Engaging With Our Cities’ Future

As with any major business operation in a particular city, there can be a tendency for convention centre managers to focus their attention on their immediate business interests. However, more than most such businesses, a centre is inevitably an important economic and structural anchor in that city. It is generally a key factor in what kinds of major events come to any destination. At the same time, it is almost always – for better or worse – a very prominent part of the build form of the city, driving not only appearance but critical issues such as the flow of people and traffic, the location of related infrastructure like hotels and many other issues that directly impact the lives of local citizenry.

All this means that as managers we should be much more engaged in the broader overall strategic planning processes for our cities than many of us in fact are. And the reasons for that – along with some ideas about how to change it – will be integral to the content of our 2015 Annual Conference in Boston.

One reason for this disconnect is the “silos” approach taken to planning in many cities, where various key elements of the overall strategy are addressed almost exclusively by separate agencies, from urban planning to economic and investment strategy to social policy. Equally, it can just be a case of busy managers not needing or wanting to take on any more responsibility than they already have when everyone is hard pressed for time and attention span.

But sometimes it can be about a lack of detailed understanding about how these areas are addressed, and what’s required to carve out a logical position in the overall process. And in times of rapid change, that’s not a one-shot lesson but an ongoing learning process.

The simple fact is we represent one of the largest single investments governments are called upon to finance in our respective cities – and we need to be able to support that with some very good rationale as to how we contribute to overall city advancement rather than simply in our business terms and a willingness to participate in the broader development processes when called upon.

This year’s conference theme – Engagement – is intended to create a knowledgeable exchange on this key aspect of centre management. Two of our keynotes will directly respond to some of the most important aspects of the interface, including how cities evolve and the role that centres can and should play in supporting that evolution as well as how a city develops and maintains a specific image – and the importance of aligning various messages to create one that supports our marketing into the Meetings Industry.

Knowing how these various aspects work is the first step to developing a better and more influential form of interface – but that’s only the beginning. Also required are better arguments around why getting input from centre managers with a good understanding of industry dynamics will ultimately support the aims of others, from local elected officials to planners and economic development authorities. As has been seen regularly in the more successful destinations, this kind of alignment benefits everyone – and helps limit the frustrations that occur when various players end up working at cross purposes simply because they’re not aware of how their actions are impacting others.

So get ready for a program that will shed a lot of new light on many of the interfaces we all deal with in our respective communities – and be prepared to contribute your own perspectives on this important discussion, if not in Boston then in the months and years to come. It’s going to be an increasingly important part of our jobs in the years to come, whether we like it or not!

Geoff Donaghy, AIPC President
This year’s Annual Conference theme of “Engagement” necessarily draws upon other players in the overall city development mix – and the most important aspects of that mix will be represented by three of this year’s keynote presenters.

Johannes Novy is an urbanist and professor for planning theory at the Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg. He studied Urban Planning and Urban Studies in Germany, Italy and the United States and finished his education with a PhD in Urban Planning from Columbia University, New York, in 2011. Johannes is an associate member of the Berlin-based Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS), (co-)coordinates “UrbanLab+,” an international network of higher education institutions in the fields of architecture, urban planning and design, and regularly publishes in both academic and mainstream publications on issues related urban and planning theory, urban (development) politics, as well as contemporary patterns of urban tourism and leisure consumption.

Johannes will be addressing the ways in which changing travel patterns are influencing liveability in key cities and how these lessons may apply to future thinking about convention centres and their impacts and interactions with their respective communities.

Professor Greg Clark is an experienced conference moderator and Senior Fellow, ULI Europe, and Chairman, OECD Forum on Local Development and Investment Strategies. He is an advisor, advocate, and mentor for cities, business, and investment and works with leadership in global cities, global firms, global institutions, and at global gatherings.

He regularly chairs summits and congresses on development issues and acts as a moderator for leadership forums and boards. He is currently a moderator of the World Mayors Forum, The Moscow Urban Forum, and The Asia Pacific Cities Summit. He has led more than 100 summits and events for INREV, ANREV, JP Morgan, Grosvenor, ICSC, JEDC, ULI, OECD, World Bank, UN, The FT, The EIB, MIPIM, LSE, Brookings Institution, and The EU Council.

Trained as an Economist, Social and Political Scientist, City & Regional Planner at Cambridge University, UK and Columbia University, NYC, he is a Harkness Fellow and author of ten books and numerous reports and papers on cities, investment, and development issues. He is also Chairman of the Business of Cities Ltd, an intelligence and strategy group based in London, UK, that observes/reports on global trends and changes in cities, leadership, and development.

