

# On the Front Line: Dealing with the SARS Outbreak

While the rest of the industry was dealing with the implications of economic issues and the war in Iraq, a number of centres were facing another challenge: the outbreak of a new and threatening disease with evident epidemic potential. Fast and effective action quickly contained the problem before it could "break out" but not before global travel was dealt another blow in a year of uncertainty. Two of the areas that were both hard hit and staged fast recoveries were Singapore and Hong Kong. Here's how it looked on the front line from Suntec Singapore CEO Warren Buckley and Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre Managing Director Cliff Wallace;



Cliff Wallace, Managing Director; Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre

*Communiqué: What impacts have you experienced so far? Were some parts of business affected more than others?*

WB: A number of large exhibitions and conferences have canceled or postponed into next year. Soon after the outbreak, the Singapore government took the step of canceling all schools for 3 weeks and committing to a very aggressive program of educating the public on preventive measures and warning about attending mass gatherings. This obviously took its toll on public shows as well as food and beverage events. As the government continued its strict preventive measures and the public grew more confident about returning to public places, our local business started to pick up but the international media began to impact our exhibition and conference business. There were 23,000 articles globally written about SARS in Singapore over a three-week period and at this point, the cancellations and postponements started to roll in.



Warren Buckley, CEO; Suntec Singapore

Now, the government and health officials have gained control of the disease and Singapore just about "out of the woods". However the market is still fickle and new business is not as forthcoming as it should be.

CW: The impact to the HKCEC from the Atypical Pneumonia virus and the related issues (SARS) has been severe, and aggravated by local and global uncertainty and a resulting extraordinary lack of confidence. The World Health Organization travel advisory concerning Hong Kong had the greatest amount of adverse impact. The international perception due to the wearing of facemasks by such a large portion of the local population had a secondary but major adverse impact. Unfortunately, there was a third major impact caused by some public and media criticism of the local officials, specifically related to the way the crisis was handled and the lack of leadership in the process.

Events in the HKCEC which were dependent on international exhibitors, delegates and buyers were affected much more than local consumer shows, tradeshows drawing primarily Hong Kong exhibitors, or local meetings. However, any event that was planned to draw a mass of people that would produce a congested environment was also impacted due to initial advice for the public to avoid such areas.

*Communiqué: What impacts are you aware of that others in your region have experienced?*

WB: Like us, venues in other affected countries are seeing their revenues affected and are working with clients to re-schedule

events and clear space for new dates while following advice from the Health Ministries to ensure control measures are in place.

CW: In most of Asia, SARS has impacted the convention and exhibition business in the same way. But additionally, all business has been impacted by those restrictions placed on international travel due to cancellations of international flights to and from major Asian cities like Hong Kong. Restaurants and hotels have suffered in extraordinary fashion as has the entire tourism industry. Varying quarantine policies globally have also served to deter travel.

*Communiqué: Were the impacts similar / greater / less on the leisure side?*

WB: The leisure side of the business, including restaurants, attractions, concerts and plays has been affected as well, with a drop in attendees/visitors/patrons. In addition, some concerts and plays had to be called off and refunds made. Some hotels reached single digit occupancy for a week at a time, and Singapore Airlines - often considered the best airline in the world - has had to cancel a number of flights and invoke layoffs.

CW: The adverse impact on the leisure side in Hong Kong was also significant. Entertainment events and events to have resulted in large gatherings were canceled (seminars, banquets, etc.). People, especially those with children, simply have stayed close to home since the end of March. School was canceled here for about 6 weeks.

*Communiqué: Are you seeing a change in the situation since SARS has been deemed to be under control in your area?*

WB: The situation has stabilized and for the last three weeks, Suntec Singapore has only seen one smaller seminar canceled. People's confidence here seems to be recovering and they are now coming out to dine and shop more. Events for the next 90 days appear to be proceeding as planned, and the Singapore hospitality industry has rallied, as part of the crisis communications management and recovery plan is to ensure consistent accurate information to the international media.

