Service Operators***

 *Reason:* Automated kiosks, virtual assistants, and robotic greeters are replacing traditional staff responsible for participant check-ins, badge distribution, and general event information.

 *Examples:*

- ✓ *Self-check-in systems*
- ✓ *Automated badge issuance*
- ✓ *AI-powered information desks*

## **ENDANGERED PROFESSIONS**

In the landscape of Congress 4.0, some traditional professions are at risk of disappearing. This phenomenon is driven by increasing automation, the adoption of advanced technologies, and the transformation of operational dynamics.

Roles that were once central are progressively losing relevance as their tasks are replaced by more efficient and scalable technological solutions.

The professions at risk of extinction not only signify a shift from the past but also offer insight into how the market is evolving towards a more technology-driven and interconnected model. Below are the key professional roles that may disappear or be significantly reduced in the near future:

### ***On-Site Interpreters***

*Reason:* The introduction of real-time translation software powered by artificial intelligence is reducing the need for interpreters to be physically present at events.

*Examples: Simultaneous interpretation.*

### ***General Information Desk Staff***

*Reason:* Tasks such as responding to emails, managing databases, and handling repetitive operations are increasingly being automated through software solutions.

*Examples: Answering frequently asked questions, providing venue orientation..*

### ***Call Center Operators for Registrations***

*Reason:* Online registration platforms and automated payment systems have eliminated the need for telephone registration operators.

*Example: Handling event registrations and confirmations via phone.*

### ***Printed Material Distributors***

*Reason:* The digitalization of brochures, programs, and promotional materials reduces the demand for personnel dedicated to distributing physical copies at events.

*Example: Handing out printed flyers or event programs.*

### ***Traditional Event Photographers***

*Reason:* The widespread use of high-quality smartphone cameras and AI-powered image enhancement tools has diminished the need for professional photographers for standard event coverage.

*Example: Taking generic photos of participants or event settings.*

### ***Check-In Staff***

*Reason:* Self-service kiosks and automated check-in systems using QR codes or facial recognition are replacing human staff.

*Example: Managing registration and badge distribution.*

### ***Transport Coordinators***

*Reason:* Ride-sharing apps and automated booking platforms are making traditional transport coordination roles obsolete.

*Example: Manual organization of shuttle buses or taxis.*

### ***Traditional Audiovisual Technicians***

*Reason:* Plug-and-play AV solutions and automation are reducing the need for technicians to handle basic audiovisual equipment.

*Example: Setting up projectors or standard audio systems.*

### ***Manual Security Personnel for Small Events***

*Reason:* Automated security systems, such as smart surveillance cameras and facial recognition, reduce the need for physical security staff.

*Example: Manual access control for small-scale events.*

### ***Ticketing Staff***

*Reason:* The shift to digital tickets, mobile purchasing apps, and online access control has nearly eliminated the need for traditional ticketing staff.

*Example: Selling and distributing physical tickets.*

## ***Personnel for Repetitive Tasks***

*Reason:* Chatbots and voice assistants can provide general information to attendees more quickly and without time restrictions.

*Examples:* Data entry, manual monitoring of participant lists.

## **A Flexible and Innovative Future**

Technological progress is not only reshaping the congress industry but also creating new opportunities for professionals. While some professions are in decline, this shift allows traditional roles to be reinvented, taking on more strategic functions.

Acquiring advanced skills in data management, creative design, and the adoption of emerging technologies will be crucial to maintaining relevance and value in a constantly evolving market.

The congress industry will continue to develop, requiring flexibility and a willingness to embrace innovation in order to meet the challenges of an increasingly dynamic sector.

The ability to adapt to new scenarios is not just a necessity but also an opportunity to redefine professional roles and contribute significantly to the success of increasingly complex and technologically advanced events.

# THE ROLE OF THE PCO

## FROM LOGISTICS ORGANIZERS TO STRATEGIC CONSULTANTS

The traditional role of the Professional Congress Organizer (PCO), historically focused on the logistical and organizational aspects of an event, is undergoing a transformation.

In the past, PCOs were primarily responsible for assisting in the selection of suitable venues, organizing services, and managing administrative tasks. However, technological advancements and easier access to information have significantly altered these dynamics.

