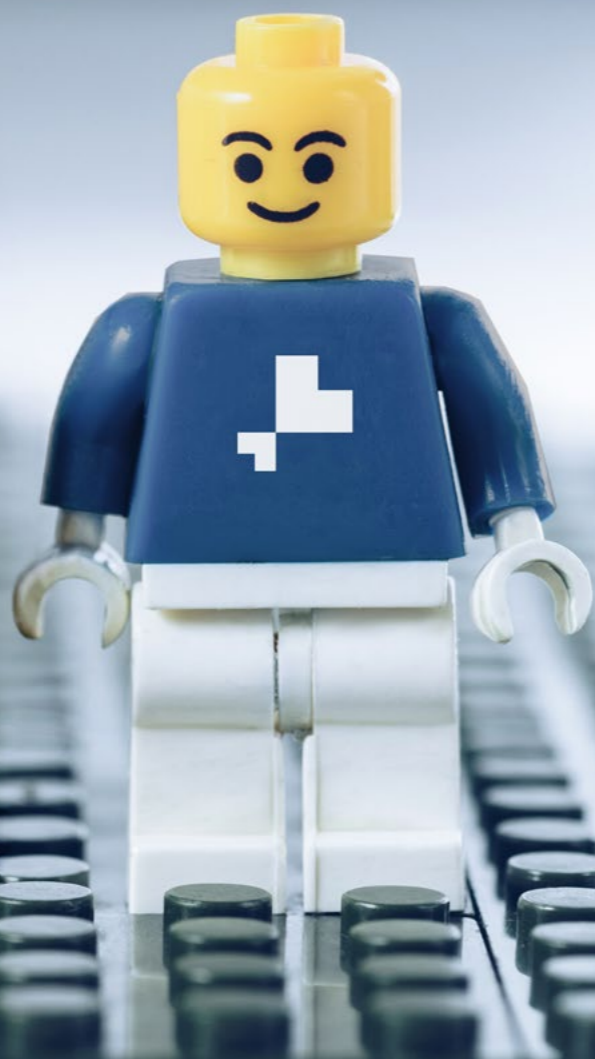


Pioneering Congresses of Tomorrow

Building magical and transformative
congresses one building block at a time



To learn more about the initiative and the various LEGO® models and building blocks of magic go to meetdenmark.org



Contents

Executive Summary	4
The Eight Blocks of Magic	8
Surprise	10
Diversity	12
Safety	14
Self-esteem	16
Serendipity	18
Design	20
Destination	22
Transferability	24
MDK's Way Forward Pioneering the Congresses of Tomorrow	26
People	28
Technology	29
Format Design	29
Contributors - the people behind the LEGO® workshop	30
More about The Initiative: Pioneering Congresses of Tomorrow	31

Published by: MeetDenmark - the Danish development organisation for business tourism
Editorial by: Stylianos Filopoulos, Managing Director of Association By Design
Layout: Bureau 117
Picture credits: Daniel Rasmussen Photography and Stylianos Filopoulos
© MeetDenmark 2024

About MeetDenmark

MeetDenmark is the Danish development organisation for business tourism. MeetDenmark's purpose is to develop and promote Danish business tourism. The current members of MeetDenmark are the Ministry of Business Industry and Financial Affairs and the four largest business tourism destinations in Denmark: Destination Fyn, Destination Nord, VisitAarhus and Wonderful Copenhagen. Learn more about MeetDenmark at www.meetdenmark.org

Executive Summary

MeetDenmark is looking to reimagine and redesign physical congresses so they create even more value in the future, for the benefit of international associations, delegates, and host destinations.

Covid-19 has demonstrated that some events can be run effectively digitally, but also that there is still a need for meeting in-person, especially when it comes to knowledge sharing, idea development, networking and problem solving. This, combined with a greater focus on sustainable business travel, means that the business event industry must redefine the why and how of in-person events and make sure that the value of attending an in-person event outweighs the costs, time, CO2 etc. spent.

If we want to find solutions to the why and the how of congresses, we need to think and act in innovative and co-creative ways. Thus, MeetDenmark initiated a dialogue with the industry to understand its challenges and pioneer the congresses of tomorrow. To foster meaningful and inclusive conversations, MeetDenmark organised a series of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) workshops with association and event leaders and engaged with the broader industry in key events such as IBTM World and PCMA Convening EMEA. The LSP method was selected as it helps to unlock new knowledge and break habitual thinking through the active participation of everyone throughout the whole duration of the workshop.

The first LSP workshop was held in October 2022 and provided a comprehensive view of how impactful congresses will look in the future and identified the elements that could affect them i.e. a LEGO® landscape model of the congress of the future (see picture on page 5). MeetDenmark presented the LEGO® landscape model at the IBTM World Association Leaders Forum 2022 and the PCMA Convening EMEA 2023 and received extremely valuable feedback from the participants. With the use of LEGO® bricks, industry representatives were engaged literally in a constructive dialogue, looking to expand the landscape model and pioneer congresses of tomorrow. From the interactions with the industry and the feedback received, MeetDenmark identified that the landscape elements which present the biggest challenges and opportunities to create more impactful congresses are:

- **Breaking The Code:** Referring to the need to disrupt traditional formats and business as usual.
- **Where Magic Happens:** Referring to the need to design unique experiences where participants feel enchanted, empowered, and transformed.

Therefore, the second LSP workshop in December 2023 was built around the challenge of understanding better what magic moments are, how magic happens and why they are important for the participants, the organisers, and the destinations. The 2023 LSP workshop brought together association leaders, event managers, and representatives from academia and the Danish convention bureaus to work together and identify key building blocks of "magical" moments. The results of the workshop and the summary of the eight building blocks of magic, i.e. surprise, diversity, safety, self-esteem, serendipity, design, destination, and transferability, are presented below. This summary captures the identity of each building block as it was presented by the group, the barriers that block magic from happening, and solutions to overcome the barriers. The building blocks aim to generate thinking around the design of the events but also to facilitate actions for more engaging and innovative events. MeetDenmark hopes that the eight building blocks can be a catalyst for a broader industry discussion of how future congresses can create even more value and inspire the whole business events ecosystem to make more magic.



The LEGO® landscape model being presented at the PCMA Convening EMEA 2023.



