



Communiqué

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER KONGRESSZENTREN

Working Together Makes Everyone Stronger

All of us who work in the meetings industry know the importance of maintaining a balance between competition and cooperation. At one level, we all compete for clients, sometimes directly. But at another level, we understand the importance of cooperation; of sharing information and learning from each other's experiences to improve the overall performance of the industry. By maintaining this kind of balance we not only improve the performance of the industry but our own prospects as well.

The same is true of industry organizations. We all compete for resources, attention, new members and the loyalty of the members we already have. Yet we also cooperate in many areas of mutual interest and opportunity. Again, it's a balance – and the exact balance is a product of circumstances as much as of how closely we share a common purpose and perspective.

But there has never been a better time to stress the cooperative side – the need for industry associations to work together – for a number of good and urgent reasons:

First, we need to deliver as much as we can for our members, who more than ever before need to weigh the value of their organizational memberships. By working with other industry associations, we can



AIPC President Barbara Maple

improve the quality of information we provide, and get the benefit of other perspectives on what issues and practices are most important. At the same time, we can produce better advice on how to respond to these issues – and that's of value as well.

Secondly, working together can make us more cost efficient by allowing us to pool our resources and talent in the development of programming and materials of common interest. There's not much point in spending our limited resources on work someone else has already done – or where we can reduce the cost by working cooperatively. There have already been many examples of multiple publications, research or educational programs on essentially the same topic – simply because several different organizations each worked in isolation from each other. None of us have the luxury of operating completely independently when there are

opportunities of mutual interest available.

But finally, and perhaps most important of all, working together can increase our profile and impact as an industry at a time when we are trying to establish the congress business as an important element in the global economy. Compared with many other sectors, we are practically invisible – and that doesn't help when we need attention for our issues. But we're a relatively small and loosely organized industry – and that means the only way we can possibly hope to achieve greater recognition is if we work together in a coordinated way so that we reinforce each other.

There will always be competition amongst industry organizations, not to mention differences in perspectives and priorities. But there are times when these differences need to be set aside in the interest of greater efficiency and effectiveness for our members. This is one of those times – and AIPC is working hard to build new bridges in this regard. At the moment, we are pursuing a number of cooperative programs with IAPCO, JMJC and WCVM along with exploring educational opportunities with IAAM. Not all will be successful – but each one that works will stretch our resources and increase our effectiveness further.

And that's the least our members should expect!

Board Meeting Focuses on Industry Recovery

Board members at AIPC's most recent board meeting in Brussels took the opportunity to review Strategic Business Plan priorities to ensure that current activities accurately reflected the most urgent requirements of the Association.

The Board was responding to a general sense that international congress and exhibition participation still remains somewhat lower than expected at the end of a turbulent year, and that actions to strengthen the role of industry associations and the level of cooperation are important components in business recovery. Among the resulting actions were:

* Board members are assuming new responsibilities for reporting industry conditions and assisting in membership development for their respective regions.

* Educational programs are proceeding on four fronts, including a continuation of the highly successful Excellence in Customer Service (ECS) program offered in conjunction with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, a series of courses offered by NEC Birmingham in partnership with AIPC and topic-specific seminars to be offered at major trade shows. AIPC will also participate in exploration of the potential for a European Facility Management School in cooperation with WCVM and IAAM.

* Closer ties are to be developed amongst industry associations in order to both enhance the impact of industry efforts and to build better overall working

relations in the industry. Activities are now underway with JMJC (for an industry profile-building program) and IAPCO (for joint programs and publications in areas of common interest).



AIPC board, staff and guests in Brussels

* New membership and sponsorship programs are aimed at ensuring AIPC remains a truly global organization with broad geographic representation and is availing itself of all available opportunities for industry partnerships.

* A more extensive marketing and communications effort has begun, incorporating the production of new Association materials, regular media articles and releases, an update of the AIPC web site and promotion of the AIPC Quality image as a distinguishing feature of Association activities.