Today, many tasks previously entrusted to PCOs are now handled directly by event promoters. With improved access to information and the increasing availability of advanced management software, many organizations are internalizing functions that were once outsourced. This trend, known as “in-house management,” allows organizers to optimize resources, reduce costs, and maintain direct control over all event phases. However, this transformation also presents challenges, such as the need to train internal staff and adopt increasingly sophisticated technological tools.

For PCOs, this phenomenon represents both a challenge and an opportunity. To continue delivering value, they must evolve from mere organizers into strategic consultants, capable of supporting event promoters in areas where specific expertise is lacking and offering tailored and innovative solutions.

## **Towards Strategic Consultancy**

Today, PCOs are expected to provide strategic consultancy that spans across legal and financial aspects, communication, administrative and insurance management, and advanced marketing strategies. Every element, from event design to execution and ROI monitoring, requires thorough analysis and a customized approach.

In this context, PCOs must offer solutions that integrate cutting-edge technological innovations, adapting them to the unique needs of each sector. This calls for a comprehensive approach that combines innovative working methods, creativity in event design, and flexible strategies to effectively respond to a constantly evolving market.

With the rise of hybrid events, it has become crucial to develop experiences that blend physical and virtual interactions, expanding audiences, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring a seamless and engaging experience for both in-person and remote participants.

## Enhancing On-Site Participation

In an era where technology enables remote participation, encouraging in-person attendance has become a top priority. Face-to-face interaction remains essential to fostering deeper connections, facilitating networking, and creating immersive learning experiences that cannot be replicated virtually.

Economic factors also play a crucial role: many event promoters rely on revenue generated from congresses, and a decline in physical attendance leads to decreased registration fees and lower sponsor interest and investment.

To motivate attendees, PCOs must create value-added experiences, such as:

- ✓ **Engagement:** Encouraging meaningful connections between colleagues and speakers, fostering active participation in sessions and discussions.
- ✓ **Networking & Personalized Interactions:** Facilitating direct exchanges of ideas and professional encounters.
- ✓ **Attractive Programs:** Not only from a scientific and event content perspective but also incorporating tourism elements, aligning with the growing bleisure trend. The selection of appealing destinations should encourage attendees to blend business trips with leisure moments, making the overall experience more rewarding.

In this scenario, personalization becomes a key factor, transforming each event into a unique and memorable occasion.

## **New Skills and Adapting to Market Dynamics**

To tackle the increasing challenges of the congress industry, PCOs must integrate multidisciplinary skills and quickly adapt to emerging trends.

At the core of this evolution are digitalization and artificial intelligence, indispensable tools for enhancing efficiency and personalization. However, it is equally essential to develop a deep understanding of economic and regulatory changes while simultaneously promoting sustainable models in line with market expectations.

## **Sustainability and Innovation**

PCOs play a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices, helping to reduce the environmental footprint of events. This includes:

Digitalization and the use of eco-friendly materials.

Choosing locations and suppliers that comply with sustainability standards.

## **Conclusion**

The PCO 4.0 is no longer just an operational organizer but a strategic partner, adding distinctive value to ensure that each event is unique and successful. This role guides all planning and management phases, integrating the best innovative and sustainable practices while helping organizations achieve their objectives through a personalized and forward-thinking vision.

# THE ROLE OF THE DESTINATION IN THE CONGRESS MARKET 4.0

Destinations play a central role in the landscape of Congress Market 4.0, not only as physical venues that host events but as key protagonists in delivering integrated and innovative experiences.

In today's evolving market—shaped by the changing needs of event promoters and participants and intensifying global competition—destinations must reinvent themselves to remain competitive and attractive.

## **The Destination as an Experience**

Beyond the quality of infrastructure and services, what truly sets a destination apart is its ability to offer a unique experience that extends beyond the congress itself. This includes:

- ✓ **Enhancing Local Heritage** – Promoting culture, art, gastronomy, and traditions, allowing participants to connect with the location in an authentic way.
- ✓ **Bleisure Tourism** – Providing opportunities to combine professional commitments with leisure activities,

encouraging participants to extend their stay, and generating economic benefits for the local community..

