Main Stage Programme

July 19, 2024 | Penang Institute, Malaysia

Main Stage

July 19th

9:00 AM - 9:10 AM

The Indie Revolution

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

9:10 AM - 9:30 AM

Coffee Chat: Growing and Scaling with Klook

From heading up consumer marketing for Klook in Singapore in her early career, this enterprising, creative leader is now running three major markets for the tours and activities unicorn. What are the trends she's seeing across these three markets which are at different levels of evolution, and how can indie travel providers leverage this moment in time when travellers are more prepared to pay for experiences than ever before? Expect lots of tips, insights and advice in this opening conversation.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Sarah Wan
General Manager, Indonesia, Malaysia & Singapore
Klook

9:30 AM - 9:50 AM

The Changing OTA Landscape: Working With These Platforms

The lines are blurring in distribution. No OTA is now just one thing. Almost all are offering more than one vertical in their bid to offer – however you wish to call it – the connected trip, the one-stop travel platform or the travel superapp. As the lines blur, how is this impacting independent hotels, alternative accommodation and tours and activities, and how do indie suppliers work with them?

Moderator:

Chan Chee Chong
CEO & Co-founder
GlobalTix

Panel:

Fabian Teja
Country Director, Malaysia & Brunei
Agoda

Ashley Xie
Country Manager, Tours & Tickets, Malaysia/Brunei
Trip.com Group

9:50 AM - 10:10 AM

The Making Of An Organic Tourism Destination: Lessons from Thailand

Meet the initiator of the organic tourism movement in Thailand. A former investment banker, he initially started The Sampran Model to gather organic farmers in the area surrounding his family's resort in Nakhon Pathom province, 45m drive from Bangkok. He then founded the Thai Organic Consumers Association to raise awareness among consumers and since then, has garnered the support of the Tourism Authority of Thailand to develop and promote organic tourism. Today, the TOCA platform connects more than 1,000 organic farmers to hotels, restaurants and convention centres.

Arrut Navaraj
Founder & President
Thai Organic Consumers Association (TOCA)

10:10 AM - 10:20 AM

Indie Hotels: The Competitive Landscape

How has the market been like for independent hotels in the region? What is the competitive landscape? And how can indie travel providers leverage trends such as events-driven tourism,
and other opportunities?

Kim Ong
Regional Director, Southeast Asia
STR

10:20 AM - 10:50 AM

Kopi & Kueh

10:50 AM - 11:20 AM

Coffee Chat: Bringing New Life To Heritage Sites Through Stories

She's the voice behind the Blue Mansion story of Penang and now she's bringing the historic site of Fort Cornwallis to life. Find out how she blends her passion for conservation and heritage with a knack for story telling to make heritage sites relevant, entertaining and compelling for a new generation of traveller.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Loh-Lim Lin Lee
Heritage Consultant, Historical & Social Researcher
Arkitek LLA

11:20 AM - 11:30 AM

The Rise of Digital Nomads: Trends & Opportunities

Arifah Sharifuddin
Head of Digital Tourism
MDEC (Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation)

11:30 AM - 11:50 AM

Coffee Chat: Marketing Sabah

The boutique destination of Sabah has seen a resurgence in its tourism in recent years and in the first quarter of this year (Jan-April), it saw a 26.6% increase in total arrivals to 1,003,955 and more impressively, a 74.3% growth in international arrivals to 396,584. Tourism receipts grew 37.6% to RM2.23B. What's behind this healthy performance? What are its plans for the future? We hear from the leader who's had more than 30 years of experience marketing this East Malaysian destination and now has a new mandate, to grow the business events sector.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Noredah Othman
CEO
Sabah Convention Bureau

11:50 AM - 12:10 PM

The Indie Hospitality Revolution

Technology is shaking up the landscape and giving opportunities to hoteliers to reimagine their revenue potential and different streams, from revenue management to mastering online distribution, creating ancillary revenues and knowing how to use data to find the right traveller. Get the big picture here, then choose your workshops after to get deeper into the topics.

Smart Use of Data To Find The Right Traveller:

Charles Tang
Regional Sales Manager, APAC
Lighthouse

Mastering Online Distribution:

Ethan Wong
Head of Pricing
ZUZU Hospitality Solutions

12:10 PM - 12:30 PM

Inside Tours & Activities: Customer Acquisition, Working With OTAs and Payments

Is social media really making it easier for indie operators to find their customers, or is that a myth? What are the other methods of customer acquisition out there? Are virtual influencers part of the future? The fact remains though, OTAs are getting more powerful in scale and reach, and indie operators have to learn how to optimize their partnerships with these distributors. What works? And what do you have to do about payments to ensure conversions? Get the big picture here, then choose your workshops later to get deeper into the topics.

Dawn Jeremiah
Vice President, Global Brand Marketing
Go City

Chan Chee Chong
CEO & Co-founder
GlobalTix

12:30 PM - 12:55 PM

Startup Stories & Lessons

We gather our cast of indie startups and hear their stories, the challenges they face and the opportunities they can create for your business.

