



ACCOR

The Business of Travel

**ACCOR NORTHERN EUROPE MASTERS OF TRAVEL
THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS TRAVEL REPORT**

'MINDFUL AND MEANINGFUL TRAVEL' WERE THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED AT ACCOR'S ANNUAL MASTERS OF TRAVEL 2022. THIS PANEL OF EUROPEAN BUSINESS LEADERS FROM 10 INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING PHARMACEUTICALS, TECHNOLOGY, FINANCE AND OTHER KEY SECTORS, MET WITH SENIOR ACCOR INSIDERS TO CREATE A VISION FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL AND MEETINGS IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD. SUSTAINABILITY, WELLBEING, AND THE VALUE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE WATCHWORDS IN A WORLD WHERE FINANCIAL BUDGETS ARE BEING REPLACED BY CARBON ONES.

The world is on the move again

80% of people surveyed across five major European nations plan at least one trip abroad in 2022. Business teams are on the road too, but Accor's Sophie Hulgard, Senior Vice President Sales Northern Europe, expects 20% fewer business trips to happen in 2022 compared to 2019 (and one Masters of Travel delegate put this figure at 50%).

Priorities have undergone a major shift: 'Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), means 'SOS! We will be travelling less to save the planet'. Any trip needs to justify its carbon. 'Offsetting is no longer enough, and our hotel partners need to prove they are actively reducing our footprint,' said one travel advisor.

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**THERE IS STILL A COMPELLING NEED FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS BECAUSE
'PARTNERSHIPS GO ABOVE AND BEYOND COMMERCIAL DECISIONS'**

Accor research reveals that in revenue terms one real-life meeting is worth three virtual ones. Employers are 'travelling with purpose' by comparing hotel and transport options using carbon calculators and promoting longer stays, even if this means 'bleisure' (combining business and pleasure) which, in the past wasn't always looked upon as kindly.

Workers want to stay in hotels that 'value its guests – don't give us micro rooms with no windows' – and staff on hand to offer advice and book restaurants and experiential extras. This is where an innovative loyalty program can really kick in.

*One silver lining of the
pandemic?*

The speeding up of virtual meeting technology, and individuals' ability to use it. When guests can't be in the room where it happens they expect glitch-free technology that is easy and intuitive to set up and delivers crystal-clear sound quality and video. Hybrid meetings, with some on-site and some attending virtually, are now the norm.



01

*Make it
count*

WE WANT TO BE IN THE
ROOM WHERE IT
HAPPENS

02

*Purposeful
innovation*

SEAMLESS TECHNOLOGY
AND MAKING EVERY
MOMENT COUNT

03

*Life rich
loyalty*

LOOKING AFTER NUMBER
ONE – THE GUEST

04

*Living in a
sustainable
world*

THE CURRENCY OF THE
FUTURE ISN'T IN YOUR
WALLET – IT'S CARBON

“We believe in and understand the incredible power and value of business travel”

SOPHIE HULGARD, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT SALES NORTHERN EUROPE, ACCOR AND CO-HOST OF MASTERS OF TRAVEL: ‘WE BELIEVE IN AND UNDERSTAND THE INCREDIBLE POWER AND VALUE OF BUSINESS TRAVEL, OF THE COMING TOGETHER OF TEAMS TO RECONNECT, TO GROW CULTURES, TO STRATEGIZE AND TO CLOSE DEALS’.

Hybrid technology is the future, but a delegate acknowledged that it’s harder to make meaningful connections because ‘It’s difficult to stay focused and pay attention when you can’t interact with the other people in the room’. In financial terms, Accor research reveals that workers expect to make 25% more revenue through face-to-face meetings than by virtual ones. The bottom line isn’t the only factor at play with 47% of workers missing social interaction with colleagues and associates, highlighting the mental health and wellbeing capital inherent in an office environment.

The Linger Longer trend, mostly associated with leisure travel post-Covid, is increasingly a factor business travel too. The one-night stay isn’t good for business purposes or for individual’s mental health because it doesn’t fit the *travel with purpose* brief. ‘Meeting four or five clients as opposed to one or two means fewer trips and less carbon.’

