

World Tourism Forum Lucerne
7th Think Tank in Lucerne, Switzerland
1–2 May 2019



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1. Programme

Wednesday, 1 May 2019

16.45–17.00	Gathering in the Hotel Schweizerhof in Lucerne
17.00	Welcome and Context Setting: The power of the WTFL Think Tank Family
17.30	Walk or transfer to the restaurant “Zur Werkstatt” in Lucerne
17.45–18.00	Welcome and drink
18.00–19.00	The Big Questions, moderated by Ros Atkins, BBC News
19.00–21.30	Collaborative dinner preparation
21.45	Walk or transfer to the hotel

Thursday, 2 May 2019

08.15	Gathering and welcome coffee on boat “Cirrus”
08.30–12.15	Think Tank discussions, moderated by Ros Atkins, BBC News Teresa Fereirra Kate Walsh Isabel Hill
12.15-12.30	Closing of WTFL Think Tank 2019
12.30–13.45	Lunch (as the start of the World Tourism Forum Lucerne 2019)
13.45–18.30	World Tourism Forum Lucerne 2019



“The WTFL Think Tank 2019 was an exceptional opportunity for thought and business leaders, policy makers and innovators to commence, bringing forward the exchange of ideas and shared experiences that can help shape a better future for this pivotal sector.”

— **Rania Al-Mashat**, Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism Egypt

2. Summary: The morning after the night before

This year's Think Tank explored innovation through the experiences of business, government and academic. But before we got into how, we wanted to explore why.

WHY DO WE WANT TO INNOVATE? WHY DO WE WANT TOURISM TO THRIVE?

These might seem such obvious questions but the importance of taking time to explore and explain motivation was a recurring theme of this Think Tank. 'Don't rush to 'how'', advised one attendee and we did not. Some delegates talked explicitly about having a 'higher purpose' for their work in this industry and how tourism's desire to move beyond a pure profit model needs to be 'deep in the strategy' of companies. We heard that a route may be appearing where profit and responsibility form a virtuous circle, and where environmental and social responsibility become drivers of recruitment success and employee performance.

THIS IS MORE THAN PRODUCT INNOVATION, THIS IS BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

The case was made for a move from linear economic models to circular economic models. The argument being that if businesses can structure themselves to give back as much as they take both environmentally, socially and economically, then staff, consumers and the business all benefit. Not all agreed that this could be done without a hit to the bottom line, and argued that the business case is not persuasive unless government's skew the market by providing incentives to act differently.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

There was repeated emphasis on how the success or otherwise of innovation at a corporate level is, to a large part, dictated by the 'ecosystem' in which it occurs. The question that followed is how do countries and institutions such as the WTTC, WTFL, WTO and others help create these ecosystems? And to what degree is a 'tourism-specific ecosystem' needed such as the initiative in Lucerne around start-ups? Some would argue that tourism's innovators are best advised to position themselves within broader 'technology innovation ecosystems'. Of course, both options work in certain circumstances. Either way, the message is absolute - innovation does not occur in a vacuum - its surroundings are vital to its chances of success.

This was born out by Teresa Ferreira whose 'input' gave us fascinating detail on Portugal's National Strategy of Innovation, which includes a non-profit Innovation Centre that provides seed and support funding. The crucial lesson here was that while innovation can come from spontaneity and speed of thinking, longer-term work at a governmental and corporate level is needed to create the environment in which that can happen.

HOW DO WE MEASURE INNOVATION AND SOCIAL IMPACT?

This remains an outstanding issue for tourism and several people highlighted the 'lack of a valuation system'. Without measures, it is impossible for the industry and consumers to reward, document and respond to progress in these areas. To learn from success stories, we need to be able to document success stories. There was an appetite from business leaders to get help from academia in establishing a valuation system. Equally, the academics argued business would need to agree to share data in a standardised way. There was agreement about the huge value of accepted measures, but an acknowledgement that both agreeing a valuation system and then applying it brings significant challenges. One other benefit of doing this is that the industry wants to tell a story of innovation and of social and environmental responsibility, but without an accepted way of assessing this, it leaves its narrative resting on anecdotal evidence and the industry open to accusations of virtue-signalling above fundamental change.

THE TALENT STREAM: SELLING THE IDEA OF SERVICE

There is always a fierce contest for the best talent. That much will never change. However, there are two specific challenges facing tourism, which emerged both at the Think Tank and at the Forum.

