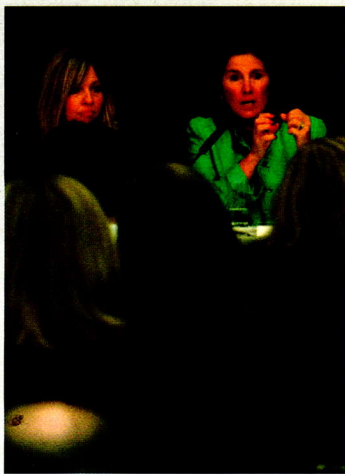


Tracking an evolving industry

Edgar Hirt, President of the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC) and Managing Director of CCH, Congress Center Hamburg offers his view on IMEX 2009, "When things are changing as quickly as they are currently, it's a major task just to keep track of what's going on. AIPC took full advantage of its involvement with IMEX this year through the AIPC Sales and



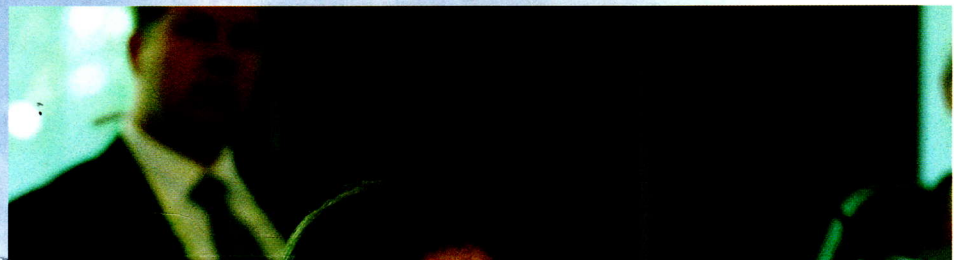
Marketing Summit and the AIPC Seminar on strategies for growing business in challenging times, which we shared with MPI and PCMA. We were also involved in the Politician's Forum and the new Meetings for Success initiative.

A theme running through all of these events was how different the industry will be once it emerges from the current crisis. One of the anticipated changes includes "repositioning" the industry as more focussed on business and professional development and less on the "pleasure" side of meetings. This will have huge implications for destination and facilities marketing. Another was the need for meetings themselves to evolve in response to changing delegate expectations. AIPC intends to address all of these aggressively over the next year. And, more than anything, these kinds of changes require the whole industry, from centres and suppliers to PCOs and clients, to work collectively on adapting to a new reality."



■ **Edgar Hirt**, President, AIPC and Managing Director, Congress Center Hamburg
www.aipc.org

A fantastically successful show for ICCA




...ding-room only audience that clearly enjoyed our innovative "crowd-panel" of 10 experts spread around the room. We also pulled more than 250 members and prospective members for our regular exhibition stand option. On top of this staff worked non-stop, trying out database demonstrations and explaining how our new PR kit works. And respective ICCA member enquiries were as numerous as ever. It was fantastic to hear so many professionals talking about long-term investment in ICCA to target international association conventions as a way to beat the recession.

When trade shows are slow or unproductive, our members are not slow in telling us know: the opposite was true for IMEX 09! In times of economic uncertainty many experts observe that there is a "flight to safety", and that's what it seems happened at IMEX this year.



■ **Martin Sirk**, CEO, ICCA
www.iccaworld.com