The Eight Building Blocks of Magic

The eight building blocks of magic (i.e. surprise, diversity, safety, self-esteem, serendipity, design, destination, and transferability) represent the outcome of the 2023 LSP workshop organised by MeetDenmark and Association By Design with the participation of association leaders, event managers and representatives from academia and three Danish convention bureaus. The purpose was to identify key building blocks of “magical” moments at future congresses. A magical moment can be described as the single moment that speaks both to the heart and the head of the delegates. It is when participants feel enchanted, empowered, and transformed, and when they have captured value which seems priceless and unparalleled.

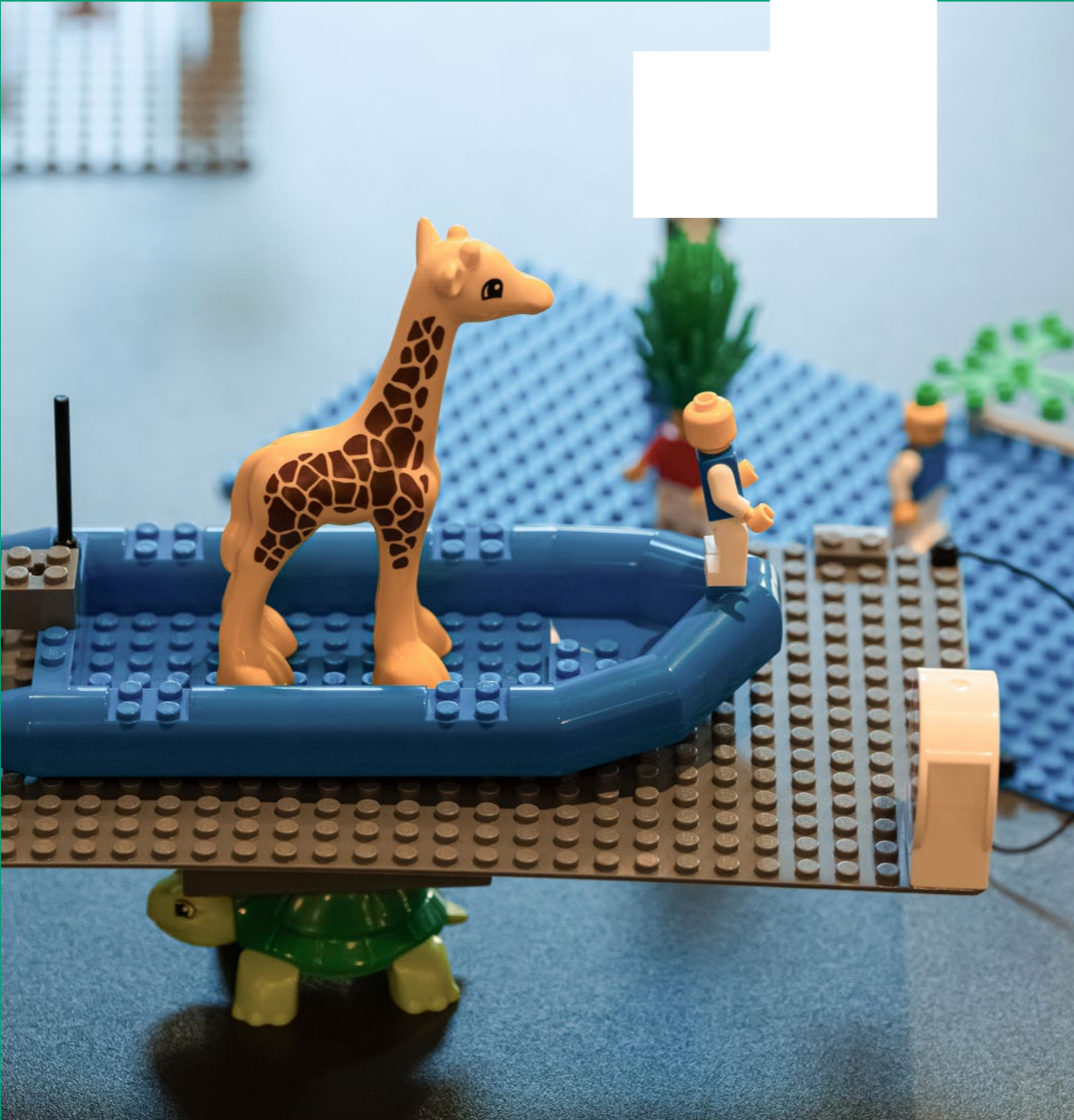
Congresses bring people together at the same time and in the same place. To understand the building blocks of this magic, we need to consider three elements: people, place, and time. Participants transcend by becoming part of the event community; they differentiate by integrating. When people get to know and trust each other, they bond and form communities. It is the magic of stepping out from being an individual to belonging to a community and bear the fruits of collective intelligence and connections. When congresses are open and inclusive, they paradoxically help participants to transcend by integrating them into the event community. In parallel, a community will flourish and create magic when it manages to integrate individual needs and hopes. By integrating their members' aspirations, they create a collective purpose that everyone feels comfortable committing to and acting upon. Place is not limited to the micro-environment of the venue, but goes well beyond, including elements that define the identity of the destination and of the local community, including environmental, cultural, and societal issues (geopolitics, human rights, political liberties, safety etc.). Finally, just as a congress does not start or end on the actual dates of the event, neither does magic start or end when the gate of the venue opens or closes. These three elements, people, place, and time are well-embedded in the eight building blocks of magic.

The presentation of the building blocks follows the workshop questions sequence:

- *What enables magic?*
- *What blocks magic from happening?*
- *What can we do to remove the barriers that prevent magic from happening?*

In the description of the building blocks, all elements that refer to Lego built models have been hash tagged and written in *Italics*. These building blocks are looking both to generate thinking around the design of the events but also to facilitate actions in implementing some of the proposed solutions. They do not necessarily give direct answer to individual problems, but they can spark some ideas and questions to lead your design thinking and problem solving.





The element of surprise is represented by a giraffe in a blue boat ("a Giraffe Moment").

Surprise

Magic happens when there is an element of surprise; doing things unconventionally, doing the unexpected. Disrupting the ordinary way of doing things is not simply about grabbing attention but creating a shock to the system that creates an awe-inspiring feeling.