Greg will be addressing the question of how major cities are evolving and what that means in terms of a changing role for their convention centres and industries.

A futurist, facilitator and marketing strategist, Chris holds a Masters degree in Studies of the Future and has married his marketing expertise with futures methodologies to help a wide variety of countries, cities and communities create development strategies, marketing plans, and brands that shape their future. As president of Resonance Consultancy, Chris leads a team that has completed more than 100 research, strategy, and branding projects for destinations around the world.

Chris is a member of the Project for Public Spaces Placemaking Leadership Council and he frequently speaks on place branding to organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, CEOs for Cities, Destination Marketing Association International and the International Downtowns Association. He is also a frequent speaker and commentator on tourism and leisure trends for leading publications such as The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, Bloomberg, The Globe & Mail and Worth magazine.

In 2013, Chris was recognized as the “Place Branding Thought Leader of the year” at the World Sense of Place Summit for his work and contribution to developing place branding methodology.

Chris will be addressing the issues of how centres can achieve better alignment with other components of their respective city “brand” in order to better respond to current market conditions.

Meet the Keynotes

JOHANNES NOVY

CHRIS FAIR

GREG CLARK
A Session Overview

The 2015 Boston Program will cover a wide range of topics and updates in addition to the sessions specifically associated with our overall program theme. Included in the mix will be:

THE CFO SUMMIT AT AIPC BOSTON
This breakout session specifically targets a growing interest in an in-depth exploration of the financial and performance aspects of centre management. Featuring CFO’s and administrative heads from around the world, it will review experiences, practices and strategies in these key areas and report back to the conference plenary on their conclusions and recommendations for further action. Amongst potential topics for consideration are such areas as how industry economics are changing in the face of new client expectations and third-party negotiators, strategies for major project financing, including capital cost management, current use of financial and event management systems and strategies for new revenue development and management.

SAFETY AND SECURITY REVISED
With new threats and security challenges emerging on a regular basis, convention centres need to be at the forefront of safety and security policies and procedures. But huge changes in technology, communications, health issues and terrorist strategies have left many older tactics and relationships far behind in today’s world. Furthermore, centres never operate in isolation, but must mesh their procedures with those of other community and national agencies. This session will explore how things have changed around the world – and what key centres are doing to make sure they are prepared for whatever challenges they may face.

INNOVATION AWARD 2015: THE NEW CROP!
Once again, the best ideas in the industry will be on display as members compete for the special recognition that accrues to innovation leaders! A new addition will be a rapid-fire series of presentations to orient delegates to the range of offerings following which there will be the traditional poster session that enables final clarification of your favourites before casting your own vote!

TOUCHING BASE: KEY CLIENT UPDATES
This year’s focus will be on the association sector and with senior representation from three global association organizations from Europe, the US and Canada, it will be one of the most comprehensive ever. As the customer base that did the most to get us all through the darkest days of the recent recession, this area is of intense ongoing interest – but a lot more is expected from centres than in the past as our panelists will be quick to point out.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS: WHAT’S UP IN THE HOTEL WORLD?
Depending on the situation, the hotel community can be our best friends, our biggest competitors or major obstacles that we need to come to terms with in order to land centre business. One of the most important global authorities on this sector will share with us why what’s happening in this sector matters, including providing an overview of trends in such areas as ownership, product development, industry interfaces and the all-important question of where rates are heading in a recovering economy.

NEW EVENT TECHNOLOGIES: WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO CENTRES
Enough with the new apps! This session will bypass the generalities and focus specifically on technology initiatives and advances that actually matter to centre managers. Topics will include not only new developments but the all-important questions about which ones are must-haves; which will create a competitive advantage and where centres can achieve cost-recovery from an increasingly sensitive customer base.

RECOVERY IN CONTEXT: THE RESULTS OF OUR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND CONFIDENCE SURVEY
Tracking the trends and enabling regional breakouts and comparisons are just two of the evolving features that have made our annual benchmarking survey more than just a performance tool. This year, the critical topic of how centres are interacting with DMO’s will also be explored, with highlights on where innovative new relationships are developing and how these are working out. Delegates will be the first to see the all-new data for 2015!

AND THERE’S MORE TO COME!
Keep an eye on the Annual Conference tab at www.aipc.org to make sure you track the evolving program as we approach the conference dates in July!

www.aipc.org
The 2015 edition of the AIPC Academy continued the development of a new strategy that has shifted the focus of this important event onto strategic problem-solving and program development using the resources of what has now become an extensive complement of faculty and guest presenters whose participation guarantees that Academy content will be the most up-to-date and relevant possible under today’s conditions.