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Business Critical

If the need for a face-to-face meeting is evaluated, delegates demand 'mindful travel'. As one financier put it, 'we don't produce anything, so travel is our biggest carbon footprint'. Leaving home has to be meaningful and deliver tangible benefits to justify its carbon footprint. The ability to run meetings virtually is prized by business leaders – but being able to benefit from hybrid technology is even more important. Now travel must be 'business critical', if it's not it's cost and carbon prohibitive.

Authentic Spaces

Masters of Travel delegate described the need to 'avoid a standard product because one size does not fit all – and we don't always have time to experience a cool living concept'. Accor is a 'global collective of entrepreneurial and founder-built brands with creativity and purpose at their heart', 42 brands, 5,300 hotels. A Masters of Travel delegate described that they wanted 'excellence and authenticity' for their stays. For business travellers who need to be in the room, the room needs to offer more – style, design, location, food, atmosphere.

Mindful Travel

Masters of Travel believe in and understand the incredible power and value of business travel, of the coming together of teams to reconnect, to grow culture, to strategize and to close deals. Covid has accelerated a change in perception and consideration of 'necessary travel', a conscious approach to more sustainable and mindful travel to make travel count professionally, economically, sustainably and personally.

Virtual Filter

Today more meetings can take place on Zoom and Teams, this is efficient business and has a positive impact on time and corporate carbon footprints. What's left is necessary and purposeful travel that adds true impact to businesses and professionals.



‘We encourage our workers to see if they can achieve more by staying longer’

‘TECHNOLOGY HAS OUR GUESTS AT THE HEART OF IT’ LUC GESVRET, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT LOYALTY & PARTNERSHIP, GUEST EXPERIENCE AND ALL ACCOR LIVE LIMITLESS, ACCOR NORTHERN EUROPE.

Masters of Travel panel members welcome this emphasis on the guest being the beneficiary and agreed that there is nothing as infuriating as technology that seems to be there for the sake of it: ‘Who wants to use an iPad to switch on a lamp?’.

For business travellers, hybrid meetings are part of any talks about the future. Sophie Hulgard believes that 20% of business meetings have gone forever, to be replaced by virtual equivalents or the realisation that they simply weren't necessary in the first place. This gives hotel groups a lot of leeway to finesse what they are offering business travellers whose priority is for ‘purposeful travel’. This might mean staying longer. As one advisor said ‘A one-night stay is now considered a premium and we encourage our workers to see if they can achieve more by staying longer’ or merging a business trip into a leisure one.

Workations are a valuable flexibility offering for talents – extend and stay longer is a motivator to make carbon count and time well spent. For employee branding, mindful travel of delegates and carbon priorities, hotels must help delegates make every moment of a real-life hotel stay count.



Tech with Heart

Key cards and check-in desks might become a thing of the past. Innovations in digital key technology enables guests a seamless check-in activated using the ALL Accor Live Limitless app.

The objective is not *no contact* with staff but *better* contact. It goes back to meaningful travel – why spend 20 minutes queuing to get a plastic (environmentally unfriendly) key card when you could use that time to get the lowdown on where to get dinner or how to borrow a bicycle to take a tour of your surroundings?