Magic happens when there is an element of surprise; doing things unconventionally, doing the unexpected. Disrupting the ordinary way of doing things is not simply about grabbing attention but creating a shock to the system that creates an awe-inspiring feeling.

The group described the element of surprise as the *#Giraffe Moment* (a LEGO® model of a Giraffe entering the stage in a blue boat), representing an achievement so big that nobody could believe that it is possible. Such an achievement can for example refer to the content and the speakers, which provided new ground-breaking perspectives and ideas that forced the participants to look at things differently. Such disruption could be electrifying for some participants, inspiring their work, while others can stay in a form of denial. Denial can occur because disruptive ideas challenge their comfortable position in the status quo or just because this magic spell does not work on everyone. In any case, the achievement will be registered in the community's collective wisdom and enrich the event's legacy.

An event planner can work with different elements to provide disruptive sessions and content. The planner should look at the congress in a holistic way and consider the flow of delegates before, during and after the event. During the event itself, design-critical elements such as the congress content/programme, the venue formats/environment, and the way that people interact can be supported with tools such as gamification, artificial intelligence (AI), enhanced matching, residencies (providing spaces at the conference or timeslots during the programme to selected individuals to present innovative ideas), problem-solving sessions, etc. To achieve a transformational experience that will endure in both the individual and collective memory it is important to consider the congress as a spectacle. Thus, not as a series of presentations and discussions, where delegates passively listen, but staging experiences where delegates are actively participating. Nonetheless, one should be careful not to overwhelm the audience and jeopardise the quality of the content. The association's vision and purpose should guide the design.

A major challenge in designing disruptive magical moments is lack of resources. *#The elephant in the room* could be lack of money, *#lack of skills*, or just *#lack of time*. In parallel, the building block of surprise, as with the other building blocks for magic, may be disrupted by what was described as *#Sluggishness - Fixed Thinking* that keeps both staff and participants *#inside the Box*. Organisation leaders are key actors in enabling the necessary mindset and helping staff to get out of their "boxes" and try out innovative ideas without fearing failure (*#leadership fostering change*). Creating *#Multidisciplinary teams* to collaborate, develop shared understandings and find solutions can also help people to innovate.



The element of diversity is represented by the three different figurines (senior, young, and neurodiverse), each with their own perspectives and needs.

Diversity

Diversity is about breaking down silos, understanding different perspectives, and fostering connections of diverse groups, which also encompasses inclusion. Recognising the various sub-communities of the congress will allow the organisers to better design content, make impactful connections, and deliver value to otherwise neglected audiences.

Inclusion

A nice representation of how *#Diversity* can spark magic is the element in the workshop LEGO® model with the three different figurines representing the senior, young and neurodiverse (ADHD, autistic, dyslectic, etc.) sub-communities. The figurines stand in front of a wall with various windows, and they are connected to each other. Each figurine has its own perspective and needs, while each window represents the access to a variety of content addressing the figurines' diverse needs. The connectors between them establish the links for interaction.

An example of connecting senior with younger participants is what the group described as *#Madonna moments*. These types of moments give young people the opportunity to meet and connect with the sector idols and give senior participants the chance to meet with young talents. Both young and senior participants are extending their perspective, expanding their sphere of influence and their network, and getting inspired. At the same time, this exchange feeds the credibility and the confidence of both types of participants. The senior participants are validated as leaders and the young participants are recognised as up-and-coming. A shared story in social media will further communicate the moment, multiplying impact.

At PCMA, MeetDenmark gathered a lot of valuable insight, directly from young participants, on what could facilitate their inclusion and allow them to feel and create magic. Incentives such as sponsorship and event fee reductions will reduce the cost of participation and remove financial barriers. Small breakout rooms to allow co-creation will function as ice breakers and facilitate networking. Finally, mentoring opportunities and providing speaking slots to young professionals, accompanied by presentation skills training, will help them to develop the necessary confidence and skills to make the most out of the congress.

Variety

Diversity also means that a magic "spell" does not necessarily work for all. Therefore, different magic moments are needed to serve the variety of the participants. So instead of one magic moment, the event designer should think about creating a *#Magic Pot*, that can serve unique needs. Nonetheless, extreme diversity can be a barrier for magic to happen. Organisers should be careful when trying to accommodate the various needs, not lose the magic. An idea that was expressed during the workshop to overcome extreme diversity barrier is to create *#Cross-fertilised path of education/experience*. Instead of thinking moments, creating paths for each participant that cross each other and interactions take place. The cross-fertilising path gives the opportunity to the participants not only to have tailor made content based on their respective learning needs, but also offer meeting opportunities with other participants to exchange and develop a dynamic peer-to-peer first-hand knowledge.



A LEGO® model representing the feeling of belonging and togetherness at a congress.

Safety

Safety, trust, and transparency are cornerstones for any thriving community, and as such constitute a fundamental building block for magic to happen.

Getting people out of their box, creating space to connect and understand the other person's ideas and proposals, will remove the barriers that prevent magic from happening. This is where the power of an in-person event lies. People can meet each other face-to-face, shake hands, and take time over a *#water cooler* or *#coffee machine* to connect. An example that was given to foster trust among participants is to organise a challenge, for example a *#Hackathon*. A hackathon can release and demonstrate the creativity and innovation of the participants. This form of "magic" is reinforced when creativity is rewarded, and the creator is entrusted to take forward her/his project. This will not only create magic but enhance the congress' legacy. Both participant and sponsor will experience a unique moment due to the event and this may only happen because the congress created a safe space to meet, exchange and trust each other.

#Fear is the opposite of safety and is an absolutely normal human reaction. Staff, members, and participants may feel fear for different reasons e.g. fear of the unknown, fear of collaborating and meeting people, fear of doing things differently, fear of failure. Fear keeps people inside their boxes. Magic will happen when a person experiencing fear feels safe to take risks and dive into the endless opportunities of the event.

It is important that the organiser, together with the destination and local suppliers, create safe spaces. Having event curators who design with the feeling of safety in mind, event ambassadors who welcome and introduce newcomers, and empowered event managers who monitor event flow and quickly solve issues, are all important when creating and preserving such event spaces. Sharing examples of successful innovative practices is also helpful to overcome fear of the unknown, as association and event executives can learn from the others and reduce risk. As mentioned in the Surprise building block *#leadership fostering change* and *#Multidisciplinary teams* are essential to reduce the fear of failure.

