

WHAT'S INSIDE
AIPC Seminar Looks for
Solutions to Big Issues

PAGE THREE



An Invitation to
the AIPC 2009
Annual Conference

PAGE FOUR



Profiling our Industry with
Government: An interview
with Ray Bloom

PAGE SIX



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Good Time to Think Locally

By the time you read this, we will be approaching the holiday season in one of the most disconcerting years any of us have seen for a long time. First, we saw a largely US and UK mortgage crisis turn into an international financial crisis and then into an economic mess as the chaos turned global and started to impact what the commentators like to refer to as the "real" economy. As we come up to year end, the two questions on everyone's mind are "how bad will it get" and "when will it be over".

It is very positive that many recent industry surveys show very limited impacts from the overall economic crisis on our sector. So far, centres and our industry colleagues are reporting reasonably strong booking for next year and little in the way of cancellations, although we can likely all expect some attendance and revenues. If anything, the impacts seem to be most likely to hit short term corporate business and we may find that we simply "straddle" much of the current crisis as a result of so much business being longer term.

However, they say that the holidays are a time to concentrate on home. And that may be a good idea for those of us in the industry as well, because that's where we may find the most encouraging news.

In challenging times, we all tend to focus on the bigger picture, because that's where the news is evolving day by day. It also is a product of the fact that our industry, by its very nature, is one that looks outward into the international arena much of the time. But we need to remember that by far the largest proportion of our business typically is local or regional, and conditions there may be very different. As an example, the more challenging air transport became over the last decade, the more important local and regional meetings became at the very time when international events were under more pressure.

I'm saying this because I think it's too easy to forget how important our local markets

While we look at big global events unfolding, we need to remember our local and regional clients for the business they bring us year after year.



are – and that we may have a tendency to short-change them at the time when they are more important than ever. While we look at big global events unfolding, we need to remember our local and regional clients for the business they bring us year after year. But there's another reason we need to invest in our local client relations – and that is the fact that they are very often the gateway to the bigger national and international business as well. I myself have experienced many situations where a good, long term relationship with a local client has led directly to a much larger event that they are associated with, and I'm sure many of you have seen that yourselves.

In fact, we can look at our relationships with local clients as delivering two sets of benefits; the direct business they bring and the broader business they often help us access because of their own relationships within their business or professional areas.

So as we all settle down to enjoy the holiday season this year, lets raise a glass to our long term, local clients – the ones that are the easiest to forget when bigger international issues take our attention. We need them now more than ever – and when conditions improve, they will also be a big factor in helping us move back into the global marketplace!

Board Decisions Creating New Protocols

AIPC's recent Board meeting at EIBTM in Barcelona resulted in some key Board decisions that will clarify and adjust a number of policies that relate to members. All are intended to reinforce AIPC's core mission of advancing and recognizing excellence in convention centre management

Among the decisions were;

- > To create a "code of commitment" for AIPC members to identify the expectations that members of the association have of fellow members in terms of participation, support for AIPC objectives and mutual respect;
- > To develop an overall Corporate / Social Responsibility statement and guidelines as an indicator of the values AIPC and its members embrace relative to the communities in which we work and carry out our activities;
- > To revise AIPC's Corporate Partnership program and policies to limit the number of sponsor-participants in order to maintain value for official partners and maintain an appropriate member / supplier balance;
- > To articulate AIPC's industry relations policy as a means of identifying specific goals and outcomes for the activities we engage in amongst our fellow industry associations. In particular, this policy would provide a guideline as to how and when AIPC should be working in concert with other industry associations to address issues of mutual concern to the industry as a whole.

The new policy initiatives will be prepared over the next few months and reviewed by Board members before being implemented. Details of any approved measures will be communicated to members and partners as they are completed.