* A review and redefinition of the AIPC research program has commenced in order to

ensure that the highest priority is being placed on areas which best reflect the interests of members, and

* A review of all AIPC activities is underway with the strategic objective of identifying and promoting cultural diversity as both an essential element in AIPC's international mandate and an opportunity to further enhance the perceived benefits arising from the meetings industry world-wide.

Figueras' New MEGASEAT Combines Technology, Design and Comfort

Working together with the architect Antonio Bonamusa, the Figueras Design Centre has developed the new MEGASEAT line, intended to create individual work centres for use in conference rooms. The products in this line combine technological features, a high degree of functionality, elegant design and generous dimensions, and fully reflect the Figueras Design Centre's extensive experience in the seating sector.

In MEGASEAT, Figueras International Seating has brought together the technology, design and comfort required to turn a simple seat into a sophisticated individual work centre. In effect, it is a new concept in seating that responds to the demands of conference rooms where the use of laptop computers and communications technologies has become the norm. The F-45 individual desk, an accessory to the seat itself, provides users with access to communications systems of all types – telephone, fax, Internet – as well as electrical outlets, a microphone, voting and translation systems, and individual lighting. MEGASEAT has also been specially designed to accommodate cables, outlets and screens for closed-circuit TV and can be equipped with an individual lectern for short presentations.

In addition to offering a range of technological features, Figueras is well aware of the current trend that stresses the need for maximum user comfort in public facilities. As a result, the new line of seating has been developed with a distance between seat axes of 58 cm (22.8") and a maximum of 62 cm

provided by the seat as a whole. The backrest and the headrest are two independent pieces, which means that different upholstery elements can be combined and maintenance is simple.

The TX acoustic system is another distinctive feature. Incorporated in the seat's backrest, this system can considerably improve the acoustics of the conference room where seating is installed. Sound reverberates through the acoustic perforations in the back cover of the backrest.

In keeping with the high safety standards applied in the manufacture of all Figueras brand products, MEGASEAT also incorporates the TX safety system, which involves the insertion of a fire barrier between foam and upholstery. The system, developed by Figueras' own laboratory, does not allow flames to penetrate to the interior of the foam core. Tests demonstrate that fire only results in the burning of seat upholstery and that flames are in this way prevented from spreading.

The presentation of MEGASEAT coincides with the launch of new designer upholstery fabrics, which are pleasant to the touch and of superb quality.



(24.4"). MEGASEAT also serves as a design element to enhance conference room décor. An innovative design uses stylized lines and an elegant armrest to create a distinctive character.

Another of the points that sets this new product apart is an ergonomic headrest that is fully integrated in the backrest and enhances the comfort

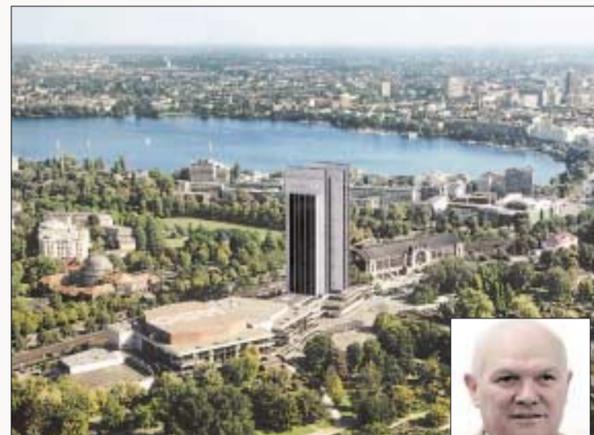
NEW MEMBERS:

Congress Centrum Hamburg

The CCH – Congress Centrum Hamburg is one of Europe's largest and most modern conference centres, and is ranked among the top venues worldwide for international conferences. On

average, some 200 conferences and meetings are held at the CCH each year, attended by about 150,000 people, and there are also some 200 cultural and social events each year, attended by about 400,000 people.