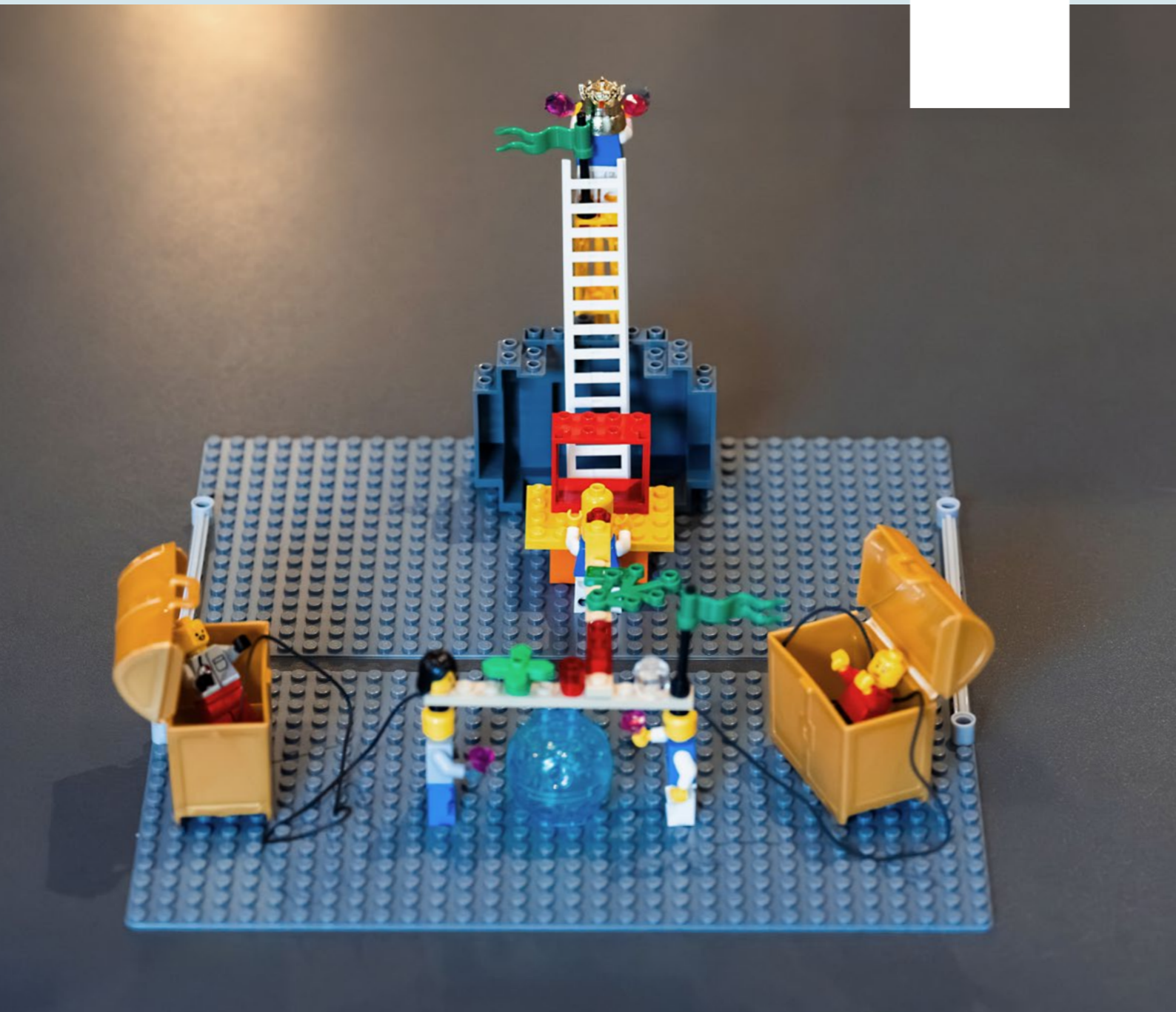
Self-esteem

Narcissism is an essential element of our society today and should be recognised and included in the design of magic moments. Magic will spark when participants feel important or when they feel heard and appreciated. Collective challenges that foster collaboration and create a feeling of accomplishment can help people to shine through their contribution to the collective achievement.

Positively fostering ego and elevating self-esteem, motivates people to actively participate and share their knowledge and ideas, contributing to the wealth and diversity of the congress. Nonetheless, narcissism can be a barrier. Senior participants might like to dominate the space and time of the congress and make the event all about them. This is what the workshop participants called *#Egomaniac*. These do not share their knowledge, connect with or care about the other participants, negatively influencing diversity and inclusion. Often the *#Egomaniac* type of leader is not alone but has his/her "pawns" who try to impose their agendas on the conference. *#Egomaniacs* also block the element of surprise because change may jeopardise their dominance.

Personal expectations and needs should be understood and managed properly. During the workshop people came up with the idea of the *#White Tiger*, which means including other senior experts who can challenge the supremacy of the *#Egomaniac* and who are willing to connect and co-create with other experts or junior participants. This will signal that no single expert can dominate the congress, no expertise is wide enough, and everyone is needed. The role of *#Event Ambassadors* (members of the community who spread the gospel, support the association's vision, and fight the egomaniac) is also important in safeguarding the event. Finally, event planners and managers need *#Thick Skin*, especially when dealing with *#Egomaniacs*.

LEGO® model representing a group of participants uniting over a common challenge, which allow them to connect and develop first-hand knowledge, while boosting their self-esteem and letting them shine



The Water Cooler Moment is represented by two figurines that have met by chance and are now developing their own magical connection by the water cooler.

Serendipity

Serendipity refers to unplanned chance meetings between congress participants. Serendipity needs some degrees of freedom to take place, where time and space is not overly designed but left to the participants to occupy and use.

