A lot can happen in six years – so I’ve found looking back on my term as your AIPC President. In this case, we’ve spanned a period of both unprecedented economic turmoil and, not unrelated, a whole new level of program activity in AIPC designed to help respond to the new challenges members have been dealing with in the face of a rapidly evolving industry.

Not all these changes have been the direct result of the global economic problems, but those conditions certainly had an impact. In part it was these forces that drove change in business practices, industry finances, event formats and the distribution of risk and reward in some very dramatic ways that we are all still trying to assess. But technology played a role as did a new generation of delegates whose expectations are very different in a number of ways from what we have been used to.

As well, the challenging finances faced by governments around the world meant that many of us whose owners and/or financial backers were public meant there was less tolerance for revenue challenges and more questions around further investment.

All in all, a time of rapid and often dramatic change.

But what stands out most for me was the fact that conditions varied so much from year to year and even more so in different parts of the world. We thought we saw a robust recovery at least a couple of times, only to see it fall back again in the face of unresolved structural issues.

And while many economies and sectors were struggling, others were in fact doing very well, and that meant it was harder than ever to try to identify what kinds of initiatives would benefit everyone equally.

Fortunately, I believe we were quite successful in AIPC in answering that question. The areas of greatest overall benefit were quickly identified as education and professional development; research; networking – to share experiences and ideas – and supporting the industry interface with the community wherever possible. This was where we put the emphasis of investment – and where I think AIPC programming evolved most significantly during this tough period.

Initiatives like the AIPC Academy, the Quality Standards program, our Annual Performance and Prospects Survey and the overhaul of key recognition vehicles like the AIPC Apex Award all took big steps forward while our conferences and Summits became more clearly focused on addressing the issues of the day from the broadest possible perspective.

For me, one of the greatest lessons of all this was realizing that we truly are our own best resource – that the membership contains all the very best ideas, experiences and strategies to help chart a course through our collective management challenges, and it remains to figure out how best to gather, process and share them. The fact that members have been so uniformly willing to share is one of the things I always felt best about, as it not only created the content for our programs but encouraged a “family” feeling that I believe to be unparalleled in the industry today.

I feel more confident than ever that we will not only prevail as an industry – with everyone a lot clearer about the many and varied roles we play in supporting the global economy as well as our own communities – but also as an organization, and an important player in the industry itself.

The bottom line: if we could survive and even prosper under some of the most challenging conditions we’re ever likely to see, we can manage just about anything!”

Edgar Hirt, AIPC President
South African CEO Panel | African Centres: Their Economics and Role as Agents of Development

South Africa’s convention centres have had an important role to play in opening up the country to new global exposure along with creating new industries and revenues. In the process they have faced some unique political and economic challenges. Three centre managers reflect on experiences that are important to colleagues around the world.

A New Urgency for Compliance: Recent Legal Developments and their Implications for Conferences and Exhibitions

Following the emergence of Pharma codes as key influencers of medical meetings funding several years back, there have been further important compliance and legal developments in many parts of the world that will certainly influence prospects for some of the most valuable events that centres host.

AIPC Innovation Award Poster Session

The 2013 AIPC Innovation Award once again brings the best and most original innovations in centre management, marketing and operation to center stage. This is an opportunity to exchange views with the innovators and prepare for the all-important vote!
The Client View: How Our Key Customers are Perceiving the Future
As the world struggles toward a solid economic recovery, key client groups face challenges of their own that will translate into centre issues. Representatives from two sectors compare notes on the challenges they face and the implications for convention centres that will have to support their evolving requirements.

Perspectives on the Exhibitions Sector: Performance and Projections
Exhibitions are still recovering from the global economic crisis of the last few years, but what will that recovery look like and how will it differ in various parts of the world? A panel of industry experts will look at the issue from a number of different perspectives.

Defining the “Ask”: What Centres Are (and Should Be) Getting from Government
This interactive session will use the polling facilities of the IML system to clarify what kinds of concessions centres are now getting from their respective governments and what they may want to consider pursuing in the future.

Adaptive Design: Architectural Solutions to both Client and Community Challenges
With many centres facing an uncertain future in the face of changing client and community expectations, flexibility and adaptability are the most important qualities in centre design today. But what exactly does this mean and how can it be achieved in practical terms?

The Branding Imperative: From Cities to Continents
The branding process has become a key element in positioning a product, whether a convention, a destination or an entire continent. Lessons developed in the creation of brands ranging from individual centres to Brand Africa will shed light on the process, the challenges and the benefits.