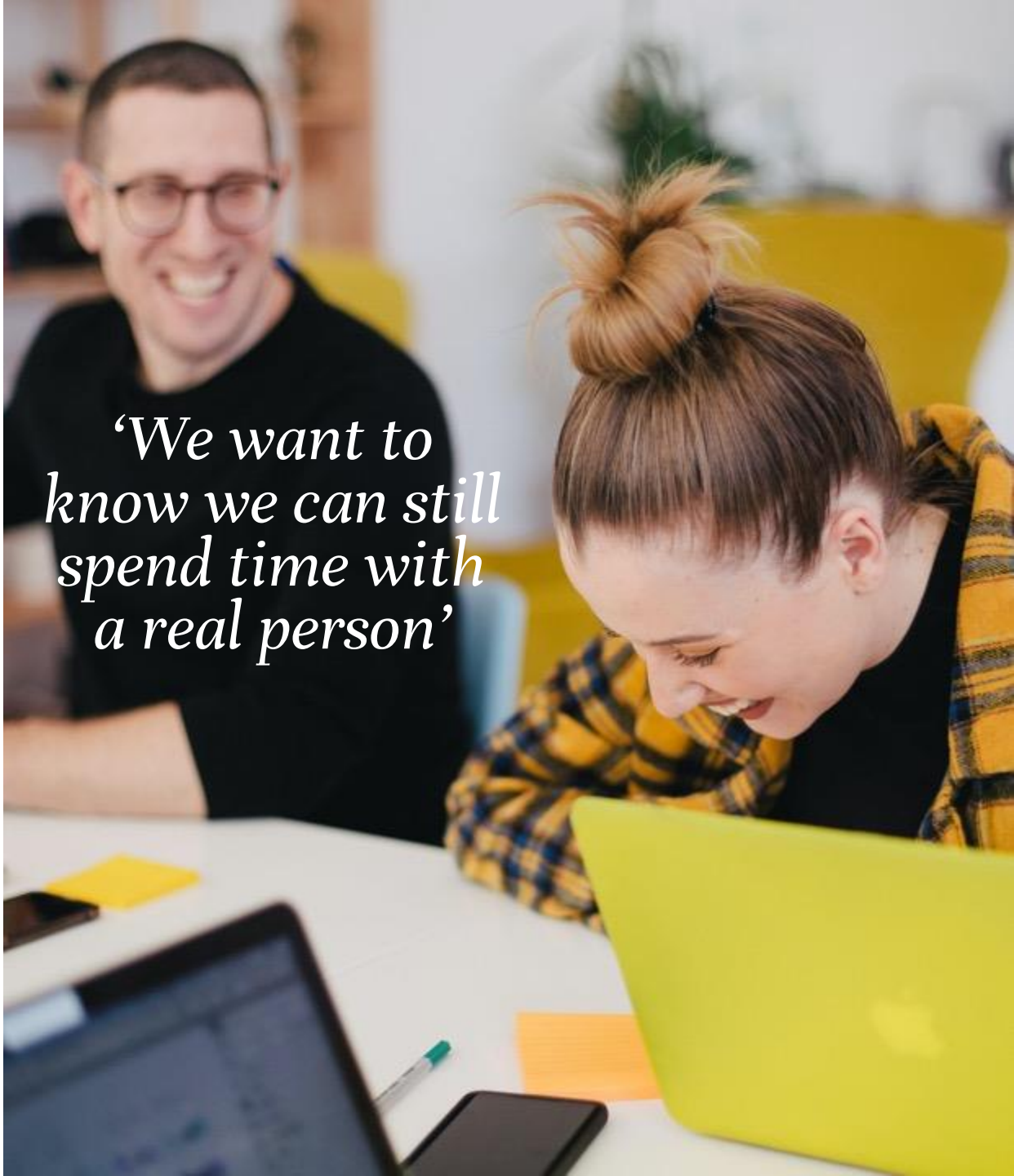
As a panel member put it:
“We want to know we can still spend time with a real person.”

Plug and Play

Masters of Travel was a hybrid event, taking place in person in Frankfurt and virtually through Encore technology and Microsoft Teams. The event’s purpose was to work on a vision for the future but a by-product was providing a showcase for Accor’s commitment to developing and delivering the meeting technologies of the future. A ‘seamless set-up’ is demanded by delegates who need to connect even when they can’t gather around the watercooler in person

Reassurance is Key

In a post-pandemic world prioritising health has never been more at the forefront of a guest’s wishlist. With this in mind free telemedicine services are offered across all Accor hotels through Accor and it’s global health and sanitary label, ALLSAFE’s partnership with AXA.

A photograph of two people in an office setting. In the foreground, a woman with her hair in a bun is looking down at a laptop. In the background, a man with glasses is smiling. The text is overlaid on the image.

‘We want to know we can still spend time with a real person’

Sight and Sound

The challenges faced while using virtual meeting technology – bad sound quality, dropping out of video conferences – must be eradicated. Delegates say these are as harmful to successful business encounters as the difficulties some encounter in not being able to see another person's body language or engage in small talk to make a more meaningful connection

Employer Branding

Business leaders know that when their workers are away from home they want to make the most of their time: 'We're investing in our employees because they should be the ones feeling good'. Accor believes it has a duty to bring innovations into a guest experience and it embraces the widespread shift away from consumerism into a respect for people and the planet.