We've also put a number of preventive measures in place as a precautionary step and to rebuild confidence in attending events. These included such things as twice daily temperature monitoring for employees, contractors and suppliers; installing 12 thermal scanners for temperature scanning of event attendees; implementing increased cleaning and disinfecting of public areas; increasing the fresh air supply into the venue and applying anti-microbial treatment to all filters and cooling fans. Employees are

regularly updated on the MOH precautionary guidelines and we are monitoring their state of health closely, while working with our company doctors.

CW: There is definitely positive change in the situation but there is a long way to go. The facemasks are beginning to come off (20% of the population as opposed to 50% now wearing them) and we are expecting the World Health Organization to remove the travel advisory very soon. Rescheduling business that was postponed will be possible to some degree but probably less than half will be realized. The longer the situation goes on, the more difficult it is to reschedule due to date availability, conflicts with like business and/or too close to the next recurrent event date. Also, the negative impact will carry forward to scheduled business occurring for a while until total confidence is restored. Decreased attendance will be the norm for all events aimed at international participants.

*Communiqué: Do you have any sense of how long complete recovery in travel confidence may take?*

WB: The time period to recovery is still unknown, but with the concerted and strong efforts between the government and industry members, we look forward to it happening soon.

CW: For the HKCEC, assuming the travel advisory was lifted today, local confidence was restored (and exhibited by a fairly complete termination of the use of face masks), and the Government leadership was taking a positive role, I project that there will still be a negative impact on HKCEC's business for at least 6 to 9 months. Unfortunately, there is still a lingering question of whether the virus will resurface on a seasonal basis.

*Communiqué: What lessons have you learned from this experience? What would you do differently if there were a next time?*

WB: One of the real reasons for the stabilization of the situation and the rebuilding of confidence has been the Singapore government's quick and decisive control measures, as well as calmness in handling the situation and transparency in providing information. This is a lesson for us in handling any similar situation, as is the need for but a well-planned crisis communications plan. In addition the provision of factual and accurate information to all clients on a regular basis helped offset the international media's tendency to lump all of the Asian countries together without distinguishing the actual situation in different areas.

CW: We've learned a number of lessons. First, a fundamental crisis management plan should be in place which can be tailored for such crises on an immediate basis so that one acts immediately instead of reacting or following someone else's plan. Secondly, this situation reiterates the value of strong leadership in business and in government, especially at the Venue, Visitors and Convention Bureau and Chamber of Commerce level. Thirdly, unity within the community to proactively deal and confront a crisis situation head on with complete disclosure and honesty is imperative.

## NEW MEMBERS:

### Welcome to New AIPC Member Sandton Convention Centre



South Africa's potential as a business tourist destination is increasingly being recognized by the global business community, and the growing popularity of Sandton Convention Centre bears testimony to this. Easily accessible from major highways and the Johannesburg International Airport, it's prime location adjacent to South Africa's top hotels, restaurants and shopping malls and its aesthetic interior with a vast African art collection help draw a high caliber of visitor to its exhibitions, conferences and special events.

Recently voted best Conference Venue in South Africa without Accommodation, Sandton Convention Centre has over the past two and a half years staged numerous prestigious corporate, government, consumer and trade events, covering a broad cross-section of industries. International conferences that have been successfully staged at the Centre include a number of United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement and Pan-African conferences, the Global Summit of Women, the European Union South African Film Symposium, the World Summit on Sustainable development and the World Veterans Federation International Convention.

Johannesburg itself offers many tourist attractions, including historic buildings, monuments and museums, a selection of wildlife venues, zoos, botanical gardens, game reserves, bird sanctuaries, hiking trails and much more. The city is also commonly regarded as the hub of South African business and tourism and is the central point for all transport and tourism routes.