The purpose built congress center is located in the heart of the city, surrounded by the "Planten un Blumen" park. It has flexible facilities which include 19 halls with a total of 10,000 seats; 4,500 sq.m. of space for accompanying exhibitions; an additional 64,000 sq.m. in adjacent exhibition halls and a multi-functional registration area. Service offerings include qualified event management and coordination, experienced professional staff with a good track record and excellent congress organization and hotel service. Congress Centrum Hamburg is easy to reach as it is only 8 km



Joachim Dieterich

from the Hamburg Airport, and is located next to the ICE high speed train station with the suburban railway (S-Bahn), subway (U-Bahn) and buses are on the doorstep. For the convenience of those arriving by vehicle, it is connected to the European freeway network. It is convenient for delegates, as it is adjacent to a first class hotel and within walking distance from other international hotels.

Hamburg itself offers a variety of diversions to delegates, from the historic Speicherstadt to sightseeing on the Alster and Elbe or visiting Hamburg's famous port and fish market. Hamburg's international cuisine, lively art and culture scene – including the performances of world-famous musicals – and shopping arcades provide other attractive options for visitors. From the excitement of a cosmopolitan city to the blissful contrast of relaxing nearby parks, Hamburg has something for every visitor.

Québec City Convention Centre

The Québec City Convention Centre is at the heart of one of North America's most charming and accommodating cities. As the only fortified city on the continent, Québec City has a uniquely historic

character combining the allure of old France with a distinctively European atmosphere. At the same time, it offers all the comfort and amenities of a large city in a compact and accessible downtown core.

The Centre itself is located across from the Parliament Building and just steps away from the historic fortifications and countless attractions of old Québec. It offers some 18,580 square meters of function space capable of accommodating up to 10,000 participants, including a 6970 square meter exhibit hall, a 3210 square meter convention hall, a 2320 square meter multi-purpose room and 36 meeting rooms. The facility is new, ultramodern in design and technically advanced in order to meet the highest



Claude Pinault

demands of international events.

Service is both friendly and fully integrated, providing complete coverage from initial booking through event completion. It includes some of the best food and beverage offerings in the industry,

comparable to the superb cuisine of surrounding restaurants. Safety and security are key features, with advanced security equipment and professionally trained security staff in place. Close proximity to all visitor amenities as well as direct indoor access to two of the city's leading hotels round out the experience.

Close to major centres like New York, Boston and Toronto, Québec City Convention Centre provides the perfect combination of destination experience and facility excellence, making it the choice of an increasing number of both North American and International events.

AIPC Educational Program Dates Set for 2003!

Dates for AIPC's educational offerings, including the ever-popular Excellence in Customer Service courses at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, have now been set for next year. They are:

AIPC Excellence in Customer Service – Edinburgh
16 – 21 March
8 – 14 November

Understanding the International Associations Market: How to Win More International Bids
7 – 9 February: Birmingham
5 – 7 April: Frankfurt
12 – 14 October: Birmingham

Advanced Influencing Skills/Coaching Skills/Effective Commercial Negotiation
17 – 20 March: Birmingham

Behavioural Interviewing/Supervisory Management/Emotional Intelligence and Leadership
13 – 15 June: Birmingham

Advanced Presentation Skills
10 – 11 November: Birmingham

Assertiveness/Persuasion Skills
12 – 13 November: Birmingham
Further details and registration information are available from the AIPC Secretariat Office.

To keep in touch with AIPC, visit www.aipc.org

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President: **Barbara Maple**, Vancouver • bmaple@bcpavco.com
Vice President: **Juan Garaiurrebaso**, Bilbao • dirgeneral@feriadebilbao.com
Treasurer: **Edgar Hirt**, München • hirt@messe-muenchen.de
Warren Buckley, Singapore • warren@siccc.com
Antti Vihinen, Lahti • antti.vihinen@lahti.fi
Pierre Gilliot, Genève • p.gilliot@fipoi.ch
Christina Nicholson, Birmingham • tina.nicholson@mail.necgroup.co.uk

SECRETARY GENERAL
Marianne de Raay • marianne.de.raay@skynet.be
Rue de l'Amazone 55, 1060 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 (0) 2 534 59 53 • Fax: +32 (0) 2 534 63 38
Mobile +32 (0) 496 23 53 27

EDITORIAL
Criterion Communications Inc., **Rod Cameron** • Vancouver, BC Canada
Tel.: +1-604-836-2123 • Fax: +1-604-263-2173

Cooperative Solutions to Event Security

Event security is an issue of increasing importance these days and one that cannot be addressed by facilities alone. Recognizing the importance of an integrated approach, AIPC has partnered with the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) to jointly define the challenges and solutions of event security from the points of view of the two key players in any event – the organizer and the venue.

