

Rosy outlook for convention centres

By Karen Yue

The second International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC) Key Issues survey of its members revealed 85 per cent of them had seen increased business in the past year and demonstrated a strong confidence despite the current economic slowdown.

Centres attributed this to favourable client response to their marketing initiatives, an increase in events secured and efforts in market diversification, such as pursuing international clients which allows venues to balance the impact of the global economy.

The tendency for major conferences to be booked far in advance is another strong contributing factor.

China National Convention Center (CNCC) director of business development, Mr Tony Xu, said: "International conferences, especially international associations' congresses, are always confirmed three or four years in advance. Convention centres tend to receive pre-bookings up to seven years ahead, which gives them full confidence for locked-in business. CNCC, for example, confirmed some huge congresses even before its opening in July 2009. In 2010 alone, we shall be hosting the World Cancer Congress of 8,000 delegates and another congress of more than 16,000 people. Rates for meeting rooms, catering and hotels have also been decided. That means the venues' occupancy and revenue will not be seriously hurt in the event the economy deteriorates further in 2009 or 2010."

The survey results were discussed at the AIPC 2008 Annual Conference and 50th General Assembly at Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 28 to July 2, which was attended by more than 150 delegates from over 50 countries. It was the first time the event had come to Asia. It will return to Europe in 2009 and 2010, when it will be held in A Coruña, Spain and Liverpool (see box), respectively. An AIPC spokesperson told *TTGmice Asia* was a major market and the annual conference would return to an Asian venue in the future, subject to the board's decision.

Industry members at the annual conference also shared their concerns over labour problems, the emergence of new venues across the world, which had caused the rotation time of host venues to lengthen, and sustainability issues.

On the topic of sustainability, members realised the need to balance green efforts with clients' expectations of green venues, while ensuring that implementing green initiatives did not substantially increase cost to clients.

Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre revenue and credit manager, Mr S Ravindran, said: "Clients are aware of green issues, but if they realise they have to pay more for recycled writing pads because the venue wants to be environmentally friendly, they would rather use regular paper." ■

Why Suntec was selected

Suntec Singapore CEO, Mr Pieter Idenburg (right), said: "With a conference of this nature, the AIPC board needed a venue with broad capabilities in operations, with experience and with people who would be able to host the event successfully and include a 'wow' factor, especially in light of AIPC's 50th anniversary. Suntec Singapore was thus selected. Of equal importance was the close co-operation and support given by the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau and its willingness to co-host the event."



The AIPC 2008 Annual Conference at Suntec Singapore: the first time it came to Asia.

ACC Liverpool

ACC Liverpool's BT Convention Centre, which has won the bid to host the 2010 Annual Conference, is a new venue.

The centre, which opened in January, has a 1,350-seat auditorium, 18 breakout rooms and 7,000m² of exhibition space. It also includes a 10,600-seat Echo Arena. AIPC president, Mr Edgar Hirt, said: "ACC Liverpool is one of our newest members. We are extremely impressed with the facility and believe our members will find its considerable environmental credentials of particular interest."

Winner's Mind

gives you the most effective starting point.

Winner's Mind is one of the most unique, leading and professional convention organizers in Korea with the experience of holding various domestic and international conference, convention, exhibition, and promotion since November 2003.

Save Time,
& Energy
& Money

www.winnersmind.co.kr

"Winner's Mind" to become a globally recognized and preferred PCO with its professionalism and effectiveness

Incentive tour
Convention
Exhibitions & Promotion

3F Shinhan Bldg., 645-14 Yeoksam-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, 135-080, Korea
Tel: +82-2-553-0822 Fax: +82-2-553-1185