ALL Connect

Accor's innovative hybrid events concept enables seamless physical and virtual meetings. Accor's aim is for 100% of its hotels with meeting rooms to comply with the new ALL CONNECT standard by end 2022. Meetings take place on the Microsoft Teams platform to blend in-hotel meetings with virtual interactions.

Workations

In an Accor poll in Northern Europe 1 in 10 plan to extend their holiday in 2022 by working abroad and 53% agreed that they 'love the freedom of working from anywhere'. This flexibility in business travel enables corporates to support employer branding and encourage the Linger Longer benefits of business travel.



INVESTING IN BUSINESS TRAVEL COMES WITH QUANTIFIABLE COSTS. THE FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS ARE TANGIBLE, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THOSE DOING THE TRAVELLING?

Corporations are conscious that when they put their staff on the road it's their responsibility to look after them and Accor is equally aware that *experiencing* a destination is key to guests getting the most out of being there – and wanting to return. Accor's Luc Gesvret has identified this need for 'a *Life Rich* approach to augmented hospitality', driving travel and lifestyle experiences and benefits.

Lifestyle is key; it's not just about burning through the points to get a free room upgrade. Masters of Travel identified the generational shift of business travellers, as one advisor put it 'they may not be bothered by a room upgrade but might like a city tour with free bicycle hire'.

One delegate added to this, believing that younger travellers in particular spend so little time in their hotel rooms that an upgrade is meaningless, so loyalty offerings need to be inventive.



'They may not be bothered by a room upgrade but might like a city tour with free bicycle hire'

Lifestyle Loyalty

ALL - Accor Live Limitless is free to join, has over 72 million members and offers a five-tier loyalty programme. It strives to inspire a shift away from consumerism and to embrace experiences and respect for people and the planet. Offering free stays, room upgrades, airport pick-ups or even a ticket to watch Paris Saint-Germain on their home turf. It's described by Luc Gesvret as a 'supportive lifestyle ecosystem'. Masters of Travel panel members want loyalty reward points to be flexible and comprehensive and to extend beyond hotel stays to include drinks and meals. This is a central plank of the ALL - Live Limitless program.

Engaging Employees

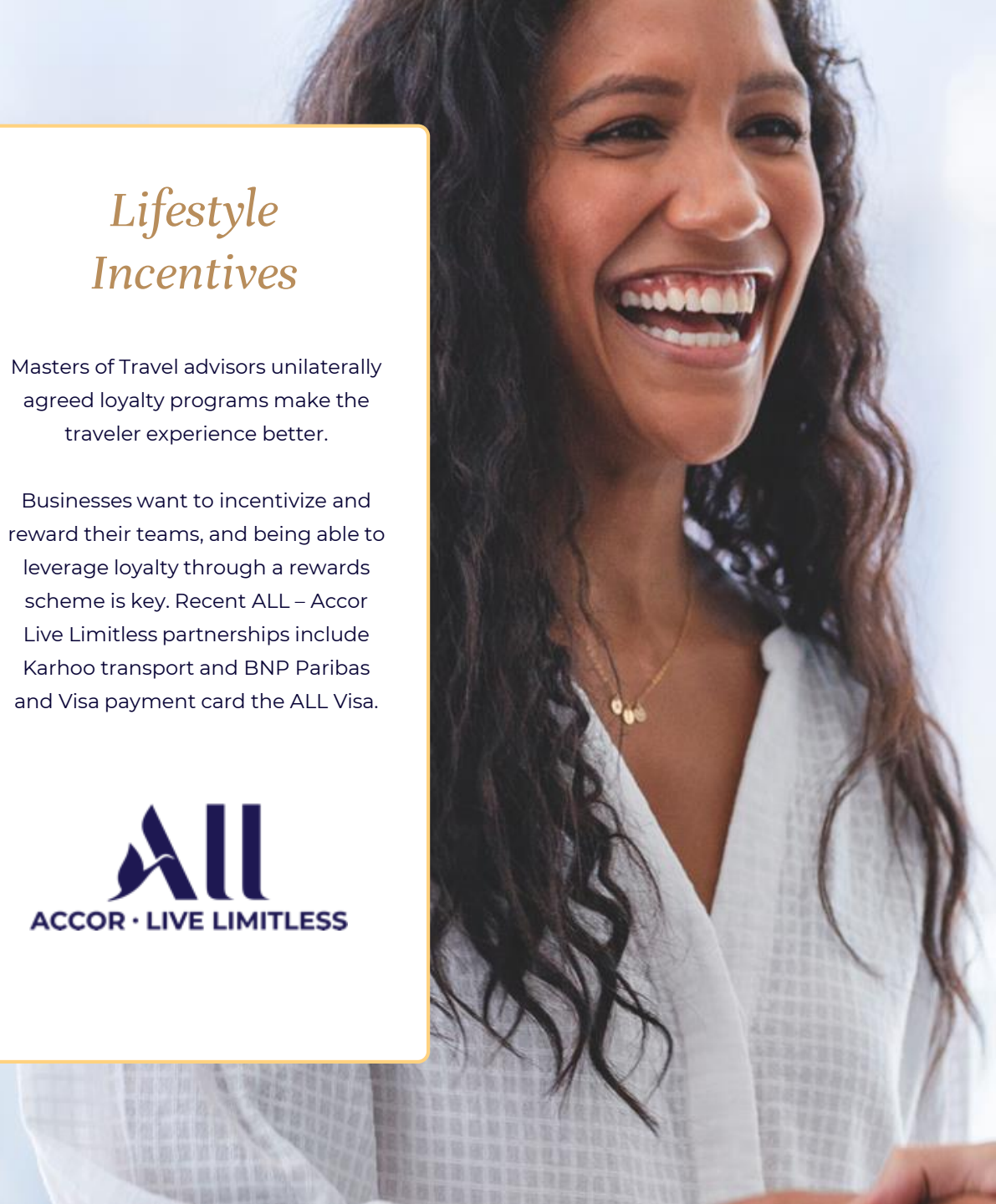
Masters of Travel revealed that motivating staff to get back on the road, when they are now used to working from home, is a priority for businesses in 2022. Businesses believe that productivity and revenue go up when people connect in person.