The first is the disconnect between tertiary education and industry. We heard how low percentage of graduates in hospitality end up working in tourism with the suggestion that the industry needs to change how it talks to young talent and the working environments it offers. Other leaders in the room suggested that a relatively low percentage of hospitality graduates moving into industry has long existed and that career paths are rarely straight. Either way, the message from academia was: think about what you can offer our talented graduates? This is two-fold. First, what is the reality of working in this sector? Is it sufficiently exciting, flexible, innovative, socially responsible and rewarding to be attractive? However, even if the answer is yes, then you must ask how am I selling this to them? It was suggested by several attendees that the language around tourism, as it markets itself to talent, needs to evolve. Marketing matters – and if working in tourism has changed, there is work to do on how best to get that across.

The second issue is how the 'the idea of service is no longer attractive'. And indeed from the word 'service' we easily reach 'servility', a notion that many reject as a working experience. Providing service can be fulfilling for both sides of the equation. However, the issue though is how the concept of service needs to be reframed for the next generation. Once again, this is one of several communication challenges for the industry as a whole.

INNOVATION IN WORKING EXPERIENCE

Further to the points above, several people made the case for a radical overhaul of the terms of employment. People may want to do more than one job, may want to work part-time, may want to take more sabbaticals and so on. It was emphasised that the next generation has different expectations of what they can and can't do while employed, and employers need to embrace a far more flexible world. One CEO passionately argued that the nature of employment as known by most leaders in tourism is not the workplace many younger people aspire to be in. The point was made that you can't expect employees to think innovatively if as an employer your approach to the terms of their work is rooted in the mid-20th century. It felt like both private and public sector could support each other more in exploring which work places innovations are working best.

PPP / PPC BEST PRACTICE

Wherever you work, it is true that innovation and change is easier to conceive and to sell when there are real examples to lean on. We heard from Svend Leirvaag on his work in South Africa, from Rania Al-Mashat about her work with ETRP in Egypt, from Maitha Said Majid Al-Mahrouqi on Oman, from Teresa Ferreira on Portugal, from Isabel Hill on the US and from Eric Jakob and Casimir Platzer on examples in Switzerland. The desire for detail on these success stories is palpable and one outcome of this Think Tank's gathering could be creating a new means of better sharing these examples on an ongoing basis. There is no one size fits all approach to PPP / PPC and the more sophisticated our ways of assessing each example and sharing what works, the better for everyone was the conclusion in the room. Governments need new ways of engaging stakeholders and evolving new platforms to support innovation as well as a productive regulatory environment that enables the best of innovation while mitigating negative impacts. Better collaboration is required to achieve this goal.

DATA COLLABORATION

This issue struck a nerve. Everyone knows what the benefits would be but persuading people to share their data is difficult. Some suggested the creation of a Tourism Data Hub, which felt like a potent idea if it could be realised. We all appreciate that is a big if.

We heard about how businesses in Norway agreed to pool data on condition of it being anonymised, and in return the whole sector got a level of analysis of consumer behaviour that it had never had before.

The challenge is to make the case that to share is to benefit. It is a tough sell but the appetite for progress is real so we must be creative in how we can pull this off. The more success stories, the easier the case is to make.

WE HAVE A STORY TO TELL BUT HOW DO WE TELL IT?

Time and again, this issue comes up and the group felt that increasingly communication needs to become more central to the conversations within this industry. A new way of talking about tourism is needed.

There is such passion about what this industry does and expressed frustration that the story does not cut through. There is an obvious desire for tourism to tell a different story and for the world to have a different perception of tourism. And, no doubt, you have a story to tell.

'If it bleeds, it leads,' one of attendees noted and that is not an unreasonable observation. The group discussed the narrative that tourism wants to tell and the many ways it can delivered, whether via the news media or direct to consumers.

Tourism has a story to tell, and with concern over climate change and the environmental impact of development escalating, it will need that story more than an ever in the coming years. One attendee observed that communication strategies can drive profound change not just in the perception of the industry but also in the behaviour of those people who work in it. The message and the change feed each other. There was a real appetite to do this work at an industry-wide level.

A DESIRE TO COLLABORATE, A DESIRE TO DO IT BETTER

Everyone agreed more cross-fertilisation between government, corporate and academic is desirable. It was a stimulating and inspiring conversation rooted in the considerable expertise that all present willingly shared. Next stop Ras al Khaimah in 2020.

Lucerne, 15 May 2019



“It was such a brilliant cast of people and knowledge in the room – being able to discuss high level issues from the perspective of thought leaders in business, government and academia.”

