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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

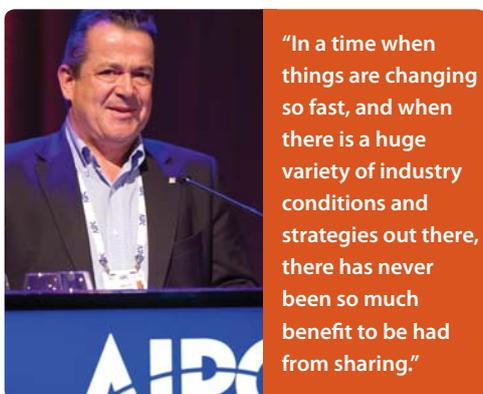
# Professional Development Offers Both Long Term and Immediate Benefits

Right now pretty much everyone in our industry is heavily focussed on current challenging conditions, and that is not only understandable but logical. But as conditions improve, attention will need to shift to the next big issue – the fact that we will increasingly need good qualified people to take over the management of centres that will be new in many respects and facing skilled labour shortages as a result of changing demographics.

That's why AIPC has put such a heavy emphasis on training and organizational development through programs like the AIPC Academy and the new Management Symposium, and I'd urge you to take a close look at what these programs can offer to both a centre's competitiveness and the staff that can benefit from solid industry knowledge combined with the experience of applying that knowledge to real-life centre demands.

Just as a reminder, the AIPC Academy was started to address two very specific requirements: first, the need to provide a broad centre and industry perspective to centre staff who have potential for promotion into positions where they will need to be aware of areas beyond those they are familiar with in their current role and secondly, to give an industry overview to new recruits who are coming from outside of the industry and need a way to put their own professional expertise into an industry context.

This program has now evolved and been refined over many years to the point where it offers a highly relevant and up to date package of content along with an opportunity to create or expand those



"In a time when things are changing so fast, and when there is a huge variety of industry conditions and strategies out there, there has never been so much benefit to be had from sharing."

industry networks that are so all-important in accessing ideas and information from various parts of the world. In fact, the program has developed so much and incorporated so much new content that it is time for previous participants to start considering returning as alumni to get a refresher course and make their own contribution to the knowledge exchange.

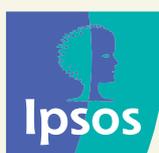
The second component, begun this year, is the Management Symposium, which was developed to fill a need for existing managers to be able to get together in a highly focused environment to address some of the key challenges they face in charting a way forward given the major

challenges centres are dealing with in a period of transition. Here is where CEO's and senior managers who already have extensive knowledge can exchange ideas and case studies in a process of collective problem solving supported by the full range of faculty and special guest presenters participating in the Academy.

As with so much of education, participants in both programs get out of it in direct proportion to what they are prepared to invest of their own time and experiences. But in a time when things are changing so fast, and when there is a huge variety of industry conditions and strategies out there, there has never been so much benefit to be had from sharing.

It's a long term investment – but has immediate payback in the form of a well-educated and connected team that is much better equipped to face today's challenges. Whether or not your centre has participated in the Academy before, it's time to have another look – and make sure you have a place in what has been a fully subscribed program every year it has been in operation.

Edgar Hirt, AIPC President



## AIPC Economic Impact Calculator Introduced

While centres everywhere are needing more than ever to demonstrate their economic benefit, a good, centre specific and affordable economic impact calculator with the credibility of a highly reputable research company behind it has only been a dream. Until now. | CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



# Amsterdam 2012 Delivers Insights, Strategies

“Strategies for Success and Survival: Information, Context, Action” was the theme of this year’s AIPPC Annual Conference in Amsterdam and as suggested it comprised a wide range of perspectives on the challenges associated with a lingering economic downturn and the growing expectations of centre clients.

**“In a time of ongoing business and government uncertainty combined with intense and growing competition, new strategies are required not only to succeed but often to simply survive” says AIPPC President Edgar Hirt. “Developing those strategies and putting them into action requires good information and analysis as well as the insights required to put them into a proper perspective”.**

Conference keynote presenters delivered a range of topics intended to serve as conversation-starters for the industry-specific and strategic sessions that followed. They included Prof. Stéphane Garelli, a world authority on competitiveness and professor at the Institute of Management Development in Lausanne who authored a best-selling book – *“Top Class Competitors - How Nations, Firms and Individuals Succeed in the New World of Competitiveness”*; Jochen Witt, a management consultant to the trade fair industry in the areas of strategy and marketing and a leading authority on trade fair related services and products, and Prof. Dr. Paul Louis Iske, Professor Open Innovation and Business Venturing, School

of Business and Economics Maastricht University and Chief Dialogues Officer at ABN AMRO Bank.

