

Post-Event Summary | Washington, D.C., 1-2 August, 2019

Greetings!

By Marie Hunter, Senior Director, IEEE MCE

We would like to thank all of our 2019 IEEE Convene participants for joining us in D.C.!

IEEE Convene brings together our community of organizers, vendors, and sponsors to share, collaborate, and learn in a unique “whole system approach.” The theme of this year’s event was “Enhancing the Attendee Experience,” which is vital to the success of every conference. Rich in history, art, food, and culture, Washington, D.C., perfectly embodied our theme. We thank our D.C. hosts for contributing their insightful narratives to the conversation at this year’s event.

2019 IEEE Convene explored the ever-changing needs of modern conference attendees and envisioned the future of the attendee experience. We loved hearing from our fabulous organizers, sponsors, experts, partners, and leaders. Keynotes, panels, interviews, and even an interactive cooking competition underscored that there are a multitude of ways to design memorable attendee experiences. The program was brimming with bright ideas and practical tips that Organizers can add to their versatile toolkits.

The 2019 program featured unique voices sharing authentic stories about creating impactful attendee experiences. SXSW Chief Programming Officer, Hugh Forrest, gave a compelling interview on designing dynamic attendee experiences for SXSW. IEEE COO and Executive Director, Steve Welby, discussed how convening advances technology and shapes our technical future. We also heard from conference leader, Nita Patel, who shared great insights into the bold road of starting up a new conference. Panel sessions offered candid discussions with IEEE Conference Organizers on important topics facing organizers today.

The 2019 IEEE Convene event enabled us to celebrate our successes, model leadership excellence, and identify areas for continuous improvement in the conferences space. As the conference landscape evolves, we look forward to continued dialogue about building inspiring and innovative attendee experiences at IEEE events. We welcome and encourage attendees to keep sharing their ideas, experiments, and insights across the IEEE Community.

We hope to see you at IEEE Convene 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark on 16-17 July 2020!



Susan Root and Nita Patel



"Inclusion in a Global Landscape" Panel

Elevating the Event Experience



Hugh Forrest and Marie Hunter

At the heart of every amazing event is a great attendee experience. Your attendee's journey is shaped by all of the touch points before, during, and after your event.

Attendees crave experiences that forge connections, spark dialogues, facilitate learning and growth, and inspire innovation. Attendees should feel energized and empowered by the interactions, content, and activities they experience at your event.

So, what are the ingredients to a great attendee experience? This year, attendees gained insights on what it takes to create events that leave a lasting impression.

Stories Worth Sharing

From intimate gatherings to week-long events, our conference organizers know a thing or two about designing engaging attendee experiences. We would like to thank IEEE Volunteers & Conferences Committee Members who took time to share their insights on how to take the attendee experience from good to great. The lively discussion provided excellent "food for thought" for our audience on how they can spice up their next event.

Kathy Land
Bruce Hecht
Nita Patel
Hausi Müller
Mark Gouker

Tommy Mayne
José Moreno
Kathy Herring Hayashi
Peter Nagy
Kathleen Kramer

2019 Convene Words of Wisdom

Joining us at 2019 Convene, were impassioned and inspired leaders from across the global events community. Our keynotes, interviewees, and panelists were kind enough to share their perspectives on designing events that matter.

Marie Hunter, Sr. Director, IEEE Meetings, Conferences and Events, sat down for a chat with **Hugh Forrest, Chief Programming Officer at SXSW**. Hugh offered his thought leadership on how SXSW has evolved into a cultural phenomenon attracting 70K attendees each year. He described conferences as a place of "sanctuary" where people can come together to gain knowledge, network, and be inspired to do better things. He also shared that ongoing conversations with your audience on everything from programming to post-event feedback can drive attendee engagement.

IEEE Executive Director and COO, Steve Welby

discussed the importance of convening in a world defined by the "accelerating pace of technological change." Steve described convening as IEEE's "secret superpower" which amplifies members' impact on the world. He also emphasized the value of IEEE Conference Organizers, likening them to "wizards who in organizing our meetings are...working to shape our profession, and serving as the glue that connects us geographically... technically, and...through our communities of practice."

An interview with **Nita Patel, Founder of the IEEE Women in Engineering International Leadership Conference**, revealed how good planning, a little convincing, and a leap of faith gave rise to this fabulous conference. Nita also shared how experimentation can give you the freedom to expand and elevate your event.

Conference Leader, Bruce Hecht, reflected on his involvement with Boston non-profit "Ideas in Action" which includes TEDx Beacon Street. Bruce discussed how lead-up events, volunteer engagement, and speaker catalysts can have a transformative impact.