Also new this year was a change in the challenge made to participants to demonstrate their learnings in a practical, applicable form. The team exercise used for the previous several years was one in which groups were asked to collectively develop a plan for a hypothetical centre facing issues that corresponded to the key areas of Academy content, and resulted in some very extensive responses from participants. This year, the challenge was to devise an innovation that would address one of the top concerns voiced by centres in the most recent AIPC Annual Survey, namely how to improve bottom line efficiencies. The results were worthy of a whole other conversation!

This year’s AIPC Academy was over-subscribed with the largest attendance to date in the face of an enrolment size limit. Next year’s dates will be February 14 to 19 and centres are encouraged to register participants as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Here’s what two senior industry observers had to say about their 2015 Academy experience

Each year the AIPC Academy program benefits from an extensive series of participant and faculty surveys that measure how expectations align with delivery and where further enhancements might be carried out. But our guest speakers bring yet another opportunity to reflect on this key professional development offering.

Helga Severyns, Senior Director, International Association of Public Transport (UITP)

Ben Hainsworth, Association Executive Director, K.I.T. Group GmbH

What was the top insight or advice you gave Academy participants?

I made the argument that in a changing environment, associations need to provide more and better strategic elements to their decision-makers on future destinations. The economic element is increasingly important for this decision-making. However, convention centers represent a major but not the only cost element to be considered. UITP considers in its evaluation process many other aspects not directly related to the venue (market, travel, accommodation, access, local environment & support, etc.) that convention centers may not influence directly. It is therefore very important that convention centers work closely together with other city actors in order to present a comprehensive and widely city-wide supported answer to the call for proposals. – Severyns

My major point was that both external and internal pressures are changing the way associations think and act, and that this in turn affects the way that PCO’s must behave in order to serve them. Under today’s conditions, everyone must re-think what will deliver the best result – and it is only logical that venues hosting association events are in turn impacted, so they need to be ready for that and anticipate what it may mean. – Hainsworth

Based on your experience what do you think will be the biggest client / centre issues in the next few years?

Being under pressure from an increasingly diversified and demanding membership, associations need to professionalize and invest in their service (content) policy. This is a chance and a challenge for convention centers to distinguish themselves. Also, convention centers that are able to offer high level logistical service packages at competitive rates will in future make a true difference. – Severyns

I think that increasing financial pressures will become an even bigger factor in defining relationships and again, centres must think through what that means in terms of their offer. Also, the importance of the ‘individual’s experience’ for delegates will become an even more important criteria for success, and centres clearly have a role to play there. – Hainsworth

What did you wish you had said to / asked of participants after you left?

I think I would have liked to put more emphasis on the fact that associations talk to each other increasingly - there are more and more formal and informal exchange networks. Reputation is therefore an important value, valid for both convention centers as well as their association clients. Organizations such as AIPC offer a wonderful opportunity to enhance the client/industry dialogue, and to create a common win/win spirit we all need. – Severyns

I learned that it’s not enough to set out the challenges at a theoretical level – we need to really get into the next stage and deal with the nitty gritty implications and solutions as well. I’d also like to see the time available to have my interpretations challenged and to defend them as a way of clarifying things further. I learned that the participants were certainly capable of that if we could have longer to explore that dimension. – Hainsworth
AIPC’s Africa Summit at Meetings Africa

In our first foray into the delivery of “on the ground” professional development, AIPC staged a full day Summit at the 2015 edition of Meetings Africa, a combination of regional forum, regionalized research results and presentations from industry authorities gathered for the most important industry event in Africa.

The Summit more than delivered on expectations, with attendance in excess of 50 and a range of subject matter facilitated by the presence of a number of industry leaders who all contributed their expertise to several events aimed variously at association, supplier and industry audiences.

Matima Nyazemi, Executive Director of the Sandton Convention Centre and host to Meetings Africa observed; “Even though South Africa certainly has a greater share of the convention centre inventory, we need to make sure that other African members feel the program represents a pan-African representation as several of the speakers did in fact do. We may also want to look at shifting the program to a previous day as the overall Meetings Africa program is a very intense one”.

Nicolette Elia-Beissel, Acting CEO of the Durban International Convention Center added; “This event was really worth the trip up to Joburg. I would like to see more in the way of panel discussions, with multiple questions are posed from both the facilitator and audience, as I believe they are really refreshing and a great way to interact with the audience. I found the workshop session at the end to be of great use and was a fabulous way to not only brainstorm ideas / discuss challenges but also as a networking platform. All in all, it was a great seminar – thank you!”