Garelli and Witt both referenced the on-going uncertainties associated with an “asymmetrical” global economy where some regions were experiencing significant growth while others – notably many countries in Europe – appeared headed for economic stagnation or even recession. However, both noted that the key to prevailing under these conditions was to pursue competitiveness through all available means, including product innovation and achieving market prominence.

Iske pursued the concept of innovation further by laying out strategies that businesses like centres could use to encourage innovations. In particular, he noted the challenges associated with a “fear of failure” and how even some of the most important breakthroughs of recent years were initially seen as failures because they did not immediately achieve their initial objectives.

Additional conference sessions included a global review of industry conditions and challenges; the perspectives of other industry professionals on the issues faced by key client groups and analyses of areas that impact convention centre business prospects such as the airline and accommodation sectors. As well, recent industry research and survey data was presented and debated in an effort to establish a clearer picture of global performance and conditions and the tactics being taken to address them.



Conference content was rounded out by panels on new technologies affecting centres and the emerging tools – including an AIPPC sponsored economic impact calculator as well as advice on engaging more effectively in community and government advocacy – that have been developed to assist members with their owner and public interfaces.

“I think we’d all have been a lot happier to have been gathering to discuss the implications and opportunities associated with a robust economic recovery, but that simply wasn’t in the cards” said Hirt. “Instead, we used our time together to compare industry conditions and look at alternate solutions, which is the best possible way to respond to the realities of today’s business environment”.



AIPC 2012: AMSTERDAM

## AIPC Member Survey Provides In-depth Intelligence

With three years of solid input from AIPC members all over the world and a new approach that enables both global and regional perspectives on key issues, the AIPC Annual Member Survey is delivering greater insights than ever before, and these were immediately evident in the presentation of results by researcher / author Michael Hughes' presentation at this year's Annual Conference in Amsterdam.

Entitled "The Road to Recovery", this year's survey presentation took an additional step forward with the inclusion of results from surveys by other industry sectors which provided a "reality check" for the AIPC data which is gathered entirely from AIPC member centres. What this comparison showed was that the insights and predictions of centres are largely consistent with those of other parts of the industry although they vary based on the mix of business for any centre and the regional variations seen in the results as a whole.

Key findings from this year's survey included;

- > **That while the general sense in most parts of the world was that prospects for economic recovery were still elusive (and actually declining in some areas), centres were still achieving reasonable growth with an average 5.7% growth in gross revenue achieved in 2011 and a further 4.7% anticipated for 2012;**
- > **That in terms of economic recovery, there were essentially "two worlds" with just over half of respondents (56%) referencing a "moderate to strong" recovery and just less than half (44%) seeing "weak to no recovery" or actual recession;**
- > **That while just over two thirds of centres were reporting strengthening pricing for space vs five years ago, that same number were acknowledging that they were engaging in more subvention activities to retain business;**
- > **That more centres are now engaged in renovations of existing facilities than pursuing expansions or new builds, reversing a multi-year trend and illustrating the challenges of finding major project funding in many areas.**



Once again, the survey was organized in such a way as to enable regional break-outs of data, revealing some considerable variations in key factors in different parts of the world. The full survey synopsis will be available for member review shortly on the AIPC web site "Members Only" area while the Annual Conference presentation is already available along with other Conference presentations via the Annual Conference 2012 section.

## What Do Clients Want Most? Ipsos Provides the Answers!

**What do centre clients want? And given a number of different factors, which are most likely to influence their decisions in favour of a particular facility? These are the questions that every centre wants and needs to have answered – and they were delivered at this year's AIPC Annual Conference from an unexpected source.**

For the first time, the evaluation process for this year's AIPC Apex Award for "World's Best Convention Centre" was managed and analyzed by Ipsos, well known as a leading international market research firm. Apart from elevating the judging process to a highly professional and credible new

level, this enabled a degree of analysis not before possible.