AIPC Academy Heads into Year Three with an Expanded Curriculum and Faculty:

"Two years of feedback has told us we are essentially on the right track with the Academy but at the same time indicated where we can adjust and improve the format and curriculum even further", says AIPC President Edgar Hirt. "Now more than ever, we need an efficient program aimed primarily at those areas that will build value for centres that send staff to the program. I would urge all of you to take a look at your staff and identify those you think would benefit both you and themselves the most from participation"

With two full program years under its belt, the AIPC Academy is moving forward in 2009 with an expanded faculty

and more diversified curriculum content. With the benefit of student feedback and a detailed analysis of each session by faculty, the 2009 program will incorporate greater depth in key topics and more "hand-on" learning as it addresses increasing challenges in maintaining a skilled labour force for our industry.

Among the new measures that will be reflected in the 2009 Academy are:

- > The total learning time will be extended by adding an additional half day and evening sessions to the existing curriculum;
- > There will be a new emphasis on group problem solving and network building through collective activities with measured outcomes;
- > Core curriculum areas will be expanded with additional content as identified in student and faculty surveys, and
- > The faculty and guest presenters list will be expanded to diversify the range of topic areas and provide a range of perspectives in each topic area.

Along with previous faculty members **Barbara Maple** (Sales and Marketing), **Dirk Elzinga** (Finance and industry

Economics), **John Christison** (Facility Operations), **Rod Cameron** (Industry Overview and Community / Government relations), **Steve Piper** (Security),



Marcia Lyons (Human Resources Management) and **Geoff Fenlon** (Client Services and Event Management) the academy will also be welcoming **Isabel Bardinet**, Congress Division Director of the European Society of Cardiology to provide a client perspective, and a number of other guest presenters to round out the program.

This year's AIPC Academy will take place February 1-5 2009 at the Dolce le Hulpe Training Centre near Brussels, and as in previous years, space is restricted. As this is the last opportunity for 2009 registration, members should contact the AIPC Secretariat as soon as possible to secure a place for eligible staff.

February 1-5, 2009

AIPC Operations Summit Delivers New Insights

More than 40 AIPC members came together at EIBTM for the first in what will potentially be an ongoing program devoted to identifying and addressing key operational and event coordination issues. A counterpart to the successful International Sales and Marketing Summit held annually at IMEX in Frankfurt, the Operations Summit represented the interests and concerns of a group that typically meets much less frequently than their sales colleagues, and that was reflected in the depth and breadth of presentations and discussions that took place in Barcelona.

"While they may not meet as frequently, this is a group that plays a truly pivotal role in the operations and overall performance of their respective centres", said AIPC President Edgar Hirt. "In fact, without the roles that our operational staff play, the rest of us wouldn't have much to sell, so their ability to exchange information and expertise is critical".

Summit topics ranged from facility certification and security issues to sustainability

measures and technical systems. Participants also engaged in working exercises aimed at addressing case studies on topics identified in advance of the session, and completed their program with a series of site visits that, amongst other things, took advantage of the opportunity for an "inside look" at the EIBTM show setup itself.

Given that this is likely the first in a series of similar annual events, participants also

played a valuable role in helping assess content and making recommendations for the program and topics for future years. One of the areas identified as a knowledge "gap" was that of the AIPC Quality Standards program, of which many participants were unaware, resulting in a commitment to communicate program information directly to operational staff who may not have received details when the program was launched.

"We want to thank all the participants and presenters whose work made this event such a success", said Hirt. "In particular, I want to acknowledge the role played by John Christison, President of the Washington State Convention and Trade Centre and a member of the AIPC Academy faculty, who acted as overall facilitator for the event".



AIPC Seminar Looks for Solutions to "Big Issues"

Under the heading of "Big Issues – Big Solutions" the AIPC Seminar at EIBTM brought three different industry perspectives to bear on some of the most important issues facing the industry today and what we can do to address them.

These issues have arisen following a period of growth and rising expectations on the part of owners as well as industry professionals, and range from labour and skills shortages and rising costs to an uncertain economy and growing concerns about the cost and carbon footprint of long

distance travel.

