The value of your AIPC membership is only partly about the ability to interact with international colleagues and the benefits of accessing unparalleled research, educational and networking opportunities. It’s also about the benefits of affiliation with an organization that promotes and recognizes excellence in convention centre management – and a way to position your centre as a superior product in today’s highly competitive market.

Why? Because being an AIPC member underlines your commitment to quality, integrity and creativity in a time when these are valuable USPs for both clients and owners. And that’s not all – programs like the AIPC Quality Standards Audit, the AIPC Apex Award and the AIPC Economic Impact Calculator also provide you with the means to further demonstrate that commitment in a relevant and tangible way. Together, these can make an important difference in how you’re seen by all of your key audiences.

Using the AIPC logo is the best and easiest way to demonstrate this connection and showcase your commitment to excellence. Make sure you feature it in association with your centre, whether on ads, your web site or anywhere that others in the industry are making their determination about what you represent. The logo is available in downloadable form on the AIPC website Members Only section or via the Secretariat Office and as a member is yours to use on all your promotional materials.

Today, pride is a selling feature! Make sure you are illustrating your quality commitment to colleagues and clients alike by flying the AIPC flag - and we’ll continue to make sure the industry recognizes that when it comes to convention centres, AIPC membership means quality!

Edgar Hirt, AIPC President
As a part of this, centres are more than ever needing to be seen in the context of their local and regional communities – not only as instruments of economic and educational development but as integral parts of how a destination can pursue its overall long term objectives through the events and activities it hosts. These considerations affect everything from marketing priorities to performance measures and even design and operational factors – and a good understanding of how a centre’s many interactions support this broader role is an essential element in its long term planning.

At the same time, centres are a focal point for all kinds of other transitions – from new event formats to changing technology and even new design requirements for venues of all types. With these factors in mind, we will be bringing together a wide range of expertise that members will be able to use to better define their overall role in the context of swivelling changes in so many different factors – and pursue an even stronger place in the mix of expectations that make up today’s industry.

This is a timely theme – and one that will offer something of strategic importance to every AIPC member in a time when we all need to define and redefine ourselves to ensure our on-going relevance.

As the 2013 AIPC Annual Conference approaches global economic conditions remain stalled or declining in many areas, centres are increasingly having to diversify business operations that make up today’s industry. How are these roles being addressed today?

**Design Flexibility: What does it really mean?**

In the face of rapid change most centres are ever constrained by their physical design. How is "flexibility" being interpreted into reality?

**Engaging or Reinventing with Clients – New Expectations and Business Models**

What are clients saying about evolving business expectations and how are centres responding with new innovations?

**Exhibitions: The Update and the Implications**

Multiple perceptions of the role and future of both stand-alone and association related trade shows in a changing market environment.

**Centres as Instruments of Economic and Social Development**

Convention centres are most often built at least partly to give it a capability to serve the broader social and economic interests of the community. How are these roles being addressed today?

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Conven...
A Better Image Equals a Better Future

“A Meetings Industry Guide to Community and Government Relations” which gets into the specifics of the kinds of actions that can be taken and how best to go about this.

To the obvious question: why now? there is an equally obvious answer: because ongoing global economic concerns have created an atmosphere where there is not just an opportunity but an obligation to tell our economic story more effectively. Our communities are most often the primary investors in centres around the world, and they need to know that their investment is producing a good return. From a convention centre perspective, it is also a good strategy to better communicate your broader values to the community in order to ensure ongoing support and investment for the future, particularly in a time when conventional revenues may be harder to achieve. Usually the biggest challenge to a more aggressive communications initiative is just getting going – it’s another task in the middle of what is already usually a heavy workload. But it doesn’t have to happen all at once.

Here are ten project ideas that you could carry out in the coming months as a way of starting a more effective communications initiative in your own city:

1. **Carry out an economic impact assessment:**
   We all know that the economic legacy is the greatest value of an event – but do you have the figures to show it? An economic impact assessment can add an “edge” to your estimates and make them more credible and even newsworthy.

2. **Define your “value proposition” as a centre in terms of your unique community values:**
   The value of events goes beyond just their economic impact and include everything from new knowledge and insights to specific professional development opportunities. However, these have the greatest impact when they can be seen to relate directly to local issues. By relating selected events taking place in your centre to priority local concerns (jobs, health, education) you can make a compelling story as to how the centre is advancing community interests.

3. **Prepare a briefing for local government on how your centre is supporting their economic and community development policies:**
   Government may be your primary investor – but whether or not this is the case, their primary interest is how well they are delivering on the policies that got them elected. By providing specific examples of how certain events are advancing their stated policy priorities you can win friends in high places.

