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Infrastructure as driver of growth

The MICE segment in Russia is entering a new stage of maturing with a holistic ecosystem of services becoming a key factor in achieving success. Vadim Subbotin, Deputy Director General, World Trade Centre Moscow (WTC), shared insights on how integrated solutions and strategies will enable the industry to adapt to current economic and geopolitical realities.

- What is the true value of a comprehensive functional infrastructure for organizing public events? What particular benefits should be counted in?

- Today, comprehensive infrastructure is one of the key success factors for any business entity operating in the MICE segment (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions). It is essential for the organizer to acquire not just a venue, but possess a holistic ecosystem, which significantly reduces the operating load, simplifies coordination and minimizes risks.

Our WTC complex is a vivid example of the all-inclusive business principle. Within the framework of a single architectural ensemble, we have combined a multifunctional Congress Center, the Plaza Garden Moscow WTC business hotel and the Mezhdunarodnaya apart-hotel, prime offices and a wide range of restaurant services.

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Organizing events in a place where congress venues are integrated with hotels allows guests to avoid logistics complications and wasted time. For example, the Plaza Garden Moscow WTC hotel has over 700 modern rooms of various categories, which offers the opportunity to accommodate even the largest delegations, corporate teams and participants of large-scale forums without the necessity to spread lodging arrangements across different hotels.

This kind of flexibility simplifies the organizational workload, eliminates the need to coordinate relocations and ensures fast and easy movement throughout the event.

This concept fully complies with world standards for holding successful international conferences: advantageous location, well-thought-out infrastructure, including halls and hotels, as well as a professional team.

- To what extent professional platforms' synergy enhances competitiveness?

The flourishing business events domain directly encourages hotel sector players to consistently improve their product and services, adapt and implement new solutions. In particular, through the intersectoral exchange of experience and resources, this business sector seeks to create comprehensive services that meet the demands of contemporary clients.

Synergy between professional platforms increases competitiveness,turning a set of disparate services into a **unified integrated offering**.

As for an example, take note of the long-term partnership of WTC with Expocenter through the interaction of the exhibition complex with the hotel infrastructure, congress site and restaurants. It generates a full cycle of services for exhibition participants, from accommodation to business services and additional event management. This comprehensive approach significantly increases the comfort and efficiency of the participants' stay, and forges a strong positive commitment.

In the global competition environment, these integrated solutions provide the very unique advantage that disparate players do not possess. As a result, it is possible to attract top-notch events as well as **high-profile clients**.

- Experts note that the interaction of platforms increases the average length of stay of business tourists. What multiplier effects – beyond direct earnings – are you recording?

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You're quite right, the multiplier effect is huge. In addition to the direct income of hotels and congress centers, money is channeled into restaurants, museums, transport and entertainment. At the end of 2025, the MICE market in Russia showed steady growth, and Moscow, as a key player in the market, accumulates the bulk of this economic activity.

Moreover, events such as the Meet Global MICE Congress, where the government of Moscow signed 10 interregional agreements on the development of tourist flows, stimulate the development of business tourism in other regions of Russia, thus propelling a systemic economic effect for the entire country.

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- What methods do you recommend to improve the efficiency of event management?

First of all, it requires systemic preparation. The earlier the planning stage starts, there are more chances to avoid hectic emergency work.

The second important point is to have in place centralized project management, when there is one single unified team or a responsible executive who ensures the coordination of all processes.

And, of course, the right choice of contractors plays a crucial role: in practice, it is the proven teams that allow you to avoid typical mistakes and function in a predictable manner.

- Is the popularity of bleisure on the rise and what products are offered on this track?

Yes, interest in combining business travel with leisure is gradually growing. This is especially noticeable during international events and among forum participants coming from other regions. At the same time, I would not overestimate the scale: this should be qualified as a steady trend rather than a multiplied phenomenon. In response to this demand, venues and hotels offer additional options: sightseeing excursion programs, cultural activities, expanded recreation opportunities.

In this sense, WTC finds itself in a truly advantageous position: it is located in the business center of the city complemented with leisure areas, cultural facilities, and a variety of gastronomical delights within walking distance. This allows the participant not to spend extra time moving around but to organically integrate leisure time into a business trip.

When the forum site is integrated into a living urban environment, this feature automatically expands the choice of options: from classic conferences to more flexible formats with networking and recreation component. In this case, the lucrative location becomes not just a background but also a full-fledged part of the product.

