

Register now for APOT - A new way to network



Creating the world's longest spring roll at APOT in Da Nang

For those who have yet to attend an [APOT](#) event or know little about APOT then your ideas of a networking conference are probably still anchored in the old familiar format.

Since APOT (the Asia Pacific Onboard Services Association) was formed, the aim has been to create an environment and experience that is nothing like the traditional conference setting. [Register now for the event running November 25 to 28 in Danang, Vietnam.](#)

Why do we do this? Two main reasons

For a start, it's more fun. We do not agree that a conference or networking event needs to follow the standard that is used across other industries. Standard conferences sell themselves on the content — and that's usually more for justification than for actual education.

The other main reason for APOT's unconventional approach to events is based on the feedback we get from attendees who all say that maximizing networking opportunities is more beneficial than almost any other aspect of the event.

The opportunities for us all in this business to gather in one place and simply exchange experiences and learn from each other are way too few. We have all been at conferences where we spend hours listening to various presentations, most of which mean little or nothing to us only to get more value from the 15-minute coffee break where we can mingle and discuss with our industry colleagues.

Let's also not forget that we are in the business of providing solutions to the travel industry for making customers happy. A relaxing, fun and comfortable travel experience at a reasonable price point is the challenge faced by most airlines and travel suppliers. We share the same mindset, so it makes sense to create the networking experience using the same philosophy.

Right from the start, APOT Founder Keerthi Happugesddenya, or "Happy" to most of us, took the view that APOT must create networking events that reflect the industry's own philosophy.

Ever since the first APOT — held in Bali, Indonesia, the most important features of the events have been the networking events. The social gatherings are always the high point of the events. Whilst the seminar content is always appropriate and interesting, it is not the key reason for attending.

We understand that this makes “selling” the idea of attending difficult for some attendees — especially those from large conservatively-minded corporate operations. APOT traditionally attracts CEOs, COOs and other leaders who are more independently able to assess the value of attending an event.

How can a golf tournament or a river cruise possibly be to the benefit of my company?

Well, the answer is actually very simple. Where else and when else would you have the opportunity to meet, exchange views, educate and learn from others at your level who are geographically always inaccessible? Face-to-face talking, in a relaxed and de-stressed environment is the perfect opportunity to network for the benefit of you, your colleagues and your company — and only APOT has that at the top of its agenda when organizing events.

So, what actually is APOT? Technically, we are a non-profit Association of Professionals incorporated in Australia but with events held all over the region. We have a “membership” of sorts — a list of everyone who has ever attended. There are no membership fees. We raise the money for events through specific sponsorship for that event and attendance fees for the event.

On the subject of geography, yes, APOT is the ASIA Pacific Onboard Travel Association, but this does not preclude anyone from anywhere in the world from attending. Most who attend have dealings with the region or operate within it, but this is also an opportunity for anyone globally who is looking to enter this region to come along and network with us, learn about Asia and do business. Previous events have been held in Shanghai, Perth, Colombo, Seoul, Da Nang and Bali.

Top executives, CEOs, CFOs and COOs from airlines including Sri Lankan, AisAisa, Vietnam Airlines, Korean Air, Cathay Pacific, Thai, MAS and many others have been in attendance. Caterers and suppliers to the airlines and caterers from around the world including international brands like dnata and Gategroup as well as many local and regional operators like Oberoi, SATS, and Korean Air Catering. Suppliers ranging from wine, food and onboard amenity makers to hi-loaders also join. IT suppliers to the industry, consultants, and advisors benefit from attending as well.

APOT is also much more than simply meeting and chatting. The Seminar is a major part of the event but we also make sure we encourage the younger generations and up-and-coming chefs with our Airline Themed Chefs Competition.

Another fun and totally unique feature of APOT is the Guinness Book Records. APOT is on record for a tea-picking record and the World’s Longest Spring Roll. This year will be no different and I encourage you to check the website to see the details!

This year APOT is back in Da Nang, Vietnam and we are extending our reach to include the region's tour operators and also the air freight operators. The “Networking Differently” theme will prevail and all who come will have not only a great time but more importantly, leave with new, fresh ideas, new friends, new colleagues and a real understanding of the benefits of face-to-face networking APOT style!

For further information please contact Jeremy Clark or Happy.