## **The Destination as a Strategic Partner**

Destinations should not merely be the backdrop for events but should act as strategic partners for organizers by offering:

- ✓ **An Integrated Congress System** – A seamless and efficient management approach that positions the destination as a cohesive ecosystem capable of orchestrating all necessary services around the congress venue. This includes accommodation, transportation, and distinctive elements that enhance its appeal, such as cultural, culinary, and tourism offerings.
- ✓ **Operational Support** – Facilitating collaboration between local authorities, suppliers, and institutions to ensure logistical efficiency and smooth organization.
- ✓ **Sustainability** – Implementing eco-friendly practices to reduce the environmental impact of events, such as renewable energy use, green transportation solutions, and recyclable materials.
- ✓ **Technological Innovation** – Integrating advanced digital tools, such as augmented and virtual reality, to enhance the congress experience.

## **Building a Successful Congress Brand**

A destination must position itself as a recognizable brand, capable of attracting high-profile events by leveraging:

- ✓ **Strategic Positioning Policies** – Different event types have specific characteristics and requirements that demand tailored services and a dedicated organizational approach. Identifying target market segments and structuring an offering accordingly is a key strategy to develop a strong business presence in this competitive sector.
- ✓ **Reputation & Credibility** – Establishing a strong brand image based on past successes and testimonials from well-executed events.
- ✓ **Effective Communication** – Promoting unique selling points through targeted marketing campaigns, participation in trade fairs, and engagement in international networks.

## **Economic and Social Value**

Congress destinations generate more than just direct economic impact—they also contribute to:

- ✓ **The Growth of Human Capital** – Encouraging knowledge-sharing and skill development through professional events.
- ✓ **Territorial Promotion** – Boosting international visibility and attracting new visitor flows.

In summary, the most successful destinations in the Congress Market 4.0 are those that transform themselves into ecosystems of innovation, sustainability, and cultural connection, offering added value that extends well beyond the event itself..

# CONGRESS VENUES: THE HUB OF THE CONGRESS MARKET 4.0

In the Congress Market 4.0, the role of Congress Venues evolves from being merely central to becoming strategic.

As the nerve center of the congress system, these venues do not simply serve a logistical function—they play a key role in shaping the entire economic ecosystem of their destination.

The pricing policies they adopt are crucial in attracting events, directly influencing the success of the local congress system.

More than just physical spaces, Congress Venues act as the core engine of a destination's congress industry. Their ability to merge technical, logistical, and organizational expertise makes them essential tools for meeting organizers' needs and ensuring an optimal experience for attendees.

Beyond their direct role in hosting events, these venues serve as economic catalysts for their destinations. Industries such as hospitality, catering, transportation, and ancillary activities benefit significantly from congresses, underlining the strategic importance of Congress Venues in generating value for the local economy.

## **The Impact of Pricing Policies**

Although venue costs typically account for only 3% to 6% of the total revenue generated by an international congress, they have a direct impact on the budget of event promoters.

For this reason, the pricing strategies adopted by Congress Centers are a determining factor:

- ✓ Competitive pricing makes it easier to secure events, ultimately strengthening the entire economic ecosystem of the destination and generating positive returns for the local community.
- ✓ Pricing is not just an economic issue—it is a strategic lever that can either attract or drive away high-profile events.

The ability to implement flexible and targeted pricing models, tailored to the specific needs of event organizers, is a key factor in remaining competitive in an increasingly global and dynamic marketplace.

# THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE CONGRESS SYSTEM

In successful destinations, public administration has always played a key role in shaping and guiding the congress project. It acts as a coordinating body, bringing together institutional stakeholders and industry operators, while providing essential institutional support to event organizers.

With the advent of the Congress Market 4.0, the role of public administration has further expanded, becoming crucial for competing on a global scale. The ability to adopt a strategic vision in managing promotional investments is now fundamental to directing these resources toward securing high-profile events, capable of generating significant economic and reputational benefits for the destination.

In this context, public sector support can take various forms, including:

- ✓ Reducing congress venue costs
- ✓ Providing direct financial contributions to event organizers

These measures, already well-established in many successful destinations, serve as a strategic tool to address the growing demands of the market and strengthen destination competitiveness.

Adopting these practices not only facilitates the acquisition of high-value events, but also positions the destination among the leading international players.

The collaboration between public and private sectors, guided by careful and strategic planning, is therefore essential to meeting the challenges of the Congress Market 4.0 and maximizing the full potential of a destination.

