

# CASE STUDY: BUSINESS EVENTS CANADA AND TOURISME MONTRÉAL WIN NEW WORLD SUMMIT AI EVENT



*World AI Summit, Amsterdam*

Montréal will host the World Summit AI Americas for four consecutive years from 2019 through 2022, with the expectation that the event will eventually host 6,000 participants in the last year.

London-based InspiredMinds, which launched the original World AI Summit in Amsterdam in 2017, was looking to create a sister event in North America. Canada wasn't originally considered in the initial pool of prospects, but that changed during London Tech Week in June 2018.

Introduced by the Canadian Trade Commissioners in London during London Tech Week, Business Events Canada met with InspiredMinds to showcase the wealth of Canadian industry and academic expertise in artificial intelligence. That meeting secured the lead for World Summit AI Americas due to Business Events Canada profiling the strength of the AI cluster in Canada. Following London Tech Week, the organization connected various Canadian DMMOs and InspiredMinds.

Tourisme Montréal was eager to bid on this event to further elevate its standing in the world of machine learning. The organization hosted Lucy Rothwell, managing director of InspiredMinds, and her team in September 2018. She was invited to scope out the city and meet with people like Yoshua Bengio, lead professor of the Department of Computer Science and Operations Research at the University of Montréal. Bengio is considered one of the world's top leading experts in advancing artificial intelligence.

"Lucy didn't care about hotels and that type of thing. She wanted to meet with leaders from the artificial intelligence industry," said Guy-Joffroy Lord, director of business events for Tourisme Montréal. "So we accompanied her to about 15 visits with stakeholders from the AI cluster, as well as potential sponsors from various economic sector development agencies and financial institutions."

For Tourisme Montréal, providing potential sponsorship opportunities was as important as connecting Rothwell and her colleagues with the city's AI cluster.

"We handed these people the business proposal from World AI Summit and we told them, 'Look, we're going to introduce you to the people from the AI Summit. They're coming to visit Montréal. They're considering our city to host this great conference that will attract more than 5,000 people eventually, and help us grow our sectors significantly, and they will ask you for money. They are here to find support



to make sure that we have the right ecosystem to accommodate their needs."

Lord said that the fact that his office briefed the people that Rothwell was scheduled to meet was very helpful, because the expectations were managed about the bigger economic development story that would benefit Montréal in the long run. The sheer variety of meetings was also important.

Tourisme Montréal introduced Rothwell to potential funders, potential partners, and potential speakers. The DMMO hosted meetings with AI cluster organizations in Montréal, such as Element AI, IVADO data management, and a few incubators of AI startups, all of which contribute to Montréal's status as a global deep learning hub.

"Finally, InspiredMinds chose Montréal as the destination to host the first four years of their conference starting next year," explained Lord. "We were super happy and proud. It was a very interesting learning experience for us because of the way we organized that city tour and the site visits. I think it's the way of the future for us. It's the way we want to do business."