Economic Impact: A Report on the AIPC Calculator Pilot Project
AIPC’s Economic Impact Calculator has been pilot tested and is now available for member use. Developers Ipsos and AIPC member centres deliver the details on how the process will work for other members.

Emerging Economies in a Global Context: Obstacles and Opportunities
From economic evolution to demographics and politics, this session will be a look at how emerging economies like Africa’s will take their places in an evolving global economy – and what that may mean for our industry.

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There's a lot of talk these days about centre functionality in the face of rapid, ongoing changes in event formats and delegate expectations. Most often this is expressed as a need for more flexibility, but in reality it goes far beyond that.

“Centres for the most part have remained the same in the midst of an evolving market and as a result they are becoming less relevant”, says Todd Voth, Senior Principal at Populous. “Buildings need to work harder to deliver great experiences to a diverse customer base”.

With this in mind, and as part of our “Centres in Context” theme for this year’s Annual Conference there will be a special session to explore this area in-depth, using the combined experiences of two top centre design specialists – Populous’s Todd Voth and LMN Architects’ Raphael Vinoly – as well as the full range of experiences of AIPC members, including those either currently immersed in or just emerging from a design process for their own facilities.

Part of the session will be based on the concept that other industries facing rapid change may have lessons to offer us – referred to by Voth as “Trend Transfer”. Another element is the idea of “Meetings Laboratories” where part of the facility is set up to experimenting with new formats and services before committing the entire facility – a concept explored at the recent AIPC Academy in a session organized by Vinoly. In either case, it will be “gloves off” to take an unfettered look at what the future really means for centres design in a world where expectations are changing daily.

Amongst the questions that will be addressed:

- What does the emerging customer want?
- What do they need?
- What ideas from non-related businesses could be incorporated into centres?
- How can centres compete in the face of more compelling investment options?
- Can local business and public events help create a more authentic “destination experience” for delegates?
- How can limited funds be used to make existing centers more viable? At what point is it smarter to shrink a center than grow it?
- What do decision makers need to feel comfortable moving in a new direction?

Come prepared to think – and argue for your vision of the future!

**Design Forum Looks at Tough Choices**

A third keynote presenter at AIPC’s Annual Conference in Cape Town will bring important insights into the whole area of destination branding and how this can apply to both emerging destinations and specifically the development of convention centres.

Thebe Ikalafeng is widely recognized as Africa’s leading authority, thought leader, advisor, commentator and author on branding and reputation leadership. He is the founder and managing director of the award-winning Brand Leadership Group, vice-chairman of the Brand Council of South Africa and a non-executive director of Mercantile Bank Holdings, Brand South Africa and South African Tourism as well as founder of the seminal Brand Africa and Public Sector Excellence initiatives and a graduate of Marquette University and the Harvard Business School.

Born in Kimberly, South Africa, he writes and speaks globally on commercial, political and national branding and has been featured in global media such as CNN, BBC and CNBC Africa. He has participated directly in convention centre branding and will speak to how product branding, particularly in the case of an emerging product, can and does impact long-term marketing success and competitiveness.

His presentation and discussion will take place on the morning of July 3 immediately before the AIPC Programs Update and General Assembly.

**“Brand Africa” Presenter Illustrates Branding Challenges, Successes**

AIPC CORPORATE PARTNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AIPC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2013 PROGRAM SPONSOR | CAPE TOWN EVENT SPONSORS
Cape Town Social Program
Makes the Most of a Great Destination!

There's something for every interest and strong platforms for member interactions – and here is the overview.

Don't forget that all the social program details are available online at http://aipc2013.onetec.eu along with the Accompanying Persons program and Post-Conference tour information.

Pre-Conference Day | SATURDAY JUNE 29

Golf at the King David Golf Club | Optional
Conference hosts CTICC were able to secure some T times for those AIPC delegates that don't want to miss the opportunity to play a round of golf with a view on Table Mountain! It is one of the oldest golf courses in Cape Town and designed by Bob Grimsel, the leading golf course architect of the day and still rated as one of the finest layouts in South Africa.

T-off is at 08:00 which means departing the lobby of the Westin hotel at 07:00. Everything has been arranged, including a golf bag for every participant as well as golf carts and caddies, so participants only have to bring shoes, a glove and perhaps a few balls. Return is 14:30.