Accor's research backs this up: professionals anticipate they will make an average of 23% more deals a year when they are able to speak to their contacts face-to-face, rather than using only video or phone conferencing options. This financial reward of business travel is the *business motivator* and the lifestyle they experience is the *employer motivator*.

Lifestyle Incentives

Masters of Travel advisors unilaterally agreed loyalty programs make the traveler experience better.

Businesses want to incentivize and reward their teams, and being able to leverage loyalty through a rewards scheme is key. Recent ALL - Accor Live Limitless partnerships include Karhoo transport and BNP Paribas and Visa payment card the ALL Visa.



THE MESSAGE WAS LOUD AND CLEAR: ISSUES SURROUNDING SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT EVERYTHING.

Consumer and corporate choice, company reputation, employee acquisition and retention, and the very way that hotels are designed and experienced. 'In 2023 we will have a carbon budget instead of financial budget.'

These questions are vital to the long-term viability of hospitality itself and Sophie Hulgard agrees that 'Delivering net zero travel and accommodation is dependent on building new approaches and partnerships'.

This was a major driver behind Masters of Travel 2022. 'Transparency is key, so it knowledge and understanding – measurement is crucial.' The key take way from Masters of Travel 2022 was succinctly put by one advisor: 'Previously we always focused on cost optimisations and very cost driven choices. Now the coin for the future is not Euro it's CO₂.'

'The coin for the future is not Euro - it's CO₂'



Green Deep

Accor's carbon expert, Tom Mallet, said 'what we're doing at Accor is *green deep*, not greenwashing'.

In March 2021 Accor became the first major international hotel group to set long-term science-based targets to reduce its carbon emissions in line with the 1.5°C ambition of the Paris Agreement. In the same month, Accor, and the 13 other members of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, announced a new Pathway to Net Positive Hospitality, an initiative supported by the World Travel & Tourism Council. Masters of Travel delegates agreed that they want the reassurance of validation by third parties in all green initiatives.

Green Washing Warnings

So-called 'green-washing' is increasingly under the microscope, and a Master of Travel delegate made it very clear that if it is discovered that environmental claims are found out to be false 'the backlash will be huge'.

The bottom line, explained another delegate, is that 'Hotels without a clear green or target-based sustainable program won't be considered as suppliers'.



Carbon Commitments

Accor's science-based targets are validated by SBTi and align with the Paris Agreement. Accor is the first major hotel international group to commit to net-zero by 2050.

