

## **Reaching out to global markets through meetings & events**

### **Paradigms of a new world**

In an era of uncertainties, we are forced to think of innovative ways to tackle new obstacles every day of the week. As the economies in America & Western Europe start to mature and reach their zenith, markets in Asia seem to be bursting with life. A number of US & North American corporations and industries have significant presence in these markets and have started to leverage the benefits of working in a diversified global market place. Globally spread corporations such as GE already report that their early foray into the global market place has allowed them to weather the current economic storm, as 50% of their revenues are generated overseas.

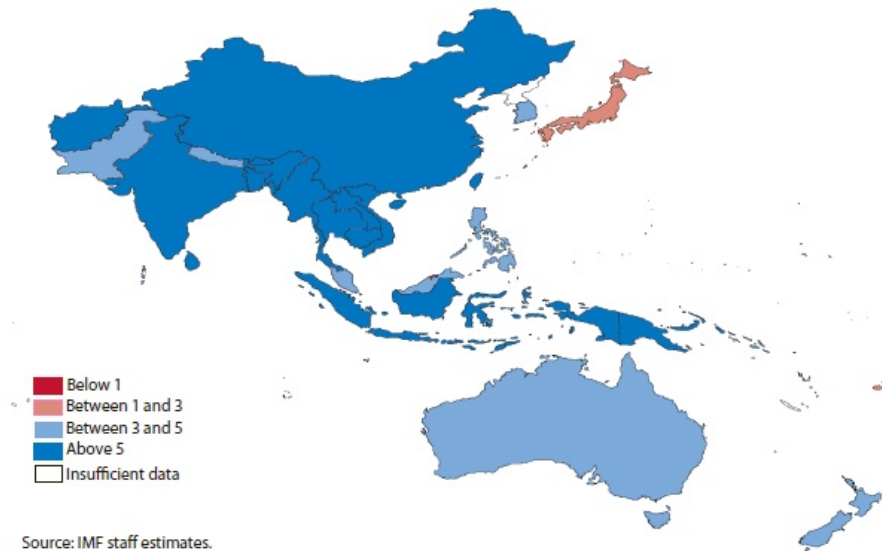
PriceWaterhouseCoopers in their 2008 report, "The world in 2050: Beyond the BRICs: A broader look at emerging market growth prospects", projected the following:

- By 2050, the emerging economies of BRIC, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey will be around 50% larger than the current G7 (US, Japan, Germany, UK, France, Italy and Canada)
- China is expected to overtake the US as the largest economy in around 2025
- India has the potential to nearly catch up with the US by 2050
- The projected list of fastest growing economies to 2050 is headed by Vietnam, and the top 10 includes Nigeria, Philippines, Egypt and Bangladesh "

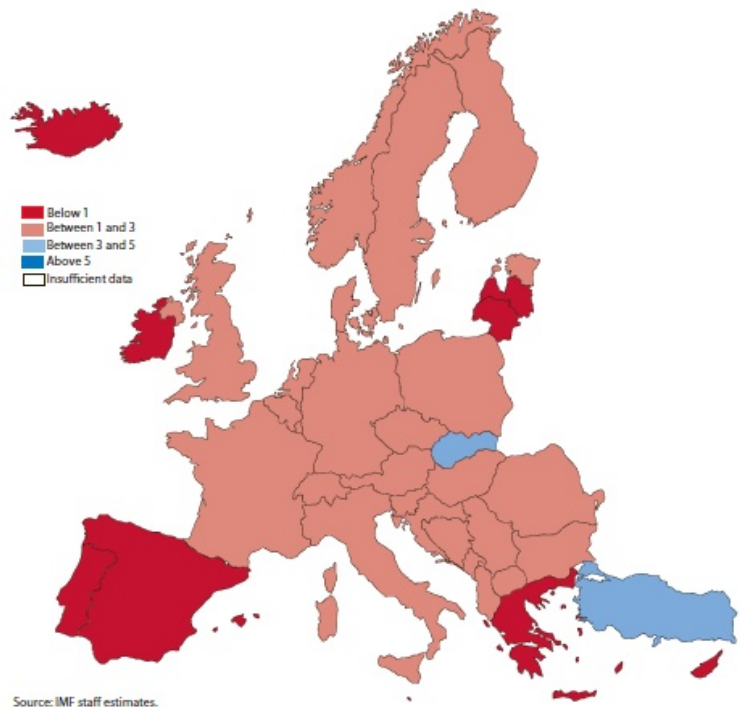
(The world in 2050: Beyond the BRICs: A broader look at emerging market growth prospects – John Hawksworth & Gordon Cookson, PriceWaterhouseCoppers LLP, March 2008)