By using the aggregate of all client references submitted on behalf of all competitors – almost 750 survey responses – as a single sample, Ipsos "mined" the data for answers to those elusive insights.

This was achieved through a sophisticated analysis that linked scoring over the broad sample to the likelihood of any centre achieving a high overall rating from their clients (and a higher score in the AIPC Apex Award competition).

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## Royal College of Physicians, London Takes **2012 AIPC Apex Award**



"We are very pleased to be recognizing the Royal College of Physicians, London for this honor in what has been a pivotal year for the AIPC Apex Award" said AIPC President Edgar Hirt. "They have achieved this distinction in a process that now requires even higher levels of client endorsement than ever before, and are a facility with a very long and proud history which is now reflected one of London's most distinctive and iconic Grade 1 listed buildings, overlooking the famous Regent's Park. This history has clearly paid off in terms of their development of superb facility management and customer service skills".

A highlight of the 2012 Annual Conference was the announcement of the Royal College of Physicians, London in the UK as the winner of the 2012 Apex Award for "World's Best Convention Centre". The Award was presented at the 2012 AIPC Annual Conference in Amsterdam from a group of highly competitive finalists who had qualified for the competition by achieving a high level of client testimonials to serve as a basis for an independent evaluation and analysis by the international research firm Ipsos.

"The AIPC Apex Award is one of the most prestigious titles in the world, and to secure it we have had to prove that we are competitive in every respect with some of the most successful venues in the world," said Clive Ostler, the RCP's Managing Director. "The defining factor is customer feedback, and clearly the detailed comments of our own clients gave us the edge".

As always, the Award was based on an extensive analysis of customer input via detailed surveys and reflects an unbiased picture of a centre's performance as seen through the eyes of its customers.

The analysis covers a range of categories including facilities, project management, customer relations, catering, creativity and technology. "The AIPC Apex Award evaluation process is an extensive one that is able to identify the distinctions that separate even the highest performing centres", said Hirt. "With almost 750 client assessments this year, we have also been able to clearly distinguish the factors that are generally most important to clients in their determination of centre performance, which gives our members and additional insight to drive performance".

The AIPC Board also recognized three runners-up to this year's award;

**Belfast Waterfront,  
Convention Centre Dublin,  
Orange County Convention  
Center, Orlando.**

"Our runners-up are also deserving of real recognition, given the very high standards required to compete in this program and the fact that they each achieved this distinction by being top-ranked in a specific category of evaluation", said Hirt. "Overall, we feel the AIPC Apex Award goes far beyond simply the winners as

it creates important information and insights that drive overall centre performance".

Begun in 2000, the AIPC Apex Award is now the pre-eminent Award for the international convention centres represented in AIPC.

The award program will again be carried out in 2014, alternating between with the 2013 edition of the AIPC Innovation Award.

### **Previous AIPC Apex Award Winners:**

**Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre** | Australia

**Congress und Messe Innsbruck** | Austria

**Vancouver Convention Centre**  
Canada – on two occasions

**Euskalduna Conference Centre  
and Concert Hall** | Bilbao Spain

**Cairns Convention Centre** | Australia

**Congress Centre-Sofia** | Bulgaria

**Centre des Congrès de Québec** | Canada

**Valencia Conference Centre** | Spain

# AIPC Economic Impact Calculator Introduced



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## The need for such a tool originated from a number of factors:

**First**, because most centres saw a need to be able to deliver a credible estimate of economic impact generated by their facility as a supplement to their direct revenue / financial figures – in fact, for many, it was a requirement;

**Secondly**, because a stand-alone study in this regard was often very costly, which in turn affected repeatability;

**Third**, because most of the national-level models that had been implemented in recent years did not lend themselves to breaking out city or centre-specific data estimates, and

**Finally** because there were issues around the consistency of data generated as a result of the variations in inputs and assumptions inherent in the wide variety of models being used.

With these points in mind, AIPC communicated with Ipsos, an international market research company with considerable experience in this area and asked them to recommend an approach that could

be of use to our members. What emerged was the idea of creating a model to which centres could input data gathered in a defined and consistent way and in turn generate a total spend figure. If desired, the same input could then be used in a local Input / Output model of the sort maintained by many governments and universities in order to be able to create a locally calibrated total economic impact number (Industry Output).