AIPC is currently exploring ways of using the same kind of programming to create regional platforms in other parts of the world where this would be seen as valuable by members. As always, any new developments will be previewed in future issues of Communique!

Save the Date!

February 22, 2016
IMEX Support Facilitates Academy Participation

And while we’re on the topic of the Academy, we also want to acknowledge the generous support provided by IMEX in the form of two Academy scholarships that enabled two AIPC member centres to send representatives to this year’s Academy. Russell Eustace of the Cairns Convention Centre and Londokuhle Mshololo of the Durban International Convention Center were the beneficiaries, and both made great contributions to the program content while learning from colleagues.

IMEX also supported a new Academy initiative in the form of a Wellness Program consisting of an arrival event, morning exercises and program energisers, all under the direction of a dedicated coach. The program was aimed at enabling participants to maintain their energy and stay in shape during the Academy – a goal that all agree was effectively achieved.

Why did you decide to pursue AIPC Quality Standards qualification?
Larivée: We have been an active member of AIPC for a few years and we feel a strong sense of belonging. We also strongly believe in the benefits associated with an international certification, and the AIPC Quality standards was a natural choice for us since it focuses on our core activities in a continuous improvement process.

How challenging was the process for your staff?
Larivée: It was a formative experience as it required documentation in a vast array of subjects. It was challenging to assess the activities deployed and assemble it in a coherent way. However, the process allowed us to take a good introspective look at our management processes and analyze what we do from a new standpoint.

What organizational benefits came out of the exercise?
What benefits do you think your “accreditation” will provide?
Larivée: It really was a tremendous gain for us to identify areas of improvement through such a rigorous process. The audit gave us a clear portrait of our situation and identified improvements to be made, and that set the stage for the development of our next strategic plan. We are working on appropriating and internalizing the standards to use it as a practical management tool.

In terms of wider audiences, the certification will surely enable us to set us apart from the competition and validate our quality value in the eyes of our clients. Naturally, we will put it to use in our future marketing and communications activities. It is an honour for us to be recognized by our industry and be part of such a select group of centres around the world. Finally, it already plays a part in team building as the whole staff feels proud of this achievement! In fact, many were involved in the accreditation process and contributed in gathering the information.

How do you intend to use your new qualification going forward?
Larivée: In addition to using it in our continuous improvement process, our next steps include strengthening our partnerships by promoting appropriate quality standards certifications to our different partners and suppliers to further complete our quality offer. That will actually expand the impact of this investment and even further improve our product offer.

26 AIPC member centres have now achieved the Quality Standards certification and they are getting special recognition in a growing program of outreach to industry clients groups through elements such as advertisements in trade media and the distribution of a “Quality Brand” directory.
WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

BALI NUSA DUA CONVENTION CENTER

The Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center’s 50,000 sq.m building area offers integrated infrastructure to accommodate a full range of events with professional products and services, including the latest technology and world class food & beverage combined with the flexibility of an experienced management team.

BNDCC features 44 multi-functional rooms including a 5-divisible 4,600 sq.m convention hall, 2 plenary halls of 1,700 sq.m each and a range of meeting rooms. On-site accommodation consists of 100 5-star hotel rooms directly connected to the center via a private internal walkway. Strategically located in the premier resort area of Nusa Dua, Bali, the BNDCC is surrounding by excellent infrastructure with more than 7,500 international 4 and 5-star hotel rooms, an 18-hole Golf & Country Club, amphitheatre, luxurious shops, hospital, cafe and restaurants and seamless white sand beaches.

“BNDCC opened in 2011 as the official venue for the ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit and since then we have hosted many high profile events since then” said Riyanthi Handayani, President Director of BNDCC.

“Venues play an integral part to the growth of MICE business, so a venue like BNDCC supports Bali as an international MICE destination. Being a member of AIPC will enable us to constantly develop and maintain international standards and a platform to connect with a global network.”

LUXEMBOURG CONVENTION CENTRE

The Luxembourg Convention Centre is the ideal partner for the organization of a wide variety of events on an international scale with facilities that can accommodate groups of up to 800 people for conferences and up to 2,000 for events.

The centre is used for the Council of the European Union for three months every year and boasts a comprehensive range of technical and security installations as a result. This resource available to any other client of the Conference centre as well.

The Centre has an unbeatable location, surrounded by important European institutions a short walk away from several 4* and 5* hotels. The capital’s city centre with its main hotels, shopping areas and tourist attractions is within a few minutes reach and linked to the main cities of Europe by a comprehensive motorway network, regular high-speed rail links (particularly the TGV link to and from Paris) and international air routes via Luxembourg’s international airport.

