

Best of the Best:
INSIGHTS FROM THE
TOP 3 PERFORMING
MICE HOTELS IN EUROPE



Introduction

Earlier this year, Cvent released its annual list of **Top Meetings Hotels for MICE planners**. The list is compiled by analysing meetings and event bookings through the Cvent Supplier Network, one of the world's largest venue sourcing platforms. MICE performance is analysed according to various criteria, including total requests for proposals (RFPs) and conversion rate.

Our top three best performing European hotels were **Hilton Prague** (who retained the number one spot for a second consecutive year), **Meliá Castilla Hotel & Convention Center Madrid**, and **InterContinental Vienna**.

We sat down with leaders from all three of these top performing hotels to learn a little more about what they do.

All three of our interviewees offer unique and practical ideas about what makes a successful MICE venue business. While all three also agree on the core principals of placing the event planner at the heart of the business, the importance of technology in understanding competitor analysis and improving performance, and what it takes to grow loyalty in a hugely competitive industry.

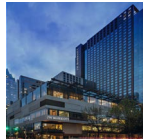
The following insights serve as good ideas and positive reminders of how to best grow and own MICE business.



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HILTON PRAGUE: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EXCEPTIONAL EVENTS

Hilton Prague is an award-winning European downtown hotel offering 791 guest rooms. It features almost 5,000 sqm of flexible meeting space with 38 versatile rooms and banqueting halls. Each year, the five-star property stages over 500 events and welcomes more than 70,000 delegates.

Suffice to say therefore that **Dagmar Vranova, Conference and Event Director at Hilton Prague**, has a wealth of experience in managing large MICE groups and knows a thing or two about keeping planners happy and satisfied.

"It's all about showing flexibility, creativity, attention to detail and professionalism," Dagmar says. "We focus on creative solutions - be it a site inspection, a coffee break or a venue for outdoor catering. We want to help our planners to wow their delegates and achieve their objectives so we trust in our experience to make events run smoothly and create unforgettable memories for delegates and planners."

"For example, at the RFP stage, our GM sends **personal thank-you cards to the booker**, offering further support. We carry out creative site inspections, and offer inspirational layouts, branding, menus and creative ideas. One client wanted desperately to experience snowy Prague during a winter that saw very little snow so we arranged for an artificial snowfall to occur in our atrium lobby."

KEY
RESULT

500

EVENTS FOR 70,000 ATTENDEES
HOSTED EACH YEAR

171%

INCREASE OF CONFIRMED
BUSINESS FROM JUNE 2018 to
MAY 2019, ABOUT \$4M



HILTON PRAGUE: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EXCEPTIONAL EVENTS

Faced with global competition, an uncertain global economy, plus fluctuations in demand for MICE business, Dagmar also places heavy importance on **the property's partnership with Cvent**.

He says: "Cvent offers its bookers a very precise and detailed search engine, which allows them to access the biggest and most popular venues per city. **With Cvent, we are more accessible for our customers.** Also, we consider Cvent a great communications channel.

"If we compare June 2017 to May 2018 with June 2018 to May 2019, Cvent has helped us to increase demand by 51%," continues Dagmar. "This is the equivalent of 100,000 room night enquiries or \$42 million. Confirmed business increased by 171%, which represents an additional \$4 million."

Data analysis and **technology** both play a key role in helping to drive both the demand and bookings.

"We study data analysis into what competitive destinations have to offer, what types of business they manage to attract versus what we get, and what drives the industry's development as a whole. This allows us to develop our business or come up with a wow solution," Dagmar concludes. "From various automated guest services to vast online platforms and apps, which improve business transactions or communications, **a technology-driven future is one we are happy to embrace.**"



NUMBER ONE BEST PRACTICE TIP

"Always put yourself in the shoes of the MICE planner in order to understand their needs better, demonstrate your expertise in order to give the planner confidence in their event's success, and pay attention to the creative details from the first site inspection to the farewell meeting."

DAGMAR VRANOVA

Conference and Event Director

INTERCONTINENTAL VIENNA: **CONNECTING ON A HUMAN LEVEL FOR ENHANCED LOYALTY**

The 458-room **InterContinental Vienna** is one of the city's largest MICE hotels, located in the heart of the Austrian capital. It can be found opposite the historical Stadtpark and just a few minutes' walk from the most important cultural and historical sights and the main shopping area - which makes it easy to combine both business and pleasure.

It was the first MICE hotel to be opened by an international chain in Vienna and combines local Viennese flair with 1,200sqm of modern conference space and a hotel bar, popular with locals and tourists alike.

The property's **Director of Marketing, Britta Neuper-Schrenk**, believes that since the Viennese MICE sector is still growing and new hotel products are always entering the market, it is crucial for the **InterContinental Vienna** to continuously invest in its service product.

She says: "Our service offer is about establishing and building a human connection between planner, sales and operations. If you really listen to the booker and find out what's important to them, only then can you truly deliver. It sounds so simple, be friendly, be available and be reliable.