On the basis that these are issues that face suppliers and clients equally, and that the best solutions will therefore be joint ones that represent a collective effort by all industry sectors acting in a coordinated way, the panel consisted of a supplier representative from AIPC - Maria João Rocha de Matos, Managing Director of the Lisboa Congress Centre; Sandi Talley, CMP- the Senior Vice President of Business Development & Membership for the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and a key client

representative: Isabel Bardinnet, Congress Division Director of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

The Seminar was colored by the fact that of all the issues originally identified, those associated most directly with the current global economic crisis clearly was the most urgent priority. In fact, while panelists recognized that all issues would eventually play a role in future planning some would have to be set aside in the face of urgent priorities associated with the economic situation. However, it was also noted that any

reprieve in issues such as a requirement for skilled and experienced labour or the cost and difficulty associated with air travel would be temporary and would emerge again quickly once an economic recovery took hold.

The panel agreed that current conditions required close monitoring, as well as regular exchanges on how various sectors are coping. In particular, they identified an ongoing need to review how various client groups were fairing in order to be able to see ways in which suppliers could support them and their events.



AIPC 2009

AIPC
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

an invitation:

Invitation from PALEXCO,
A Coruña, Spain



Dear colleagues;

I am very pleased to be welcoming you to our part of the world from July 4–8 for the 2009 AIPC Annual Conference. This will be a very important gathering, given some of the new challenges we are facing as an industry, and we in A Coruña regard it as an honour to be hosting such an important event as this one will prove to be.

While some of you have experienced our destination before, others will have not, and I think we can offer all of you a unique and unforgettable experience. Ours is not only an attractive and historic location, but one that is filled with enthusiasm and excitement for what we have to offer. This will create the perfect backdrop for the important discussions that will be taking place as part of the conference program.

Please start to make your plans now for your attendance. We are already developing an extensive program of activities that will enable you to experience our city and region in a very special way, and can promise that you will both learn and enjoy yourselves at the same time. We will be providing further information as we get closer to the conference dates, and look forward to seeing you in 2009!

Enrique Pena Gonzalez,
Director, PALEXCO Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos A Coruña

AIPC's 2009 Annual Conference and 51st General Assembly will be a very important event, coming as it will in the midst of a complex global transition that will be affecting our industry in ways we can only now imagine. It will take place in A Coruña – a very unique destination with an attractive combination of history and beauty on Spain's northwest coast. We'll be providing more details around the conference program, the social program and the destination itself in future issues of *Communiqué* – but for now, let us extend an official invitation to a conference and a destination you won't want to miss!



“Glocalization”

Balancing Our Global and Local Business Priorities

While global issues dominate much of our attention as convention centres, the fact is that much of our most reliable and sustaining business is local, regional and repeat in nature. As we struggle with the impacts of global markets we also need to respect and recognize the importance of this business and maintain a focus on growing and supporting it in the future. The program for the Conference will therefore be a combination of presentations and discussions on local

event activity and potential with those relating to the broader issues of the day; specifically the impacts and solutions associated with global economic turmoil. Issues such as transportation, sustainability, corporate business prospects and world economics will all be addressed from these two points of view, with factors that impact one market area having potential to actually benefit others.



A Coruña THE DESTINATION

A Coruña is a dynamic city, brimming with hospitality, full of energy and vitality, with a strong legacy, ever-present in its history, art, legends and traditions which harmonize perfectly with the modern, cosmopolitan city it has become. A Coruña lies in the north-west corner of Spain and forms part of the region called Galicia. It is a balcony onto the Atlantic from where you can contemplate an incessant business, commercial and cultural activity. The population is 247,000 and the climate is mild - average maximum temperatures are 22°C in summer and 14°C in winter.

Any time you visit us will be an unforgettable experience.

The city is a peninsula surrounded by 12 km of sea. Many of its tourist attractions have been built all along this extraordinary natural setting, sharing the waterfront with age-old existing structures like the Tower of Hercules, dating back two thousand years in time. This Roman lighthouse is the city's insignia, sharing this distinction with the fishermen's houses, famous for their glass verandas, which has earned the city its moniker: 'The glass city'. A Coruña offers the visitor a wealth of cultural and leisure

activities. At any time of the year, you can enjoy the sports facilities, museums, exhibits, art galleries, theatre, concerts, operas, recitals and chamber music. The visitor can stroll around the old town or head for the beaches. Above all, A Coruña is a city that lives for the sea. Huge ocean liners, little fishing boats and majestic sailing ships bring the city to life; that was the birth place of a race of expert sailors, and where a fundamental skill for the city's economy has always revolved round fishing.

