PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE – Michel Neijmann

A new EDGE to IAPCO

During the IAPCO Annual Meeting and General Assembly in Lisbon earlier this year, we discussed options by which to further improve the quality programme of the association. Embracing the key elements of the quality programme, “education drives quality”, members provided us with the mandate to investigate the implementation and administration of appropriate initiatives. This decision has helped define another milestone in the long history of IAPCO, which has always represented our collective determination to improve quality standards in the international meetings industry. IAPCO members worldwide are aware of the continuous need to reflect on their own performance and to carefully analyse their business models. Additionally, with an increasing demand for experienced staff, it is no surprise that an emphasis on education is at the top of the agenda for IAPCO for the coming years.

At IMEX in Frankfurt in May this year, IAPCO launched its new education programme – EDGE – which is designed to better meet the needs of our members and the dynamic meetings industry. Having said farewell after 37 years to the traditional Annual Seminar in Wolfsburg, IAPCO is now offering EDGE, a global seminar dedicated to professional congress organisation at general, intermediate and advanced levels. Importantly, and with a key aim of improving membership engagement, IAPCO is offering members the opportunity to organise their own EDGE seminar and thus take the lead in providing an educational platform in their region. Local and accessible registration fees.

IAPCO has started the year with a very positive outlook for the future, and I am sure we will make great progress together towards realising our goals. As always, I look forward to meeting with many of you in person throughout the year. In the meantime, stay happy and healthy!

Michel Neijmann
President
Maximising congress attendance: an increasing challenge for associations

By André Victor, Bureaucrats Congress

When working with international associations on their meetings these days, one of the most common statements that I hear is “We are planning to cut costs in our congress budget since we don’t know what will happen in 2 years’ time!” It is a fact that uncertainty continues to grow regarding both industry support and delegate attendance, particularly in the healthcare sector. The concern, which has been with us for many years, is that attracting delegates to a conference or scientific meeting has become more and more of a challenge and a headache for associations.

This is due to a variety of reasons. It is not only because of a steadily increasing number of competing conferences, but also due to the fact that professionals are entitled to take fewer days off for continuing education. On top of that, corporate compliance policies and new industry regulations are affecting the ability of companies to invite delegates.

There is also another fear factor – how will on-line access to digital educational content and e-learning platforms impact the attendance at face-to-face meetings? An increasing number of associations are making all congress content available through a dedicated e-library at their website, for a limited period of time or all year round. Nevertheless, several case studies actually show that access to digital content does not prevent people from signing up for the next conference – and in fact motivates non-attendees to go, and not to miss out on the face-to-face experience. That sounds promising. However, it is important to get the basics right, including a cutting-edge scientific programme, an attractive programme design and format allowing for delegate engagement and providing good networking opportunities, as well as the best return on investment (ROI) or on objectives (ROO)!

Let us return to our initial challenge… One of the major concerns of associations today, very often due to a lack of expertise, is how to maximise congress attendance for their face-to-face meetings. There are two key questions to be answered. How do potential participants find out about the conference and its value? How do we effectively communicate in order to reach 100% of our target group and to achieve the desired impact, taking into account the generational differences?

A 360-degree marketing and communication strategy is needed that encompasses the three main areas of marketing:

1. Digital marketing – embracing brand creation, congress promotion via an official congress website, video, webinars, on-line ‘teaser’ sessions, a congress app, electronic marketing such as email blasts, and social media and e-newsletter campaigns.

2. Traditional marketing methods – including printed promotional activities, advertising and PR.

3. Face-to-face marketing – consisting of promotional campaigns in collaboration with industry and sponsors, promotion through an ambassador programme acting as an extended sales force, as well as promotional campaigns at other industry events and the preceding conference.

Social media campaigns are relatively new to many of our clients but are more commonly integrated in the promotion plan since they help to reach out to those potential conference delegates not covered in any existing database or mailing list. However, it requires some expertise to use the right media and channels, depending on whom we are targeting and for what purpose. This is where PCOs may add tremendous value.