"In order to satisfy the demands of delegates, leading conference and exhibition organizers look for a venue which not only offers the most advanced facilities and quality service, but also succeeds in satisfying other needs such as location and experience," says Anton Post, Deputy Executive Director of Sandton Convention Centre. "We are in the midst of exciting times with the boom of

business tourism to SA, but we cannot forget that we form part of a global competitive market and therefore need to pull out all the stops to ensure that we continuously strive to offer a quality experience."



Anton Post



### New joint MD for Austria Center Vienna



Tourism expert Thomas Rupperti took the reins as chairman of the board of management of the Austria Center Vienna (ACV) at the start of 2003. Rupperti, 54, has assumed responsibility for all areas of operations at ACV including marketing, sales and event management, while long-serving management board member Dr Michael Auracher is in charge of property management and administrative duties on behalf of the Government in connection with the neighbouring United Nations building.

German born Rupperti has lived in Austria since 1983. The marketing and tourist expert saw extended service as managing director of Austria's largest holiday hotel operator, the TUI owned Dorfhotel Group, before leaving in 1999 to head Seaside Hotels in the Canaries. In June 2001 he was appointed as managing director of Hardt Resort AG in Bad Griesbach. He was appointed as chairman of the supervisory board of IAKW-AG, which operates the Austria Center Vienna, in mid-2001.

Outlining his vision for the multipurpose venue he said: "We aim to help Vienna maintain its position as one of the world's top conference destinations by standing out for our highly motivated and professional team, our customer driven approach and our high service standards."



Thomas Rupperti

### ECS Dates set for 2003

This year's version of AIPC's ever-popular Excellence in Customer Service course at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre has now been set for November 8-14. This course is consistently rated as one of the best in the industry, and enrollment is limited - so plan now for your staff to attend!

Full details are available through the AIPC Secretariat office.

### To keep in touch with AIPC, visit [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org)

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# Communiqué

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

### President's Message:

## Our Report Card is Looking Good!

Last year at the Annual Conference we set an ambitious agenda for association development based on our first formal AIPC business plan. In spite of a very challenging year in which we found ourselves having to react to a lot of global impacts beyond our control, I'm pleased to say your Board of Directors and staff have pretty much achieved everything we set out to do.

One of the biggest tasks was to formalize a lot of the operating areas and provide guidelines that introduced a new level of consistency in how we evaluate and carry out key activities. With the help of member surveys, we identified priorities in such areas as education and research and created new AIPC policies for these as well as in other areas such as sponsorship and membership development. We now have a clear process for how we assign priorities and measure progress that will guide our activities for years to come.

At the same time, we made a conscious effort to raise the Association's profile in the meetings industry in order to make AIPC more effective in shaping issues of concern to members. We've done this by getting much more AIPC related information and commentary into the trade media, as well as by preparing and placing articles and bulletins on key issues facing the industry. We've also completed a new "look" for AIPC, with a new and consistent design applied to everything from our web site to a new brochure, presentation kit and member's directory. These new materials have given us a way of presenting ourselves to potential sponsors, industry partners and media in a much more professional manner - and have allowed us to be more cost-effective in the process.

Education and publications development have also met their targets for the year. Along with maintaining the ever-popular "Excellence in Customer Service" courses at the EICC and offering a series of new educational programs was explored in conjunction with ICC Birmingham, AIPC created or participated in key educational seminars at all major industry events. An updated "Congress Centres and the Environmental" publication is in final production, with more topics on the way through cooperative efforts with other industry organizations.

Throughout all of this - not to mention disruptions from war to SARS - we've also made steady progress in all our key areas of

participation. Membership is up to historic levels, as is our sponsorship program. We've expanded our trade show participation to include the new IMEX event, and this year's list of finalists in the Apex Award competition is first-rate. At the same time, we've still been able to explore potential new areas of activity such as the cultural diversity initiative to be launched in Mannheim.

