



THE BUSINESS AVIATION ASIA FORUM & EXPO

By Alud Davies

What is an event if it can't be referred to by its acronym? The US has NBAA-BACE, Europe has EBACE and Latin America has LABACE. Asia used to have ABACE, but with little appetite on behalf of the organizers to return after Covid, Experia Events is stepping up to the plate and introducing a new acronym that it hopes will enter everybody's vernacular.

So enter BAAFEx, the Business Aviation Asia Forum and Expo, a new show that will be held in Singapore. The name neatly explains exactly what the event will be, with a dedicated business aviation event complimented by an equally dedicated business aviation exhibition.

According to Leck Chet Lam, Managing Director, Experia Events, BAAFEx is looking to fill the void left over by ABACE.

"The entire [business aviation] ecosystem has been very supportive of having a show," says Leck. "And I think that is

because of the vacuum left by ABACE which had its last edition in 2019. So since then and now, there has been the lack of a dedicated business aviation event in this part of the world."

ABACE had quickly become a staple of the business aviation calendar, especially in Asia. It had been a full rival to NBAA-BACE, albeit on a smaller scale and Asia focused. It was, however, the place where the industry gathered every year, not only to catch up with clients and make new contacts, but also to see the latest OEMs offerings in a large static display that was connected to the exhibition halls.

But ABACE had a problem. Although billed as the Asian Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition, the fact that it was held in Shanghai each year meant that the greater majority of exhibitors hailed from China itself. That's not to say that there weren't exhibitors and visitors from other countries, but if you were to walk around ABACE then you'd be forgiven for thinking that it was just a Chinese show.

That's one of the reasons why the event is being held outside of China, with Singapore being one of only a small handful of possible alternatives. Singapore itself attracts many visitors from across the region and elsewhere in the world and is viewed as an 'easy' city to visit for non-residents, thanks in no small part to the large-scale adoption of English as one of Singapore's main languages, but also through Singapore's reputation as a clean and efficient city.

“The aim of BAAFEx, is to provide a platform that the community can come and converge, meet and discuss opportunities,”

and use BAAFEx and Singapore as a springboard into the growing business aviation industry, be it in Southeast Asia, or the rest of the Asia-Pacific region,” says Leck.

There have been rumblings about various different parties looking to capitalize on the lack of ABACE, although the majority of those rumors involved companies that had not run events before. The people behind BAAFEx, Experia Events, are used to running large scale events, and behind the Singapore Airshow that takes place every other year, as well as several other large-scale events.

“All of the people that we have approached have been very happy that Experia is taking up this vacuum and organizing a business aviation event,” says Leck.

It's hard not to draw comparisons with ABACE, although for the BAAFEx team, it's not by design, rather that there's only really one format you can run a large-scale business aviation event. Especially one that will appeal to all aspects of the business aviation ecosystem, rather than just focusing on operations, or safety, or technology.

“We have people from the entire ecosystem that have signed up for the show,” says Leck. “From the OEMs to the fleet operators, from the regulatory authorities and people who are dealing with systems, and satellite companies to communications people, I think we have a wide spectrum of people that have signed up.”

As well as the exhibition side of the event, Experia is introducing a conference section to the event as well. This is being jointly arranged with local Singapore company Francis and Low, which has been busy setting the agenda and finding speakers.

“For the conference we have multiple sessions arranged on all of the relevant trending topics. So for example we have panels on what are the current opportunities and challenges in the industry and the

status of the FBO and MRO businesses,” says Leck. “Sustainability is also a big item that is on the conference program.”

Although there was a conference side to ABACE, this was very much a fringe activity, however with more companies focusing on thought leadership than traditional print media to get their marketing messages across, speaker opportunities at conferences and forums have become more valuable.

“The speaker's response has been overwhelmingly positive. We have people from Honeywell, we have people from the authorities, IBAC (International Business Aviation Council) and the FlightSafety Foundation,” says Leck. “So, the senior leadership of the conference speakers has also been very good in terms of the response.”

One of the main draws for an exhibition is the chance to get up close and personal with some of the latest business aircraft, and the BAAFEx team has been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that the event will be held alongside a static display. Much like with the Singapore Airshow, the static display of aircraft will be right outside the exhibition halls, meaning that unlike NBAA-BACE, attendees won't have to take shuttle buses from the halls to the static.

“The other element that we have for the show is the static aircraft display. So right now we have four confirmed aircraft and we are working on more, we are just now working on the details to try and get them confirmed,” says Leck. “So I also believe that this gives trade attendees the chance to go and visit the latest and greatest aircraft, get a tour of the aircraft and understand it better, to hopefully buy or charter it for their use.”

With the event rapidly approaching the BAAFEx team says that more and more companies are signing up to exhibit. As a first run event some companies have naturally taken a 'wait and see' approach, and will have a small presence at the event, whilst others have taken a more forward approach and have committed fully to the show.

Either way, at the end of the show Experia will take stock of the event, taking a deep look into what worked and what didn't work during the show. And then start planning for its return in 2027.

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