

Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication (10-12 April 2026)

Managing conflict by mastering the art of active listening and inquiry to influence positive outcome

Facilitators: Stuart Cole & Jason Oglesby

Critical incidents rarely occur at a time. A workplace conflict escalates, a sensitive internal allegation lands on a leader's desk, and suddenly cyber breach adds pressure, uncertainty, and reputational risk. In those moments, organizations don't just need policy, they need calm, strategic leadership grounded in facts, clear communication, and defensible decision-making.

This workshop equips leaders and frontline professionals to perform with confidence when the stakes are high and events are unfolding rapidly. You will learn how to stabilize conflict before it escalates, using active listening and the art of inquiry to surface critical information and drive positive outcomes. We will also examine how to communicate and lead through a cyber breach with clarity, coordination, and strategic control, and how to make fair, lawful, and defensible decisions in sensitive internal investigations, especially when the evidence leads somewhere unexpected.

Friday 10 April 2026	
18.00 - 20.00	Registration and Intro Reception for the workshop Lobby

Saturday 11 April 2026	
09.00 - 10.30	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.00	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant
13.00 - 14.30	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
14.30 – 15.00	Networking break
15.00 – 16.30	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
16.30 - 18.00	Networking / Downtime
18.00 - 19.30	Buffet dinner - Argan Restaurant

19.30 - 21.00	Networking / Downtime
---------------	------------------------------

Sunday 12 April 2026	
09.00 - 10.30	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.00	Optional Pre-Academy Workshop: Strategic Communication
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant

AIPC ACADEMY (12-17 April 2026)

Sunday 12 April 2026	
13.00 - 13.30	Registration
13.30 – 13.45	Welcome to the AIPC 2026 Academy! Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
13.45 – 14.30	Icebreaker exercise: Circle of Connectivity and Council Introduce yourself in 1 minute! Share your role, venue, and unique perspective in a dynamic, outdoor circle to foster connections and set the stage for collaboration. Presenters: Participants Terrasse e-coffee / Cherry Meeting Room Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
14.30 - 15.00	Unleash the Warrior Within. The Haka Experience Steve McKenzie Chief Innovation Officer Momentus Technologies
15.00 - 15.30	Global Market Outlook A "scene setter" for Academy discussions, this opening session will provide a global market outlook, based on recent research by AIPC partners. Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
15.30 - 16.30	Technology. to boldly go ...

	<p>Technology has never been as important for convention centres as it is today, whether it concerns the implementation of health & safety protocols, enabling digital events or delivering actionable insights via data mining. This session will give an overview of the market landscape and the latest trends when it comes to technology for convention centers.</p> <p>Presenter.</p> <p>Steve MacKenzie Chief Innovation Officer Momentus Technologies</p>
16.30 – 17.00	<p>Introduction of team challenges</p> <p>A key element of the AIPC Academy are the team challenges. joint exercises round industry challenges. In this session, the participants will be briefed on their mission.</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Sven Bossu CEO AIPC</p> <p>Julianne Jammers Managing Director STCC</p>
17.00 – 18.00	Group Project - Individual Team Kick off
18.00 - 18.30	<p>Welcome reception</p> <p>Badian Lounge Bar</p>
18.00 - 20.00	<p>Group Project Team Dinner</p> <p>Buffet Dinner. Argan Restaurant</p>
Monday 13 April 2026	
08.15 - 09.00	<p>Start of day Exercise: Behaviour Shapes</p> <p>Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center</p> <p>This session explores Behaviour Shapes to help teams understand different working styles. Through a short pre-work exercise and group discussion, participants identify personality tendencies, recognise strengths and challenges, and learn practical tips to collaborate more effectively, reduce friction, and improve teamwork and communication</p>
09.00 - 09.45	<p>5 Generations – what we need and how we work with intention</p> <p>Presenter: TBC</p>
09.45 - 10.30	<p>Global Trends in the Event Industry</p> <p>Professor Gayle McPherson Chair in Events and Cultural Policy, and Director of the Research Centre for Culture, Sport and Events School of Business and Creative Industries, University of West of Scotland</p>

	Professor Gayle McPherson explores key trends in the evolving event industry, highlighting global growth, sustainability, and stakeholder expectations. She'll discuss emerging markets, women's football, multi-city bids, and AI's impact on venues and branding, emphasizing the industry's role in achieving net zero and adapting to technological advancements.
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.00	<p>Voice of the Customer</p> <p>The overall event industry – similar to other industries – is facing an increased level of uncertainty. In this session, you will hear from 2 very different event organizers the challenges they are facing and how this is impacting their expectations with regards to contracting convention centers.</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Natasha Richards Director of Impact & Industry Relations IMEX</p> <p>Chiara Gasparotto Deputy CEO European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO)</p>
12.00 - 13.00	<p>Lunch & Group project</p> <p>Argan Restaurant</p>
13.00 - 14.30	<p>Human Factors Part 1 - Crisis Communications</p> <p>Art of Inquiry and Active Listening</p> <p>Greyscale Intelligence Facilitation</p>
14.30 - 15.00	Networking break
15.00 - 16.30	<p>Human Factors Part 2 - Crisis Communications</p> <p>Breach Case Study</p> <p>Greyscale Intelligence Facilitation</p>
16.30 – 18.30	Group Project Time
18.30 - 20.00	Cocktail and Tapas Academy. Learn, Taste, Enjoy
20.00 – 22.00	Group Project Time

Tuesday 14 April 2026

08.15 - 09.00	Start of day Exercise: Systems Presenter: Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
---------------	--