4. **Reach out to a business, academic or professional organization:**
   Allies are everything – and when your allies are recognized and respected members of the community, your own status increases. Communicating the values in 2 and 3 above to local organizations you can create the basis for a mutually beneficial relationship that will pay dividends when you need supporters.

5. **Review your upcoming events for linkages to government policy priorities:**
   Governments have their own urgencies – so they may not make the connection between the activities of the centre and their own priorities unless it’s pointed out to them. Choose events that demonstrate this relationship and bring them to the attention of relevant officials – maybe even arranging access – and don’t limit your actions to obvious big groups like economic development and tourism when you can readily relate to others such as health, education, technology and investment.

6. **Encourage an incoming client to leave a community legacy:**
   You can make an event and its legacies more obvious by encouraging clients to reach out to the community – and this may fit well with their own agendas. Even something as simple as a public presentation related to the conference topic will attract local media coverage and demonstrate those greater values to a community that may otherwise not even be aware an event is taking place.

7. **Send local media a bulletin highlighting the benefits to be generated by an incoming event:**
   Like government officials, local media have their own priorities, and may not have the time or inclination to dig into an incoming event in order to discover its broader implications. If you take the initiative – and maybe even arrange access to key participants – you’ll not only increase the chances of better coverage but establish an ongoing relationship for the future.

8. **Feature a local “ambassador” in a thank you ad:**
   Sometimes it’s hard to speak publicly about the value of an event without looking like you’re “self-promoting” – but there’s no such problem when you're recognizing the achievements of a local individual who has helped secure or organize a national or international event. The message is a thank you ad:

9. **Make a presentation on the role of the centre to a local community organization:**
   Every destination has numerous organizations concerned in various ways about the welfare of the community and many may have no idea of the role a centre and the events they host play in supporting these. It’s only an hour out of your life to appear and present – but the repercussions may be significant, particularly when you have no idea of the people to whom the room may be and what connections they may have.

10. **Challenge centre staff to come up with community relations ideas:**
    Everyone has a potential role to play and their own unique set of connections and working relationships in the community. Take advantage of your relations with colleagues and local industry organizations by looking for ways to join forces in developing ideas on how to spread the message more effectively.

**AIPC recently distributed to its members copies of a new publication developed in cooperation with the Joint Meetings Industry Council entitled “Speak Up”. As the title suggests it was prepared to encourage members of the industry to take the initiative to communicate the value of our industry more aggressively, whether to local governments and communities or simply colleagues and business associates.**

Nowhere is this message more appropriate than to convention centres, which have a huge stake in the economic life of their respective communities and are in many cases owned or heavily invested in by local government. For that reason, we also distributed copies of a companion piece distributed copies of a companion piece "Speak Up". As the title suggests it was prepared to encourage members of the industry to take the initiative to communicate the value of our industry more aggressively, whether to local governments and communities or simply colleagues and business associates.

The answer will be found in the 2013 edition of the AIPC Innovation Award! The innovation Award Ceremony will be held in conjunction with the 2013 Annual Conference in Cape Town, and there are no limitations on the type of operations and / or market served in determining eligibility. The evaluation criteria that will guide the panel of judges are outlined under the Innovation Award Evaluation Criteria section on www.aipc.org.

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Remember, the winners of the AIPC Innovation Award are accorded the same level of recognition as is given to AIPC Apex Award Winners. Publicity will be achieved through trade media, member communications and industry presentations. Amaze your colleagues with your centre’s creative thinking – and get the recognition you deserve! Download the entry form now and start planning your submission for this year’s Award.

To paraphrase Mark Twain’s famous comment on the weather, everyone today is talking about innovation – but the real question is what are we doing about it?
The Las Vegas Convention Center in the USA is the latest member to achieve the AIPC Quality Standards (Gold) accreditation following the recent audit. In an interview, Terry Jicinsky, Senior Vice President of Operations for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority explained how they pursued this and what they hope to get out of it.

**Wall Space will become as Valuable as Floor Space**

Pieter Idenburg | Group CEO, ADNEC

While the Meetings Industry will always remain people oriented and customer driven, the rise of digital technology and its capabilities will certainly have an impact on our business.

In the past, total space available for rent or advertising in our venues has traditionally been very limited by square meters available as well as the advertising and signage capabilities we offer our organizers and our customers. But static advertising displays and unused plain walls are fast becoming a thing of the past.

Individuals expect to be able to readily access information online, and it is therefore natural that these individuals would also want an online and interactive connection with our venues. Visitors want an experience that enables them to look, be involved in and give feedback at the event they attend – an interactive experience that is tailored to their specific needs and interests.