It is interesting to see that some cities and Convention Bureaux have also set up a unique selling point in association with the event’s key issue of ‘delegate boosting’. This is done by providing services and tools such as use of in-house media and PR channels, specially designed apps, on-line tools and widgets promoting corporate social responsibility programmes, exclusive packages or special discounts to conference delegates for local transportation, cultural activities, and restaurants, and even healthcare insurance to enhance the visitor experience – to name only a few.

PCOs are increasingly asked by association clients to take an active role and become a central part in the promotion strategy, as well as the execution, of the overall communication plan. It requires quite a deal of expertise to choose the right channels, and PCOs are of utmost value due to their experience gathered from working with so many different communities and delegate profiles.

Talking science in Tokyo: Nobel Prize Dialogue comes to Japan

PCO: Congress Corporation

Congress Corporation was honoured to assist the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and Nobel Media AB in convening the first Nobel Prize Dialogue to be held outside Sweden on 1 March 2015 in Tokyo, at the Tokyo International Forum. The meeting was inspired by the Nobel Week Dialogue event, which has been held in Sweden since 2012 on the day before the Nobel Prize ceremony, that aims to deepen the dialogue between the scientific community and the rest of society on issues connected with the Nobel Prizes, and takes advantage of the presence of the Nobel laureates in Sweden at the time of the ceremony.

This year, the Nobel Foundation wanted to take this concept overseas, and Nobel Prize Dialogue Tokyo 2015, which had the topic of ‘The Genetic Revolution and its Future Impact’, was convened in Japan.

The company worked with JSPS in developing all aspects of the meeting, going ‘all-out’ to meet the expectations of both Nobel Media and JSPS. The most important aspect for the clients was to ensure impeccable design throughout that was at least on a par with the calibre of design produced for the equivalent events in Sweden. This covered everything from the website to each type of ID badge for delegates. The Congress Corporation team photographer shot the deep red, art deco winding staircase, evoking a gene, that the organizers loved and selected as the main design image for the meeting, for use on the website and printed materials.

The organizers were also very concerned about the staging, and Congress Corporation’s design proposal utilised colourful boxes to match the topic of Nobel Prize Dialogue Tokyo 2015. The design was highly rated by the organizers and everyone involved. The participants told Congress Corporation, “This is better than Sweden!”

The company were very happy with their achievements, stating, “We are proud of the success of the first Nobel Prize Dialogue in Japan and the fact that we executed our duties making the most of the energy and talent of our up-and-coming staff in Congress Corporation, which in turn will prove to be a valuable experience for their career development. We do hope this will lead to the Nobel Prize Dialogue returning to Japan in the near-future.”
Taking the load in Prague

PCO - C-IN, Prague, Czech Republic

Variable amplitude loading was the focus of the 3rd International Conference on Material and Component Performance under Variable Amplitude Loading (VLAL 2015), which took place in the Prague Congress Centre on 23-26 March 2015. The meeting was organised by the Czech Technical University in Prague and IAPCO member C-IN was engaged as the PCO responsible for organising the whole event, which included a series of mini-symposiums designed to initiate and cultivate discussion about the key issues in fatigue and fracture analysis, of which variable amplitude loading is one.

Variable amplitude loading is an important concept to understand, due to the complexity of the damaging processes involved in fatigue, simplified loading is often regarded as necessary when developing predictive models. For example, when designing new machines, knowledge of the final services loads is limited, and thus such simplifications must be used. However, variable amplitude loading is a more common scenario than simplified loading, and can have an important impact on the life of a product. Companies that produce machines intended for a particular purpose understand that without the correct knowledge of the likely service life of their products, their relationships with customers will suffer – but through symposia such as those at VLAL 2015, they can gain a deeper understanding of the issues, enabling them to provide customers with the guarantees that they expect.

