

## AIPC QUALITY STANDARDS PROGRAM A VALUABLE TOOL FOR BOTH CENTRES AND CLIENTS



IN TODAY'S COMPLEX AND COMPETITIVE MARKET, CONVENTION CENTRE CLIENTS NEED MORE THAN EVER SOME RELIABLE MEANS OF ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF A GIVEN FACILITY WHILE CENTRES THEMSELVES NEED A WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HOW SHOULD THEY DO THIS? AIPC'S GOT THE ANSWER.

TEXT: EDGAR HIRT - AIPC PRESIDENT AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CCH, CONGRESS CENTER HAMBURG

Some form of rating or accreditation would help both convention centre clients and facilities themselves. The problem has been that, for a very long time, no such accreditation has existed. Yes, there were credentials that could be adapted from other areas such as hospitality or manufacturing but these generally failed to really reflect the kinds of performance important to the management of a centre. At the same time, there were credentials developed in particular countries or regions, but these lacked the universality required by clients who were regularly looking for venues world wide.

### AIPC UNDERTOOK A FEW YEARS BACK THE SEEMINGLY OVERWHELMING TASK OF DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE STANDARD SPECIFIC TO CONVENTION CENTRES

It was for this reason that AIPC undertook a few years back the seemingly overwhelming task of developing a performance standard specific to convention centres.

To be universally applicable, such standards would have to meet a number of tests. First, they needed to be flexible and adaptable to a wide variety of facility types. Secondly, they needed to be seen from a client perspective so they were relevant to the market. Third, they had to be 'graduated' in order to give

participating centres a way forward in addressing any performance issues that were in the process of being addressed and, finally, they needed to be seen as having been developed and maintained by an external body like AIPC, using an external auditor, in order to maintain their credibility.

To achieve this, the AIPC Board authorized a four-step process. Step one was to review other Quality Standard models as well as centre operations and define key areas where a quality standard was appropriate. Step two was to draft an AIPC version of quality standards

based on this research and 'test' these categories with representative member centres. Step three was to set out a procedure that would allow centres who wish to adopt the AIPC quality standards guidelines to do so through an initial 'self-audit'. Step four consisted of a formal process that would allow centres to document their accomplishments and have these reviewed by an external 'auditor'.

The standards that were developed addressed 10 key areas of centre management:



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Customer Service, Quality of Facilities and Operations, Employee Relations, Health, Safety, Security and Emergency Response, Financial Integrity, Community Relations, Environmental Responsibility, Industry Relations and Supplier Relations.

This process has now been completed, and to date, seven centres - the Brighton Centre; Sibelius Hall, Congress and Concert Centre Lahti; the Kursaal Centre, San Sebastian, the Lisboa Congress Centre, the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, Finlandia Hall, Helsinki and the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre - have achieved the accreditation set out in the Quality Standards program.

#### AIPC CONTACT DETAILS

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