The project resulted in an extensive “guidebook” that covers everything from data gathering within recognized statistical parameters to sample sizes, sources of input and categories of business. Following testing, this will be made available to all AIPC members for both their reference and use, where data gathered in accordance with the guidelines could be input to the spend calculator (which Ipsos would maintain under agreement with AIPC) to arrive at a number which would be both consistent and credible across many different regions.

The resulting “tool” will be a free service to members, with the major cost being

associated with the data gathering; this can be either carried out by the centre itself or contracted out.

The project was outlined at this year’s Annual Conference and AIPC is currently identifying along with Ipsos a trial run with a sample of AIPC members. Following any final adjustments resulting from the trial, it will be made available to all members for their own use.

**“This has been a major undertaking for AIPC, but the importance our members place on having access to a credible yet affordable calculator has made it a priority”, says AIPC President Edgar Hirt. “With the help of our initial pilot project members we will be able to take it to a point where all members can use it, and avail themselves of the major advantage of not only accessing a centre-specific process but also having a highly reputable international research company like Ipsos behind it to ensure the credibility of the final figures”.**

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## What Do Clients Want Most? Ipsos Provides the Answers!

What emerged was a clear indication that services during the actual event ranked highest in client’s minds as the chief determinant of centre performance and capability. Of secondary importance were the services provided during the event planning and post-event interactions such as follow-up and invoicing. Many other aspects of the centre experience (and the rating criteria used to select the AIPC Apex Award winner) rated well below these front runners.

But the insight didn’t end there. Within each of the major categories of scoring were component elements that contributed to the overall rating for that area. In the case of “services during the event” there were again a number of components including such things as security, food and beverage,

room sets and logistics but again there was a clear leader which was “being able to handle unexpected problems / changes”. The implications for centre management, organization training and operating priorities are obvious and suggest very specific actions.

As a further example, the Ipsos team “drilled down” into the buildings and amenities area and as with the event experience, some specific factors emerged as being the most important in client’s minds. In this case, ambiance and atmosphere led the pack once the “fit” of facilities with event requirements had been assured. Amongst the mix of various spaces, it was the plenary and breakout rooms that were of most concern over areas like the exhibition or ballroom spaces.

“It was not our intent to develop a definitive and complete analysis of priority factors for centres in general but rather to illustrate that this can be done for any individual centre just as it can be for the group as a whole, said Ipsos’ Julie Winram. “Each centre will have a somewhat different mix of priorities amongst their clients and therefore a slightly different pattern will emerge. However, this exercise illustrates that it is possible to extract from the data a clear picture of just how much weight a client places on various parts of the centre experience and how well a particular centre is doing in that regard”.



## Ottawa Convention Centre Joins Quality Standards Gold Achievers

The Ottawa Convention Centre has become the 20th AIPC member centre to have achieved Quality Standards distinction, securing a "Gold" level accreditation this summer. Communiqué speaks with OCC CEO Pat Kelly about this accomplishment.



### Why did you decide to do this?

Ottawa Convention Centre made the decision to pursue AIPC Quality Standards certification because it is the most credible quality standards certification process in our industry and is well-recognized by our peers and clientele. We felt the process would be a good test for us as a new operation.

### How was the experience?

#### What did you get out of it?

The exercise was challenging in a positive way requiring us to undergo a comprehensive overview of standards and performance in all areas of management and operations. The outcome of this review is unquestionably a very positive experience and has provided a framework for continuous and sustained improvement.

The AIPC Quality Standards qualification process also uncovered specific areas of importance that perhaps had not received the level of attention they deserved. Attention to improving these elements of the submission and our operation will undoubtedly improve the Centre's overall performance.

### What did your staff get out of the process?

Each member of the OCC AIPC Champions Team who participated in this process benefitted in a tangible way as they gained a corporate-wide perspective that they may not have had prior to the exercise.

OCC's accreditation has resulted in a more efficient and higher-quality service delivery. The certification supports our 3rd and 4th Shared Commitments; we are deeply passionate about making it happen for our guests and we always demonstrate a pig-headed resistance to mediocrity.

### Do you see any market benefits?

This credential will provides us with a competitive advantage in the marketplace. OCC will use its new qualification as an ongoing benchmark against which to test ourselves and our processes and as a powerful marketing and branding tool.