Moderator:

Arvindh Yuvaraj
Content Lead
WiT

Panel:

Raudha Zaini
Strategic Partnerships & Projects Lead
HalalTrip

Low Wan Xin
Founder
Wanderworks Lab and Remote Work Malaysia

Faizal Abd Kadir
Founder
Loka

12:55 PM - 1:55 PM

The WiT Indie Street Food Fair

1:55 PM - 2:50 PM

Workshop Time

First, gather in the main hall and pick the workshop you want.

A: The Science & Art of Doing Good: Sustainability & ESG In Action

Everyone wants to do better by the environment and local communities and be more accessible and inclusive of all customers. But we also know that if you can't measure it, you can't improve it. Sustainability matters need to be measured, and trackable, whether it be in hospitality or in general business operations. From energy to waste management, to community engagement, how can you make your business more respectful of the environment and local communities you engage with? Plus, how can you make your business more inclusive and accessible? Get first hand lessons and share best practices in this workshop.

Andrew Dixon
Owner
Nikoi/Cempedak Islands

Yock Song Law
Co-founder, Questeon / Partner & Head of Partnerships, Tribe Tours, Singapore

B: Hospitality: Direct Bookings, Ancillary Revenues, Revenue Management

How do you use AI and data to drive more revenues and profitability to your hotels? This session will cover topics such as revenue management, online distribution, ancillary revenues and data analytics to find the right traveller.

Charles Tang
Regional Sales Manager, APAC
Lighthouse

Ethan Wong
Head of Pricing
ZUZU Hospitality Solutions

C: Tours & Activities: Tech, Product & Distribution

What tools can you leverage to make your product more discoverable, and bookable? How do you use AI to supercharge customer service? How do you manage your partnerships with OTAs? All these questions and more answered by the experts leading this workshop.

Chan Chee Chong
CEO & Co-founder
GlobalTix

Ashley Xie
Country Manager, Tours & Tickets, Malaysia/Brunei
Trip.com Group

D: Customer Acquisition & Content Creation

How do you use AI to supercharge content creation, and yet keep your authentic voice? What are the most effective customer acquisition methods out there? How do you work with influencers, human or virtual? What's the best way to get your product to market?

Dawn Jeremiah
Vice President, Global Brand Marketing
Go City

Jasmine Seah
Marketing Director, Indonesia & Singapore
Klook

2:50 PM - 3:00 PM

Workshop turnaround

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Repeat workshops

4:00 PM - 4:25 PM

Kopi & Kueh

4:25 PM - 4:45 PM

Coffee Chat: The Art, Tech and Heart of Brand Marketing

This Penang-born executive has followed her passion in media, communications and marketing, working in content across several brands, until she entered travel through KAYAK, the US-based travel metasearch giant. She joined Go City nearly five years ago to spearhead their e-commerce and marketing activities in Asia Pacific and recently transitioned to a new role of global brand marketing. She was deeply involved in the launch of Go City's Weixin Mini Program as part of the company's expansion into the Chinese market. In this session, she will cast her eye over the changing landscape of content and marketing, and share tips on addressing the tech-savvy Chinese traveller.

Interviewer:

Yeoh Siew Hoon
Founder
WiT

Speaker:

Dawn Jeremiah
Vice President, Global Brand Marketing
Go City

4:45 PM - 5:00 PM

Design Thinking & Story Telling To Create Experiences

Technology can help transform spaces but at the heart of great experiences is imaginative design thinking and compelling story telling. Get inspired by a film producer who's been using audio and stories to transform spaces such as museums and attractions and create experiences for companies such as Klook and Vivid Sydney.

Jason Chan
Co-founder
Cinewav

5:00 PM - 5:20 PM

Coffee Chat: A Tour Operator Trying To Find Its Sweet Spot

For Tribe Tours, storytelling is an absolutely essential element to staying relevant as a tour operator in a destination where, let's face it, visitors don't face much trouble in getting around; it's how you differentiate and add value. There's also much information around these days for travellers to access wherever they are, even in the most remote places – so how do you continue to add value as a tour operator in today's age of technology and digitization?

Yock Song Law
Co-Founder, Questeon
Partner & Head of Partnerships, Tribe Tours, Singapore

5:20 PM - 5:50 PM

Meet The Creators, Curators & Community Weavers

Meet the humans who have created communities around their curated experiences, which have been made with love, fuelled by passion and driven by purpose. What are the challenges they have overcome and what are the opportunities they see in their creations, going forward?

Moderator:

Sarah Wan
General Manager, Indonesia, Malaysia & Singapore
Klook

Panel:

Eric Chong
Owner
Green Acres, Penang

Li-Chin Kuo
Founder, Taitung Slow Food Festival
CEO, Co-create Planning & Design Consultancy

Jane Iyer
Founder & CEO
Jane's Singapore Tours

Henry Sun
COO & Founder
Stunning Taiwan Travel

5:50 PM

It's A Wrap

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

WiT Indie party, hosted by My Indie World

Join us for an evening of cocktails to celebrate the indie spirit of travel, with **My Indie World**.

Venue:

Courtyard, China House Penang
153 & 155 Beach Street
10300 George Town, Penang

Programme correct at time of publishing
All times shown are in Malaysia Time (GMT +8)

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