Patrick Hoffnung, Director General of the Luxembourg Convention Centre says:

“We are very proud to be a member of AIPC, an international platform where we can share best practices and find common solutions to specific challenges that Convention Centres face”.

AHONY ROTTERDAM CONGRESS & MEETING CENTRE

Ahoy Rotterdam is a multifunctional venue located in the vibrant city of Rotterdam, known for its harbor and beautiful architecture. For over 40 years it has been a leading multifunctional venue in the Netherlands, and since opening in 1971 has built up a rich history of well-known events including numerous concerts of international artists to various world championships and large trade shows.

Ahoy Rotterdam has a unique combination of arena, exhibition and event halls with a conference and meeting centre. The arena is mainly used for concerts, conferences, family shows and tournaments with a maximum capacity of 15,000. The exhibition and event halls, with a total of 30,000 m2 of exhibition space, welcome many trade shows and consumer and business events. The Conference and Meeting Centre consists of an auditorium seating 500 guests and eight break-out rooms varying in size and suitable for meetings and presentations, all of which can be interconnected with each other.

Says Peter van der Veer, Managing Director: “Ahoy Rotterdam will be undergoing a considerable expansion in the coming years with an international convention centre and concert hall. The new convention centre, operational in 2019, will have the biggest auditorium in the Netherlands (2,750 pax) and 35 break-out rooms. I am excited to share experiences with other AIPC members and to hear what kind of challenges other venues face”.

Riyanthi Handayani
President Director of BNDCC

Patrick Hoffnung
Director General

Peter van der Veer
Managing Director
Barco offers the technology to engage, inspire and excite… at any venue, during any event!

With more and more entertainment and information available online, what will get people out of their homes and offices to attend industry events these days? Exceptional moments and interaction make all the difference, because in our always connected, digital world, people want to engage and be wowed more than ever.

Building on decades of experience, Barco provides the most complete portfolio of integrated technology to entertain and engage audiences and to connect people. Our wide range of projectors, LED displays and massive video walls bring action and excitement at the world’s biggest events and cinemas, in prestigious concert halls and museums and at the most exciting amusement parks. Barco presentation switchers – the most advanced video processing and presentation control systems on the market today – provide designers with endless creative possibilities, and our increasingly interactive digital Out-of-Home (DOOH) advertising and digital signage solutions help strengthen brand awareness and encourage visitor interaction. Moreover, Barco provides a rapidly growing series of solutions to raise productivity and boost collaboration in meeting rooms too.

Attractive visualization is absolutely essential to the hospitality experience; from the minute your visitors arrive. With Barco’s extensive range of LED and LCD display technologies, available in varying degrees of brightness, pixel pitch, contrast and price point, you can display informational and promotional messages to truly engage your audiences. Outdoor LED billboards can enhance your venue’s exterior. And our freestanding OBLX structures allow you to position a video wall wherever you want, without the need for wall support. In addition, Barco offers enticing digital signage solutions which can guide visitors to their destination faster, update people on the most recent schedules, news or offers or simply entertain them.

Rather rely on projectors to spread your images, messages or video? From our business range through to our large-venue projectors: every Barco solution combines perfect image quality – vibrant colors, superb uniformity, and brightness levels – with reliability, low cost of ownership and energy efficiency. There’s a Barco projector for every type of event, in any venue.

Over the past few years, Barco has also significantly broadened its portfolio of collaboration solutions for meeting rooms, boardrooms, classrooms and congress centers. We realize that today’s conference visitors are no longer attendees sitting passively at an event or in a meeting but fully involved participants who want to have their say. That’s why we provide congress centers, companies, hotels, etc. with advanced yet user-friendly tools to improve productivity and boost interaction and collaboration among people. Our ClickShare presentation and collaboration system, for example, which allows multiple users to share their views on-screen simultaneously, is revolutionizing lectures, meetings and trainings around the globe.

“Visitor engagement and interactivity have become key to any event, at any venue” says Richard Marples, Strategic Marketing Director Venues & Hospitality at Barco. “After all, people today crave for opportunities to be entertained, meet people and share ideas. We now have the technology to create exciting, new ways for them to interact and engage with content, be it in trade shows, museums, congress centers, visitor attractions or in meeting rooms. Moreover, getting all of these different entertainment technologies to work well together requires specialist know-how and expertise – and that’s exactly what Barco can offer too.”

Barco: It’s All About Creating an Exceptional Visitor Experience!  

www.barco.com