Cost is ZAR 1050 per person (approximately € 90) and includes:
- Transfer to golf course and back
- 18 holes green fees
- golf bag, card, caddy
- halfway house breakfast, coffee & tea and refreshments

Hop-On-Hop-Off City Tours | Optional
This Cape Town city sightseeing tour is the best way to get a quick impression of the city and its immediate surroundings; red double decker busses depart every 15 minutes from the Westin/CTICC (first departure at 09:10). If you don't leave the bus you will be back two hours after departure; however you can leave the bus at 18 stops, including The Castle of Good Hope, Desmond Tutu's St. George Cathedral and the VOC Companies Gardens, the Gold Museum and various other museums; the base station of the Cable Car to the top of Table Mountain, the Camps Bay beach and boulevard and the V&A Waterfront, a shoppers paradise in a working harbour environment. Price | ZAR 150 per person (approximately Euro 13.00)

Informal Welcome Reception with Drinks and Cocktail Snacks
From 17:00–19:00 at CTICC's Roof Terrace Room located on the 2nd floor of the CTICC.

CTICC 10th Birthday Celebration
From 20:00–23:00 AIPC Conference Delegates are invited to CTICC's 10th Birthday concert in the centre's Auditorium with contemporary and traditional African music performed by global African stars. CTICC offers complimentary invitations for all AIPC delegates and their partners.

Welcome Day | SUNDAY JUNE 30
Walk up Lion's Head | Optional
This is a medium intensity hike up Lion's Head, one of the mountains of the Table Mountain range. A view from the 1000 meter high top of this mountain gives you an unforgettable impression of Cape Town and the Table Bay, Robben Island, Table Mountain and all the way down to the Indian Ocean. A shuttle will leave at 08:30 sharp from the Westin.

First Time Attendees and New Members Welcome and Orientation
From 14:30-15:30 in the Main Lounge at CTICC. Come and meet the AIPC Board of Directors and management team; get a quick orientation to AIPC and its programs and find out how to make the most of your Annual Conference experience.

Peninsula tour and Welcome Dinner at Simons Restaurant–Groot Constantia Wine Estate.
Transport leaves at 15:30, immediately after the First Time Attendees reception for our two hour mini Peninsula tour through the centre of Cape Town along the Atlantic boulevards of Green Point, Sea Point and Camps Bay, through the 12 Apostles mountain range to the fishing village of Hout Bay. From there we take the scenic Chapman’s peak toll road around the cliffs to the holiday resort Noordhoek and the mountain pass road ‘Ou Kaapse Weg’ which brings us to the heart of the Constantia wine district for our welcome dinner in Restaurant Simons. Dress is smart casual and there will be After Dinner Drinks at the bar on the first floor of the Westin on our return.

Conference Day 1 | MONDAY JULY 1
Evening at Leisure: Explore Cape Town with Colleagues and AIPC Partners
CTICC has booked 10 of the most popular restaurants in the V&A Waterfront for this evening, all within walking distance from each other, including three of the best fish restaurants and one of the best steak houses, with more than 100 top Cape wines by the glass. You will receive an overview of these 10 restaurants on registration and on July 1 you will be able to book one or more seats for you and the colleagues that will join you for the evening. After starters and main course you make your way to Moyo African restaurant (5 minutes’ walk from all the restaurants) where we get together for our dessert and coffee. The walk to and from the V&A Waterfront takes 10 minutes but there a shuttle bus service is provided departing at 19:00 from the Westin.

Conference Day 2 | TUESDAY JULY 2
AIPC Award Dinner at the Marimba Restaurant
The AIPC Award Dinner is the traditional high point of the Annual Conference where we will recognize the winner of the 2013 Innovation Award in the Marimba Restaurant in the CTICC, with dining in a friendly African ambiance with live music. Marimba’s award winning décor celebrates the African Origin and Global Energy of the Marimba. Their culinary delights comprise the Marimba Feast ...an array of communal dishes including Africa’s finest offerings of wild game, succulent beef and poultry and fresh Cape seafood. Dress is smart casual; timing is 19:00-22:00

Pre-registration is required for all activities via the online registration form and/or the booking form at www.aipc2013.onetec.eu
Dates Set for AIPC Academy 2014: February 9–14

After yet another highly successful program this past February plans are already developed for the 2014 edition of the AIPC Academy in Brussels and available to members with the foresight to plan ahead for their participation!

Recognized as the leading convention centre-specific professional development program in the industry, this session is always fully subscribed and it makes sense to ensure you are holding a slot for your centre on an annual basis, either for a new participant or returning alumni who want to refresh their knowledge and contacts with the very latest program updates added to the program each year.

And there’s no better way to get all the details in one convenient place then with the 2014 Academy Brochure, now available through the AIPC Secretariat, online at aipc.org or via direct mail. This comprehensive information piece has all the information you’ll need and details as well about available scholarships and discounts for long haul participants.

MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY
Stay the Course; Create New Opportunities

The results of a comprehensive members survey on AIPC programs earlier this year provided a basic re-assurance that members feel things are moving in the right direction while also identifying some key areas of new opportunity. Carried out by SENTIS Research, the survey was statistically solid, providing a good basis for conclusions on what members felt their association was delivering for them.

Overall survey conclusions reflected a basic satisfaction with AIPC’s objectives and how they are being addressed. To quote from the Summary

It’s international scope and senior level involvement makes AIPC valuable to centre leaders who need to stay abreast of new trends, challenges, standards and approaches. The opportunity to mix with colleagues, especially at the senior level, keeps members engaged with AIPC. What members most want from AIPC is to keep them informed of industry news and information and keep them connected with industry colleagues. AIPC is doing an excellent job of meeting these expectations and serving the needs of members.

While members offered an array of suggestions they are not looking for a new direction or even a shift in priorities; rather members want more of what AIPC already provides - more events, more communications and more opportunities to learn from each other. Several expressly ask that AIPC continue to push forward on several fronts – such as standards, economic impact measurement and the sharing of ideas around sales, innovation and excellence.

Analysts at SENTIS also noted a distinct emphasis on a desire for a greater regionalization of activities. The Report continued

There is an over-arching appreciation for the amount of service and support that AIPC delivers with a small team. (However) members also want more opportunities to meet with colleagues to tackle common issues and if more events can be added to AIPC’s calendar they should be held in different regions. While centre managers like AIPC’s international reach and flavour, they also want AIPC to be closer to home. The desire for more regional meetings demonstrates the desire to be involved, but without going too far from home.

Suggestions for bringing AIPC closer include hosting regional events, rotating event locations around the world and providing them with support for best practices at a country level. Interest in regional meetings comes mainly from European Centres and specifically EU. EU members also want AIPC to help represent their interests regionally. The greatest interest in more opportunities for Professional Development, Networking and Collaboration, however, comes from Africa and Asia.

The Report also detailed specific program recommendations in the areas or standards, awards and communications, which reflected a combination of general satisfaction with good suggestions for improving both form and participation in some key areas. These, along with the results of a senior management focus group held in conjunction with this year’s Management Symposium, will help shape Board discussions and program decisions over the coming year.

The full survey report is available to members online at www.aipc.org.
AIPC Quality Initiative: Getting the Word Out to Clients

AIPC means quality – that has been our slogan and mission statement as an organization for many years, and is an assertion based in the fact that all our programming has been aimed at this one, focused objective. But this kind of objective is not simply for members – when used effectively, it is also a way of adding value to membership when it is used to distinguish AIPC members in today’s highly competitive market.

That’s the purpose of a new “AIPC Means Quality” program recently launched with a number of different components all aimed at presenting AIPC members to key client groups as the quality alternative. With a number of different components, this effort is for the first time directly targeting such groups with the message of what a commitment to quality means and why it delivers better value to centre clientele.

The key elements now being introduced include;

> A new “World of Quality” brochure listing all AIPC member facilities by global location and outlining why AIPC programs and member commitments deliver quality to the market;
> A presence in major trade shows again focusing on encouraging planners to seek out AIPC facilities as an assurance of quality around the world;

It will provide the basis of a theme that will help shape both internal and external communications over the months ahead and direct new program development as well.

“We have ourselves accepted that AIPC’s mission is to encourage, support and recognize management quality and used that as a way of evaluating new program development for many years”, said AIPC President Edgar Hirt. “Now, we feel it’s time to get that message out more effectively into the market, and we intend to make this a program priority as a way of achieving greater recognition for the accomplishments of members”.

AIPC Perspective: Successful Events Demand a Joint Effort

This AIPC article was printed in a number of trade media over the last few months as a part of our “AIPC Quality” initiative and is reprinted here for member information

One of the new realities both convention centres and meeting planners need to address these days is the rapid evolution in event content and formats. Driven by factors ranging from newly available technologies and changing delegate expectations to shifts in program requirements and an increasing engagement by participants in shaping the event structure itself, these shifts can require a significant investment of effort by all concerned—often with little time in which to do it.

But there’s a lot at stake for everyone. Organizers know the importance of responding to changing expectations if they are to retain attendance, and those expectations are changing daily. Many features that were considered luxuries even a year or so ago are now simply givens, while others are moving rapidly in that direction. To add even more of a challenge, this is all coming at a time when event finances are still challenged from years of global economic recession.

Centres have their own issues in this regard. It’s a lot easier to change a program on paper than it is to reconfigure a building which may have been designed and built to meet different conditions. At the same time, many of the new services now so much in demand are costly to support. However, the centre product is itself constantly evolving, and that creates new opportunities to revisit how changing event requirements can be supported.

