



IELA REGIONAL TALK #8 - AMERICAS Winning confidence back



"It's time for action. Let's make waves and go for it!" (Mariane Ewbank)
Leveraging support as a major tool to get the Americas re-opened

Geneva, Switzerland – July 23rd 2020

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IELA RELOAD greeted a panel discussion on the situation of the Americas in the event and exhibition industry. Prominent speakers were invited to share their thoughts and give insight from their local region.

Moderated by IELA Board Members, **Mariane Ewbank Rodrigues Batista**, Director Fulstandig Shows E Eventos MC Ltda, Brazil, and **Sandi Trotter**, Director Business Development TWI Group, Inc. Canada, 6 top Industry Leaders from the Americas were introduced on the panel:

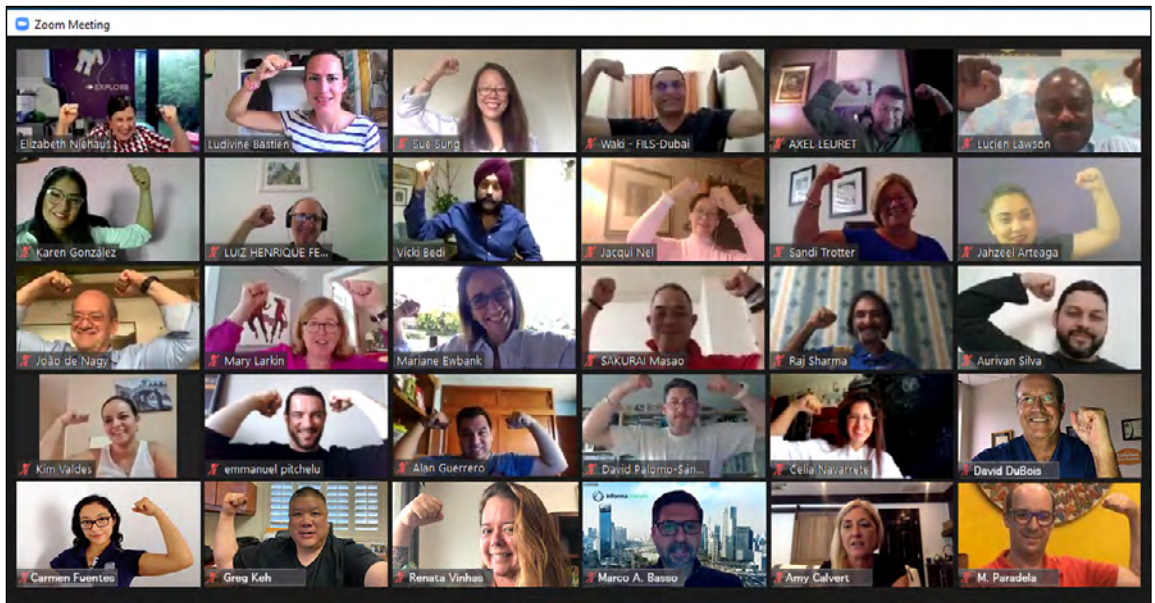
- **Mary Larkin**, UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry President & Diversified Communications USA President
- **Amy Calvert**, Events Industry Council CEO
- **David DuBois**, IAEE, The International Association of Exhibitions & Events President & CEO
- **Sue Sung**, Go Live Together Executive Director
- **Marco A. Basso**, Informa Markets Brazil CEO
- **João de Nagy**, Ubrafe Brazil Vice-President
- **Celia Navarrete**, AMPROFEC AC Mexico President & Informa Markets Mexico Executive Vice-President
- **Daniel Galante**, GL events Brazil Director & São Paulo Expo Exhibition & Convention Center Director

Sandi Trotter opened the discussion with **Mary Larkin** who echoed consensus that “Collaboration is key” in order to **bring the industry out stronger than ever from this crisis**. Important is that all regions are represented in the US. **David Dubois** stated that the US presents a situation similar to being “on a roller-coaster”, well behind Europe and Asia regarding pandemic control.

By leveraging support and joining forces, **the success in re-opening safe shows will be based on the ability of “making sure that we have a united front”** according to Mary Larkin, who then mentioned how the UFI forum has connected all industry actors to share information and intensify advocacy efforts. **Sue Sung** presented “**Amplifying the Live Events Industry – Response to COVID-19**” in which committed actions have been taken regarding health and safety, the consequent impacts, public awareness and legislation. She named the industry a “growth engine”, with 6.640.000 jobs relating to live events and a total value of 419 billion US dollars. She continued to say “Events cover every sector of the US GDP” as the industry is made up of smaller shows in all sectors. There is certainly still a lot of education to be done as people do not automatically understand the industry. Commenting on the complete closure of shows, **Sue Sung** highlighted the fact that there are no half measures - whereas restaurants can partially open, trade fairs cannot.