Panels of IEEE Conference Organizers from around the globe assembled to exchange observations and stories gleaned from their work organizing conferences. A panel of MGA Conference Organizers discussed the importance of engaging members including students and young professionals, leveraging local communities, and encouraging industry participation.

Creating Meaningful Attendee Experiences

At Convene, we believe in “learning by doing” to create memorable and fun attendee experiences.

This year, organizers learned about recent trends, current best practices, and practical applications for creating amazing events.

IEEE Convene Food Fight

Hands-on activities like IEEE Convene’s Food Fight cooking competition demonstrated novel ways to build community among participants, while minimizing isolation during down time. Four teams were given the same set of ingredients but different spices and were challenged to create a different regional dish. Entries were judged on taste, work area cleanliness, presentation, and collaboration.

Guess the Organizer

Fans of mysteries cheered at this intriguing activity that challenged attendees to guess a mystery organizer based on a series of video clues. Attendees shared a few laughs while getting to know a little more about their fellow organizers and the events they support.

Quick Tips

At Convene, providing organizers with useful content is our goal. Presenters shared gems such as how incorporating local music into your event can add a personal touch. Attendees also learned how creating evergreen assets that can be used year after year can build brand recognition and reduce costs.

Breakout Sessions

Breakout sessions enabled attendees to create a truly customized Convene experience. With choices like event marketing, AV trends, publications quality assurance, and community-building, attendees could select the topics that were most meaningful to them. Small group settings offered personalized learning experiences and enabled one-to-one dialogues among participants.

Social Activities

This year’s Convene aimed to address the whole attendee - mind, body, & spirit. Attendees discovered great food and stimulating conversation at the *Welcome Reception* held at La Vie, a trending spot in D.C.’s Wharf District. Portland “Pints and Pours” delighted attendees with craft brews and light bites. “Puppies and Ice Cream” sponsored by Hilton provided a dose of cuteness overload for attendees and much needed socialization for local rescue animals.



IEEE Convene Food Fight



“The Importance of Building Community at Events” Breakout Session



Puppies and Ice Cream Courtesy of Hilton

iCON Recognition: IEEE International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IEEE IGARSS)

At Convene 2019, we had the pleasure of presenting the annual IEEE iCON recognition. This honor celebrates an event that has demonstrated excellence in innovation, content curation, community-building, and financial stability and growth.

The recipient of this year's iCON recognition was the 2018 IEEE International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium held in Valencia, Spain. IEEE IGARSS is the premier event in remote sensing for obtaining the latest research, exchanging ideas, identifying future trends, and making contacts with the international remote sensing community.

2018 Conference Chair, José Moreno, of the University of Valencia accepted the recognition on behalf of the conference, whose theme was "Observing, Understanding and Forecasting the Dynamics of Our Planet." Under Moreno's leadership, the conference established a unique technical program and successfully accomplished a number of strategic objectives.

Innovative planning and program initiatives were a few of the achievements that earned 2018 IEEE IGARSS the iCON honor. Creative industry engagement initiatives such as the Technology-Industry-Education (TIE) Forum and sessions tailored to women and young professionals in geoscience and remote sensing made for a robust technical program. The 2018 event hosted their first ever Code Workshop, enabling participants to practice processing satellite data with open source tools. The technical program also featured two special initiatives organized by the European Space Agency (ESA). 2018 IEEE IGARSS also increased their revenue by 47% over 2017.

A local organizing committee based in Spain planned the conference, which is a global event welcoming speakers, exhibitors and attendees from all over the world. IEEE IGARSS is a model for how creativity in planning can establish an event that engages attendees and inspires innovation.



José Moreno and Fred Schindler



Save the Date!

We loved spending time with you at IEEE Convene 2019. We hope you gained some innovative ideas on the attendee experience. Thank you for all of your contributions and participation!

We are thrilled to announce the date and location for 2020 IEEE Convene. We hope you will join us in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 16-17 July 2020. Often ranked among the world's happiest cities, this green, bicycle-friendly city is home to castles, Michelin star restaurants, waterways, museums, gardens, and more. Stay tuned for more details as we gather conference leadership to discuss, engage, and inspire.

The IEEE Meetings, Conferences & Events team can't wait to meet you there!

2019 Convene Key Takeaways

At IEEE Convene, our philosophy is to “show and not tell.” We demonstrate the latest techniques, share new ideas, and provide novel experiences that can inspire applications at scholarly conferences. We are pleased to share our 2019 IEEE Convene Key Takeaways to enhance the attendee experience at your next event.