It will create a memorable backdrop for the 2009 AIPC Annual Conference!



Profiling our Industry with Government

Ray Bloom AN INTERVIEW with Ray Bloom



Ray Bloom is as well known a figure as you can find in our industry; not simply as the owner of IMEX but also as a tireless representative at every industry event and a supporter of a huge range of industry activities. But beyond lending his support to the actions of others, Ray has been notable for having initiated and maintained key industry initiatives on his own. One of the most successful and visionary of these is the Politician's Forum; a gathering of government and industry representatives which anticipated the need for the industry to create a vehicle for industry exchange with the governments we interact with and which has evolved continuously as an opportunity to clarify and promote the benefits the meetings industry delivers. *Communiqué* focuses on this topic in the following interview;

Communiqué |

What kind of responsibility do you feel a trade show has in supporting the overall industry?

A trade show, such as IMEX, has an important responsibility to provide the industry with outstanding business opportunities for both sellers and buyers to meet once a year in a setting conducive to doing business. In addition, a trade show is a platform for the industry to develop new ideas and advance issues of importance as it is in a unique position to highlight opportunities and challenges, as well as bring people from across the industry and across the globe together. Through the IMEX New Vision initiatives we support the industry on an enormous range of topics – from the development of future talent to lobbying of politicians to highlighting environmental responsibility.

Communiqué |

Why and how did you begin the Politician's Forum initiative?

The Politicians Forum began out of a desire to assist the industry in raising the profile and political influence of our sector. In this way, we wanted to aid the education of politicians in understanding the specialties of the meetings industry, as opposed to

tourism; as well as the tangible economic and less tangible – but no less important – social impacts of meetings and events for a destination. In addition, we wanted to show the politicians how they could influence the industry in their destination positively – winning business and economic success.

At first the Forum was focused on trying to attract MEPs and national politicians from some of the key European destinations – UK, France, Brussels, Austria, Germany, etc. The first Forum, at IMEX 2003, welcomed around 20 politicians and 30 industry leaders and centered around a debate on how the industry could take advantage of an enlarged European Union.

Communiqué |

How has it evolved since then?

The Forum is organized under the auspices of JMIC (Joint Meetings Industry Council) and together with European Cities Marketing (ECM). We facilitate a meeting every November of representatives from both organizations who discuss the objectives of the forthcoming Forum. This process has enabled the Forum to develop to the needs of the industry and has meant that it has become a far more practical tool for destinations and politicians alike. Whereas, in 2003, the Forum was seen as a more general discussion

between industry leaders and politicians; it is now seen as a practical way for politicians to gain real understanding of what the industry is and what it does; as well as how they can benefit from our sector. The Forum has evolved from the industry asking politicians to help us, to the industry showing politicians how we can help them to achieve increased success for their city or destination by working together constructively.

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What do you think have been its greatest successes?

The Forum has been important in helping to raise the debate amongst key politicians and throughout the industry at large. The meetings industry itself is beginning to recognize the importance of making politicians aware of the benefits of the sector, both economically and culturally; as well as the importance of raising the profile of the industry in general. Destinations which invite politicians to attend IMEX and the Forum, view it as an important part of their long-term strategy to improve knowledge of the meetings industry within local government and engage greater support.

An example is Glasgow City Marketing Bureau who brought Bailie Liz Cameron to the Forum in 2008 which they say helped to “improve her appreciation

of the scale and the size of the industry and the competition they face” or when Göteborg Convention Bureau, Sweden succeeded in winning €900,000 for a three year Ambassador project in their region of Western Sweden following the IMEX Politicians' Forum 2004.

Communiqué |

Where do you want it to go from here?