— **Shannon Stowell**, CEO, Adventure Travel Trade Association

3. List of participants

Last Name	First Name	Job Title	Company	Country
Aldrigui Carvalho	Mariana	Professor	University of Sao Paulo	Brazil
Al-Mashat	Rania	Minister of Tourism	Ministry of Tourism Egypt	Egypt
Atkins	Ros	Presenter and Creator Outside Source	BBC Global News	United Kingdom
Barth	Martin	President & CEO	World Tourism Forum Lucerne	Switzerland
Chhatwal	Puneet	Managing Director & CEO	The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL)	India
Ferreira	Teresa	Director for Development and Innovation	Turismo de Portugal	Portugal
Frankenberger	Karolin	Professor, Director of the Institute of Management & Strategy	University of St. Gallen	Switzerland
Fulton	Peter	Group President – EAME/Southwest Asia	Hyatt International	Switzerland
Guevara	Gloria	President & CEO	World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)	United Kingdom
Hill	Isabel	Director	U.S. Department of Commerce - National Travel & Tourism Office	United States
Jakob	Eric	Ambassador Head of Promotion Activities	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	Switzerland
Kadbi	Hassan	CEO	Hapimag	Switzerland
Kerkloh	Michael	CEO	Munich Airport	Germany
Khowala	Aradhana	CEO and Founder	Aptamind Partners	United Kingdom
Leirvaag	Svend O.	Vice-President Industry Affairs	Amadeus IT Group SA	Spain
Mattar	Haitham	CEO	Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority	United Arab Emirates
Mendiratta	Anita	Special Advisor to Secretary General	United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	United Kingdom
Platzer	Casimir	President	GastroSuisse	Switzerland
Poh	Chi Chuan	Director, Digital Transformation	Singapore Tourism Board	Singapore
Saif Majid Al-Mahrouqi	Maitha	Undersecretary	Ministry of Tourism Oman	Oman
Sawiris	Samih	Chairman	Orascom Development Holding AG	Egypt
Steele	Paul	Senior Vice President Member and External Relations & Corporate Secretary	International Air Transport Association (IATA)	Switzerland

Stowell	Shannon	CEO	Adventure Travel Trade Association	United States
Sullivan	Ted	Vice President Destination Analytics	ADARA	United States
Tollman	Brett G.	Chief Executive	The Travel Corporation (TTC)	United States
Vorster	Shaun	Extraordinary Professor	University of Stellenbosch Business School	South Africa
Walsh	Kate	Dean and E.M. Statler Professor Cornell University School of Hotel Administration	Cornell University	United States
Wittwer	Reto	Chairman	World Tourism Forum Lucerne	United Arab Emirates



“Our world is increasingly defined by political, social, economic, environmental and technological forces of change. As travel & tourism accelerates in not only activity but also impact, leaders must come together, and work together, to ensure the sector keeps safety, unity, inclusivity, authenticity and opportunity as its pillars for sustainable growth.

The WTFL Think Tank provides exactly this platform, enabling government, business and academia to rigorously examine critical issues central to decision making. To be a part of this leadership community is an honour beyond compare.”

— **Anita Mendiratta**, Special Advisor to the Secretary General, UNWTO

4. Impressions





5. About World Tourism Forum Lucerne and Preview

The World Tourism Forum Lucerne (WTFL) is an interdisciplinary professional platform, which takes place every second year in Lucerne, Switzerland. It offers decision-makers in business, politics, science and finance an overview of current topics and trends in the global tourism industry. WTFL is also the only international platform, which enables leading decision makers to meet emerging Young Talents and Start-Ups in the industry. WTFL is supported by an international Advisory Board under the chairmanship of Reto Wittwer.

The World Tourism Forum Lucerne has evolved from an organisation that convenes meetings to become a year-round network of leaders and leading thinkers tackling global problems in the tourism sector. It gets people acting constructively and also fills a special role in bringing together the leaders of the emerging countries into dialogue with those who have walked the path before from the rest of the world.

The Think Tank network is part of the WTFL's goal to expand beyond a two-day talkathon once a year and move into an active partnership that "walks the talk". It is unique as a gathering bringing together political leadership, CEOs, financial experts, scholars as well as young industry movers & shakers to reflect on the big challenges facing the industry and to address them in out of the box "game-changing" ways to reshape the role of the sector.

The next WTFL Think Tank will take place on 24-25 October in Ras Al Khaimah United Arab Emirates.

Martin Barth
President & CEO World Tourism Forum Lucerne



The WTFL is a unique forum that brings together people cross generation and from different disciplines (business, corporate and academia) around one table for open discussions with no barriers. It also bridges inspirational people with start-ups and established bodies (business and politics), and brings the importance and potential of tourism to light.

It is my second WTFL, and I can feel the results and the effect of the event. I have not experienced another forum that is that focused, and therefore it is a must to attend for anyone who cares about the future of Tourism.

— **Hassan Kadbi**, CEO, Hapimag