The technology is certainly keeping up with these expectations. As an example, digital signage in venues can now be fully networked and offer branded displays that are broken up by short bursts of live footage, interviews and venue updates to create an interesting and up to date virtual environment. Interactive and multi-touch abilities also play a crucial part in the evolution of digital displays. Venues are evolving into environments where delegates visit, view and touch, ensuring not only a fully immersive experience but also more vibrant sponsorship and branding opportunities to organizers.

As an avid user of a number of social media channels, I am excited by the technological capabilities that have the ability to display live social media feeds including Twitter and Instagram. Delegates can post their comments and thoughts about the event and these can be displayed on a range of digital channels, which obviously creates a social buzz and a great online networking opportunity. Statistics from 2012 show that there are 2.4 billion internet users worldwide, including 1 billion active Facebook and 200 million active Twitter users. There were 9.66 million tweets during the opening ceremony of the London Olympics & Paralympics Games 2012 and for the first time in history, 2012 on-line Christmas sales surpassed actual physical high street sales in London.

These statistics are a clear indication as to how we integrate with on-line and social media and how it is now an integral part of our business and our lives. It is certainly starting to develop a role in our industry too. As an example, during the UFI Congress 2012 and World Future Energy Summit 2013 hosted here at ADNEC, there were active twitter trends that illustrated the role of social media as a tool for organizers and venue owners. As a digital experience that allows visitors to select and send certain data and information electronically is not only a great tool for visitors, but also ensures the venue and organizers are more sustainable.

With the constantly evolving digital technologies and visitor interaction possibilities, it is inevitable that wall space will become more valuable than floor space. High speed infrastructure is a high-worth asset and a substantial new revenue stream, and digital signage solutions will not only become an integral part of the venue offering, but also become tailored to the needs of the organizer and venue, particularly as investment costs of large size digital media are dramatically reducing year on year. The human face to face and authentic experience will remain the lifeblood of our industry – but the future for wall space is certainly a very bright and exciting one.

**Welcome to our new AIPC Members!**

Pieter Idenburg Group CEO

look forward to hosting an AIPC conference one day to showcase ADNEC’s wonderful facility, but also to demonstrate traditional Arabian hospitality”
Brähler ICS AG started out as a garage company in a small village near Bonn, Germany; now a fully-fledged international company, Brähler has built up the first Sales and Rental network that spans five continents. It manufactures and sells microphone discussion systems, simultaneous interpretation systems and audience response systems and can supply the entire spectrum of public address, lighting and media technology and professional conference technology for rent.

What is your corporate philosophy around service?
From small conferences in town offices to all the big convention and congress events staged around the globe any and all services, including our own, are people-driven and the good rapport between our customers and technicians proves this point. When it comes to services, you have to think outside the box. Even where we are not the general contractor, we are still the local human ‘interface’ for the customer and the conference members. Often customers call us – even when renting or installing – asking for a particular person to do the job for them, and that speaks highly of our style of working and personal commitment.

What’s a recent example of a large and complex event you have supported?
In 2012 we supported events of up to 16,000 delegates. The most exciting congress recently was the IUCN in South Korea, where organizers required a conference system that was state-of-the-art in both design and function. It was the first event where we used our new DIGIMIC with more than 1,200 units, and we did customization work on the software to handle the complex evaluation and voting specifications in compliance with the IUCN’s statutes and requirements. The congress was held on an island, so the logistics handling was demanding, including having to organize everything for our on-site technicians. When selling and installing equipment we want the customer to be free to completely focus on the conference content and we make sure we adapt to this leaving no loose ends.

What’s an example of a major recent sales project?
One of our biggest projects last year was the Great Hall of the People in Beijing with 3,600 voting units. We completely retrofitted and modernized the old voting system and added customized features like keypads with Chinese characters and a waterproof housing. We also installed our CDSVAN system in the Kenyan Parliament and several communities around Europe, including our new DIGIMIC system installed as built-in units for the Bavarian parliament.

What advantages do you offer association clients?
Every convention and congress is unique - so we take the opportunity to pay our customers a visit, explain what we do and talk about our latest products. In this way we ensure we can meet the unique requirements of each and every customer.

Las Vegas Convention Center Achieves AIPC “Gold” Quality Standards Accreditation
Now that you have the accreditation, how do you intend to use it to advantage? First and foremost, the greatest benefit we immediately experienced was the positive impact on employee morale. This achievement has reinforced the appreciation we have for our staff’s expertise, commitment and professionalism. In addition, we believe this accreditation will prove helpful in our future marketing and public relations strategies. In terms of external audiences, the accreditation logo was immediately added to our web site, and as future printed promotional materials are completed, the logo and accompanying promotional explanation will be incorporated.