IMF in its annual report on growth indicated that developing markets of Asia are outperforming the developed markets of Europe & Americas by leaps and this is evident in the indicative maps below.

**Figure 2.4. Asia: Average Real GDP Growth in 2010-11**  
(Percent)



**Figure 2.6. Europe: Average Real GDP Growth in 2010-11**  
(Percent)



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## **Building Blocks**

As an Association, where funds are prudently spent, it is important to invest in the right strategy that would allow you to grow. Choosing this strategy is obviously very important and critical. The options are numerous and some of these are:

- Remote online and off line Services from HQ
- Conducting Meetings in the Region
- Outsourcing services to an Agency
- Investing in opening offices in the incumbent country/ region

However, in order to define a right strategy, associations first have to evaluate how relevant their products and services are for international markets and how ready the organisation is for global expansion in terms of support and approval from their governance, capacity to increase economies of scale and a thorough understanding of the international markets.

Depending on the stages of your growth strategy, it is always advisable for organisations to test the waters and understand market requirements before foraying into the new venture.

Having assisted number of international associations grow globally, it is recommended that organisations test the response from these markets by conducting a focussed market research and through meetings in the region of choice and varied sizes.

The Question most commonly raised is, why is there a need to conduct meetings in new markets when we are a highly networked community of global professionals who can feed back requirements to the HQ?

The answer lies in the simplicity of understanding “the village needs to meet”!

Meetings offer the following opportunities for Associations who are looking at expanding their offerings:

- Building a Brand
- Knowledge Transfer
- Creating Research Centre
- Capacity Building
- Trade Development and Building Global partnerships
- Economic Generator

## Case Studies

According to the World Bank, the number of countries with a strong middle class is expected to grow five-fold leading to greater demand for access to higher standards of living by 2025. And this in turn will drive a greater desire for education and credentialing from associations who can demonstrate their products are “generally accepted” by decision makers around the world.

Here are some international conference examples and keys to success that promote good international conference development as a means to global expansion that can tap into this growing opportunity outside the US.

### MIDDLE CLASS SIZE PROJECTIONS TO 2025

Ranks			Middle Class (millions)	2025 Total		
2005	2015	2025		2015	2025	Popul.
16	1	1	China	334	392	1453
1	2	2	United States	314	319	350
7	3	3	India	136	174	1449
2	4	4	Japan	102	102	120
12	8	5	Brazil	50	74	218
3	5	6	Germany	60	64	80
19	9	7	Russia	48	61	128
5	7	8	United Kingdom	50	54	64
4	6	9	France	50	50	63
6	10	10	Italy	43	45	56
13	11	11	Mexico	43	43	130
9	13	12	Indonesia	36	42	278
11	15	13	South Korea	34	37	51
8	14	14	Canada	34	35	38
10	16	15	Spain	27	29	39
27	17	16	Turkey	21	25	82
15	21	17	Argentina	17	23	46
22	23	18	Pakistan	16	23	229
18	19	19	Thailand	19	22	70
17	18	20	Australia	20	20	23
24	22	21	Philippines	17	19	118
14	28	22	Saudi Arabia	11	18	36
31	20	23	Taiwan	17	18	24
33	26	24	Colombia	13	17	55
32	27	25	Bangladesh	12	16	204

### Middle East (Emerging Market):

In 2009, in order to address issues and trends in the field of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology and to widen the scope of their reach, three associations joined hands and organised a meeting that focussed on Asia and Middle East. Asian Allergy Asthma Foundation, Lebanese Society of Asthma & Immunology and Emirates Respiratory & Asthma Society came together to build a multi-region focussed meeting, combined their strengths and worked closely to strengthen the brand of all three societies, expand regionally and further develop their content quality.

