

BACK ON THE ROAD

Daniel Cordey, Chairman of the Association of Global Event Suppliers, spoke to PS&AM about how the industry is recovering from the pandemic.

The global event supply chain was ripped apart by the Covid pandemic, but the industry is starting to fight back.

There are many challenges ahead, including the fallout from the war in Ukraine, but Daniel Cordey, Chairman of the Association of Global Event Suppliers, thinks lessons learned will leave the industry in a strong position.

He told PS&AM: *"If we as an industry have learnt something from the pandemic, it is that there are always opportunities, whatever happens. The pandemic was devastating for the events and entertainment industry, which collapsed.*

"We were the first hit and we'll be the last to get back. Having said that, some companies have suffered very badly but some companies have discovered new business and have become more capable coming out of the crisis. Some good always comes out of everything.

"This crisis was a game-changer for our industry. Members in some countries suffered more because they didn't have good governmental support.

"We have members in Germany, Austria and other countries who had huge government support. They got through this crisis and actually are fitter than before, financially. But there are other companies in other markets which did not benefit from government support and which now need to rebuild their capabilities again.

Cordey warned that the event supply industry had also suffered from a 'brain drain' with workers switching to other forms of employment.

He said: *"Many of our members downsized their staff. And the employees, who usually love the industry and this type of work, needed to feed their families and have moved on to the construction industry or back into other areas.*

"Now with any kind of rebound in activity, our members are afraid they can't deliver because they're missing resources. They have a lack of manpower."

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Major sporting events such as the World Cup will continue to provide work in the months to come.

But in the wake of the pandemic, there has also been a shift over to crisis management.

Cordey said: *"Of course, there are many small and medium sized events in local markets which are keeping the industry busy but if we talk about major events on a global level then certainly the World Cup in Qatar provides future opportunities. There are other major events like the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham or the multi-sports European Championships in Munich taking place later this year.*

"There is also the dismantling of the World Expo in Dubai which ended in March. Our industry was busy providing services for that type of event too."

Cordey said that before the war in Ukraine started there was a confidence coming back into the market.

"Our members were looking forward to a great 2022 because most people, most governments and the marketplace had seen an end to this pandemic and were starting to plan."

He said planning for big events was kicking off again, with confidence returning that people would actually be able to attend events.

"Now though, within just a few days everything has become confused again and event organisers are thinking about what the consequences of the war will be.

"But actually what is maybe more important is that this war creates opportunities also. It's sad to say but we need refugee camps we need logistics centres and rapid deployment of many things.

"During the pandemic this was for temporary hospitals, testing centres, mortuaries. Now these have been demobilised. What is happening in Poland, Hungary and in many countries is



Aerial view of a field hospital built inside the Pacaembu Stadium to treat Covid-19 patients Editorial. © Caio Pederneiras / Shutterstock.com

that there are Hundreds of thousands of refugees to deal with. This is again an opportunity for our industry which has evolved considerably.

“During the pandemic, many of our members have come together to offer a comprehensive scope and delivered complete hospitals ready to operate, like ES Global did in Cardiff, leading a team of event suppliers.”

Arena Group, for example was approached by Landmarc with an urgent request for quarantine accommodation, suitable for up to 150 soldiers, to adhere to the 14-day Covid-19 isolation period prior to being deployed to foreign countries.

Arena successfully met the deadline, despite the unique challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing full project management, design and supply of five temporary accommodation Alu Hall structures, furniture, building control approval, lighting, power and amenities.

Cordey added: *“Before, sport was the driving force but it has also now shifted over to the crisis management infrastructure being used by the army, by governments, by health organisations. As sad as the war is, it creates a business opportunity for our industry.”*

Cordey said the DNA of his members is about flexibility, immediate response, meeting deadlines and understanding what it is to be on the spot ready to operate.

“Also with movement into the digital world, our members are creating studios and offering digital services which were there before, but not at this level, not to this extent. Many of our members have benefited from that and are offering new production facilities, whether it is for TV broadcasting or for corporate events.”

Cordey said another bump in the road facing his members was changing delivery models for events like the Paris Olympic Games 2024.

He said: *“Paris use existing infrastructure at its best, with renovations or adaptations and complements with temporary facilities where needed. This helps to minimise investments. For the delivery of the venues they test a new procurement route, called the Event Delivery Model.*

“Paris 2024 are basically outsourcing the delivery to venues, federations or existing organisers of longstanding events. This changes the delivery model a lot, not just for the organiser but also for the suppliers because they then need to reorganise and reposition themselves.” ■

CHELTENHAM FAVOURITES



The 2022 Cheltenham Festival expanded racecourse capacity with demountable infrastructure supplied by Arena Group.

Arena’s structures’ project manager Ben Sly explained: *“We installed 17,500sqm of luxury hospitality, including Europe’s longest three-storey temporary structure, 185m in length, incorporating restaurants, lounges, boxes and bars. Hosting 5,000 people for each of the four days, this represented a significant addition to the Festival’s economy. Temporary infrastructure means that year-on-year we can create new venues to give guests fresh experiences.*

“The 2,500 sqm Guinness Pavilion was another bespoke double decker with upper level covered seating and hospitality bars, with lower-level terraced standing and public Guinness bar. Arena also supplied covered grandstands with 2,500 tiered seats, camera towers and media platforms.

“Extensive pre-planning began with design-led consultation, supporting The Jockey Club’s aspiration to create an incredible range of pristine environments, to give guests unique experiences and unrivalled views over the course.

“With VIP guests arriving in helicopters and Bentleys, we deliver the highest standards, to make these demountable venue’s feel permanent, with high-level interior design and fit-out that the guests would expect.” ■