In November 2021, COP26 saw Accor pledge to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, the first international hotel group to do so. Accor signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism launched by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNTWO) on November 4 2021.

These commitments build on a decade of groundwork in sustainability from the pioneering Planet 21 initiative, which Accor started in 2011.

Carbon Calculator

The Masters of Travel symposium was a net zero carbon event, carefully mapped and offset using Accor's Carbon Calculator. This calculator works out every aspect of a corporate stay, including getting delegates to and from the airport. This enables a business to make the conscious choices demanded by their corporate responsibility standards. 100,000 kg CO₂ has been compensated to date*.

Masters of Travel universally agreed tools like this are crucial to affecting change in travel and event planning:

'It's all going the right way and increases awareness and understanding when you start calculating and inputting the data, seeing the carbon impact when you change delegate travel from flight to rail.'

*data from [myclimate](#) as of May 2022



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Green Journey

Masters of Travel advisors all agreed it's vital to take guests on the green journey. 'We need to educate travelers and help them change habits and help them change with us' said one advisor. Masters of Travel advisors pushed for the hospitality industry to help guests make more sustainable choices, to make it 'more visible' in the booking journey.

Guests are increasingly aware of their own responsibilities towards the environment but not always *how* to drive real change. It's going to be increasingly common to 'go green and skip the clean' on a two night or more stay in Accor hotels, simple actions that have daily impact. All delegates agreed that education was key to successfully introducing green measures.

CSR+

Masters of Travel agreed CSR runs deeper than sustainability. 'It's not just about carbon, it's also Diversity & Inclusion, social enterprise purchasing in procurement and more'.

Another added, Masters of Travel championed 'if a supplier doesn't have a clear green standard it doesn't matter if they are cheaper, we can't use them.' the importance of driving positive action through business ethics, responsible tourism, environmental sustainability, community engagement, diversity and inclusivity.

Food Waste

A widely recognised problem throughout the hospitality sector, Accor is targeting everything from identifying how to ensure nothing from a buffet breakfast is wasted to working with the waste app Too Good to Go to save hundreds of thousands of meals from going to the scrapheap.

These actions help reassure the Masters of Travel that green actions cross all segments of the hospitality experience – energy, carbon, food and more. Over 1,200 hotels have vegetable gardens on site and an increasing focus on local and seasonal producers strengthens the supply chain (doubly important in this time of energy price hikes and global transport issues) and cutting those all-important food miles.



Working better when we're together

The business of travel enables real connections. In emotional terms it's a celebration just to be together after two years apart: 'The last two years have been a real journey and it's no small thing to say it's great to see you'. In financial terms the impact of being in the same room is tangible – research from Accor shows that workers expect to make 25% more revenue through face-to-face meetings.

The last two years have been a real journey and it's no small thing to say "It's great to see you"

As a Masters of Travel delegate put it: 'I'm very happy to be here today. I felt guilty because I flew, but this is valuable, purposeful travel. It's a partnership, listening to each other and how we work together for an overall goal that will help take us all forward'.

The currency of carbon is never far from anyone's mind, but increasingly neither is the purpose.



In-person events are roaring back! Since the pandemic there is a longing for re-connecting in-person, however hybrid formats remain highly relevant, as combining in-person and virtual aspects gives a whole new dimension to events.

Hybrid can increase audience reach, provide analytics on engagement, and enable us to choose from different formats to achieve the desired outcome of an event. A virtual solution will never be able to replace the F2F experience, but a hybrid solution can be more inclusive and highly effective in minimising carbon footprint by reducing travel.

Whether in-person or hybrid, the future of events will still offer the typical wants and needs of attending any event.

However, this purpose is not limited to the event experience itself. In the future we will go beyond this and talk about the “legacy of events”; events that are not just a few days bringing delegates together.

Instead, they should be part of a corporate strategy delivering boundless experiences and content that last.

Since 2009, Encore has been seamlessly connecting in-person and virtual audiences with hybrid event production. As a trusted partner, we offer a full range of solutions and expertise – not just to ensure the show goes on, but to cut through the clutter in new and imaginative ways, elevating your events for greater impact.



Future events will typically have virtual elements and become part of any event planning. Why wouldn't you stream the CEO's speech to the whole company, not just to the delegates in the room?





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