**KEY
RESULT**

47%

YEAR-ON-YEAR GROWTH
IN TOTAL RPFs



INTERCONTINENTAL VIENNA: CONNECTING ON A HUMAN LEVEL FOR ENHANCED LOYALTY

“Communication is key to making sure everything works smoothly – even more so when it comes to big events,” Britta continues. “We strive to connect both client and their delegates with the destination itself so that they leave with memories of having been in Vienna, the world capital of music, the imperial city of art and culture.”

This business philosophy is definitely working as **InterContinental Vienna** has continuously grown the number of RFPs it receives in a highly competitive market.

“The current figures show a year-on-year growth of 47% in total RFPs,” Britta confirms. “Cvent has definitely contributed to this success. We work very closely with the Cvent team to **optimise our performance** and make sure everything is up-to-date. It’s worth taking additional time to analyse all available data and use the insights to develop strategies that will improve and optimise performance.”



NUMBER ONE BEST PRACTICE TIP

“Of course you must work hard together with all operational teams and try to make the impossible possible for our clients. But if you don’t manage to build up a good relationship with the client and nurture that human connection, you won’t make them happy.”

BRITTA NEUPER-SCHRENK
Director of Marketing

MELIÁ CASTILLA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER MADRID: PLACING THE PLANNER AT THE HEART OF THE BUSINESS

The Meliá Castilla Hotel & Convention Center Madrid offers almost 1,000 bedrooms in the heart of the city's gastronomic golden mile and close to the Bernabéu stadium, home of Real Madrid FC.

Over the past five years, the property has developed a strong MICE culture and focused on attracting business from different markets and regions worldwide.

The hotel's conference centre offers more than 7,500sqm and 32 meeting rooms in four independent areas, which allows it to host multiple groups at the same time and still provide an exclusive experience.

Marcos Mellado, Director of Sales, believes this flexibility and focus, along with strong investment, is the secret behind a 40% annual growth in MICE business and, perhaps more importantly, a significant increase in repeat business.

He says: "Our success is largely based on repeat business so it's vital for us to keep planners happy and build loyalty. Being an event planner is one of the most stressful jobs in the world so we ensure that when they visit us, they feel like they're at home.

"We always try to ensure that they deal with the same person they've always dealt with and that nothing is too much trouble. This extends into personalised global agreements that are often bespoke to the client's individual needs and payment policies.

KEY
RESULT

60%

OF MICE BUSINESS FROM INTERNATIONAL
MARKETS (PREDOMINANTLY FROM THE
U.S AND UK).

40%

FROM LOCAL SPANISH PLANNERS



MELIÁ CASTILLA HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER MADRID: PLACING THE PLANNER AT THE HEART OF THE BUSINESS

"By ensuring that we're flexible and agile, **we can secure personalised global agreements on a repeat basis**. Loyalty is built on being able to respond quickly and offer this personalised bespoke service.

"From 2014, we had to restructure our teams to specialise in different international markets and recruit operations people who could execute MICE business for these different types of international planners," Marcos continues. "At the same time, we had to invest a lot of money quickly to change the perception of our property from leisure to MICE by refurbishing key areas without disrupting ongoing business bookings. We did this by focusing the refurbishment over the quieter periods around Christmas and summer. As a result, **60% of our MICE business is now from international markets** (predominantly from the U.S and UK) and 40% comes from local Spanish planners. Cvent has been vital in helping us to reach these U.S. planners, which in turn has had a tremendous impact on our enquiry levels."

Marcos agrees with the other two hoteliers that data's role in analysing the growing competition continues to evolve but there's also a fundamental need to **understand his own team's performance** and keep on improving KPIs.

"Technology in a wider sense is vital for this," he says. "We are currently investing a lot in technology to achieve better meeting design, more insights and faster response times. It now needs to connect everything together. **The better the technology, the more competitive you can become.**"



NUMBER ONE BEST PRACTICE TIP

"Keep things simple. Be flexible and never forget the human aspect to doing business. Become a partner, a consultant and develop positive relationships that reflect your local culture. Quality and people are the two most important aspects."

MARCOS MELLADO
Director of Sales

2019 CVENT TOP MEETING HOTELS

The 2019 Cvent Top Meeting Hotel lists are compiled by analysing meeting and event booking activity through the [Cvent Supplier Network \(CSN\)](#), one of the world's largest venue sourcing platforms. More than \$16 billion and more than 42 million room nights were sourced through the CSN in 2018. Cvent's Top Meeting Hotels lists rank hotels based on MICE business performance according to various criteria, including total requests for proposals (RFPs) and conversion rate.



2019 CVENT TOP MEETING HOTELS: POPULAR FEATURES

Cvent has compiled Top Meeting Hotel lists based on increased demand and buyer preferences, shown in commonly searched attributes such as meeting space square footage, and more.



ABOUT CVENT

Cvent is the global meeting, event, travel, and hospitality technology leader. Cvent provides easy-to-use, integrated technology solutions to maximise the impact of meetings and events of all sizes. We help organisations plan and market events, execute onsite, engage audiences, and measure and analyse results.



[CVENT.CO.UK](https://cvent.co.uk)