In the end, only one thing really matters for both parties – and that is to ensure the delegate has the best possible experience and comes away from the event feeling they got a good return on their investment of both time and money. So it makes sense that more than ever, centres and planners should be collaborating on how to deliver that experience as powerfully and cost-effectively as possible.

There are two keys to achieving this, and again, both parties have a role to play. The first is creativity and the second is transparency.

In the creativity department, the need is to anticipate new program demands as far in advance as possible in order to create a better opportunity to address them. This means an ongoing dialogue between the planner and the centre during the period between booking and delivery in order to take full advantage of new services and program options that may be developed in the interim. Creative solutions can more often be found within existing spaces if there is advance information.

As far as transparency, again it only makes sense to get all the expectations on the table and keep updating these as conditions evolve so there are no surprises on either side. By keeping this conversation active and updated the surprise factor can be minimized – and in the meantime, everyone can be on the lookout for greater savings and efficiencies.

AIPC member centres recognize that the world of meetings and conventions is an increasingly complicated one, but they also understand that the desired outcome – a successful event that meets the “relevance test” for delegates – remains the same. The consensus view of our members, and the goal they are setting for themselves, is that by working together in a creative and open atmosphere, both they and the organizers they work with can make sure that happens to everyone’s benefit.
An Interview with AIPC

Business Partner Newmarket International

AIPC speaks with Scott Reeve (above left), responsible for sales and operations of MeetingMatrix outside of North America and Dan Hiza (above right), Vice President of Newmarket International who acquired the company behind MeetingMatrix last year.

How has your new relationship helped Newmarket International and MeetingMatrix?

Scott Reeve: MeetingMatrix was always a solid company with applications that our venues love to use. With the global presence and full development force of Newmarket behind us, we are growing more rapidly into new markets with new products focusing on the Social, Mobile and Collaborative approaches our customers are requesting to better serve meeting planners and better manage conference operations.

Dan Hiza: MeetingMatrix helps round out our application suite. Newmarket’s core application, Delphi, helps facilities sell, manage and report on their group, conference and event business. With over 30,000 venues on Delphi today, our customers consistently push our team to develop better, more innovative solutions. Now, with both the online benefits of iPlan to guide the meeting planner’s purchase decision, to the on-property operational benefits of MeetingMatrix diagrams, venues can now help ensure meetings go off flawlessly.

Today’s planners are finding appropriate venues online, researching and interacting via different social channels including Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor and LinkedIn, and collaborating online with the destination property and their attendees. MeetingMatrix and iPlan fit in perfectly with this evolution of social media.

What’s next with MeetingMatrix and iPlan?

Scott Reeve: Later in the year our interactive floor plan solution ‘iPlan’ will be available as a mobile App enabling planners to view a venue floor-by-floor on a mobile device with the ability to create event setups and view both 2D diagrams and 3D images. This will be followed by the launch of MeetingMatrix in the ‘Cloud’ providing our users unlimited access of high-resolution custom diagrams anywhere in the world via the internet.

Dan Hiza: Another new initiative is HRM™, which stands for Hospitality Relationship Management, and is the combination of the world’s leading CRM platform, Salesforce.com, with Newmarket International’s hospitality domain expertise, to enable facilities to find new customers, collaborate with existing customers, improve overall revenues and increase customer satisfaction.

HRM™ provides a complete 360-degree view of each customer, enabling sales people to build and maintain a strong, lasting customer relationship. Account and contact data is collected and synchronized with key hospitality management systems, providing an integrated solution to manage company history, conference agency history, past, present and future meeting details, attendee history and planner profiles.

The result: a conference center acquires deep knowledge of every account and contact, while facilitating collaboration and communication across an organization.

How does the link to Social Media help a convention sales person?

Dan Hiza: The link of HRM™ to social networks from Twitter to Facebook becomes an integral tool in a facility’s marketing strategy and customer communications in order to keep them current and competitive. Through social media and messaging, an organization can efficiently monitor user profiles for service responses, communicate conference promotions and special offers, provide concierge services or even communicate with attendees pre-conference and post-departure with relevant, high-impact messages.

Scott Reeve: iPlan, our interactive floor planning solution, enables meeting planners to have a complete overview of the property starting from an aerial view of the venue through to public areas and right down to the individual event spaces and the ability to create setups live online. We know that a customer’s purchase decision is heavily influenced by their online experience with the venue, and iPlan’s powerful visual impact is proven to prompt customers to send RFPs, which in turn is proven to increase conversion rates.