



Communiqué

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

■ President's Message:

New Challenges Call for Collective Solutions

As another year draws to a close, we always find ourselves wondering what we've learned that will help us meet the challenges of the future. The problem is, that future keeps changing as new issues, technologies and industry relationships keep evolving into new areas and we find ourselves having to "rethink" even those things we thought were long settled.

A great example, and one that's partially discussed elsewhere in this issue, is performance measurement. Increasingly, we're being called upon to show how we're benefiting our owners and the communities they represent, and at the same time, that's getting increasingly difficult to do. Take financial benefits, for example.

The key to good economic estimation is good data about delegate and event spending. Without that basic information, all the elaborate calculations and multipliers in the world won't give us a defensible set of figures. But each day, it seems, such information becomes harder to access. Two examples illustrate that point well.

Detailed delegate information has never been easy to collect. Meeting planners and association executives are the only real source and it's been hard to persuade them that along with everything else they have to do, they should also be collecting delegate spending data for us! As a result, we've often had to rely on third-hand information that may not really identify the full extent of the economic benefit.

But now, new privacy regulations are being put in place in various countries that may make it next to impossible for even event

organizers to collect the kind of information needed. Under these regulations, personal information about individual delegates can only be gathered or passed on with the express permission of the individual themselves. That adds an even greater obstacle to the process of collecting the kind of details required to begin the process of economic benefit calculation.

As if that weren't enough, another favourite means of estimating economic benefit is also disappearing rapidly - that being the calculation of benefits arising from hotel room bookings. The problem here, of course, is that the whole concept of room blocks is heading for extinction, courtesy of Internet booking and the accompanying effects of room block attrition. It seems likely that soon, planners won't even bother to create room blocks as this only subjects them to potential penalties for rooms that are sold through other vehicles to their delegates!

For years, many of us used "room nights" as a figure for calculating financial benefits and even as a definition for the relative sizes of events. Now, that simply doesn't work in most cases, and there's little reason to think it ever will again. The result is that we need more specific measures like delegate days, and that, in turn, will require even more data gathering.

It's not going to be easy to adapt to these kinds of new demands - but there's not a lot of choice. We're all having to justify our existence to owners and investors, and business measurement is fundamental to doing that. But as everyone is facing the same kind of problem, there's hope and incentive for collective solutions we all can use. When those solutions are developed, we'll be able to evaluate and adopt them together.

And that's one of the big benefits of our organization!



Barbara Maple, AIPC President

Delegates Rate Annual Conference

For the second year, an extensive delegate preference survey was carried out following the AIPC Annual Conference and General Assembly. This year, the survey was distributed immediately after the event, which significantly improved the ratio and geographic distribution of responses. The survey examined both sessions and convention services, and provided an opportunity for subjective comments as well.

The survey confirms the pattern of preferences first noted in the Tenerife survey; namely that delegates vastly prefer practical sessions which include industry colleagues over more academic speakers on conceptual topics. At the same time, there is strong interest in the degree of interaction taking place in a session. Even in formats that are not based on participation (i.e.,

speakers) there is a desire for audience interaction via question periods, and workshops and interactive panels are vastly preferred to "one-way" presentations.



The survey also demonstrates that the perceived quality of registration and AIPC administration associated with the conference was high, as were conference and hotel facilities and the social program. The timing, location and format of the trade show was rated well overall but there was a sense that the mix of exhibitors was restricted and should be expanded to a greater variety of industry-related services in the future.

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Make Your Plans Now for Edinburgh!

AIPC's 2004 Annual Conference will be more than the industry's premier educational and networking opportunity. As a result of its timing and location, it'll also be a chance to experience some of Europe's most exciting cultural and performing arts activity right at the Conference doorstep!

The Conference is scheduled for Jul 31 - Aug 4, 2004, which puts it—and you, as a delegate—right in the center of the legendary Edinburgh Festival. It's a spectacular opportunity to combine the benefits of Annual Conference sessions with a great holiday opportunity.

Conference theme and content are already under development, and will focus on the expanding opportunities we're being presented with as facilities, technology and service are all put to the test in an ever more competitive market. Sessions will explore new ways to evaluate these opportunities and to proceed in pursuing them once you've decided which are most appropriate and potentially advantageous to you! Full conference details will be available on-line in the new year, and will be published in a special issue of Communiqué as well.