Drumming up a special celebration

Core PCO since 2002: CPO HANSSER SERVICE

The European Society of Sexual Medicine (ESSM) celebrated its 20th anniversary earlier this year with a very special opening ceremony at its Annual Congress, which was held at the Bella Center Copenhagen in Denmark in February and attracted 1250 delegates from 65 countries. After a conventional start, with official speeches and an awards ceremony, the lights went off and the audience was treated to a spectacular performance from the Copenhagen Drummers.

The performance started with four young men entering from the back of the auditorium playing traditional marching music on their drums using illuminated sticks. On reaching the stage, the spectacle increased, with elements including black light drumming, drumming on garbage bins and ladders, and water drumming with special lighting effects, all culminating in a pyrotechnic finale. Suddenly, the lights went off again, and then a gentle, husky voice began singing ‘Happy birthday to you’ in the style of Marilyn Monroe. Before a highly professional look-and-sound-a-like came on stage with a huge birthday cake and a kiss for the President to celebrate 20 years of ESSM! After giving the performance a standing ovation, delegates were treated to a piece of the celebratory birthday cake at the special anniversary reception that followed.

What’s going where – latest wins for IAPCO members

International Conference on Public Policy

ICPP July 2015; Milan, Italy
1100 participants – Housing
PCO: AIM Group Milan, Italy

International Society for Vascular Surgery Congress

2015 September 2015; Athens, Greece
600 participants
PCO: Erasmus S.A., Greece

NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2015

October 2015; Stravanger, Norway
900 participants
PCO: Congress-Norway

EUROSPINE 2015

November 2015; Athens, Greece
1600 participants
PCO: ERA Ltd, Greece

Velo-City Global

March 2016; Taipei, Taiwan
1000 participants
PCO: GIS Group, Taiwan

International Neurosotematology Interest Group May 2016; Birmingham, UK
1000 participants
PCO: ICS Canada

29th International Electric Vehicle Symposium and Exhibition,

June 2016, Montreal, Canada
3000 participants
PCO: JPDL, Montreal

European City of Science (EoSF)

July 2016; Manchester, UK
5000 participants
PCO: Conference Partners, Ireland

25th European Academy of Dermatology and Venerology Congress (EADV)

Sept/Oct 2016; Vienna, Austria
8000 participants
PCO: C-IN, Czech Republic

75th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Cancer Association

October 2016; Yokohama, Japan
5000 participants
PCO: Congress Corporation, Japan

11th Triennial Congress of the World Association of Theoretical and Computational Chemists (WATOC)

August 2017; Munich, Germany
1200 participants
PCO: Interplan, Germany

11th International Kimberlite Conference September 2017, Gaborone, Botswana
600 participants
PCO: Venue West Conference Services, Canada

International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property Congress (AIPPI 2017)

October 2017; Sydney, Australia
2000 participants
PCO: Arzine Pty Ltd, Australia

EUROSPIRINE

October 2017; Dublin, Ireland
4000 participants
PCO: Mondial, Austria

XXI Ibero-Latin American Congress of Dermatology (CILAD)

June 2018, Rome, Italy
900 participants
PCO: Ega Worldwide Congresses & Events, Italy

International Congress on Emergency Medicine

June 2020, Buenos Aires, Argentina
2200 participants
PCO: MCI Group Argentina

New Kid on the Block

PCO: Dekon Group, Turkey

Over the past year or so, Dekon has exponentially expanded its Expo experience to such an extent that it has now taken the next logical step and grown the portfolio of the Dekon Group to include its own Dekon Expo company. Dekon’s first Expo work came in March 2014, having just organised a conference in Argentina, the Turkish Defence Ministry asked Dekon Congress to organise a tradeshow booth at an Expo in Chile. Following this first successful operation, Dekon enjoyed several more wins in fields other than defence, growing its Expo experience in places including Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and the United States. So, what started as a congress business has now developed its own spin-off offering clients high-tech CAD floor designs, booth designs, furniture rental and all other aspects required for a successful tradeshow, with scaled models of stand designs providing clients with true visual representations of their stands instead of having to interpret drawings and plans.
A wonderful place to begin

With the launch of IAPCO’s EDGE program, the Annual Seminar – familiarly known as the Wolfsberg Seminar – moves into a new era. It is with a sense of sadness but with no regrets that IAPCO says goodbye to its traditional Wolfsberg venue, which has been the home of the Annual Seminar for 37 years and has seen more than 2000 students learn their trade in the meetings industry.