But perhaps the area we can be proudest of is our expanded involvement with other industry organizations. Tough times have a way of making us realize how we can work better together to achieve common goals, and over the past year we've built new cooperative activities from joint educational and publication efforts with IAPCO to the development of an industry-wide strategic plan with JMJC. These relationships create added benefits for members and make us more cost-effective as an association as we eliminate the kind of crossover and duplication that can result from a lack of cooperation and communication. At the same time, they help us deliver a better service to our clients.

We owe the board of directors a vote of thanks for this. Warren had a big hand in rewriting AIPC by-laws as well as providing Board direction to the Annual Conference program. Juan has taken on responsibility for liaison on our joint activities with IAPCO along with his duties as Vice President. Edgar has managed our finances superbly while setting up a new accounting system and still finding time to manage the Apex Award process. Pierre has spearheaded the cultural initiative which you'll see more about in another article in this issue. Christina helped explore a series of new educational initiatives, and Antti, our newest Board member, has already taken on the environmental area and represented AIPC in this year's EIBTM debate.

But AIPC members can also give themselves a pat on the back! Your continued support, along with prompt and productive responses to member surveys and questionnaires and strong participation in AIPC sponsored activities have been critical to expanding our presence and program in the industry.

And if we can accomplish all this under the circumstances most of us have been facing this year, imagine what we'll be able to do when global events calm down for a while!

### Blue Ribbon Keynotes Featured in Mannheim

Delegates to this year's AIPC Annual Conference in Mannheim will have a unique combination of a blue-ribbon program and an array of exciting social activities as a back drop to the discussion of pressing industry issues. Among the keynote speakers are:

- Dr. Mathias Döpfner on the subject of "Face-to-face Communications in a Digital World". Dr. Döpfner has had a long and distinguished career in Journalism, and is Chairman of the Board and Head, Newspapers for Axel Springer Verlag, one of the world's leading media companies.
- Professor Dr. Peter Glotz on "Society and Learning". Dr. Glotz is Professor for media and Society at the University of St. Gallen; his career spans a wide range of political and communications involvement, including as a member of the German Bundestag, Manager of the Social Democratic Party and Professor at universities in Berlin, Munich and Milwaukee.
- Dr. Christian Mikunda, on the topic of "Strategic Dramaturgy of Conventions". Dr. Mikunda is a former film and television dramatic advisor and university professor who is now a consultant on the topic of economic dramaturgy. His clients range from the hospitality industry to television companies, property developers and town councils.
- Fedor H. Radmann will be interviewed on the topic of "Strategy of Bidding, Marketing, Lobbying and PR". Mr. Radmann has had a diverse career in marketing for sport, culture and tourism and is currently Managing Vice President of the Organizing Committee of the 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany.
- Chris Skinner will speak on "Visions of Conventions". Mr. Skinner has worked extensively in business engineering, strategies and re-engineering and has worked with such organizations as the Institute for International Research and Unisys. He is regarded as one of the top communications professional in business today.

Between sessions, delegates will be enjoying social activities ranging from golf at St. Leon-Rot and a car rally to a vine-growing estate in the Palatinate region to a riverboat party on the romantic Neckar River from Heidelberg and a Gala Dinner in the gardens of Schloss Schwetzingen where Mozart played and Voltaire was a frequent guest. All events are available to registered delegates and accompanying persons.

The full conference program is available on the conference web site, reached via [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org) "Annual Conference" section. Registration can also be completed on-line.

**Don't miss this highly educational and engaging event in an historic centre and region!**

## Cultural Initiative Reflects AIPC's Diversity



Over the past few months, AIPC Board member Pierre Gilliot has been developing a new initiative which is intended to reflect the cultural diversity that exists amongst AIPC members and the ways in which this can be used to enhance the products they offer in the meetings and congress market.

"Cultural diversity is essential in the convention industry, and its importance can best be illustrated by two points", says Gilliot. "First, the diversity of knowledge and the need to exchange it is one of the most basic reasons for the industry's existence. Our job is to enable individuals who share an ideal, a concern, a project - whether economic, scientific, social or political - to meet each other and satisfy their need to listen, exchange views and put forward ideas about a subject which in their eyes is important".