After hours, you'll be treated to all the excitement of one of Europe's most attractive destinations - at the best possible time of

year. Plan now to attend - and to take advantage of an unbeatable combination of program and destination experience.

And for those that really plan ahead, don't forget our 2005 Annual Conference in Quebec City, Canada Jul 16-20. We'll be featuring more details on this great upcoming program and destination in future issues as well!



Edinburgh International Conference Centre

Ungerboeck Systems International at the Leading Edge of Event Management Software

Ungerboeck Systems International Inc.'s Event Business Management Software (EBMS) is the world-leading system for event venues. It includes capabilities for sales and marketing, booking and contracts, event scripting, order processing, resource scheduling, inventory, purchasing, event accounting & analysis, event registration, facility maintenance, accounts receivable, accounts payable, general ledger, and financial reporting. In addition, it offers extensive e-business functionality including a calendar of events, floor plans, service orders, web registration and more. EBMS customers on six continents include leading convention and conference facilities, event managers, arenas, stadia, universities, performing arts, and CVBs.

USI's latest product enhancements can help facility operators make the most out of the ever-growing capabilities of PDAs (Personal Data Assistant) in conjunction with wireless communications and a suite of web-based EBMS tools to help venue and event operations staff increase their productivity, customer service and operating controls. Among the capabilities of this system are:

Order Entry: While on a pre-event walkthrough, last-minute orders can be entered into a PDA and instantly reflected in the regular EBMS event management and work order schedules. Facility maintenance orders such as minor repairs or light replacements can similarly be entered "on the run".

Work Order Status or completion: Operations staff may consult their PDA for the current work order schedule or any last-minute order changes. This feature also permits staff to complete work

orders in real time, yielding up-to-date inventory records and automatic tracking of labor resources.

Inventory Inquiry: This feature provides on-line access to the inventory status display showing how many items you have on hand, on purchase orders, and on customer orders within the planning horizon. Optionally, one may also view various purchasing records such as preferred vendor, cost, economic order quantities and lead times.

E-Mail: E-mail over PDA has been proven to be a highly effective means of communicating with associates across the often-vast expanses of event venues.



While these features are formulated to operate from the limited display capacity of PDAs, they are of course equally operable from any computer with Internet or intra-net browser capability.

Similarly, all other iEBMS and standard EBMS capabilities can be readily activated on PDAs as well although being designed for full-size screens, they may require extensive scrolling on the PDA.

MEET OUR NEW MEMBER:

AIPC Welcomes New Member Brussels Expo

The Brussels Exhibition and Convention Centre (Brussels Expo) offers top quality facilities and services for all types of meetings, exhibitions and congresses and is ranked amongst the top 15 International Exhibition Centres in the world.

It began life as the site of 5 exhibition halls for the 1935 World Wide Exposition, and has been steadily updated and added to over subsequent years.

Amongst the facilities is the Grand Palais, considered an architectural masterpiece in its era. In 1958, for the Universal Exhibition, Brussels Expo expanded with 3 additional halls and the Atomium, one of the symbols of Brussels. The 2 last



Jean-Marie Pire, CEO

decades, 3 other halls were added to complete the Centre.

Brussels Expo is centrally located, easily accessible from the airport (15 minutes) and has direct access by train. Current features include:

- * 12 existing meeting rooms with capacities ranging from 20 to 2,000 people
- * 12 modular exhibition or event halls (between 3,000 and 13,000 sqm in size)
- * Parking facilities for 12,500 cars
- * Professional, flexible, multilingual and service-oriented staff

Brussels Expo prides itself as being the "least expensive" facility in Europe and say "Your budget will notice the difference, while the quality of your event will be first class!"

In 2003, the Belgian government along with the Brussels region and the City of Brussels approved a plan to research additional convention facilities to be located at Brussels Expo along with the existing buildings of the Brussels Exhibition Centre. The new centre would open in 2009, and respond to the growing needs of international associations and congress organizers with the enlargement of the European Union to 15 additional countries by 2010.

