



AIPC Media Release November 10, 2002

AIPC Board Targets Actions for Industry Recovery

Report on the Proceedings of the AIPC Board of Directors Meeting, Brussels October 5-6, 2002

AIPC's most recent board meeting in Brussels combined a survey of industry conditions with a review of Strategic Business Plan priorities to ensure that current activities reflected the most urgent requirements of the Association. The result was a series of new initiatives to target areas of opportunity and fulfill AIPC's mission of promoting and recognizing excellence in congress centre management. Among the actions taken were:

- Board members will be assuming new responsibilities for reporting industry conditions and assisting in membership development for their respective regions. Reporting by board members will form the basis for ongoing monitoring of industry trends and developments.
- Educational programs will proceed on four fronts: a continuation of the highly successful Excellence in Customer Service (ECS) program offered in conjunction with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre; a series of courses offered by NEC Birmingham in partnership with AIPC and topic-specific seminars to be offered at major trade shows. AIPC is also participating in exploration of the potential for a European Facility Management School in cooperation with EVVC, NAA, WCVM and IAAM.
- The Board reinforced the need for further action in the development of closer ties amongst industry associations, and in addition to the educational initiative indicated above, is currently exploring joint programs with JMIC (for an industry profile-building program) and IAPCO (for joint programs and publications in areas of common interest). There was a sense that such programs not only enhance the impact of industry efforts but serve to build better overall working relations in the industry.
- Association development will proceed under three new initiatives; a membership development program aimed at ensuring AIPC remains a truly global organization with broad geographic representation, a sponsorship program which identifies and clarifies categories and opportunities for industry partnerships and the exploration of strategic alliances with other regional congress centre organizations. Each of these initiatives is now supported by a formal policy statement along with new promotional materials and tactics.
- The Board has also initiated a more extensive marketing and communications effort, incorporating the production of new Association materials, regular media articles and releases and an update of the AIPC web site. Among other things, this new effort will target promotion of the AIPC Quality image as a distinguishing feature of Association activities.

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- A decision was made to review and redefine the AIPC research program in order to ensure that highest priority is being placed on areas which best reflect the interests of members. At the same time, sponsorship opportunities are being identified which can support the research program which addresses the areas of industry standards, market conditions and member surveys.
- Results from a survey of member's reactions to the 2002 Annual Conference and General Assembly were reviewed and it was noted that while respondents gave generally high ratings for most of the event, there was an overall desire to see more interactive sessions. Members placed a high priority on the opportunity to exchange information with their colleagues, noting that the format for such exchanges needed to be facilitated in an unobtrusive way and results documented in order to capture the outcome for future use. Board members noted that they are looking forward to the 2003 Conference in Mannheim where such sessions can be incorporated.
- Finally, the Board has initiated a review of all AIPC activities to identify areas where the strategic objective of identifying and promoting cultural diversity can be addressed. Cultural diversity has been recognized as both an essential element in AIPC's international mandate and an opportunity to further enhance the perceived benefits arising from the meetings industry world-wide.

In taking these actions, the Board was responding to a general sense that international congress and exhibition participation still remains somewhat lower than expected at the end of a turbulent year. Actions to strengthen the role of industry associations and the level of cooperation amongst them were seen as important components in business recovery, as this kind of activity can help promote the importance of meetings to the global community.

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