In international congresses and conferences, participants come from all parts of the globe and have a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, says Gilliot. "Meetings derive their wealth from the diversity of the exchanges and the pooling of knowledge. The ideal - or even the project - they share attenuates the cultural differences and any language barriers that separate them".

The second point is the question of: what determines the choice of venue? To Gilliot, the answer is the distinctive cultural features of the location.

"Before choosing one or another of our congress centres, our customers first decide on the location in which they want their event to be held. The image it brings to mind - "exotic", "serious" - its cultural and tourist attractions, its relevance to the meeting, the proximity of leading institutions in the chosen field, the need to get away from daily routine; every location has its strong points. But in the end that decision is seldom rational: more often than not it is emotional and has to do with the cultural identity of the place".

"Once the choice is made, our convention centres must measure up to the image our various locations convey and fulfil the expectations we have created. In other words, the challenge for us is to get our customers to share the attachment we have to our own cultures".

With 129 members worldwide, each with its own cultural values, AIPC has resolved to think actively about the impact cultural diversity can have on the way our industry develops. "Does it afford a means of giving our customers better quality service, by organizing an unforgettable event, enhancing the quality of the work they undertake, creating lasting memories? Is it a means of differentiating the service we provide from the standard package offered by the big groups and the hotel chains? These are the kinds of questions we want to explore", says Gilliot.

He has assembled a committee of AIPC members, including Laure Mouton - Paris (F), Antti Vihinen - Lahti (FIN), Claude Pinault - Quebec (CAN) and José Salinas - Valencia (Spain) to work on the project. Their plans include a presentation at the upcoming Annual Conference and a more extensive program in cooperation with Edinburgh in 2005. In the meantime, the committee is asking that members who have had any practical experiences showing the value of cultural diversity in our industry and thoughts on how these could be shared and utilized contact any committee member or send an e-mail to p.gilliot@cicg.ch.

# New Perspectives on Security

The IMEX trade show in Frankfurt was the site of a unique collaboration between AIPC and IAPCO (the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers) on a joint seminar entitled "Cooperative Solutions to Event Security".

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss ways in which facilities and PCO's could develop cooperative strategies for enhancing event security and for involving other components of the security equation in the development and implementation of a solid plan.

The panelists were Steve Piper, Head of Venues, Brighton City Council, UK; Rainer Kostka, Co-owner of AIMS International, Austria; Jim Papineau, Director for Marketing & Sales, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre and Philippe Mahuas, Director of Operations, Hilton Prague. As this area is of such importance to members these days, we have created a special section of this issue to give you a comprehensive picture of the different perspectives presented by our panelists and the conclusions they reached.



*Steve Piper, Head of Venues, Brighton City Council: Steve has over 25 years experience in venue management, having worked with many high profile events including major political conferences, international meetings and exhibitions, product launches and entertainment programmes. He works closely with Brighton City's events team and was an organiser of the millennium celebrations.*

### Steve Piper:



Steve stressed the importance of all parties working together cooperatively in both the development and execution of a security plan and sharing all information openly amongst involved agencies. The security team -which should include not only the venue, PCO and client organization but also hotels, security companies, police and potentially even national police intelligence - needs a clear strategy. Within that strategy, there are distinct roles to be played by each of the event partners;

- PCO's are often in the best position to carry out a risk assessment. Conferences with high profile attendees are may be at greatest risk, and need regular update meetings from at least a year out from the events. During this time, the event can be monitored and evaluated relative to attendees and meeting topics that may create the potential for disruptions.
- The clients themselves need to consider the content of the meeting, and recognize that media attention will raise its profile. They can also evaluate previous events to identify problems that could reoccur.
- The venue needs to manage the process through regular meetings and preparing an event schedule which contains security milestones. At the same time, it can act as a catalyst for all agencies to prepare and disseminate relevant information.
- Conference hotels need to be involved as they may be considered a "soft target" relative to the main venue.