In order to keep business going, virtual events and the increase in digital news have become the norm but as **David Dubois** commented “**Virtual is not the answer**”. **Celia Navarrete** said that a “**combination will be our new reality**” and content will be of utmost importance in order to attract the audience. **Marco Basso** sees digital solutions as complimentary to face-to-face meetings which are the more effective way of doing business. **Mary Larkin** explained that having talked to customers from all industries on a regular basis, it is clear that **the re-opening of trade fairs is awaited with anticipation, especially among small to medium-sized companies who rely on shows to fuel their business**. Larger companies have the headache of controlling large numbers of visitors on their stand which causes eventual problems with visitor registration. Her view is that **trade fairs will become much more focused with less people under one roof in the exhibition halls**, resulting from techniques such as staggered visitor entry. **Marco Basso** mentioned that there is also the aspect of **more ROI being demanded from shows by exhibitors**.

In Brazil, **Joao de Nagy** highlighted a similarly challenging situation. 2019 had been an excellent year and then early 2020 the industry was hit badly. **Building confidence levels is very important** as there is as yet no official date for re-opening trade fairs and events. **Mariane Ewbank** summed up the situation by saying that a clear vision is just not possible as the situation is very unpredictable and changes constantly regarding the pandemic. **Joao de Nagy** commented, he is “hoping for August, praying for September”. However small and medium-sized companies cannot survive on the long term in certain industries. In the past, Brazil has witnessed a healthy rise in investment due to its positive economic environment. A wide range of base products are produced in Brazil and so it is ever so important to have trade fairs to encourage more foreign investment. It is imperative that **“trade fairs and corporate events should detach themselves from consumer events”** in order to be recognised as a vital part of the revival process for the economy as a whole.



#TogetherSTRONG

Marco Basso reflected on his fight to keep shows and emphasised that strong partnerships with venues saved the day. The perception of trade fairs being mass gatherings damages the effect of any efforts being taken for the cause. As he explained there is a **"domino effect"** as European subsidiaries recommend the cancellation or postponement in Brazil of show participation as uncertainty grows. **Celia Navarrete** reported similar settings in Mexico where the BtoB market was hard hit by the crisis. **Shows in sectors such as Hospitality and Construction are important for the country and there is hope that these can take place in order to boost the economy.**

For **Amy Calvert** the focus is on **building trust and promoting the value of the face-to-face experience.** The investment of additional resources and creation of educational measures are important but **crucial is the advocacy role in "asserting the social impact.....to capture the minds of policy makers"** in order to **get the industry back on its feet again.** Every individual has his/her role to play. Innovation and adaptation from different perspectives are being demanded at shows in order to **fulfill the expectations of the targeted communities who want a clear and transparent concept.** With **full global recovery only expected in 2023,** we will be aiming at coming out of this **more deeply committed to areas such as sustainability, social impact etc.** when organising our events.

All participants were unanimous in saying that the protocols have to be put into place in order to build confidence to re-open shows. **David Dubois** brought attention to the **Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC)** who support and advise businesses with certified protocols controlling and avoiding the spread of infection. **Joao de Nagy** proudly spoke of strict serious protocols being created in Brazil and stated "the more mature, the more confidence built in the public". It is now more a question of how to live with the protocols. **Sandi Trotter** concluded the discussion by saying that there are lessons to be learned from **European counterparts** who are currently at a further stage of **organising test shows** which will **reinforce the conviction that trade fairs are not mass gatherings.**

With all this expertise and experience in mind, in the words of **Mariane Ewbank:**
"It's time for action. Let's make noise and go for it!"

- Full Replay available: <https://youtu.be/qi7A9Aj9Qw>



Early May, we began IELA RELOAD, the association’s recovery programme based on 2 main pillars: weekly regional talks (IELA TALKS) and ten RECOVERY TALKS as empowering resources for navigating through the crisis:



At our REGIONAL TALKS we invite worldwide leading exhibition organisers, venues and associations to discuss **How to Win Confidence Back in our industry.**

The sessions are dedicated to IELA Members & Industry Partners (organisers, venues, related associations and exhibitors) and we invite you to join the next **IELA TALK #9 - WINNING CONFIDENCE BACK- AFRICA – July 7th – 11:30 am CET**

July 2020 programme

Tuesday, July 7th
11:30 AM CET

REGIONAL TALKS
IELA TALK #9
Winning Confidence Back - AFRICA

Session dedicated to IELA Members & Industry Partners (organisers, venues, related associations and exhibitors)

Speakers			Moderators
CRAIG NEWMAN Joburg Expo Centre Car Road Show and Navac - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) LH Chairperson	GLENON DE KOCK Southern African Association for the Conference Industry Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	GARY CORIN Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery, UK Managing Director	JACQUI NEL EF-GSM South Africa, South Africa, Director, IELA Industry Relations WG Chair
JUSTIN HAWES IFES, President Scan Display Solutions, Managing Director	CORINE KOCH Cape Town Convention Bureau Head of Convention Sector	T. TALIRE MUTHARANE CTICC CEO	ELIZABETH NIEHAUS IELA Executive Officer



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About IELA:

The **International Exhibition Logistics Association** is the global industry network enhancing the professionalism of the transportation logistics and freight handling segments of the exhibition & event industry. IELA works with venue owners, organisers and national associations educating, training and sharing expertise for safe and secure operations around the world. The quality brand IELA is currently represented by 172 members and 31 affiliates in 56 countries.

[For further information contact](#)


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