The meeting initially targeted for 600 people had an over-whelming response and was attended by 1,400 participants across 43 countries. The organisers managed to get the endorsement of all local stakeholders including Dubai Health Authority, Ministry of Health and Sheikh Hamdan Awards for Medical Sciences, which further strengthened the meeting, encouraged more sponsors and exhibitors to come on board and more local attendance. For international participation, they built partnerships and managed to get support from World Allergy Organization (WAO) in collaboration with the ACAAI, the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy & Immunology (AAAAI) and the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI). Overall the event attracted 29

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exhibitors and 11 sponsors, which helped them achieve their financial objectives as well.

The event was a huge success and achieved all its objectives in terms of financial gains, regional expansion, industry trends and now the event has been made into a bi-annual event with the next one scheduled for 2011.

### **Europe (Matured Market):**

Many US-based associations find it more difficult to gain a foothold in a mature market like Europe, but the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), in partnership with several international and European based societies launched a new type of conference called Transatlantic Innovations in 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to convene key thought leaders from Europe, the United States and around the world to discuss and debate scientific advances, over the horizon technology, and socio-economic trends affecting plastic surgery now and in the future.

ASPS conducted market research to explore the creation of a European. Of the majority of surgeons who responded to an ASPS survey, 93% in total, were interested in a European event, jointly organized by ASPS and another European association. Several surgeons saw the benefit of bringing together the “best of” in European and US techniques with a multiple day event being more popular. Other surgeons preferred an event organized with the leading European associations such as those in the: UK, Germany, Italy, France and Sweden or alternatively a road show event moving between the major cities.

The key was to have support and endorsement from Key Opinion Leaders. In fact, several leaders who participated in the telephone interviews confirmed that they were willing to work with ASPS on developing the project. Also, members of the ASPS Industry Advisory Council were willing to sponsor this kind of event giving it strong financial backing.

Despite the existence of several existing plastic surgery events, ASPS and its partners held the meeting in Paris in April 2009 with an attendance of 202 delegates and faculty, representing 38 countries: 62 percent of attendees were from Europe, 32 percent North America and 6 percent from other countries. Seventy-eight (78%) percent of participants noted they will implement new strategies into their practice as a result of the program and ninety-eight percent of the respondents agreed that Transatlantic Innovations should be repeated. As a result of the success of 2009, the co-sponsors agreed to run another event in Paris, March 2011

## **Success Factors for International Meetings**

Some of the key success factors to organise international meetings are:

- 1) Market research to uncover opportunity and an event strategy for focus
- 2) Endorsements from local authorities and partnerships for financial, content, and audience access support
- 3) Organizing committees with recognized regional Knowledge Opinion Leaders to ensure content localization
- 4) Direct and indirect marketing with direct sales (e.g. telemarketing) with a focus on local and regional markets where the meeting is going to be held
- 5) Focused local and regional press activities to build the brand of the meeting, create momentum and attract participation
- 6) Strong financial and risk controls supported from experienced regional event organizers
- 7) A lot of regions do not have English as their first language, so a very simple and easy to understand language to be used for all communication materials
- 8) When marketing internationally, it is extremely important to advise on international codes for telephone numbers, working hours keeping in mind the time differences and weekends
- 9) Some of the agreements and discussions with local authorities & associations (in some regions) can take longer than expected, so being persistent and patient is absolutely essential
- 10) Be prepared for a significant amount of last minute tasks and changes