Delegates may also need to be reminded that they may remain a target even when they're not in actual sessions.

- Security companies also need to be fully briefed as they can provide professional input that goes beyond what other partners can provide. They will also be in the best position to access any personnel or equipment that may be required, such as airport-style search channels or metal detectors.
- Local police also need to be "kept in the loop", as they can provide additional resources not always available to others. They can also carry out other actions that may be needed such as road closures or building searches.
- Finally, national police can add an extra dimension to the security net. They have access to another level of intelligence data which can be used to assess threat. They often have responsibility for the security of high profile visitors, and can support local police efforts through direct contact with other resources such as armed forces.

Steve says that having created the team, the important thing is to ensure effective communications amongst all members. Part of this communication is to set and regularly review event milestones; if these are not being met, there then needs to be an evaluation of why and alterations or adjustments made accordingly.

The team approach also creates logistical requirements that need to be accommodated in event planning. Security activities will impact such things as load-in times, feeding security staff and potentially having to provide them with

rest areas, parking/transport and hotel accommodation. Finally, there is the need to consider and deal with the impacts that security arrangements may have on the local community. This means that there is a need to build the security strategy into all other aspects of event planning, including PR / marketing, budget projections and health and safety plans.

Steve's conclusion: that security planning needs to be an integral part of all events with identified risk factors, and a team approach is the best one. The key to the success of such a team is good communications and a clear framework of responsibilities and accountabilities for the results.

*Jim Papineau, Director for Marketing & Sales, Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre: Jim has more than 20 years of senior management experience in the hospitality, convention and exhibition industry. He was the catalyst for the ground breaking cross-industry marketing consortium, the "Singapore Intelligence Centre".*



### Jim Papineau:



Jim prefaced his remarks by pointing out that Singapore has always taken the security issue very seriously, and as a result, has been highly ranked in various studies evaluating destination security. This approach has helped attract business, and government support in providing security measures has helped Singapore secure many events such as WTO, and SIBOS .

These security measures were tightened even further following recent global events such as 9/11, Bali and Iraq. An integrated and multi-layered approach includes such measures as security threat assessment by the Internal Security Department, cooperation with other countries' intelligence agencies, the sharing of security related intelligence and technology and tighter border control.

Specific security measures now in place include 100% screening of all checked luggage along with X-ray screening and physical checks on hand luggage and



*Philippe Mahuas, Director of Operations, Hilton Prague: Philippe started his international career in Monte Carlo with Forte Hotels before moving to London where he joined Hilton International at the Hilton Park Lane. He has been in Prague for six years and Director of Operations for the last two years.*

increased security and vehicle controls at the airport. Singapore is committed to meeting or exceeding the standards set by the ICAO for security.

- Enhanced security measures have also been implemented at Suntec Singapore. These include;
- More than 70 staff on regular patrols 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- New surveillance cameras with continuous monitoring;
- A detailed and well-rehearsed Emergency Procedures

Plan, created with input from Singapore police, Red Cross and Civil Defense Force

These emergency plans are regularly rehearsed, including evacuation exercises.

Jim concluded by stating that Singapore has some distinct advantages in the security area, including legislative tools which enable it to take pre-emptive measures in the case of threat and a community outreach program that encourages citizens to report suspicious activities. However, a successful security plan will always be one which includes the full spectrum of event partners, from Centres and PCO's to hotels, airlines, police and private security companies.

### Philippe Mahuas:



Philippe believes that there are a number of reasons why a good security plan is important. Amongst these he includes; ensuring the safety of participants and organizers, preventing incidents, providing organizers with extra "insurance" and being able to react in an effective and accurate manner.