The project will have two aspects. First, AIPC will be reviewing security guidelines developed for publication by IAPCO to ensure their relevance to congress centres. These guidelines will thus reflect the combined perspectives of the two groups, and offer suggestions as to how both planners and facilities can benefit from a joint approach. In addition, the associations will be presenting a joint seminar at IMEX entitled “Cooperative Solutions to Event Security”. This session is intended to both report on the progress being made in this cooperative effort and present the different perspectives each group brings to the discussion. In addition, it will offer practical solutions to immediate security issues faced by planners and facilities in an increasingly challenging global environment.

The project is one of several now being examined in an effort to improve industry cooperation and allow different organizations to benefit from the views and experience of industry colleagues. “This is an industry that depends on different groups working together to create the best possible experience for the client, and that means we need to pay attention to the question of how we can best cooperate as event partners”, says AIPC President Barbara Maple. “It’s our hope that these projects will lead to an ongoing partnership that will help us all perform better.”

Who is IAPCO?

IAPCO (International Association of Professional Congress Organizers) was founded in 1968 under the auspices of the Union des Associations Internationales (UAI) to meet the needs of congresses, conferences, conventions, meetings and seminars that started to boom after the Second World War. From that time on, there has been a need for professional experts to manage the booming market that has continued to grow worldwide.

The founders of IAPCO were people from very different backgrounds, including academic doctors, interpreters, lawyers and media experts. From this humble beginning, this association today has grown to over 70 members in 34 countries over 5 continents.

The main goals of IAPCO are to promote the role of the Professional Congress Organizer (PCO), establish methods for a better practice, train newcomers in the field, promote relations with other international associations and establish contacts with governments and politicians for better recognition of the important roles of conventions.

For that purpose, IAPCO initiated their education programme with the annual “Wolfsberg Seminar” which has run successfully every January in Switzerland for the past 30 years and achieved worldwide recognition. To date, more than 1500 participants from over 22 different countries have attended these seminars. IAPCO has also run over 20 regional and national seminars in Europe, Asia and the Americas over the past 15 years.

Utilizing the experience and expertise of its members, IAPCO also produces guidelines and publications for the congress industry as well as the Meetings Industry Terminology Glossary, an industry dictionary covering over 1000 words in 12 languages produced in collaboration with the European Union. It also collaborates with other industry bodies through activities such as the Liaison Working Group in the Healthcare Industry, a group consisting of IAPCO, IPCAA (International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association), HCEA (Healthcare Congress & Exhibitors Association) and IEARC (International Exhibitors Association for Radiological Congresses). This latter group has produced several powerful documents relating to the relationship between industry, suppliers, PCO’s and clients including “Housing Guidelines”, “Sponsorship Prospectus” and “First Steps in the Preparation of an International Medical Meeting for the Chairman of the Meeting”.

MEMBER UPDATES:

“SevenCenters” Lay Foundation for Long-term Marketing Cooperation

Although they are really competitors, the seven largest German congress centres have launched a program to

improve capacity utilization by promoting and advertising jointly for large international customers. The seven – ICC Berlin – Internationales Congress Center Berlin, CCD – Congress Center Düsseldorf, Congress Center Messe Frankfurt, CCH – Congress Centrum Hamburg, KölnKongress (in Cologne), ICM – International Congress Centre Munich and Messe Congress Center Stuttgart will make a joint presentation to the international trade at IMEX 2003, and in future will advertise jointly for large events at international level under the motto, “Great places for great conventions”.