ECS Delivers Another Graduating Class



Most recent AIPC ECS (Excellence in Customer Service) course graduates gather outside host Edinburgh International Conference Centre

- Tiia Toivola - *Helsinki Fair Centre*
- David Flint - *Manchester International Convention Centre*
- Leena Permanto - *Sibelius Hall, Congress and Concert Centre*
- Megat Yusman Bin Megat Jamaludin - *Putrajaya Convention Centre*
- Eric Rymer - *The Right Solution*
- Aloyce Mwasuka - *Arusha International Conference Centre*
- Charlotte Hagstrom - *Göteborg Convention Centre*
- Debbie Roberts - *Edinburgh International Conference Centre*
- Anna Hsiao - *Taipei International Convention Center*
- Pamela Donald - *Edinburgh International Conference Centre*

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

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Conference Survey

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Overall scores, on a rating of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) were as follows:

	Program	Material	Presentation	Average
Keynote speakers:	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.1
Panel discussions:				
Communications	4.0	3.6	4.0	3.9
Future of Industry	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.3
Cultural Identity	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Economic Impact	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.3
Average:	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0
Workshops:*				
Leadership	4.6	4.4	3.9	4.3
Event Concept	3.8	3.6	4.1	3.8
Visual Concepts	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.5
Open Space	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.6
Average:	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8

*partial attendance only

Business sessions:

General Assembly:	4.2
Apex Award Review	4.1

Facilities and administration:

Meeting rooms:	4.5
Meals:	4.5
Trade show hours:	4.3
Trade show setup	3.9
Exhibitors	3.6
Staff	4.2
Hotel registration	4.5
Promo literature	4.1
Registration materials	4.5
Registration desk	4.5
AIPC staff	4.7

Delegate comments summary:

Liked best:	Social program, networking opportunities, peer discussions on industry topics
Liked least:	Keynote speakers: too many, irrelevant topics, lack of focus
Would change:	Speakers, breakfast format, more learning and sharing of information vs. academics
Trade show:	Broader industry representation (architects, IT systems, technology, "hard" products)

Member Updates

Brisbane Makes it "Three in a Row"



Brisbane has won its third consecutive bid to host a major international conference in as many months, underlining the city's increasing popularity as a destination. The announcement that Medinfo 2007 is coming to Brisbane follows recently announced wins including the XXIV International Mineral Processing Congress (IMPC) in 2010 and International Conference of the International Society for Trenchless Technology in 2006.

Eighteen months ago, Brisbane won the Australian rights to bid for Medinfo 2007, the International Congress for Medical and Health Informatics, against fierce competition from Sydney and Melbourne. Since then the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, together with the Health Informatics Society of Australia (HISA), the National host organisation for the Congress, has worked closely with

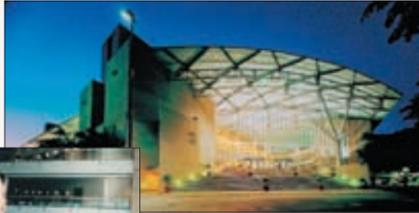


Brisbane Marketing who prepared the winning bid. At an international meeting in Rome, it was announced that

Brisbane, Australia had resoundingly won the bid against extensive competition from South Africa.

The

Conference will bring some 2,000 delegates from the around the world and an estimated \$5 million in economic benefit to Brisbane and South East Queensland. Brisbane Convention Centre **General Manager Robert O'Keefe** said the Centre was delighted and proud to be selected as the host venue for the 2007 congress. "The Centre is host to many medical and scientific meetings and has ably demonstrated its capabilities and professionalism in this field."



QE II Appoints New Chief Executive



Ernest Vincent has been appointed the new Chief Executive of The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London's prestigious purpose-built venue in the heart of Westminster. Mr Vincent has over 25 years experience in the international exhibition and convention industry and specialises in the management of world-class conference and exhibition facilities. He has worked in the UK, Southeast Asia and North America, and replaces the acting Chief Executive, John McCarthy, who was seconded to the role by the Civil Service on an interim basis.



Prior to joining the QEII Conference Centre, Vincent was

the General Manager of Toronto's National Trade Centre, one of the largest public assembly facilities in North America. Earlier in his career, Vincent was a member of the executive management team at The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Following this, he was recruited by The Hong Kong Trade Development Council to establish The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Mr Vincent has also worked alongside The Royal Thai Government's Department of Export Promotion and the Thai Ministry of Finance. He managed the opening of The Queen Sirikit Convention Centre in Bangkok in 1991.