We would like to see the Forum continue to expand in scope and size and in particular to carry on improving the awareness and influence of the industry across the political spectrum on a global level. In the short and medium term I would hope that we can continue to attract an even wider range of politicians from across the globe to the Forum who are able to share different perspectives with each other and the industry. In addition, I hope that more of our exhibitors will become actively involved in the Forum – inviting their politicians to attend – which I am positive will give them long-term benefits of the type explained above.

Communiqué |

What are some of the most important lessons we've learned from participating politicians?

I think that the most important lesson that we have learned from the participating politicians is the need for the industry to communicate to them

with a consistency and clarity of message. The industry is very diverse, but it is important that we come together to deliver a coherent, simple message to the wider world which can be easily understood and taken forward by politicians. In addition, politicians come and go and therefore the industry needs to commit to a long-term programme of planned communication and education if we are to have a lasting impact.

Communiqué |

What should be our priority messages to governments in times of economic turmoil like today?

In difficult markets like today, the industry needs to be unanimous and consistent in its message to political leaders. We need to show governments the economic benefits of supporting our industry, as well as the legacy benefits of hosting large congresses which include trade development, improved cultural understanding and advances in scientific understanding. In addition, the industry must continue to raise the issue of environmental protection as a key way that we can positively contribute to our local communities. Finally, we must be active in continuously working to highlight the ways that politicians can easily become involved and show them why it will make a difference at election-time.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

CHINA NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER, BEIJING

Located at the heart of Beijing 2008 Olympic Green beside the Bird's Nest Stadium, the Watercube (National Aquatic Center) and the National Indoor Stadium, the China National Convention Center (CNCC) is China's largest and first purpose built convention center. It offers a 6,000 seat capacity Plenary Hall; a 3,500 seat Ballroom; an exhibition center of 24,000 m²; and over 60 breakout rooms.

Also on site is the 445 room CNCC Grand Hotel which serves as the meeting's headquarters hotel. and the 335 room Inter Continental Hotel which is attached by sky-bridge, providing a total of almost 800 quality rooms.

The CNCC is liberally served with roadway linkage and a dedicated subway station as well as being only 30 minutes away from

the Capital Airport and 15 minutes away from the CBD. Says Liu Haiying, CEO, China National Convention Center; **"The primary objective of CNCC is to introduce into Beijing and China a venue of adequate quality and dimension to accommodate the most**



important and largest international meetings. We look forward to extending Chinese hospitality to the meetings industry. CNCC joined AIPC to connect with a family of facilities that represent the best practices in the convention and exhibition meetings industry. AIPC itself provides a progressive



Liu Haiying
CEO



educational platform with benchmark performance standard guidelines. It is our intention to participate fully in the programs of AIPC to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for our staff to allow us continuously improve on our service standards".

QATAR NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE

Opening in 2011, the Qatar National Convention Centre will not only set a new benchmark in global venue design, it will become one of the Middle East's largest convention and exhibition venues.

Boasting 40,000sqm of exhibition in nine halls, a tiered lyric style theatre seating 2,300, two auditoria, a multi-purpose conference hall to seat 4,000, complemented by an additional 52 meetings rooms and luxury business lounges. The Centre will also cater for 10,000 for a conference or banquet and all the latest technology to meet the demands of global conference and exhibition organisers.

QNCC's General Manager, Paul D'Arcy said **"The Middle East is one of the fastest growing convention and exhibition destinations in the world. Joining AIPC will assist our goals in identifying new trends in venue centre excellence, developing stronger networks with our industry peers and ultimately gain a stronger global awareness of the world-class venue design, professional venue management and quality in service standards that are available in the Middle East, in particular Qatar."**

The QNCC is a member of the Qatar Foundation and managed by one of the world's leading venue management specialists, AEG Ogden.