## **The Impact of Taxation and Opportunities for Destinations**

In today's global context, taxation represents a crucial challenge for event organizers, often associated with significant costs that increase business risk. As a result, many international associations and societies have relocated their headquarters to countries with more favorable tax policies.

Consequently, destinations that offer tax incentives and competitive economic conditions are becoming particularly attractive for hosting congresses and events.

✓ These destinations not only provide direct support to event organizers but also strategically position themselves as congress hubs, creating new business opportunities and long-term economic benefits for the local area.

## **A Future Opportunity**

The needs of the Congress Market 4.0 demand a forward-thinking vision, recognizing the various stakeholders as

integrated, complementary, and synergistic parts of a unified system.

This system, structured around Congress Venues, must be able to foster a shared business culture and project a coherent and strong brand identity.

✓ Only in this way can a well-defined brand be created—one that is positively perceived by target markets and capable of responding to the new challenges of the international congress landscape.

# NEW STRUCTURES OF TERRITORIAL STAKEHOLDERS

The evolution of the Congress Market 4.0 and the growing complexity of economic and operational dynamics have led to a redefinition of the roles played by the stakeholders within a destination's congress system.

Among these, Convention Bureaus, DMCs, and PCOs face new challenges and opportunities, adapting their functions to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive and interconnected market.

## **Convention Bureau 4.0: Evolution and New Functions**

In the past, Convention Bureaus often played multiple roles, acting as all-purpose entities to fill organizational gaps within a destination. Their responsibilities included:

- ✓ Promotion
- ✓ Bid preparation
- ✓ Client assistance throughout the planning phase
- ✓ Management of information offices
- ✓ Coordination of the destination's congress offer

With the rise of the Congress Market 4.0, Convention Bureaus are now returning to their original function as a

“convention table”, acting as a strategic meeting point between public entities, major congress venues, and industry associations.

This central role aims to develop a coordinated and effective congress strategy for the destination.

## **Main Functions of Convention Bureaus**

- ✓ *Promotion of the Destination’s Congress System.* Serving as a liaison with local institutions, working alongside both public and private entities to create a favorable ecosystem for congress development.
- ✓ *Support for Inspection Visits* Providing information, hospitality, and logistical support for visiting delegates evaluating the destination.
- ✓ *Large-Scale Scouting* Identifying potential congresses and events of interest to the destination

## **The Operational Limits of Convention Bureaus**

Due to their public role, Convention Bureaus must operate within clearly defined limits.

✗ They cannot engage in personalized promotional activities, despite the market’s increasing demand for them.

✓ Instead, they must focus on informational functions, leaving private sector specialists responsible for direct

commercial promotion of the congress products offered by the destination.

# PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGRESS DESTINATION

In the Congress Market 4.0, destination promotion requires an integrated and strategic approach, where each stakeholder in the value chain plays a coordinated role in the overall success.

On one hand, Convention Bureaus and public institutions, as discussed in the previous chapter, handle the general promotion of the territory and the consolidation of the destination's brand. These actors are essential in creating a strong and recognizable identity, capable of attracting the interest of both organizers and participants.

On the other hand, direct promotional activities, aimed at securing specific events, must be entrusted to specialized entities. Among these, congress centers play a key role. Given their structure and entrepreneurial nature, they are required to develop independent marketing and promotional initiatives, which are essential for ensuring the economic sustainability of their operations.

## **Segmentation Strategies for Competitive Destinations**

The congress market is experiencing an increasing segmentation, with destinations positioning themselves strategically to attract specific types of events.

- ✓ Some focus on strengthening their presence in the high-end market, offering cutting-edge services and technologies.
- ✓ Others adopt a low-cost approach, providing essential yet efficient solutions.

This phenomenon reflects a diversification of positioning strategies, with some destinations specializing in niche sectors, while others collaborate with commercial partners to enhance their attractiveness.

- ◆ The key to success lies in the ability to identify and meet the specific needs of each market segment.

## **The Value of an Integrated System**

The efforts of individual stakeholders must be supported by the entire destination ecosystem.

- ◆ The economic benefits generated by acquired congresses extend far beyond the services provided by the congress centers themselves.