- 1. Plan ahead.** The attendee experience begins before attendees even register for your event. Your brand, messaging, website, promotional materials, and even word of mouth have influence.
- 2. Engage with your host city early.** Consider local culture, native audience, city setting, and city partners when choosing your location. Connect with your host city to learn what financial or other assets may be available. Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) are a great resource.
- 3. Employ the strengths of your team.** Create opportunities for your team to shine at your event to enhance visibility, foster professional growth, and enrich your program.
- 4. Be inclusive.** Strive for diversity on your planning team & in your program. Include ways to engage underrepresented groups in your audience. Promote the Event Conduct and Safety Statement at your event.
- 5. Cultivate your event’s brand.** Your brand is a collection of the experiences, emotions, & associations attendees have with your event. Ensure consistency across attendee touch points & continuity from year to year.
- 6. Create common threads.** Bring forward content from prior events to reinforce key points. Curate content from previous years to create community, establish traditions, & make lasting memories.
- 7. Create an immersive local experience.** Infuse your event with local food, music, history, and attractions. Consider a local service project, like donation of leftover food from your event.
- 8. Consider the whole attendee.** Design experiences that address the emotional, educational, sensory, & social dimensions of your audience.
- 9. Make ‘em laugh.** Use humor to enliven content, make ideas memorable, & connect with your audience.
- 10. Engage your whole audience.** Help all attendees feel comfortable participating at your event. Provide options like enabling attendees to ask questions through your event mobile app during Q&A sessions.
- 11. Use audiovisual cues to facilitate learning.** Use graphics, color, screen setup, and music to reinforce messaging.
- 12. Use social media to engage your audience.** Channels like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can be a great way to market your event. Interact with followers, and use authentic photos to bring your event to life.
- 13. Align technologies to the needs of your attendees.** Use technology to add value to the attendee experience (e.g. feedback, wayfinding, networking, engagement, learning, and collaboration).
- 14. Lean in to current food trends.** Be creative, highlight seasonality, vary menus yearly, and tailor options to the diversity of your audience.
- 15. Create healthy menus with flair.** Vegetarian and vegan options don’t have to be boring. There are marvelous budget-friendly, sustainable flavor options available that can delight and energize your attendees.
- 16. Use music to set the mood at your event.** Work closely with your event planner, AV professional, and venue to design your music strategy. Consider live music for a local & unique touch.
- 17. Learn from the experts.** Professional organizations like PCMA, ICCA, and ASAE have a wealth of information about attendee engagement available online.
- 18. Foster post-event attendee engagement.** Maintain connections with your attendees and empower them to apply what they have learned. Use digital content and spaces to keep the conversation going.
- 19. Aim for continuous improvement.** Obtain feedback from attendees, identify successes and areas for improvement, and carry these lessons forward to your next event.



Kathy Land and Theresa Brunasso

We're Here For You

Feeling a sense of community, energy, and even inspiration- that's what happens when an event transforms into an experience.

Powerful, lasting memories. Stronger impressions. Increased commitment. IEEE Meetings, Conferences & Events (MCE) helps you transform your event into an experience that stays with participants long after the meeting ends. Our mission is growing IEEE's technical communities through innovative, collaborative gatherings.

What does that mean?
That we're here for you, from early concept design through strategic agenda development and attendee engagement strategies.

Maybe we are introducing you to patrons or speakers that we have connected with along the way.

Maybe we're consulting on logistics and location specific planning. Or maybe we're crafting media and putting your meeting online with streaming video and mobile apps.

From planning through execution, MCE has the expertise to make the connections and help you build your community.



Services to Support Your Next Event



Site selection & contract negotiation



Venue & supplier management



Registration, plenary, exhibit & concurrent session management



Audience generation strategies



Creative event media design & development



Logistics planning & event management



Patron program development



Speaker management & engagement



Exhibit sales & management

Thank you to our 2019 IEEE Convene Contributors!



Thank You and Honors



We want to thank and acknowledge the leadership of Bin Zhao and the IEEE Conferences Committee. In his first year as Chair, Bin has served in several roles on the committee and has chaired many of the subcommittees with a strong understanding of IEEE conferences. He continues to strive for technical excellence in IEEE conferences and is highly engaged in various critical activities including quality, co-sponsorship, conference publications, conference governance and policies. We look forward to continued collaborations and opportunities in the future.

Special Thanks



Steve Welby

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A very special thank you to my team in MCE. From developing the program to planning logistics and providing on-site support, their tireless efforts and positive attitudes helped make IEEE Convene 2019 a great success.

Warm regards,

Marie