The group used the terms *#Water Cooler* and *#Coffee Machine* moments to express serendipity - it is all about accidental meetings that take place when giving participants the space and time to develop their own magical connections. While it is important not to overdesign serendipity, the organiser needs to provide the necessary navigating signs and tools for participants to explore this unformatted space and time. Congresses are usually held in big spaces with a lot of people, where it is easy to get lost or lose track of time. Being able to orient themselves removes unnecessary stress and allows serendipity to happen. Together with the navigators, the event planner can think of "nudges," to gently push people to fill empty spaces. Environments that do not create silos or VIP separation allow more of these moments to happen. Also, spaces that allow some *#Goofiness* are extremely important - these spaces are offered to participants to occupy as they please; to play, rest, work, create, etc. Empty spaces, full of opportunities to spark magic.

In contrast, creating a plenum programme with no free time will limit serendipity opportunities. It is therefore important to provide not only the space but also the time for magic to happen. Serendipity is not easy to prompt, as people do not always feel safe or confident to get out of their comfort zones and therefore miss the opportunity to connect. Similarly, to the building block of safety, the role of the event curator, event manager and event ambassadors, together with the sharing of best practices are crucial to nudge people and get them out of their cognitive *#Cages*. Serendipity, as a building block of magic, requires the presence of people and their availability in the space and time of the event. However, today's widespread addiction to phones creates digital interruptions which disrupt our attention and disengage us from the event. *#Phones* act as a chain blocking us from engaging fully with the event and experiencing serendipity.



LEGO® model showing how the right congress design can generate magic.

Design

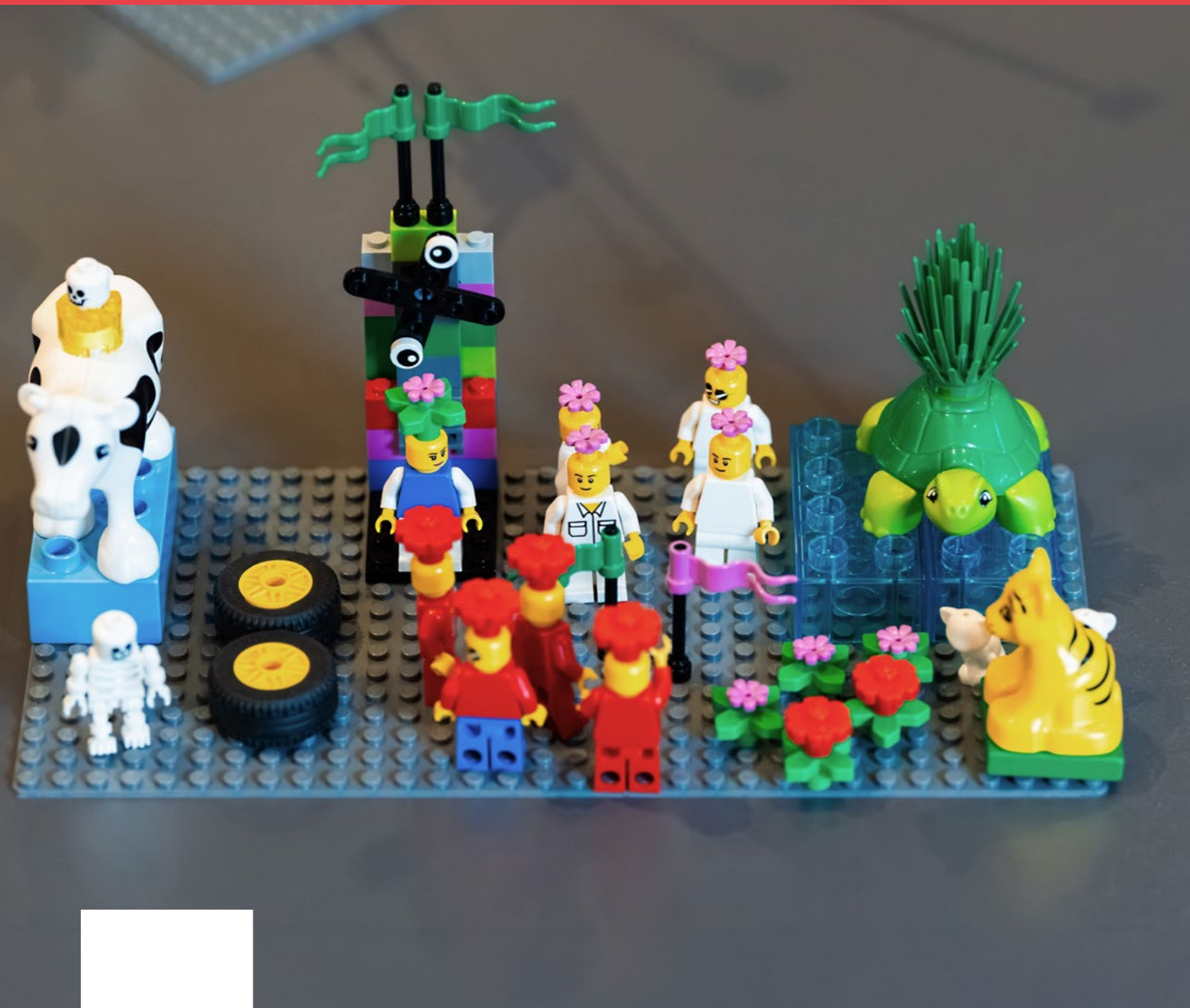
Today, design thinking, system theory, AI, big data, and neuroscience enable us more than ever before to meet participants' needs and create magic. Placing event delegates at the centre of the design, understanding the complex interactions that take place between participants during the event and helping them to stay in flow are key when developing transformational experiences and sparking magic.

Analysing good practices, gathering available data, and asking people about their needs and expectations and processing them with AI tools, can greatly help to understand needs, expectations and offer the right experience. To this end, events need to be designed well in advance and involve all stakeholders (*#Design with all stakeholders*). The magic in the design phase (innovation, diversity, creativity, etc.) is a proxy of magic during the actual event. The organisation's vision must be clear as it will act as a compass for the participants, so they feel that they are part of a bigger purpose and catalyse interactions within the system. An enabler of designed magic that was identified was *#Match-making innovation*. By analysing the participants' interests, the organiser can make the right match, facilitate connection, and create the space during the event to allow for more co-creation and for new ideas to flourish. Creating an *#Informal Innovation Space* was also an idea that came up during the workshop. These spaces are not as structured as the match-making innovation, but they allow peer-to-peer conversation in an informal setting to exchange ideas and foster collaboration.