The first step in planning is clearly defining security needs. Amongst the factors to be considered are;

- Addressing security needs from the first site inspection in order to get a clear idea of the needs and constraints and ensure client has good knowledge of the venue;
- Establishing clear communications to avoid confusion;
- Creating a profile of participants and defining their unique requirements;
- Recognizing the budgetary implications of security

- Multiple countries need to develop an understanding of their respective security needs
- There may be a failure to respect the emergency procedures of the host country, which can lead to chaos
- Different governments and government agencies may have their own different contingency plans. These variations will require regular and ongoing meetings to avoid potentially dangerous misunderstandings from arising, particularly in an emergency.
- Corporate events, whose security needs generally depend on the content of the meeting; where new products or strategies are involved, there may be high security needs. There may also be police involvement for particularly large events.
- Association events, which are highly variable, with security needs defined by such things as the profile of participants, speakers and country delegations. As a result, there are few specific rules and each event will require different measures. Philippe believes that there are a number of key steps in carrying out the security assessment and planning process. Amongst these are;
- Compare check lists from all participants and either merge these or ensure everyone is familiar and comply with each others needs;
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of all emergency procedures, property plans, exits and meeting points;
- Ensure all participants are aware of security plans

the media, other groups are concerned but often don't know what their security risks or needs are. The solution, with no real guidelines in place for such groups, is to routinely assess and establish security requirements for each event.

In Rainer's view, the two key components of a security plan are risk assessment and risk management. Risk assessment requires an evaluation of a number of factors, including;

- The venues, the event itself and the individuals participating;
- The issues that surround the event, including potential violence, personal security and property damage;
- The identification of political, professional or protest groups who may represent a threat to the event;
- Sources of information about potential threats, including the client, media, police or the Internet;
- The other security professionals who may be involved (police, firefighters, Red Cross, diplomatic personnel, National security);
- The effect that increased security may have on the organizer, such as imposing legal, financial or marketing restrictions or raising awareness of the event and subsequent publicity;
- The complexity of security coordination that may arise from multiple security services and the involvement of private security experts;
- Potential damaging of facilities and services, from

*Rainer Kostka, Co-owner of AIMS International, Austria: Rainer began his career in hotel industry, and founded the first company of what became the AIMS Group in 1979. Today AIMS International is a hospitality management services group comprising 9 companies in five European countries and employing 75 full time staff.*



and ready to address concerns or complaints that may arise;

- Ensure that all required technology support is in place (i.e., bar codes, magnetic locks, back-up generators, smoke detectors);
- Simplify security measures as much as possible and ensure that while visible, they are not obtrusive;
- Define the location of security or police teams and ensure official contacts are clearly defined, and
- Ensure event security plans are in line with those of the venue.

During the event,

- Maintain regular briefings and ignore rumours until officially verified;
- Maintain an official contact for all participants and ensure any abnormalities are reported;
- Maintain emergency access for emergency services throughout the event, and
- Remember that in an emergency, 20% of people will be in control, 20% will panic and the remaining 60% will follow the strongest visible leader!

### Rainer Kostka:



Rainer noted that until recently, the security issue was not a high priority for trade and professional associations but rather a concern of governmental groups and corporations concerned about confidentiality. Now, with global uncertainty and a higher profile created by

facility and neighbouring buildings to transportation and personnel;

- Insurance implications, including uninsured risks (i.e., terrorist), legal liability amongst event organizers and additional demands by planners for PCO or venue insurance, and
- The need for a crisis management plan to determine such things as procedures, who will be in charge, managing communications and directing staff. Having assessed risks, the next step is developing a risk management plan to address them. Some of the considerations in such a plan are;
- Security operations must begin prior to the set-up of the event to be effective;
- Security measures must cover entrances and exits as well as the inspection of materials delivery;
- ID measures can include radio frequency chips in ID badges, photo ID or bar codes;
- Metal detectors may be deployed for brief cases, mobiles, laptop computers and even clothing checks;
- Communications systems must be tested for failure under pressure and a backup system available;
- Evacuation procedures must be in place and tested, including announcements in multiple languages;
- Staff must be briefed on specific risk areas and confirmed as to their abilities to perform, and
- Security measures must be effective, but not so excessive that they lead to panic.