It is perhaps less well known that the very first IAPCO Annual Seminar was held, 40 years ago, at Scanticon in Denmark. Therefore, it seems fitting that the first of IAPCO’s new EDGE seminars in Europe should also be held in Denmark, this time at the Hotel Scandic Copenhagen. The hotel is located in central Copenhagen, has stunning views over the water and Copenhagen city, and is close to attractions such as Copenhagen’s Tivoli Gardens. A sleek and modern venue, the Scandic Copenhagen is an ideal fit for the modern EDGE programme.

This will be the first ever IAPCO Educational Seminar in North America and Whistler, BC, provides the perfect environment for this in-depth learning experience. Meetings professionals are invited to join us for a unique learning experience that is focused on a well-rounded look at conference management and the changing landscape of our industry. In order to maximise learning outcomes and networking opportunities, this seminar is strictly limited in size and allows for maximum interaction with faculty and industry experts. If you are serious about your career in the meetings industry, you must not miss this rare opportunity.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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<td>Venue</td>
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**PROGRAMME TOPICS**

- **Trends in the World**
- **Bidding for a Conference**
- **Engaging the Delegate**
- **Site Visits and Farm Trips**
- **Strategic Trends**
- **Negotiation Skills**
- **Compliance**
- **Advanced Sponsorship**
- **Strategic Marketing – beyond the email blast**
- **The PCO**
- **FACULTY**
- André Marcal, Barceló Congressos, Spain
- Jonas Witosrup, Wonderful Copenhagen, Denmark
- Nicola McGrane, Conference Partners, Ireland
- Martin Enevoldsen, 01saver, Denmark
- Martin Jensen, Lundbeck, Denmark
- Hans Henrik Friis, Teletech, Denmark

**HOSTS**

This EDGE Seminar is co-hosted by DIS Congress Services, Copenhagen, Denmark, and by the Wonderful Copenhagen Convention Bureau.

Qatar engages all

Qatar hosted its first IAPCO regional seminar, entitled ‘Engaging all’, in March this year, with more than 50 participants from all sectors of the meetings industry attending the 3-day event. The seminar was organised by the Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA), and facilitated by IAPCO educators Mathias Pusich of ICS Canada, Nicola McGowan of Conference Partners Dublin, and Sarah Stone-Pugh, Executive Director of IAPCO QTA, which is in charge of planning, regulating, and promoting sustainable tourism in Qatar, plays a key role in the success of global and regional business events held in Qatar, and achieves those objectives by forming numerous collaborations and networks aimed at providing new business opportunities.

The concentrated seminar programme was engaging, didactic and, in some instances, controversial. As representatives from the different sectors of the meeting industry expressed their needs and opinions, however, all agreed it was an excellent learning experience.

“Fascinating and imperative to see presentations and insights of Convention Bureau International and delivered to Qatar’s different sectors,” said Amanda Barnett, International Meetings & Events. "It stimulated the necessary dialogue to motivate the attending stakeholders to stay working together to win international business for Qatar." Dr. Amin, a member of IBHA Education, agreed praising the content of the meeting: "The seminar was great. It summarised in 10 hours the knowledge to be gained from a 10-week course."
24 August 2015

The Meetings Industry: a snapshot
Taking the temperature of the current meetings market, looking at the implications of the worldwide shift to an ‘experience economy’ and the corresponding shift of the PCO’s role from skilled logisticsian to expert advisors and creators of outstanding experiences.

The New Face of Meetings
The pace of change in the 21st century is now one of the biggest challenges for individuals, companies and associations where the ability to react and adapt to changing circumstances has become necessary for survival. Looking at best-practice ways to respond to this challenge.

