



Prague Congress Centre's State-of-the-Art Facilities Reinforce its Premium Status



“Technology is one of the trend-setting factors determining the future of the MICE industry,” says **Roman Sovják, Sales and Marketing Director of the Prague Congress Centre (PCC)**. In this interview, he sheds light on how the centre managed to get to its pre-pandemic business figures and how the company coped with the energy crisis. Technological and engineering innovations are key to maintaining PCC’s premium position, as is the unique *Genius loci* that helps create the unique moments visitors take away from the centre.

Prague has become the sixth most attractive congress destination in the world. How does this affect your business?

Prague is a beautiful destination with a rich history and romantic charm. It is one of the safest cities in the world, with excellent infrastructure and great accessibility. With a public transport system rated one of the best in the world, you can get everywhere in minutes. For example, you can reach the city centre in ten minutes from the Prague Congress Centre. The city’s position as a university hub also gives it intellectual prestige. It is no wonder that Prague has achieved such an excellent ranking in the **ICCA** rankings and ranks in the top 5 in Europe. Naturally, this brings more opportunities for us as well; we are reaching out to prestigious clients and successfully expanding our services internationally, attesting to the premium nature of our brand and the high standard of service we can provide for our clients. I believe that PCC is also actively contributing to the congress attractiveness of Prague, whether through its innovative approach, modern facilities or excellent approach to sustainability.

Sustainability is a priority, not just in the MICE industry. What role does it play at PCC?

Sustainability is a natural part of our daily operations. We are mindful of the carbon footprint we leave behind and actively succeeding in reducing it. That is why we invest

in green solutions and have completely transformed our energy management, from a massive photovoltaic rooftop power plant to heating the halls with waste heat from the kitchen, to establishing sustainable concepts in catering, etc. However, we also incorporate sustainability into our cooperation with suppliers or partners. For example, our cooperation with the **Prague Convention Bureau** has motivated congress delegates to use public transport, which is practically right next to the entrance of the building. If certain conditions are met, visitors to the centre can also use public transport free of charge.

The Prague Congress Centre is an iconic building of the city, but like many neo-functional buildings, it was not designed to be energy-efficient. Given its enormous size, how did you deal with that?

Our building is truly iconic, and the generous budgets allocated to art at the time of its construction make it unique in design. The building was designed to showcase its time and the capital, so everything associated with the PCC is grandiose. We benefit from our size and versatility – we offer 70 halls and lounges with a capacity of up to 10,000 participants, making us one of the most flexible venues in Prague. However, energy efficiency was not on the table just a few years ago. Therefore, in 2015 we started to apply

energy saving measures using the Energy Performance Contract (EPC) method. Until then, the costs of electricity, gas and water amounted to almost €2,9 million annually. We have invested €5,3 million in the EPC project, with a projected return on investment of under 10 years. In the end, the investment was recouped within five-and-a-half years. In the first few years we saved €1,4 million a year, now it is already at €2 million. Not to mention the fact that being ahead of the curve in the energy transition during the recent energy crisis literally saved us.

It is not only through cost savings that you are thriving. Your business results for 2023 were positive. How do you look at the future of the centre?

In the last two years, we have held a greater number of scientific, medical and technological conferences, which has positively impacted our business results. We have already surpassed the pre-pandemic numbers, and PCC attendance has increased by 30,000 to 230,000 visitors in 2022. Revenue increased by 15%, allowing us to invest in the centre's development. We implemented self-check-in kiosks with badge printing and invested heavily in audiovisual technology. For example, we purchased a giant 20x8-metre frame projection screen, which provides 100% visibility for all 2,766 spectators in the Congress Hall, even on the balconies, thanks to its overall





height of 30 metres, and a variable LED wall accompanying the projection screen. Event organisers can present virtually any multimedia content with video directing supporting up to 8K for large screen projection. Our technological innovations include LED MESH backdrops for stunning stage effects and LED posters that effectively replace traditional roll-ups or smaller digital displays. Technology is one of the drivers that will determine the future direction of the convention and event industry. Substantial investment and a focus on cutting-edge engineering and technology are key to our future. That is why we also strive to stay one step ahead in this area.

What impact do investments in the latest technology have on the participants and organisers of large events themselves?

With the growing demand for face-to-face meetings and renewed corporate investment, it is also crucial to enhance the experience and emotions of visitors. This can also be effectively achieved through modern technology. Attendees seek innovative and interactive experiences that appeal to them and create unforgettable memories. Our state-of-the-art equipment can take any event to the next level. As does our superior service. After all, creating unique moments is our speciality, which is also appreciated by exceptional business partners such as the **Czech Olympic Committee** or the organisers of well-being events **Happiness at Work**. Of course, technology adds to the premium nature of our brand, but it also contributes to building a strong community that grows around us. As a result, the largest marketing community in the country, **#HolkyszMarketingu**, comes back to us repeatedly.

How important is the role of your artistic value in events?

Crucial. In our interiors, you will find works by world-famous artists, especially glassmakers who were considered masters of the field in their day and who inspired the world – from Stanislav Libensky and Jaroslava Brychtová and their sculpture *Woman with a Dove*, to František Vízner's chandeliers in the lounges. The originality and unique backdrops of our premises increase the attractiveness of events and, together with panoramic views of romantic Prague, create an inspiring and pleasant environment for visitors. Our *genius loci* gives us a competitive edge, encourages creativity and helps to give our events a hallmark of memorability. After all, it is not for nothing that we are also a popular location for filmmakers, fashion photoshoots or commercials. Most recently this year, our space was used by the filmmakers for the sci-fi film *Spaceman of Bohemia* (Johan Renck, 2024) starring Adam Sandler, who used the timeless design of the so-called “Star Trek room” for some scenes.

How important is community building to PCC?

The seeds of friendships and professional collaborations are formed in our event spaces, and we are delighted to be a part of them. We also strive to build relationships and communities in the non-profit sphere. We support various charitable projects and events, both financially and non-financially, by providing our space to non-profit organisations. This has been the case for many years, for example, with the **Jedlička Institute**, which helps children and young people with physical disabilities integrate into everyday life, or the **No Foot No Stress** initiative, a foundation for people who have lost their limbs. We are also members of the **Corporate Social Responsibility Association**, which, in cooperation with *Forbes* magazine, announces the ESG ranking of companies. I am proud that the 2025 ranking will take place at the Prague Congress Centre, where sustainability is not just a sexy claim but a real value that we constantly push to a new level.

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