09.00 - 10.30	Leadership through uncertainty Part 1 Presenter: Sandy Kennedy CEO Entrepreneurial Scotland Uncertainty is the norm, but it also drives growth. This interactive workshop, led by executive Sandy Kennedy, equips leaders with tools to navigate ambiguity, mitigate risks, and turn uncertainty into opportunity. Through discussions and exercises, gain insights to lead confidently, make informed decisions, and inspire your team.
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.00	Leadership through uncertainty Part 2 Presenter: Sandy Kennedy CEO Entrepreneurial Scotland
12.00 - 12.45	Lunch break Argan Restaurant
12.45 - 13.15	Departure - Walk to Castle
13.15 – 15.30	Management by Walking Around with a Royal Touch In this session, the participants will be broken up into small teams. Each team will receive a case study on a convention center which needs to be “fixed”. Applying the lessons learned so far, each team will come up with a proposal, addressing the challenges faced. Next to the case study, the teams will have access to a chief operating officer, a chief technology officer, a sales manager and a HR- manager to obtain additional information and guidance. However, the teams will only have 2,5 hours to come up with the solution. Facilitated by: Julianne Jammers Managing Director SwissTech Convention Center – EPF Steve McKenzie Chief Innovation Officer Momentus Technologies Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center Gemma Roxburgh Chief Financial Officer Hacking and Paterson Management Services
15.30 – 16.00	Travel back from Castle
16.00 - 18.30	Group Project time
18.00 – 20.30	Dinner - Group Project Presentations
20.30 – 22.00	Networking/ Downtime

Wednesday 15 April 2026

08.15 - 09.00	Start of day Exercise - Toast Presenter: Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.00 - 10.30	Everything you want to ask a CEO Presenters: Julianne Jammers Executive Director SwissTech Center Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center Lenka Zlebkova CEO Prague Convention Center
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.00	Business Development – What we think, we become Business development entails tasks and processes to develop and implement growth opportunities within and between organizations. But it all starts with an ambition and articulated objectives, which is turned into reality. In this session, you will hear from a senior industry leader how this can be achieved. Presenter: Genevieve Lim Assistant Vice President of Sales & MICE Marina Bay Sands
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch break. The Belgian Bar @ Gare Maritime
13.00 - 14.30	Trends – AV has moved from Backstage to centre stage – Case Study Presentation and Exercise Presenter: Zsuzsa Szégnér Head of Sales Visual Europe Group (BUD)
14.30 - 15.00	Networking break
15:00 – 16:30	Building Resilient Teams Resiliency through Adversity Case Study & Exercise Presenter: Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
16.30 – 17.30	Networking / Down Time
17.30 – 20.00	Dinner - Group Project Presentations
20.00 – 22.00	Networking / Down Time

Thursday 16 April 2026

08.15 - 09.00	Start of day Exercise: Council Confidential Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.00 - 10.30	Bridging the Gap. Mediation and Business Events In our dynamic and fast paced business events industry, effective conflict management is key to seamless operations and successful outcomes. This workshop introduces mediation as a practical tool for resolving workplace tensions, facilitating collaboration, and improving team performance under pressure. Through interactive exercises and industry-specific scenarios, participants will discover how mediation bridges communication gaps and enhances workplace safety. Presenter. Angela Herberholz Founder HERBERHOLZ MEDIATION SERVICES
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 – 12.30	Finance. bringing it all together Finance is where everything connects. In this session, Gemma will share how financial data goes far beyond numbers on a spreadsheet and becomes a powerful tool to understand the overall health, performance and resilience of a convention centre. Drawing on her experience in senior finance roles across multiple industries – including the events sector – Gemma will explore how meaningful financial insight supports strategic decision-making, operational efficiency and long-term sustainability. A practical session for leaders who want finance to truly add value to the business.. Gemma Roxburgh Chief Financial Officer Hacking and Paterson Management Services
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant
13.30 – 15.00	Sustainability in Action – Behind the scenes Case study Presentation and Q&A Presenter: Rob Turnbull Sustainability Manager Edinburgh International Conference Centre The Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) has been leading the way in sustainable events for the past 30 years. Rob Turnbull, the EICC's Sustainability Manager, will share the Centre's journey, highlighting how it has reduced its carbon emissions by 60% over the past decade, even while hosting twice as many events. From smart energy management and low-carbon travel planning to responsible catering, community food redistribution, and inclusive initiatives, discover how the EICC creates events that are greener, more inclusive and impactful, raising the standard for sustainable gatherings.

15.00 - 15.30	Networking break
15.30 - 16.30	HR & Leadership Individual Challenges - Group Solutions Access to entire Co-hort and leaders Group Exercise
16.30 – 17.30	Networking / Down Time
17.30 – 18.30	Cocktails
18.30 – 20.00	Special Academy Dinner - Brasserie 135
20.00 – 22.00	Networking / Down Time

Friday 17 April 2026

09.00 – 09.30	Start of day Exercise Mind & Memories Review of Week! Presenter: Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.30 – 10.30	Hosting a NATO Summit. Insights from The Hague's 2025 Experience Presenter. Michiel Middendorf General Manager World Forum The Hague In 2025, the World Forum The Hague hosted a historic NATO Summit. We have the privilege of welcoming Michiel Middendorf , CEO of the convention center, as a keynote speaker to share what it takes to make such a high-profile summit happen
10.30 - 10.45	Networking break
10.45 - 11.30	Design is how it works, not how it looks like Good event design is key for delivering successful events and goes beyond the creative elements. it should include a clear strategy, excellent production and analytics allowing for actionable insights. This session will focus on the role convention centers can play when it comes to event design, covering all these elements. Presenter. Adam Paulitsch Design Director and Principal Populous Kansas City
11.30 - 12.30	Wrap Up / Survey / Awards / Toast / Departures

AIPC Academy 2026 Draft Program: April 12-17

