

Global Issues Meet Local Solutions at AIPC 2018

The 2018 AIPC Annual Conference in London UK achieved a balance between high level perspectives on global issues of potential significance for the Meetings Industry and the creation of practical solutions to the consequences for local centre management. These ranged from the implications of significant international and geo-political turmoil – as exemplified by the UK Brexit challenges evident in the Conference location – to growing urgencies in such areas as talent acquisition, accommodation access and affordability and a rapidly evolving exhibition industry.

Featured keynotes included Razeen Sally, a Singapore-based global economist and expert on trade agreements and global economic trends, who addressed the evolution of international relations and trade in a world increasingly moving toward protectionism and trade friction and Roger Martin-Fagg, a business process expert who counselled members on creating business strategies for uncertain conditions. Other sessions included a review of the international hotel scene under “peak” business conditions, the challenges faced by centres in recruiting and retaining key staff in a period of increasingly full employment and a highly selective work force and a comparison of different centre management models along with the factors considered by owners in choosing amongst alternatives.

Each “thought” session was followed up with industry-based panels that focused on the centre-specific implications of the big picture topics and explored ways in which centres might or already have responded. These latter insights served to “ground” discussion of high level issues and enable group insights that will assist centre executives in creating their own response strategies.

Delegates also benefited from “on the ground” advice such as how a strong community coalition has helped a city like London weather the challenges posed by Brexit-related uncertainties and the ways in which exhibition organizers are appealing to a new generation of attendees and competition from other marketing vehicles.

Content was rounded out with updates on new AIPC program and management tool offerings designed to provide purpose-built, cost-effective means of addressing collective requirements. Amongst these were:

- The AIPC Financial and Operational Benchmarking Survey, which enables members to compare a wide range of performance, financial, business mix and logistical factors across a sample of more than 50 centres located around the world;

- The new AIPC-Ipsos Client Satisfaction Survey, which tracks client evaluations of a wide range of key performance measures on an ongoing basis, provides a real-time assessment and hot alert function to facilitate immediate action on emerging centre performance issues and offers an opportunity for automatic entry to the prestigious AIPC Apex Award, and
- The launch of a new comprehensive industry trends analysis report which will combine AIPC Member Survey responses with comparable data from other industry sectors to create a broad perspective on how business is developing and evolving in ways that impact centre business.

“We live in a world where global forces can have huge impacts on our business prospects but are largely beyond our ability to shape them”, said AIPC President Aloysius Arlando. “By combining high-level perspectives with sessions designed to consider practical responses, we feel we are best serving the interests of members and at the same time helping identify the most relevant tools and services we can provide to them”.