## Introducing New Board Member

Aloysius Arlando | Chief Executive Officer of the Singex Group in Singapore

AIPC's newest Board member is Aloysius Arlando, Chief Executive Officer of the Singex Group in Singapore. He joined the Singex Group in 2010, and subsequently devoted his time on building up the Singex portfolio of international MICE-related centre management and events through developing a suite of business event solutions and raising venue management services to new standards.



"My management of Singapore EXPO – Singapore's largest exhibition and convention centre - has been consistent with AIPC values of excellence in convention centre management" says Arlando. "Singapore EXPO strives to provide organizers with a worry-free experience, and for this reason we have pursued innovations and standards through maintaining credentials such as the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System certification and achieving Business Continuity Management certification. My time at the Singex Group has thus given me a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities afforded to Asian industry players within the MICE environment which I believe I can use effectively as a member of the AIPC Board of Directors".

Prior to his role with SINGEX, he spent 18 years in various leadership positions in the Singapore public sector with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau (SECB), and the Ministry of Trade & Industry where he was focused on the advancement of Singapore's tourism and business travel industries given the intensifying competition in the Asian region. He was also the Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Singapore 2009 Organising Committee, responsible for co-organising a series of high-level meetings including the APEC Leaders' Summit.

"I believe that my MICE industry background as a practitioner from the public and private sectors and my deep appreciation of the Asian marketplace will help facilitate the continuing growth, profile and activities of AIPC in the global meetings industry.

In a competitive and changing global economy, knowledge exchange and collaboration have become important factors for success, and I believe AIPC fulfills this critical role".

## Time to Schedule Your Professional Development Participation

Once again this year, AIPC will be staging a series of professional development programs specifically designed to meet the needs of centres managers and their staff. With dates now scheduled, it's time to decide which of your team should be taking advantage of these opportunities to upgrade their knowledge and share the benefits of our collective member experience.

Each of these programs offers distinctive learning and networking experiences, but space is limited for all, so get any additional information you may need at [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org) and register now while there are still places available!

Here are our upcoming offerings:

# WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

## HALIÇ CONGRESS CENTER

The Haliç Congress Center is a new landmark of Istanbul, centrally located at Haliç Bay which is the world famous Golden Horn. It is easily accessible from all parts of Istanbul, and its unique horizontal architecture and multi-functional design enables event owners and planners to create flexible, innovative events.

With a total area of 102,000 square meters the center offers 23 multi-functional rooms including 5 state-of-the-art Auditoria, the largest for over 3000 persons, all of which are fully equipped with high-tech A/V facilities. The meeting rooms are located in 4 main buildings and connected to each other via large foyers and galleries with natural lighting which provide an indoor exhibition area

of 9200 square meters that complements an additional 16,000 square meters of multi-purpose outdoor space.

Says General Manager Mrs. Handan Boyce "Haliç Congress Center has been privately managed since 2011, and is an asset for both Istanbul and the international meeting industry. Our focus on key industry needs, our flexibility and service excellence and our experienced team of professionals, Haliç Congress Center has developed strong partnerships with its key clients".

"Knowing that AIPC offers the ultimate learning, sharing and networking platform, we look forward to strengthening our network with top industry players and to engage with the industry's latest trends and developments in pursuit of management excellence".



**Handan Boyce**  
General Manager



## HUNGEXPO BUDAPEST

A member of the French-owned GL Events Group, HUNGEXPO Budapest is the biggest event venue in Hungary, boasting decades of professional experience and the infrastructure required to organise conferences and exhibitions to its clients' satisfaction. HUNGEXPO Budapest is located 15 km (a 20-minute drive) from the international airport and is 4 km from the downtown area.

After a successful privatisation in 2005 the company embarked on a major refurbishment project including improvements to existing buildings, extension of parking facilities and construction of Budapest's newest and biggest multifunctional event hall for audiences of up to 10,000 people.

The facility covers 36 hectares, with landscaped gardens and 8 pavilions of 55,000 sqm total covered area which together provide the ideal venue for hosting any type of events year-round of up to 10,000 people. The venue is equipped with all modern technologies, and offers a full range of premium services from stand design to interpretation for its partners. The venue also has an on-site hotel, the 160 room four-star Expo Congress Hotel which is the latest member of the Mellow Mood Group's "Congress" brand.

