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# “Civil aviation brings peace”

On 6 June 2019, the eleventh edition of Aviation-Event will take place at Salzburg Airport, Terminal II – a reason for us to take a closer look at the AE format; after all, the aviation industry is an important feeder, especially for international events, but cannot escape current discussions [about climate change] either. We talked to Marcel Riwalsky (MR), the person responsible for Aviation-Event at the event management company DA! GmbH (Darmstadt).

mep: Mr Riwalsky, what exactly is Aviation-Event (AE)?

MR: Aviation-Event is a communications, networking and media platform for the aviation industry and third parties, such as suppliers or frequent flyers. While the AE event is our annual highlight, the platform is active and present all year round. For example, we hosted an Aviation-Event Security Workshop a short while ago. In addition, we publish targeted content on social media channels, run in Eng-

lish, which disseminate information all around the topic of air traffic five days a week. Combined, we have approximately 220,000 followers on all channels, most of whom work in top and middle management positions in the industry.

Who or what is behind AE?

Aviation-Event is a registered trademark of DA! GmbH. I worked for a large corporation until a few years ago, then went into business for myself and was able to take over all other DA! GmbH shares. We also have a “supervisory board”, comprising senior ma-



Image: studioZeta / Aviation-Event

managers in the aviation industry, boasting an aggregate 140 years of industry experience.

Who is Aviation-Event’s target group?

Obviously the industry itself; specifically managers – existing and prospective, but, as I said before, we are also targeting the involved third-party sector. This includes airport taxi service providers, for example, as well as Deutsche Bahn. A good land transport connection is, after all, a prerequisite for any successful airport.

Why is AE also interesting for the meeting industry?

The meeting industry is a gateway to aviation, and a welcome partner. The number of international participants at events is consistently rising. And the aviation sector – obviously – is particularly interested in transporting the people who account for about 80 per cent of the business. Locations, however, can also show us new ways to go. Take Salzburg Airport W. A. Mozart, for example, whose special feature is to host events at an

operational terminal – and not in disused space, as elsewhere.

What is the agenda of the format like? How can participants engage in networking?

We start the evening before the event, with a VIP reception for sponsors and speakers, helping them to get to know each other. During the conference day, we offer six panels, selected by our supervisory board. There are also three long breaks and an airport tour after the event, rounded off by a sunset dinner.

What are this year’s highlights?

As AE has a broad range of topics, I do not want to highlight anybody in particular – or any specific agenda item. What we are especially excited about is that this year’s event will be drawing upon experiences from 14 countries. Another highlight is the Aviation Media Award for moving-images content that we are presenting for the first time this year. Despite its low budget, it has an extensive reach.

The winner is Fraport AG's event department, for the film about the children's festival "Kleine Helden, große Flieger" (Little heroes, big planes).

**How is the location selected?**

Aviation-Event's location must be at or near an airport, and obviously also boast the necessary infrastructure. Applications to host 2020's event are already open.

**How critical is Aviation-Event allowed to be, regarding (current) issues and problems?**

AE is allowed to be very critical. But we mustn't go too far, either. The aviation industry

is a CO<sub>2</sub> intensive business; 60–80 per cent of costs are incurred for fuel. Short-haul flights are a challenge, but otherwise there is no need for the aviation industry to hide. How else would we connect the world across continents, except with aircraft and engines which are as economical as possible?

**Which solutions does AE provide?**

We do not develop specific solutions; rather, we bring together people involved in decision-making processes. There is no white paper at AE; our success is defined by competent, appropriate reporting.

**Where would you like the event to evolve towards? Hitherto, it has taken place in Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Düsseldorf.**

We want to become more international in terms of the location, also beyond Europe. However, since – at the end of the day – Aviation-Event has to pay off, we also have to take the profitability into account.

**Last but not least – what is your forecast for the aviation industry?**

Consolidation in the aviation sector will continue. "Ecological fuel" and new forms of power and propulsion will also be an issue. However, I don't see electric aircraft in

the foreseeable future – helicopters and drones being the exception. The higher the quality of goods, the higher the probability that they are transported by air, since the capital tie-up would be far too high otherwise. Since empty flights are unprofitable, aviation also acts as a catalyst. By connecting people and promoting international trade, civil aviation even brings peace. Buying, for example, goods or services from each other brings goodwill and develops cooperation, and can only help lead to less conflict on our planet.

**mep: Thank you very much for the interview.**

**Personal profile**

The avowed "mega-frequent flyer" Marcel Riwalsky holds an MBA degree and a Certificat d'Etudes Supérieures, inter alia. According to his own words, he has made his hobby his profession: in doing so, he not only became the initiator of Aviation-Event, but also the main organiser. Prior to AE, he worked as a consultant, among other things.

**On the programme**

Topics to be discussed include growth and predatory competition, low-fare airlines, changes in air travel, women in the aviation industry, and non-aeronautical revenues. Conference language is English.

[www.aviation-event.com](http://www.aviation-event.com)



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