Bidding for a Conference: winning tactics
Competition among destinations to host events is tougher now than ever with the need to build the strongest possible bid team. How to market your bid by creating a strong, unified brand story around your destination, your people and your wider community of stakeholders. How to organise the bid process and an insight into the mysterious and powerful process of lobbying.

Serving the Clients of the Future
In this session you will be served up the priorities and outlook of a new generation of buyers is essential. How do PCOs stay relevant and tuned in to this new market, with the need for continuous upskilling to keep pace with technological and social change?

Strategic Marketing: beyond the email blast
Reaching audiences today means cutting through the vast amounts of information and other education options competing for delegates’ time and attention. Indiscriminate mass emails will no longer do it: a more strategic approach to promoting your conference, including the careful segmentation of databases, strategically timed campaigns, personalised messaging and the power of response tracking is required.

25 August 2015

No-Surprises Financial Management
Good financial management is essential to a well-run conference. This general principles of financial management; budgeting, budget control and cashflow forecasting, all to ensure no nasty surprises.

Meeting Formats: across the spectrum
Meetings are no longer a series of ‘one person behind a podium’ presentations. As the way we live has changed tremendously over recent years, so have the ways we learn and interact. Looking at various meeting formats, how face-to-face to fully online and hybrid versions in between. What format works best for whom and when, and the associated costs and benefits of each.

Meeting Design: tailors not cookie-cutters
Designing a successful meeting means tailoring the flow of the programme and the meeting environment to facilitate better learning, networking and motivation of the participants. Avoid the ‘cookie-cutter’ approach to meeting design, and instead create and market meetings that are compelling and relevant to their target audiences.

Prioritising and Mitigating Risk
Drawing up a list of risks is the easy part of risk management. The challenging part is prioritising those risks and planned ways to mitigate them using tools for undertaking strategic risk assessments both pre-con and post-con.

Conducting Successful Site Visits
Often after years of research, working on a bid and lobbying, it all comes down to one or two days in your destination with the potential client. However, site visits are seldom given the attention they deserve. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful site visits will provide pointers on preparation and what really matters most.

Navigating the Compliance Landscape
Sometimes in our work on corporate, government or medical meetings, we find ourselves having to navigate a maze of regulations and restrictions. Look at the key aspects of understanding compliance – essential to conducting successful business in the meetings industry.

The Art of Sponsorship
How can you maximise your revenue while ensuring that you deliver market value and service? What’s the most effective way to approach your sponsors? Assessing the importance of research and timing your approach, innovative ways to engage and inspire your sponsors, and then to meet your sponsors’ needs, the technical management of sponsorship and current pharma compliance legislation.

Content is King: good programme management
All too often the programme ends up bottom of the decision-making priority list. Looking at the importance of good programme management, including the key elements required to engage participants and deliver an inspiring, educational conference experience.

26 August 2015

Engaging the Delegate
As participants’ expectations of meetings continue to change, delegate engagement must increasingly be the focus of PCOs and their clients. With technology providing a diverse range of other ways for people to connect and learn, delegates need to be convinced of the value your conference will deliver, including high-quality content and opportunities for networking and social interaction.

Working with Client Expectations
To justify your role as PCO, you need to meet or exceed your clients’ expectations and deliver real and measurable value. You need to ensure the value of the result exceeds the cost of the resources. How do you assess the real needs of your clients, ensure that you achieve the meeting’s objectives, and measure that success.

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN DESTINATION PROGRAMME

www.iapcoedgeauckland.org  info@iapcoedgeauckland.co.nz
Thailand—Proven RoI
IT&CMA Bangkok, 29 September – 1 October
www.itcmc.com
With more than 20 years of organising successful industry trade shows, IT&CMA Bangkok knows that delegates’ time – your time – is extremely precious. For some, a trade event is all about finding the right suppliers and seeking business opportunities, whereas for others it is about gaining inspiration and learning how to implement successful practices in their own businesses. Many would also say that expanding global or regional contacts is their primary objective. At IT&CMA and CTW Asia-Pacific, the goal is to ensure that the best of three worlds are brought to you – business, learning and networking. Delegates can move with ease from an exhibition showcase, offering the largest representation of Asian national tourist offices, convention bureaus and international corporate brands, to all-day learning sessions on trending topics by industry experts renowned in their fields. This results in quantifiable savings in terms of time, lead acquisition and prospecting opportunity... in essence, a proven return on investment and increased productivity.