HUNGEXPO joined AIPC in order to take part in the convention and meeting industry much more actively and to strengthen our international relationships", says Company CEO Gábor Ganczer, who was recently re-elected as the President of the Hungarian Association of Event Organisers.



**Gabor Ganczer**  
CEO



**Barcelona | Nov 25–26, 2012**

Held in conjunction with the EIBTM trade show, this session brings together operations and event managers from around the world in a two day program designed to address key operations and event management issues and strategies while accessing new expertise in areas of collective interest.



**Brussels | Feb 3–8, 2013**

Begun six years ago as an efficient and effective way for centres to address the need to expand the perspectives of staff preparing for more senior management responsibilities and to orient individuals who already had their professional credentials in another field but needed to learn more about the specifics of our industry, this program is now fully evolved as the leading vehicle for centre management training.



**Brussels | Feb 3–5, 2013**

Designed to meet the needs of senior managers, directors and CEO's who already have significant management experience and who are looking for a forum in which they can work with Academy Faculty and colleagues on developing strategies to meet today's most pressing management challenges.



**Frankfurt | May 19, 2013**

This is a "must attend" session for sales and marketing managers who need to keep up on the latest market developments and exchange perspectives and strategies with colleagues and key clients.



## Gala Systems

### Create Value through Flexibility

**Robert Heimbach** Vice President, Business Development, Gala Systems Inc.

The Gala Venue technology for enabling conversion of centre spaces into a number of different configurations is both innovative and proven over many different applications and years of service. We speak with Robert Heimbach, Vice President, Business Development about Gala's view of the future of convention centres and where their systems fit into this.

**What do you see as the primary requirements of a convention center of the future?**

State-of-the-art technology and maximum versatility of infrastructures, not only in terms of room configuration but also flexible, modular walls to enable complete versatility and modularity depending on the event, including the ability to increase the size and number of subcommittee rooms and areas like lobbies to accommodate small exhibitions.

**How does this relate to a centre's profitability?**

In our view, the profitability of a Convention Centre is heavily dependent on its ability to adapt to many different meeting formats; for example, to have the flexibility to transform a 3,000 seat auditorium into multiple rooms of different configurations. This flexibility allows a centre to accommodate the requirements of many different customers throughout the year and work at a greater capacity. Ideally, a facility should never have to turn away a client group because they cannot meet the special needs of their event.

**In a situation where an area like an auditorium needs different configurations, how does your platform system support this kind of flexibility?**

Each row is individually mounted on a narrow and long platform, and is motor driven and guided independently so they can be individually positioned at the desired height wherever they are in the room. Each is independently powered, and the whole system is controlled by a programmable system of moveable floor rows which allows infinite configurations with fully automated processing.

**How many technicians are needed to make a transformation from one configuration to another? Is it easy to create new configurations?**

Only one operator is required to make a complete transformation of platform rows and seats from one level to another or to make them flat. The transformation time is about 15 minutes long to change to several configurations; an operator can also add a new configuration through programming on a large touch screen, and each configuration is saved and identified by a name so it can be recalled upon request.

**In your experience, how do participants perceive the seats and floor of an automatically convertible room compared to a fixed room?**

The audience will not notice the difference. The quality of the seats and the floor of a fixed room are fully comparable and the seats used for a Gala convertible room are robust. The floor is constructed of tubular steel and is as solid as a fixed room in structural steel, and only when the system is transformed can an audience member see that it is convertible.

**How would you rate the reliability of your system?**

Gala system components are built for a 50 year lifetime of operation assuming daily use of the room and an annual minimum maintenance schedule. The removal of any critical component cannot cause a rupture of a complete platform, and in the 10 years that Gala Venues have been installed not a single Spiralift has had to be replaced and no show has ever been cancelled or delayed.

**How many Spiralift units have been installed to date?**

Approximately 16,000 units have been installed in 1,400 projects in 63 countries.

[www.galasytems.com](http://www.galasytems.com)

**Help Yourself!** See anything you'd like to use from this or any issue of Communiqué? All content is available to AIPC members for their own newsletters or presentations – and there's even more to select from at [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org). Whether it's articles, opinions or research results, if you want to adapt anything for your own purposes, go ahead. We'll be flattered and it will help spread some of our key industry messages to a wider audience. [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org)



ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES  
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER KONGRESSZENTREN

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