A well-designed experience can act as a proxy for magic; for example, when participants meet in small groups with a common challenge or short discussion, this creates a shared experience that they have in common. This shared experience initiates further interactions that can lead to serendipitous moments.

The environment is key for magic to happen. Key things to think about are design elements in the venue environment that stimulate the senses e.g. visuals (colours, imagery, symbols) and sounds (jingle of the event), physical lighting, plants etc.). Considering the flow of participants during the different sessions of the event is also key; spaces for gathering and spaces for movement should be considered and should be used for further communicating messages and feelings. Supporting the designed experience by creating an architecture of choices and nudges for the delegates will greatly help the successful implementation of the design.

As always, over-structuring magic moments can block them, as they may seem too polished and artificial in the eyes of the delegates. Of course, when it comes to crafting unique experiences, the sky is the limit; therefore, the event planner should always keep an eye on their resources and make sure that the design is fit for purpose and sticks to the budget.



LEGO® model representing congress participants interacting with the local community and getting a feeling for what the host destination is all about.

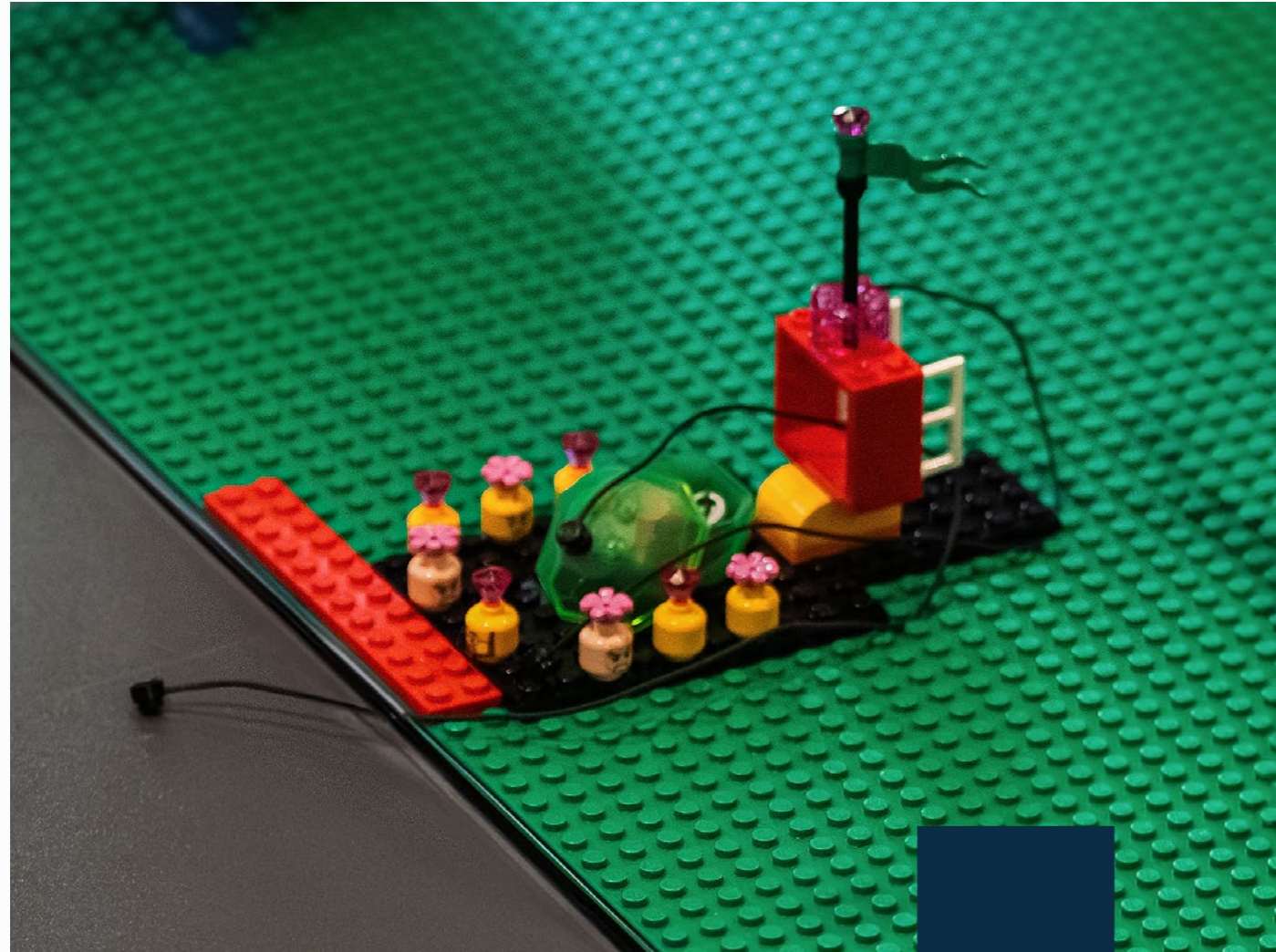
Destination

Local stakeholders like organisers, participants, convention bureaus etc. all play an extremely significant role when it comes to sparking magic, as they represent the uniqueness of the destination. Connecting with locals, with local lifestyle and culture, and supporting the local community in their socioeconomic and sustainability objectives are the cornerstone of the event's authenticity, allowing participants to have a unique experience that is only possible in the given time and place.

When an event is brought to a destination, the association community is enriched with local participants' unique ideas and culture. They are enthusiastic to learn and meet new people and can act as the new blood rejuvenating the congress and association community. Therefore, local communities should be an essential element of the event design, both for rejuvenated the organisation and making it authentic. An event that creates magic for the local community is an event that will create legacy.

Nonetheless, sometimes the local organiser can act as barrier to the event design and success by having a conflicting agenda and fixed thinking, which was coined by the group as the *#Cage of the local organiser*. Early involvement of the local organiser in the design of the congress can help to develop a shared understanding of the congress objectives and design elements and enable magic to happen.