Third Regional Seminar
http://iapcoeducation.org/regional-seminar/
The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is working in partnership with IAPCO in a 3-year agreement to organise regional seminars in Bangkok, and this year sees the third such seminar taking place on 1–3 July, with faculty members Jan Tonkin, Michel Neijmann and André Vietor. The IAPCO/TCEB Regional Seminars represent an important aspect of TCEB’s mission, which is to promote and facilitate networking, trade, knowledge exchanges and the transfer of technical know-how, both regionally and on a global local basis. “The MICE industry in Asia is growing at an extraordinary rate, in keeping with the rapid expansion of the economies of many countries in the region,” commented Nuchapa Yoonwee, Director of MICE Capabilities Department, TCEB. “In Thailand, the MICE sector is growing at ~15% per annum. Therefore, it is important to ensure strong development in organisational skills that will lead to successful events, the IAPCO programme is developing these skills, serving needs – and setting the standards – of the MICE industry.”

UAE Cancer Congress 2014
Organised by MCI: Case Study by Sumairu Isqar, Chief Operating Officer, MCI MEA
The challenge
After heart disease and traffic accidents, cancer is the third leading cause of death in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the most common cancers being breast, cervical, prostate and lung cancer. In 2009, the first UAE Breast Cancer Summit was held and attended by 132 delegates. Recognising the need to diversify the scientific programme and medical education in order to reach key audiences, the congress President decided to engage MCI as a strategic partner to help raise the profile of the congress and to position it as a key regional meeting in the healthcare field. Looking at our success in growing congresses in emerging markets and our strong local connections in the healthcare industry, MCI was tasked with helping the congress meet the following challenges:

• Break away from outmoded approaches in order to diversify the scientific programme and medical education
• Provide various key educational opportunities and strong thought leadership
• Assist with the creation of partnerships with several international societies to grow the content and reach of the conference, both locally and abroad.

The solutions
We worked with the congress to widen its target audience by rebranding itself as the UAE Cancer Congress and to raise its profile by partnering with a number of renowned regional and international institutions. By sourcing some of the best local and international speakers, we enabled the congress to revamp its scientific programme, to cover a wider range of topics and to provide up-to-the-minute educational lectures, conferences and workshops on practical case studies, as well as interactive discussions and workshops, including a live surgery workshop conducted by Tata Memorial Centre in 2014. Leveraging sponsorship activation solutions and key industry contacts, we also ensured the success of the medical exhibition.

The outcomes
Working hand in hand with the congress committee, MCI has succeeded in maximising congress revenues and increasing profitability by 20% year-on-year, and in growing delegate attendance by 872% in just 6 years, from 132 delegates in 2009 to 1283 delegates in 2014. The congress President was delighted with the success of the partnership and went on to work with MCI on the launch of the Asia Pacific Breast Cancer Summit, a successful flagship event and key educational meeting for the region.

The UAE Cancer Congress has become a ‘must-attend’ oncology scientific meeting for clinicians, surgeons, nurses and researchers from all over the Middle East and South Asia. MCI played a significant role in the success of the UAE Cancer Congress and the team’s support has been invaluable in ensuring its place in the calendar of oncology meetings in the region and beyond.” Dr. Shahaanw Desouw, Chairperson, Organising Committee, UAE Cancer Congress.