“We are simply stronger together,” says Dr Ralf G Kleinhenz, spokesman of the “SevenCenters” Working Group. “Since our product is homogeneous it seems obvious that we should combine our marketing activities on the international market. For example, all the congress

centres involved all have similar space and seating capacities, with adjacent trade fair grounds and



modern buildings, facilities and services. So it is a good idea to engage in joint activities based on our common interests”.

The Working Group’s main aim is to attract even more large international congresses and events to Germany and facilitate the international organizer’s search for a suitable congress venue in Germany. Joint marketing will emphasize the special advantages of the German congress infrastructure even more clearly than in the past, and the centres represented in the SevenCenters’ Working Group hope that this cooperation will give them the edge in this highly competitive international market. They feel that with closer cooperation even more customer inquiries will turn into concrete bookings, and if one congress centre has a bottleneck, inquiries could be passed on directly to colleagues in the Working Group.

In addition to a joint website (www.sevencenters.com), there are plans to make joint trade fair presentations. Priority is being given to constant and close coordination of all activities with the German Convention Bureau (GCB) in order to portray Germany as a single congress venue with a variety of regional facets.

Houston Turns Concept Into Reality on the Exhibit Floor!

Ninety-five percent of set-up work done on the convention center floor during move-in is routine.

However, every show invariably has at least one exhibit that presents special challenges for all involved. That means facility management and on-site contractors must commit to doing whatever is necessary to get the exhibitor ready for showtime, since while the bottom line is important, garnering repeat business is more important.

A case in point was the Italian Space Agency exhibition developed for the World Space Congress in Houston’s George R. Brown Convention Center October 14-19.

This congress convenes every 10 years and is the biggest event in the aerospace industry. Conceived by the prominent Italian design house Gruppo Bodino and fleshed out with the help of CAD software, the Italian Space Agency’s 3,000-square foot floor exhibit was bold and beautiful, with understated blue lighting, a mesh-fabric canopy, hanging banners, and 20 highly stylized display kiosks created an effect calculated to turn heads. However, it had only recently been designed and never been assembled.

It was the Centre’s job to turn a concept into a reality. It took four days, with workers finishing at midnight before the show opening. In the end, we believe the whole exceeded the sum of its parts. The exhibit was shipped 5,700 miles to the George R. Brown Convention Center, whose electrical, telecommunications and audio-visual departments were on hand to meet the shipment, armed with CAD drawings and little more.

Smart City Networks, one of the national leaders in event technology services and in-house provider, went to work first, installing electrical wiring and telephone



Dawn Ulrich, Director

hookups. The entire electrical system and phone wires had to be put in place before a raised floor platform could be laid down. As the designer had given strict instructions that no extension cords were allowed, access panels to electrical floor ports had to be built so that service calls wouldn’t entail ripping up the platform floor.

Creativity was at a premium as problems surfaced and then were resolved. Smart City required 106 manhours to complete its infrastructure work, leaving the stage to Houston’s audio-visual team, AVW-TELAV. After securing the dramatic but heavy canopy with four one-ton chain hoists, crews installed seven data projectors with independent sound systems, six 27-inch monitors, six multi-scan flat-screen monitors, 20 DVD players and a 42-inch plasma monitor. Workers also ran data cable to the display kiosks, and created an eight-seat 3-D theater. Throughout the process there were numerous rigging challenges and various formatting issues related to lighting, video and audio systems; at peak periods, eight workers were dedicated to the site. Once opened for the convention, custodial crews repeatedly serviced the Italian exhibit to keep it in pristine condition, and a two-person crew was assigned solely to the exhibit.

The end product was a huge hit. Convention-goers were invariably drawn to the undeniable appeal of the Italian exhibit, and all the hard work and considerable resources expended were rewarded.

“Like all convention facility operators, we are not a charity”, says Dawn Ulrich, Director of the George R. Brown Convention Center. “Revenue to the Center and our contractors from the Italian exhibit was not small change: on the other hand, it didn’t reflect the full value of our service, either, and a large number of extras were performed at no charge. Knocking yourself out to please even the most demanding client is one way to ensure that they’ll be back”.