Commenting on his appointment Mr. Vincent said: "I am honoured to be offered the opportunity to head up such a world class facility. The Centre is undergoing an amazing transformation with a huge level of investment, and I am pleased to be joining a truly professional and committed team".

Montreux Convention & Exhibition Center Updates Facilities

With the successes of the last few years, the Montreux Convention Center Ltd (MCC) decided to address the increasing demands of its professional customers by entirely renovating a part of the building constructed in the early seventies.

Eight completely new multi-purpose conference rooms were created and outfitted with the latest technologies. The whole center also underwent a general refurbishment to add top new technical equipment, and create an advantage for accessing events such as shows, conferences and product launches.

Now, with two auditoriums and over 40 conference rooms in a range of sizes, the Montreux Convention Center is strengthening its position as a leading facility accommodating international congresses from 200 to 2000 participants.



Two Composers; Two Centres



Lahti, Finland and Bergen, Norway share more than their Congress Centre's membership in AIPC! What they both have in common is that they celebrate and are named after two famous composers whose lives and work live on in their respective namesake facilities.

Both Grieg and Sibelius, for whom Bergen's Grieghallen and Lahti's Sibelius Congress and Concert Centre were named, were already national heroes long before they became the namesake of their respective centres. They were important figures of national identity for their communities in their time as active composers, and stood for much of the cultural importance that is now associated with the two countries.

"The importance of Sibelius for the nation-building-process of an independent Finnish state is immense", says Sibelius Congress and Concert Centre Managing Director Antti Vihinen. "The name Sibelius Hall has a very special meaning for the Finns, so it is interesting to note that before the Lahti Sibelius Hall project there were no centres named after him anywhere in the country".

"Edvard Grieg stands as the symbol of Norway in the world of music", says Gert Gundersen, Managing Director of Grieghallen in Bergen. "Through its vitality and richness of melodies, his music came to be loved by generations of music lovers throughout the world. His appeal is not only due to the music's strong national foundation, but also because it expresses universal human feelings and emotions which he summed up in his personal credo: "One must first of all be human. All true art springs from our humanity".

How did the community react to the naming of the centres? In Lahti, it was in a very positive way, according to Vihinen. "Lahti was honoured by the Sibelius family to have this magic name to use for the centre. The city and community was very proud to have the privilege of using the composer's name, and considered it a great honour".

In Bergen, there was an even more direct connection. "The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra is one of Europe's oldest orchestras, and Edvard Grieg, who was born, and had his home in Bergen, was the first strong advocate for building a concert hall as a permanent home for the orchestra", says Gundersen. "His official initiative was presented in a letter dated November 1, 1894, and he worked actively for this project until his death in 1907. It was therefore quite natural to name the completed concert hall after the famous composer - indeed it would have caused a public outcry not to have used his name for the building!"

The composers and their work "live on" in the activities of the two centres. The Lahti Symphony Orchestra, famous for its Sibelius recordings, is the resident orchestra in Sibelius Hall. There is a Sibelius Festival held annually in the centre, and even its rock-club is called the "Finlandia-club" after the most famous composition of the classical master, so he is present in many ways. On a more personal note: Vihinen confides that he wrote his doctoral thesis on Sibelius' music - not a bad qualification for the job!

Similarly, Grieghallen is the permanent home of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in accordance with the intentions of

Edvard Grieg. It is also the main arena for cultural and entertainment performances in Western Norway, with important events such as the Bergen International Festival and the Ole Blues International Festival being part of some 250 cultural/entertainment performances taking place each year.

A concert focus creates a real balancing act for operators of centres that are also trying to accommodate congress business. "This is a big problem, because we only have one big hall for all the types of business we serve in the centre", says Vihinen. "Our main hall is at its best with classical music, so we organize some 50-60 concerts of classical music every year along with some 75 concerts of entertainment music. However, the congress activities bring in the money for the city - so they need to be accommodated within this schedule as well. It is an everlasting puzzle of timetables for our congress and program managers!"