Hong Kong hosts 6th World Glaucoma Congress
By Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK)
An eye for the future
The 6th World Glaucoma Congress was held in Hong Kong on 6-9 June at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, representing the first time this event has been held in Hong Kong. More than 300 international delegates travelled to Hong Kong to share industry knowledge and exchange ideas, including internationally renowned opinion leaders as well as young professionals noted for their originality in their publications and scientific presentations. This year’s programme included topics across all areas of glaucoma research and practice, from basic and clinical science to surgery and translational science. With six plenary sessions, 16 symposia and more than 60 courses, there was plenty of opportunity to learn and network. The key innovation at this year’s congress was the Presidential Symposium on ‘Glaucoma innovation and opportunities’ which took place on the first day of the meeting and featured presentations on the state of the art in glaucoma research.

Your specialist subject is… Hong Kong!
MEHK would like to thank everyone who completed its IAPCO member survey, and is pleased to announce the winner of the survey quiz as Michael Kern, of Dekon Group. Michael wins a 1-year membership subscription to IAPCO. “Well, I can’t say I got all the answers right, but I do have a good insight into the benefits of organising international meetings in Hong Kong,” said Michael. “And I would like to thank MEHK for not only their support of IAPCO but also their generosity in providing this prize.” For those wishing to know the results of the quiz, the questions and answers are as follows:

• What Chinese Zodiac sign is it this year? Goat
• How many MICE visitors did Hong Kong welcome in 2014? 1.8 million
• How many countries gain visa-free access to Hong Kong? 170
• How many convention centres are there currently in Hong Kong? 2

The congress grew from 132 delegates in 2008 to 924 delegates in 2014. Attendance grew by 872%.
Digital design from vanGoGh!

AIM Group International has recently undertaken a complete renewal of its online and off-line identity in partnership with vanGoGh, a full-service digital agency based in Milan. vanGoGh covers a multidisciplinary team of creative thinkers including a digital strategists, user-experience designers, a creative technologist, writers and project management specialists, all of whom have solid experience. In addition, vanGoGh coordinates activities and supports the client as consultants.

The new AIM website has been fully redesigned with an improved look and feel that enables visitors to better understand the values that make up the DNA of AIM Group International. “Simplicity” was the key word guiding the development of the new website and the elegant, innovative site is equally accessible from smartphones, tablets, and all the latest devices through a responsive design approach adopted by vanGoGh.

IAPCO opens gateway to Hamburg’s thriving meetings industry

By Hamburg Convention Bureau

With its dynamic economic and scientific landscape and exceptional conference venues, Hamburg is inviting PCOs to take a fresh look at the northern European MICE market through its new partnership with IAPCO, which promises to offer numerous opportunities for getting to know the city. On 1 May this year, Hamburg Convention Bureau (HCB) became the first European destination to enter into a corporate partnership agreement with IAPCO, a partnership that was formally launched on 19 May at IMEX in Frankfurt/Main. Hamburg, Germany’s second largest city, boasts pioneering urban development projects such as short travel distances, excellent transport links and an efficient infrastructure network, making it a prime choice for PCOs. Event organisers are supported by the dedicated team of the HCB, experienced experts who maintain a network of contacts with the city’s key institutions, government agencies and service providers.

The Hanseatic City of Hamburg is sending out multiple signals demonstrating its ongoing transformation into a sustainable city of the future. Key milestones have included the development of its Smart City and Smart Port initiatives, its economic clusters in areas such as civil aviation and logistics, its focus on renewable energies and life sciences, as well as its young IT, creative and entrepreneurial hubs. In addition, Hamburg boasts pioneering urban development projects such as the HafenCity Hamburg district, which will expand the city centre by 40%. In many of these recent developments, alliances between business and science and academia have played a major role. The city thus presents itself as an exciting venue for experts and decision-makers from all over the world, especially from 2019 onwards, when Hamburg will offer an exceptional location for scientific exchange. Following revitalisation, the Congress Center Hamburg (CCH) will be one of the largest and most modern convention centres in Europe.