Congress Center Mannheim Has Become m:con

With the goal of creating one comprehensive solution for the client, Mannheim Kongress und Touristik GmbH-MKT (Mannheim Congress and Tourism Inc.) has now summarised all its convention activities in one single brandmark: m:con – a novelty in the congress and convention industry! Previously, all individual sections of MKT acted autonomously: CCM Congress Center Mannheim, the congress meeting agency (PCO) “meet ideas” and the Congress Center Management.

m:con as a word mark is a combination of “m”, standing for “Mannheim” and “con” for “convention” as well as for concept, congress center, contentment, consulting, conventions, conferences, concerts, controlling, contracts and confidence. They also point out that the Latin translation of “con” means “together” and stands for the fact that m:con finds and creates solutions together with the client.

Says CEO Michel Mauge: “Nowadays it is no longer adequate – especially in the field of business-to-business communication – to concentrate only on the

sales of single products or services. Successful customer relationships are based on partnerships and the willingness to offer solutions. m:con will be the first server of complete and universal meeting solutions in Germany.”

“Whether scientific congress, business event or cultural highlight – m:con opens up all possibilities, developing ideas and from these outstanding events. m:con approaches meetings in a comprehensive sense, from the idea to the documentation, by experts from diverse technical and organisational divisions working together in covering each section of a meeting, not only in Mannheim, but anywhere a client wishes worldwide”, he said.

New Corporate Identity for PALEXPO

The operators of Geneva’s PALEXPO have developed a new corporate identity to better reflect its role in the market. “The visual aspects of our new Corporate Identity must reflect key house values to form a whole”.

says Director General Bruno Lurati. “GENEVA PALEXPO is becoming a brand which covers both structures: Palexpo – the infrastructure – and Orgexpo – the operator. By opting for the English translation of “Geneva”, we want to show the international flavour of the town on the one hand and, on the other, more importantly, to underline the fact that we combine both international supply and demand. Similarly, we want to heighten the solidarity that links us to the town, the canton and the region, as well as the close working relationship we have with the local and regional authorities”.

The logo graphic was also intended to illustrate one of the significant advantages offered by the facility, namely the fact that at GENEVA PALEXPO everything is under one roof. The long horizontal lines illustrate the silhouette of Hall 7, and continue at a right angle with the new Hall 6, which has just been built over the motorway to join up with the existing Hall 5.

■ Annual Conference

Tenerife Evaluated...

With AIPC’s 2003 Annual Conference in Mannheim approaching, results of a survey of member’s reactions to the 2002 Annual Conference and General Assembly in Tenerife provide a useful insight into member’s preferences for the event.

Respondents to the survey gave generally high ratings for the majority of the event, with most program elements achieving more than a 70% approval rating. In addition, there was an overall desire to see more interactive sessions, with members placing a high priority on the opportunity to exchange information with their colleagues and less support for presentations that did not allow for member interaction.

Comments made on interactive sessions indicated that such exchanges needed to be facilitated in an unobtrusive way and that results of such sessions needed to be documented in order to capture the outcome for future use. There was less support for formats that detracted from the content of such member interactions or that made it more difficult to capture the outcome.

Hotel facilities rated generally high, as did conference literature, staff and organization. Meeting and exhibit spaces were not rated highly, but considerable variation in responses underlined the variability of preferences in this regard.

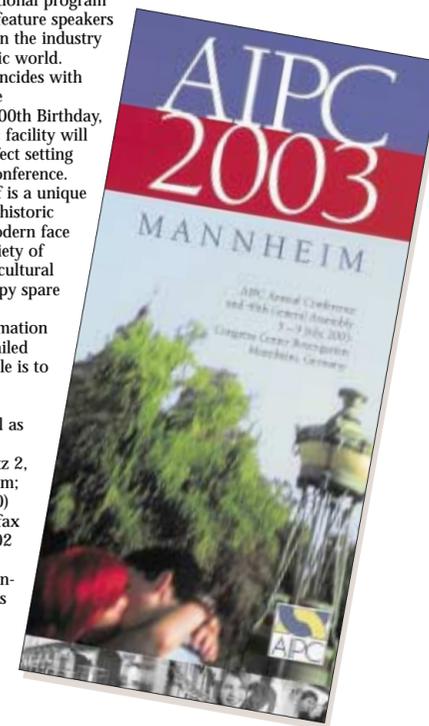
...and Mannheim on the Horizon

With a preliminary program already circulated to AIPC members, it’s time for everyone to mark their calendars for July 5-9, 2003, the dates of the AIPC Annual Conference and 45th General Assembly in Mannheim, Germany!