In Bergen, combining the functions of cultural and conference centres also creates particular challenges, but opportunities emerge as well. "In the case of Grieghallen, where we run at close to 100 % capacity, utilisation conflicts start to become evident. However, in a combined centre, the ability to sell to both parts of the market creates an added opportunity for improving economic results", says Gundersen.

Of Grieghallen's 300,000 visitors in 2002, approximately 60% attended culture and entertainment events, and the remaining 40% congresses, conferences and meetings. However, conferences contributed about 55% of the economic benefit. "From a purely commercial standpoint, this should favour the meeting sector, says Gundersen. "But the strong cultural profile of the center, combined



Sibelius Congress and Concert Centre, (above); Antti Vihinen

with the public and political interest for this profile to be maintained, makes thing more complicated!"

"On the other hand, it is our experience that there is a growing awareness amongst meeting organisers of the added value of placing meetings in a cultural setting. The combination of a cultural venue and a conference center in itself gives a competitive advantage, and the possibility of integrating cultural and entertainment elements in a meeting programme adds even more value to the meeting. So having Edvard Grieg's own orchestra performing his music in the Grieghall is a competitive strength, which we try continuously to exploit".

Antti Vihinen agrees that the congress function benefits from the association with a great composer. "It certainly works for us, because the name of Sibelius has almost an aristocratic sound for the Finnish society", says Vihinen. "That name makes it much easier to do marketing for all types and functions and services of the hall, not simply those associated with concerts or classical music".

Gundersen sees a similar benefit in Bergen. "Edvard Grieg's work for a new concert hall, which started in 1897, is still benefiting us in the meeting market more than a hundred years later, and hopefully will for many years to come", he says.

Panel Reviews Economic Impact Options

A panel discussion at the Annual Conference underlined the perceived importance of economic impact measurement, even as it demonstrated the wide variety of opinion and approaches taken to this subject.

"Economic impact measurement is probably more important than ever these days as many centres increasingly feel the need to demonstrate value and justify operating losses for the sake of greater community benefits", said panel moderator Rod Cameron. "The real issue is credibility, and the need to show some consistency and objectivity in our methods if our figures are to be believed".

One problem, he said, has been that many different approaches are being used and there may therefore be little comparability of different results. The alternative of having everyone use a single model has been difficult, as conditions and costs vary dramatically from one region to the next.

AIPC Board member Antti Vihinen identified a series of reasons why the ability to measure and document economic benefits would always be an important one for centres. "Economic generation is one of our most important functions, and we need to be able to demonstrate how well we're achieving that," he said. "At the same time, we can't ignore the other benefits we bring to the community, and we may need better ways of documenting them as well."

Vihinen argued that those carrying out an economic analysis needed to be seen as objective, and that suggested there were benefits to using academics from recognized universities to develop a more standardized system. Others felt that a "name" consulting company could provide similar benefits with a greater degree of recognition by facility owners. Overall, there was a general sense that those with the greatest credibility would vary according to different circumstances, and what worked best in one region might not work at all in others.

Panelist Lyle Hall of KPMG said that before any work begins, it's important to clearly identify the purpose for the analysis, which might be to justify a facility expansion or increased funding, or to rationalize operating losses against the greater economic benefit. This determination would then guide how the work was done and where emphasis would be placed.

He also noted that there was a need to identify the target audience for the review, citing the example of different levels of government which have different needs and expectations depending on how they raise revenues and calculate incremental benefits. Hall cautioned that it was important to recognize that there was seldom an "ultimate" figure and it was instead best to ensure that figures developed were realistic and defensible relative to other figures with which they might be compared.

Audience discussion underlined the wide variety of approaches now being taken to economic impact calculation, and the recognition of how needs vary according to circumstances. A point raised repeatedly was that proper sampling was at least as important an issue as that of the model used for calculation of economic impact. The one common factor amongst those who put a strong emphasis on economic impact calculation was the attention they gave to surveying clients, and all agreed that this was one of the most demanding aspects of the process.

The discussion ended with the conclusion that while regional differences would always make the idea of developing a common economic impact "model" a difficult one, there was merit to the consideration of a more standardized approach to client surveys. By making the data collected more consistent, it was felt that some degree of continuity could be developed amongst centres operating under varying conditions.