These events activate a virtuous cycle, benefiting key sectors such as:

- ✓ Hospitality

- ✓ Catering
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Related activities

This cohesive collaboration between all actors—public and private, strategic and operational—is essential to create a competitive and attractive congress ecosystem, capable of maximizing economic, social, and cultural opportunities offered by the Congress Market 4.0.

## **Actors in Destination Promotion and Commercialization**

A strategic role in direct promotion and destination commercialization is played by specialized actors, such as:

- ◆ DMCs with a congress office
- ◆ Local PCOs

These professionals complement and enhance the promotional activities led by public institutions and congress centers.

- ✓ Deep market knowledge and the ability to interpret specific client needs
- ✓ Innovative and customized solutions
- ✓ Operational flexibility, allowing them to respond quickly to market demands

◆ Their role strengthens the destination's competitive positioning and enhances its appeal, making it more attractive and functional for event organizers.

## **Collaborations and Event Circulation**

Another key feature of the Congress Market 4.0 is the strategic collaboration between destinations.

📌 Increasingly, territories and cities are working together to create congress circuits, offering joint packages and shared conditions to encourage event organizers to plan itinerant events.

✅ This healthy competition promotes a balanced distribution of events, allowing emerging destinations to position themselves alongside more established ones.

✅ These collaborations also optimize resources and expertise, ensuring a diverse and advantageous offer for event organizers.

📌 Strategic partnerships between destinations not only increase the perceived value of each location but also facilitate the creation of international networks, further strengthening the destination's brand.

## **The Contribution of Local Operators**

Local operators also play an essential role in territorial promotion.

By promoting their own services, they indirectly contribute to enhancing the destination as a whole.

This process creates a broad and diversified commercial network, attracting a varied clientele and meeting the needs of a constantly evolving market.

The synergy between specialized actors and local operators is a key factor in building a competitive and cohesive ecosystem, capable of maximizing benefits for the entire community.

# CONCLUSIONS: BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

The congress market, with its extraordinary ability to evolve and adapt, is one of the most dynamic and resilient sectors on the global stage.

Throughout this treatise, we have explored the key players, ongoing transformations, and strategies necessary to navigate a future where technology, sustainability, and personalization will be the true drivers of change.

However, this evolution is not merely technological or organizational—it is a cultural shift. Congresses are no longer just events; they have become platforms for knowledge exchange, authentic connections, and destination enhancement.

The centrality of people—whether they are organizers, participants, or industry professionals—remains the beating heart of a system that must continuously reinvent itself to meet emerging challenges.

## **Collaboration and Innovation for Progress**

The future of Congress 4.0 will be built on collaboration between:

✓ Public and private sectors

✓ Innovation and tradition

✓ Local experiences and global perspectives

The synergy among stakeholders is essential to maximize economic, social, and cultural benefits.

Each event is an opportunity not just to create immediate value, but also to leave a lasting legacy for the communities and destinations that host it.

## **A Collective Commitment**

To make the congress market sustainable, inclusive, and innovative, a collective effort is required.

From public institutions to industry professionals, from congress centers to local operators, everyone has a crucial role in shaping a future that prioritizes:

✓ Quality

✓ Efficiency

✓ The human experience

Only through a shared vision can we tackle the complexities of the global market and position this sector as a pillar of tourism and the global economy.

## **An Invitation to Look Forward**

This treatise does not simply conclude with an analysis—it is an invitation to reflect, innovate, and collaborate.

Congress 4.0 is not just an evolving reality; it is an extraordinary opportunity to rethink how we:

- ✓ Create connections
- ✓ Share knowledge
- ✓ Enhance destinations

Looking ahead, the congress industry must continue to evolve with courage and creativity. Only by doing so can we build an ecosystem where technological innovation, sustainability, and human experience coexist harmoniously—transforming every event into a unique occasion to grow, inspire, and leave a lasting impact.

## **A Closing, A New Beginning**

Like every congress, this treatise has been a journey—one that does not end here, but opens the door to new ideas, projects, and collaborations.

Every reader, as a protagonist in this sector, now possesses the insights and tools to shape the future of the congress industry.

A future that does not belong to a few, but one that will be written by a shared will to build something truly extraordinary.

 The challenge is set. Congress 4.0 is already here, and its potential is yet to be fully explored. .



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