Paul D'Arcy
General Manager



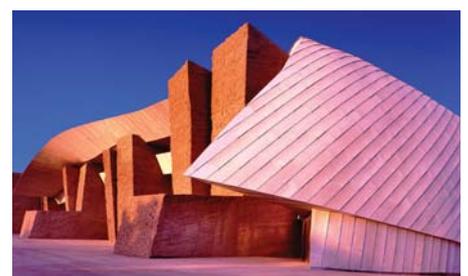
MAGMA EVENTS AND CONGRESS CENTRE TENERIFE

Magma Events and Congress Centre is a building which, apart of its unique architecture, is perfectly designed to satisfy the most varied demands of any event up to 2.500 delegates. Situated in Costa Adeje, Tenerife, Canary Islands, and only 10 minutes from international south airport; Magma has 3 main indoor and 1 outdoor areas, which can be divided into a total of 19 meeting rooms by means of moveable panels. With maximum flexibility, the centre provides the combination of professional services required to fulfil the highest expectations of event organizers. Surrounded by a wide range of brand new hotels facilities and leisure options, Magma delivers superb design and versatility in one of the world's best climates.

Says General Manager Pablo Gutiérrez, who has recently joined Magma Events and Congress Centre with the objective of turning Magma into a local, national, European and international contender in the meeting market **"Magma does not have to be considered only as a Congress Centre but, due to its original architecture and flexibility, as an ideal venue with unique design and endless event possibilities. Our commercial challenges are to become a key venue for Tenerife cultural and meeting market while also focusing on the national and main European market. We consider joining AIPC a great opportunity to enhance our image in Europe as well as in a potential international market."**



Pablo Gutiérrez
General Manager



AIPC

QUALITY STANDARDS PROGRAM

AIPC Quality Standards

Deliver a Variety of Benefits

As more AIPC Member Centres adopt the AIPC Quality Standards program, a body of experience is developing with how others can go about achieving this distinction and what kinds of benefits the related audit process delivers in terms of staff team building and internal policy development. Communiqué talks to two centres who have recently completed the process and been awarded the AIPC Gold Level Quality Standards designation; the respondents are Leigh Harry, Chief Executive, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre and Maria João Rocha de Matos, Managing Director, Lisboa Congress Centre.

Communiqué |

How challenging was the Quality Standards audit process for your staff?

LEIGH HARRY: The process was not particularly challenging because our organisation already has a significant range of quality procedures and policies in place. What it did do was enable us to revisit a number of these procedures and policies from a different perspective. This has then encouraged the team to identify a number of suggestions that have resulted in further refinement of our practices

MARIA JOÃO ROCHA DE MATOS: The Lisboa Congress Centre has a Quality Management System Certification by

the standard of ISO 9001 since 2003. This certification is renewed every year. Therefore, all the process for the AIPC Quality Standards Audit was quite simple for us.

Communiqué |

What other benefits came out of the exercise, for example, in terms of staff performance?

LEIGH HARRY: Apart from the one above the way we approached this encouraged staff from individual departments to look across the whole organisation. This has improved their understanding of the whole range of our activities and certainly encouraged a greater team based view of the importance of individual departments

MARIA JOÃO ROCHA DE MATOS: The benefits of this kind of exercise include many aspects, including team building and the systematization of the procedures, which helps you recognize immediately any deficiencies or errors, which leads to immediate improvements. They also include the fact that such an exercise forces you to set objectives clearly, and leads to a process of continuous improvement. However, it also helps set procedures and control mechanisms, and through the reporting and control you can easily

identify your faults and errors and things to improve. Finally, it brings your clients to collaborate with your management team, and they appreciate it.

Communiqué |

What benefits do you think your accreditation will provide?

LEIGH HARRY: We are already using the award in our marketing and have received attention as a result of press releases featuring the award. The value of this will be to a large degree determined by the publicity which I understand that AIPC will generate for this new program. The other benefits are those mentioned above and that as a result of the program we are reviewing the way we attain and retain a number of accreditations that we currently hold as an organisation.

MARIA JOÃO ROCHA DE MATOS: If the Quality Standards Audit is seriously developed, as AIPC intends, it will become an important benchmarking tool. It enables a comparison between competitors, as opposed to the Quality Management System by the standard of ISO 9001, which is one rule for any kind of company. This means a lot more to our industry and our clients.



ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES
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TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AIPC VISIT
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