The Conference promises to be one of the most exciting and educational ever, with an array of social activities complementing an extensive educational program and prominent feature speakers from both within the industry and the academic world.

The event coincides with Congress Centre Rosengarten’s 100th Birthday, and this historic facility will provide the perfect setting for the AIPC Conference. Mannheim itself is a unique combination of historic charm and a modern face with a wide variety of attractions and cultural features to occupy spare moments.

Further information and a more detailed program schedule is to be found in the announcement brochure as well as from m:con at Rosengartenplatz 2, 68161 Mannheim; by phone +49 (0) 621 4106 152, fax +49 (0) 4106 202 or e-mail (aipc2003@mcon-mannheim.de) as well as through the AIPC Secretariat office.



Meet AIPC’s Vice President Juan Garaiurrebaso



Juan Garaiurrebaso, General Manager of the Bilbao International Exhibition Centre, brings extensive experience in the events industry to his role as AIPC Vice President.

With a degree in Economic and Business Sciences, he began his career with the Exporters Group of Biscay, first as a Technical Assistance Expert and subsequently as General Director. Following positions as the Pavilion Manager for Spain in the Baghdad and Thessaloniki International Fairs, and as Secretary to the Committee of Fairs of Bilbao Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping, he became General Director of the Bilbao International Exhibition Centre.

He has been International Trade Expert of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD-GATT in Geneva since 1983 and a Member of the Management Committee of the International Union of Trade Fairs (UIF) since 1997 and UIF Vice President since 1998. Since 2000, he has also been Chairman of the Spanish Association of Trade Fairs (AFE). He has served on the AIPC Board since 2000, first as Secretary and subsequently as Vice President.

With a number of languages at his command, including French, English and Euskera (the Basque language), Juan has been a valued spokesperson and representative for AIPC’s extensive Spanish membership. At the same time, his linkages to many European and international organisations make him a valuable resource for evaluating the state of the industry across a wide spectrum of activity.



AIPC Member Survey: Use of FAQ’s to Communicate with Clients

A recent AIPC survey explored the extent to which AIPC members use “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) lists to assist clients in their orientation to their facilities and whether or not there were common elements in such lists that might lead to an industry standard. The survey was carried out in cooperation with CAT Publications, who wished to explore this area as the basis for an article.

Survey questions addressed the use, content and location of FAQ’s along with what alternatives were used for client communications. 28 members responded to the survey, with only 7, or 25% of respondents indicating that they did maintain a set of FAQ’s for marketing purposes. Other results included the fact that 6 of the 7 used the FAQ’s on their web sites, that the FAQ’s addressed general questions rather than specific details and that those who did not utilize a set of FAQ’s did so because there were other mechanisms, including web sites, brochures, facility service handbooks etc. that better served the purpose.

Most of those surveyed indicated that they felt the level of detail required to respond properly to inquiries was better dealt with through direct contact with staff, which they tried to encourage at the earliest stage possible. This appears to be because the range of possible questions was wide, and varied tremendously by event type and client expectations.

In the place of FAQ’s, most members felt they wanted to take the time to work with the client to identify their unique needs and come up with a range of possibilities to respond to them. There was a sense that reliance on a single FAQ reduced a complex discussion to a few somewhat arbitrary questions when what is needed, in many member’s views, is personal contact and an effort to truly understand the client’s needs.

However, survey results indicated there might be some use for a more “standardized” approach to identifying and responding to common client questions such that there is a starting point for those clients with little experience in evaluating and comparing the capabilities of congress centres.