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- How fast are digital technologies being introduced in the field of business tourism and whether the market is ripe for the complete transfer of all processes to the online format?

Digitalization in business tourism is progressing rapidly, but it is still too early to consider a full transfer of the entire market to an online format, and this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

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Today, we witness a wide-ranging transition to corporate online platforms for booking air tickets, hotels and transfers, automation of reporting with integration into accounting systems, and the appliance of artificial intelligence (AI) used to foresee prices and optimize routes.

The main goal of business tourism is still live (offline) meetings, negotiations and networking, and videoconferencing cannot fully **replace** all these activities.One should not discard neither the human factor since many large companies prefer a personal manager over a chatbot, as well as the problems of integrating heterogeneous systems and the risks of data leakage when completely dependent on online operations.

A realistic forecast suggests as the preferred option a hybrid model, when routine operations become fully automated, but business travel as physical movement of people remains. Digital technology, AI, online services will be powerful assistants, however, they would not become a replacement.

- What affects the market the most and is there a seasonality factor?

The market has become much more demanding in this line of services and sensitive to the level of prices. Customers take more time for consideration and making the final decision; they carefully calculate the allocated budgets while expecting more flexible terms and conditions. Among factors affecting the state of play on the market, I would, first of all, highlight the dynamics of business activity in the economy as a whole. It directly depends on macroeconomic forecasts: during periods of uncertainty, companies, as a rule, optimize expenses, and this approach finds reflection in the format and duration of public events.

The seasonality factor in business tourism is usually associated with peak periods in spring and autumn, while summer and winter are often marked by a decline in activity. This creates downside risks that can be minimized by developing partnerships and hybrid formats, that is a combination of offline and online events, webinars, workshops and thematic events that require lower costs and are available for remote performance.

By the way, in recent years, the seasonality factor has become somewhat less prominent: for example, in summer, full-size events and forums are held in Moscow and they attract numerous participants. Expanding the geography of events and taking into account regional characteristics allows taking advantage of diversified climatic and time zones. Adapted marketing strategies and the use of loyalty programs reduce the impact of seasonal fluctuations and ensure a more stable flow of business events all year round.

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- What measures are being taken to ensure the comfort of participants?

Comfort is founded on the basis that any guest has no worries associated with his or her stay in our WTC complex, including any interaction with any staff member on any occasion. Customized approach, well-established logistics, simple navigation, timely registration, well coordinated work of personnel, all of this generates a positive impression.

Particular attention is paid to nutrition, program timing and transport accessibility, because even small shortcomings can significantly affect the perception of the event. A customized approach is also important: we respond to the wishes of each client, develop services that meet their expectations in order to prevent any inconvenience.

Due attention is paid to minute detail – from space design to services, and ultimately it creates a harmonious atmosphere. All these measures allow forum participants and guests to feel relieved and avoid problems, thus preserving a pleasant aftertaste after the event closure.

- What trends and strategies will determine the future of the sector?

The future of business tourism will be determined by several key trends and strategies that absorb to a large extent the fallout from the current geopolitical environment.

Under the circumstances marked by high instability and rapid global changes, the market is vigorously adapting, paying more and more attention to flexibility and versatility of formats, and that is the combination of virtual, hybrid and offline events, and this is becoming the norm.

Business activity will persist since it is dependent on personal contacts and effective communication to strengthen partnerships, explore and find new opportunities, and **respond promptly to emerging challenges.**

The focus will be placed on sustainability and environmentally friendly solutions that will help generate a positive image and build up the reputation of business actors. Digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation and platform solutions will make it possible **to participate in events**.

Individualization of experience, meaning the creation of customized programs, services and conditions, will become an imperative element to upsurge the level of comfort, flexibility and satisfaction of clients.

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In addition, due to geopolitical risks, it is essential to be prepared for a change in logistics, and be able to switch to alternative transportation routes and sites, as well as to expand business operations into new geographical regions.

Under such conditions, a strategic approach to infrastructure development, flexible event formats and ability to rapidly adapt to new circumstances will be the key to success. In general, it is important for the corporate players in this segment of economy to establish sustainable, multilateral interaction and rigorously monitor changes in the global market in order to respond in a timely manner – and thus remain competitive.

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