A warm collaboration on the eve of ANZAC day

PCO: Aim Group International

By Mathias Posch and André Vitor, Chair of the Committee of Ethics

Roman Muska for Prague CVB Board

PCO: Aim Group Prague

Roman Muska, Country Manager for AIM Group International’s Prague Office, has been elected Vice-President and re-elected to the Board of Directors of Prague Convention Bureau for a second 2-year term. The elections took place on 14 April during the Board of Directors’ Annual Meeting, which was held at the Radisson Blu Alcron Hotel in Prague; the new Board then appointed the President and Vice-Presidents. With the outstanding influence of such PCOs on board, the Prague Convention Bureau is setting course for another exciting two years!
Malaga, a must consider destination

The number of full-time employees at IA PCO members in exhibitions tends to rise and fall in alternate years, and 2014 saw a drop of 9% in the area managed. Service that they were previously offered when their accommodation was managed by PCOs. In contrast, however, involvement of IA PCO members in exhibitions tends to rise and fall in alternate years, and 2014 saw a drop of 9% in the area managed.

Malaga, a city that is inordinately proud of what it has to offer and that is supported by an extremely active convention bureau headed by Francisco Quevedo Rodriguez. For more than 12 years, the city has followed a strategic plan for developing business tourism that was initiated by Malaga’s Mayor, Francisco de la Torre Prado, and remains on-going. Implementation of this plan has led to the construction of a spacious congress centre within a short distance of both the airport and the city centre, the development of an expandable third terminal at the airport, which is capable of accommodating a hugely increased number of passengers for the region, and the creation of new infrastructure in the form of novel venues, public transport, and an increasing number of hotels of all kinds.

During their visit to Malaga, the members of IA PCO’s Council had the opportunity for some face-to-face discussions with representatives of the local meetings industry during a Malaga Convention Bureau Roundtable. This meeting allowed them to conduct an in-depth SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of Malaga and the Costa del Sol as business destinations. Malaga’s strengths, including excellent access by air and high-speed railway, safety and security, value for money, close proximity to facilities, excellent culture and unique venues, and a united stakeholder team were very much in evidence and support the city’s claim to be the third destination city in Spain, after Madrid and Barcelona. Indeed, the hosting package that was put together for the IA PCO Council included a taste of the city’s arts and museums culture, with visits to the brand new Centre Pompidou Malaga and the Russian Museum with its amazing art collection, plus dinner at the Automobile Museum, which houses 94 pristine classic cars and designer costumes.

IA PCO Council also provided some well-received advice, including to undertake SWOT analyses on a regular basis and to do so honestly, admitting to any weaknesses that might be identified and not taking any of them personally, but addressing them carefully. After all, it is a sign of strength to review one’s weaknesses, as many opportunities arise as a result of identifying a weakness – not that there were many weaknesses to review in the SWOT analyses undertaken for Malaga! Another strong recommendation was to think about the destination from a business visitor’s perspective rather than from the point of view of attracting tourists, and to tailor promotion strategies and communications towards this target market. A valuable approach is to create five simple, clear messages for each market segment (association, governmental, corporate meetings) highlighting relevant strengths, and to target the size of meeting that best suits the destination. In Malaga’s case, meetings of up to 2000 participants appear to be a perfect fit.

In summary, the visit to Malaga enabled the members of IA PCO’s Council to recognise the city’s strengths as a base for future congress business. As a result, IA PCO will be acting as ambassadors for the city and the wider region, and will be proud to promote it as a ‘must-consider’ destination.

Multi-billion euro economic impact in 2014

The IA PCO Annual Survey and Review for 2014 has revealed continued growth for IA PCO members and the meetings they organise. Across all types of meetings, increases were seen compared with previous years. For example, the number of association meetings continues to increase despite the global economic difficulties, and has now reached 3113 compared with 2153 meetings in 2010. There has also been a rising trend in the number of governmental meetings over the same period, from 498 to 656, although last year’s total did not quite reach the peak of 707 seen in 2011. Similarly, the number of corporate meetings is rising, in 2010. There has also been a rising trend in the number of governmental meetings over the same period, from 498 to 656, although last year’s total did not quite reach the peak of 707 seen in 2011. Similarly, the number of corporate meetings is rising,