Finally, destinations can play a crucial role in both environmental sustainability and in social aspects. The climate crisis poses significant challenges for creating unforgettable experiences, from travel restrictions to shifting preferences and new regulations. However, it also presents a chance to rethink how we organize congresses. By focusing on environmental sustainability, we can both reduce the delegates' carbon footprint and cater to the growing interest in eco-friendly practices and provide hope and inspiration to those who care most about the planet. At the same time, events that use their collective power to lift *#national restrictions* (including political, human rights, and freedom concerns) and advocate for inclusion, not only open the congress' magical experiences up to those who might have been previously excluded but create a legacy and set a precedent for future congresses. Congress activism can support the strategic objectives and the vision of the association, while creating magic for the congress community and the local society.



LEGO® model representing knowledge and key takeaways being transferred from the congress back to the organisation.

Transferability

Participants should share magical moments from the congress, transferring key takeaways and value to colleagues and other relevant stakeholders. It is therefore important that congresses are designed with transferability in mind.

As with all good things in life, magical moments should be shared; therefore the feeling and the value that the magic moment has created should be easily transferred to colleagues and other stakeholders during and after the event. This will allow the participants on the one hand to recall the magic moment and the respective positive feeling and on the other hand to be appreciated by their colleagues for sharing their takeaways with them and consequently creating further value for the organisation. Also, the transferability of the magic will allow the participants to sustain and further develop his/her *#Individual path* that started with the event. A *#Playful tangible outcome* is always much easier to bring back to work and pass knowledge and magic to colleagues and stakeholders; thus the design of the event should consider how transformational experiences can be used by participants after the event.

A barrier to transferring the magic after the event is *#Hoarding*. Some participants might be reluctant to share the event treasure of knowledge as they want to keep it as loot. While it is understandable that event value is offered to those who have spent time, effort, and money to participate, some elements of value can be shared to expand the impact of the event and to act as promoters of the next edition. Sharing and multiplying event value after the event would be easier if during the event feelings of inclusion, community, and co-creation were cultivated.

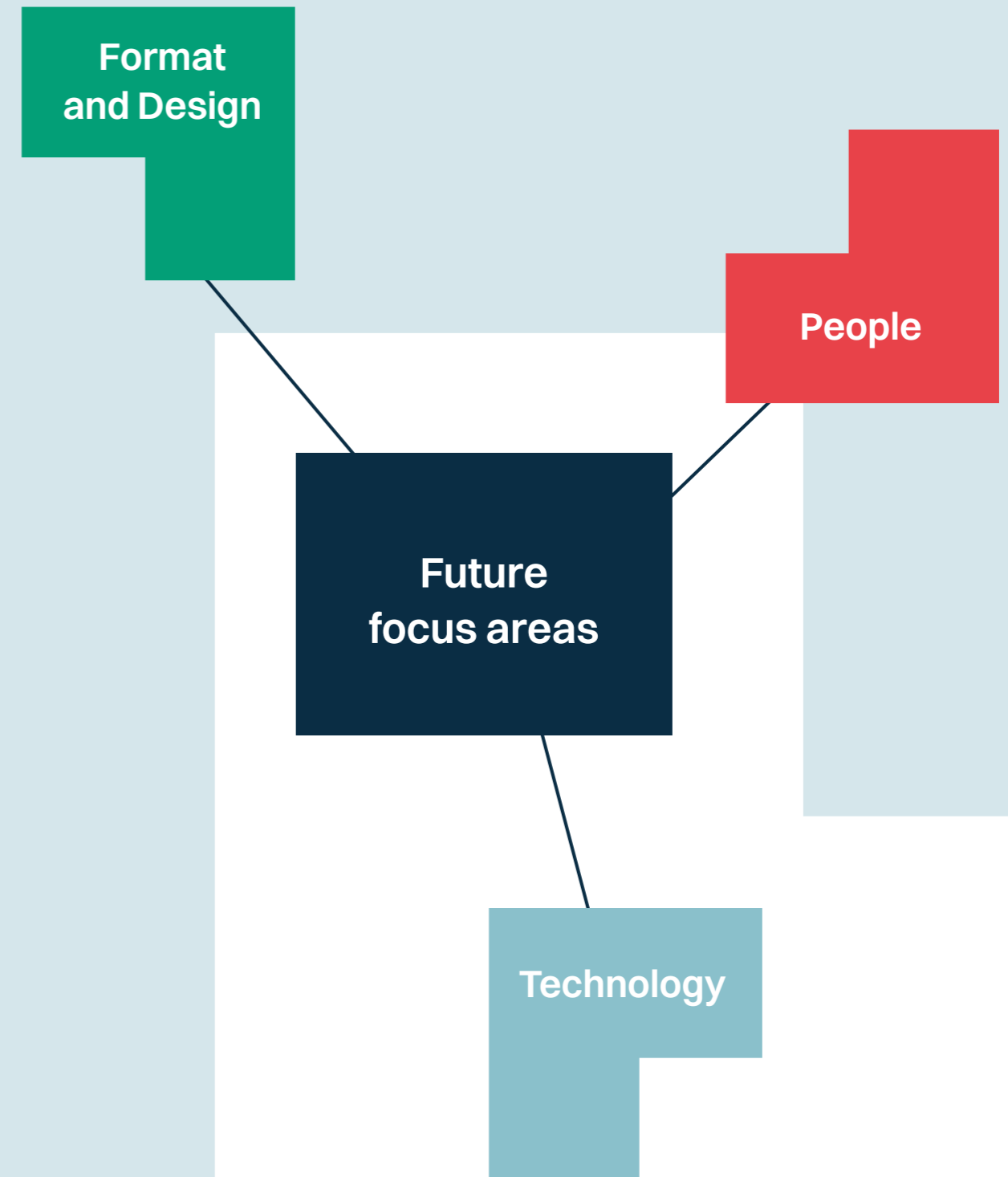
It is crucial to design with impact in mind. Already in the design phase the curator should collaborate with all stakeholders to understand what will be valuable for the participants to take back "home" and how they can best deliver it to increase the impact of the event. Currently, participants have access to presentations, proceedings, videos, participant lists, etc., that constitute a wealth of material. Organisers could look deeper into AI technologies, as they can help us make more sense of this material but also capture the collective intelligence shared during the event and provide useful feedback. This enhanced analytical capacity will provide both a broader view of the event but also deeper and more relevant insights.

