

# CMW

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## 100- UP

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this centenary issue  
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# E-Formula for success

CMW HEARS ABOUT GLAMOUR AND GRAFT, AS WELL AS DIGITALISATION AND INFLUENCER MARKETING FROM **SANDRINE CAMIA**, DEPUTY GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE MONACO GOVERNMENT TOURIST AND CONVENTION AUTHORITY

## **H**ow did you first come into the meetings industry?

I have made a 22-year career in sales and marketing in deluxe hospitality, starting in Paris in 1989 with Concorde Hotels Group then owned and managed by the Taittinger family. I have co-operated with meeting and incentive organisers since the early 90s working for Hotel Lutetia and later for Hotel Martinez in Cannes.

I joined Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority in 2011 as Director of the Convention Bureau.

## Tell us about some recent high-profile meetings and conferences in the Principality?

Monaco welcomes more than 400 business events per year and notable events have included the Ernst & Young World Entrepreneur of the Year, the world re-insurance congress ('Rendez Vous de Septembre' which shows unparalleled longevity and marks its 63rd edition in 2019).

Monaco has a high level of loyal clients which account for 41% of the total overnight stays generated by business tourism.

Monaco hosts many association events and, in 2017 saw the FERMA Risk Management Forum welcome 2,000 delegates to the Grimaldi Forum and more recently 1,500 delegates touched down in Monaco for the AEGPL 2018 Congress.

In 2019, Monaco will host the sixth International Olympic Committee World Conference on Prevention of Injury & Illness in Sport. The triennial conference

has been hosted in Monaco since 2011 bringing together 1,200 delegates from 24 countries.

Monaco has a long tradition in hosting international conferences, including the Interpol General Assembly, IOC Extraordinary Session, and numerous conferences on sustainability and preservation of the oceans.

This year we'll host the 51st Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the 36th session of the International Organisation of La Francophonie.

There was also the recent State visit of the Chinese President Xi.

## What about claims that Monaco is expensive and hard to get to?

Monaco is easily accessible. The Principality is located in the heart of Europe, 25km from Nice Cote d'Azur international airport, which links Monaco with 100 international destinations. There are 70 daily flights to and from Europe's main hubs. It is the third busiest airport in France and an base for Air France and Easyjet. In 2018 it handled almost 14m passengers;

Monaco is also easily accessible by train, by car and has a regular helicopter line from Nice airport. Once you get there, Monaco is a safe and walkable destination.

## Perception

Until now, our biggest challenge when marketing the destination for MICE has been the perception. Monaco is one of the most well-known destinations in the world, a land of superyachts, super casinos and super rich.

*For visitors from certain countries you have VAT refunds for many services, right?*

"VAT recovery conditions vary depending on the nature of the event an most requests are for incentive groups. We recommend contacting tax advisers to get the appropriate guidance."

We did have our successes with these stereotypes, but after the 2009 world financial crisis, our attractions turned into negative stereotypes that many planners and corporate CEOs avoided.

The Monaco Convention Bureau (MCB) launched a campaign aimed to change the destination's perception to be more appealing for international MICE.

Today, group business is 27% of total tourism in Monaco and we have been able fill the quieter winter months with business travellers.

The initial campaign targeted three key sectors: finance, medical and technology. As the campaign progressed, so the focus shifted to promoting values over sectors. These include: good value for money, excellent service and strong expertise hosting business events.

## What recent developments are there to report on the hotel and venue side?

From May 2019, Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer will offer a new conference centre, One Monte-Carlo, in the heart of Monaco. Together with Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo and Hôtel Hermitage Monte-Carlo, it will form a new hub, right on Casino Square.

Covering a surface area of 1,445sqm, One Monte-Carlo conference centre will include 300sqm of plenary space, with a 178sqm connecting multipurpose room, three modular breakout rooms and a large 523sqm foyer.

Opposite One Monte-Carlo, the Boulingrins Gardens has been relandscaped around Casino Square, and will be available for private functions.

The Hotel de Paris is starting a new chapter of its story, fully re-opening its



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**ff** You need content experience and engagement for all event participants. Those are the new elements of success.

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*Big interview*





209 rooms and suites after four years of refurbishment. The Columbus Monte Carlo was also fully renovated last year.

The Principality will launch a new offshore urban extension. The project includes the construction of an eco-district with housing, public parking and harbour with pedestrian quays, a park, coastal promenade, as well as an extension to the Grimaldi Forum convention centre that will increase its exhibition capacity by 50%, with an additional surface of nearly 6,000sqm. This new area will mean bigger tradeshow can be accommodated and more events combined at the same time.

A new destination guide lists all the activities visitors can find when staying in Monaco. It will be online on our re-designed website in May.

**Tell us about the new focus on digital transformation at the bureau and the new incubator and accelerator start-ups, the Monacotech.**

Monaco made a digital shift in 2018 with the creation of the Digital Transition Office. The Principality is starting an ambitious plan of digital transition including smart city, e-government, digital security and digital law and innovation (such as blockchain) as well as cross cutting issues such as e-health, e-education and e-communication.

The MCB is working in line with this

strategy, including strong communication via social media, paperless policy and more digital experiences at tradeshow.

It is worth mentioning Monacotech - a start-up incubator and accelerator established by our Government in late 2017 in partnership with Monaco Telecom and Xavier Niel and designed to support innovative start-up projects and, long-term integrate successful new companies into the local economy.

Our big Day One event, which first took place in November brought together CEOs of large multinationals, start-up representatives and academics to create a vision and action plan for the new economy. The new country Chief Digital Officer presented a three-year vision plan for digitalising the country.

The event was created by Denis Jacque, French tech pioneer and entrepreneur who will also organise a second edition of Day One at the Grimaldi Forum in November 2019.

**Record year**

It was a record year for business tourism in 2018 and Communications Technology, Pharmaceutical and the Medical Sector and Banking, Finance and Insurance represent 50% of total MICE activity.

In 2018, 30 major repeat events were noted, half of which were attended by

over 1,000 participants and loyal clients now account for 43% of the total overnight business tourism stays.

Our main markets are France, European markets and North America.

**You are one of the first destinations to use influencer marketing strategies. Tell us about that.**

Social networks and influencers allow us to reach a large target of professionals on a daily basis and create lots of commitment, specially at tradeshow.

It is an essential way to promote a destination these days, especially when you are a small one. It is also the only way to reach out the generation of millennials who will be tomorrow's decision-makers.

We have worked with Irina Graf, creator of the MICE Blog, who also made a case study on the Day One event.

We are launching a new video at 2019 IMEX Frankfurt which will highlight how the destination is committing to sustainability.

**What are the major changes you have seen in the MICE business?**

They are all changes caused by web revolution:

- Digital and innovation are dramatically changing our jobs on a daily basis: communication, marketing, client relationship to list a few. You have to adjust very quickly otherwise you could lose attractiveness and market share
- Simultaneously with the digital revolution, clients are looking for experience and authenticity. Organising an event is not only booking venues and handling logistics. You need content, experience and engagement for all participants. Those are the new elements of success.

Organisers want customisation and access to high levels of specialisation. They also want destinations with legacy and heritage in specific fields.

MICE professionals look for elements of the destination brand to resonate with who they are and what they stand for. ■

What advice would you give a young meetings professional starting out their career today?



If you choose to make a career in meeting industry, you should first do this job with passion, and you have to love human relationships. Technology is just a tool. The core of our business is people: clients, employees, partners, service providers. You have to make them work all together all the time.

If you want to make a career and reach leadership position, you have to step out of your comfort zone, and question yourself often.

You need objectives, because when you reach them, it brings a huge satisfaction and desire to go further.