MeetDenmark's Way Forward in Pioneering the Congresses of Tomorrow

The business events industry is an industry worth billions, and many international associations have built their entire business model around events. In parallel, the event ecosystem is quite extensive and includes various stakeholders that often act in a rather competitive manner (*#Competition*). Creating *#non-transactional thinking* between stakeholders and identifying new ways of cooperating and creating value for the different sides is crucial. *#Fostering Collaboration/Transparency* is key to optimising resources, creating magic, and addressing global challenges. When thinking about collaboration and transparency we should not neglect that the climate crisis is too big to be addressed by each actor in isolation. The event industry needs to come together and develop eco-friendly practices that can support a just green transition.

The key building blocks are contingent on resources both human and financial and we need to invest in reskilling staff, in attracting new talents, in innovation and especially in new technologies. In the realm of human resources, identifying new roles, developing essential competencies, and ethically utilising AI are crucial steps. Knowledge is key to everything. While the emergence of generative AI will increasingly develop our processing capacity and new knowledge, we as humans also need to ensure good practices and articulate magic moments. We need to enrich the dialogue by sharing good practices. By making good practices available to the broader community (and consequently to generative AI applications), we will learn from each other how to improve our congresses, by trying new things, optimising business practices, and ensuring best use of resources.

We believe that solutions should be focused on three key areas: people, technology, and format design. To rethink these three key elements and overcome the fear of the unknown, we need to work together and exchange best practices, develop a shared understanding of key challenges, generate new knowledge, and build solutions. This will not only help us to create magic for congress participants, but also to create magic for the sustainable development of our society and of the planet. MeetDenmark will pursue and perpetuate the work to reimagine and redesign the congresses of tomorrow and is looking to co-create with all stakeholders, inside and outside the box, to assure that congresses will have a positive impact.



Future focus areas



People

The human factor is central in sparking magic, but apparently staff, leaders, and community all have barriers to overcome in doing so e.g. lack of skills, lack of time, fear, fixed mindset, etc. Considering as well emerging market needs, it is necessary to rethink and reframe the roles and competencies of the events professional and invest in training and reskilling. Without overlooking the importance of cultivating *#Leaders to foster change* and co-creating with *#Multidisciplinary teams*, the group during the workshop identified at least four key roles for the congresses of tomorrow:

- **Event Curators:** Similar to an art biennale curator, they expertly select themes, speakers, and content, crafting a cohesive narrative for the event and ensuring an engaging and harmonious experience. This role transforms academic or corporate gatherings into immersive, thought-provoking events, much like a well-curated art exhibition.
- **Event Problem Solvers:** A role currently covered by the event project role, is a dedicated role for a resourceful professional, fully empowered to identify and solve problems and risks.
- **Event Ambassadors:** They can be either staff or members of the community (often leadership) and their objective is to foster the feeling of belonging (safety, inclusion, transparency) by introducing participants at the congress and helping them make the most out of it.
- **Event Data Analyst:** The event data analyst manages and prompts AI tools, monitors data and provides reports and information to help the design of the event, the delivery of seamless experiences, risk identification and problem solving.

The industry could collectively look more deeply into these job profiles and support the necessary upskilling of the talented people already working in the industry to better serve the needs of tomorrow.

Technology

Technology, especially generative AI, holds untapped potential alongside numerous risks. Datamining combined with AI can greatly support event design, delivery, and evaluation. The expanded capacity to understand participants' needs and behavioural patterns will allow event curators to develop tailored experiences and spark magic. Digitally assessing event performance can provide invaluable real-time analytics to allow quick corrective actions, as well as informed ex-post analysis to improve future designs. AI tools could also undertake tasks that are time-consuming and repetitive and allow event professionals to focus on more creative roles and spark magic. In parallel, congresses' dependency on cloud services, the internet of things, etc., will increase cybersecurity needs. Developing our capacity to use AI ethically and efficiently, will be key to the success of any congress. From prompting AI to complex programming, a new level of technological literacy is highly needed.

Format Design

The design of the physical event space is crucial in facilitating the magic of the congress. The flow of people inside the venue, and the architecture of choices should be well-designed to create seamless and intuitive experiences.

A good design should help participants differentiate their experience and develop a unique learning path. To succeed in this design, we need to look outside the current framework and employ outside-the-box thinking through co-design with architects, neuromarketing experts, game designers, AI experts, etc.



Contributors – the people behind the LEGO® workshop

This report would not have been possible without the motivation, commitment, and creativity of the workshop participants.

Workshop Participants

Amélie Trémolière

Communications and Events Operations Lead
ESAE (European Society of Association Executives)

Jesper Grenaa

Senior Project Manager
MeetDenmark

Anne Lind Vidkjær

Project manager
VisitAarhus Convention Bureau

Laetitia Delzenne

Head of Events Management
UITP

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier

Deputy Convention Director
Copenhagen's Convention Bureau

Lemmietta G. McNeilly

PhD, CCC-SLP, FASAE, CAE, FNAP,
ASHA Fellow Chief Staff Officer
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
ASHA and ASAE Board Members

Carola van der Hoeff

COO and Congress Director / President
International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) /
Associations & Conference Forum

Marta I. De Los Ríos White

Senior Project Manager and Capacity Builder
European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL)

Dominik Rinnhofer

Professor in Game Design
Macromedia University

Mette Dam

Project manager
Aalborg Convention Bureau

Feriel Saouli

CEO
SEC Newgate EU

Peter Dyhr Andreassen

Head of Secretariat
MeetDenmark

Glen Burrige

Executive Director
European Federation of Geologists

Tania Bauman

CEO
World Energy Council



The LSP workshop was designed and delivered by Association by Design SRL with the support of LEGO® Serious Play® Certified Facilitator Team.

Stylianos Filopoulos

Founder & Managing Director
Association By Design SRL

Jesper Jensen

Hintz Consulting

Robert Rasmussen

LEGO Serious Play® Master Trainer
Rasmussen Consulting

The author of this report was Stylianos Filopoulos, Managing Director of Association By Design, SRL for MeetDenmark.

To learn more about the initiative and the various LEGO® models and building blocks of magic go to

meetdenmark.org



MeetDenmark
The Danish Business Events Association



