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QHotels' Chesford Grange £400,000 Conference Suite Unveiled

Today sees QHotels' Warwickshire hotel Chesford Grange, unveil its brand new £400,000 event suite. The Stratford Suite, which has taken just 6 weeks to complete, is equipped with the latest audio visual technology, enjoys natural daylight, impressive views over the hotel's gardens and has ample space to accommodate 180 delegates theatre style, and 120 for a banquet.

"We are delighted with the new conference and event suite; this addition to our facilities will not only provide us with extra flexibility..."

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Heritage Motor Centre, England: Unrivalled Conference & Event Facilities

The Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, Warwickshire is an award winning, high-profile contemporary venue offering up-to-date technology and versatility to suit any event. Providing a unique environment for conferences, exhibitions, events, product launches and gala dinners, the centre was purpose built to eliminate compromise...

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The Royal Horticultural Halls & Conference Centre

Need a quick turnaround on a conference, banquet, meeting or special event? Need a professional, experienced team who are flexible in organising events with short lead times and one that offers competitive prices? Look no further than The Royal Horticultural Halls and Conference Centre.

At The RHH, they know that organisers don't always have months to plan events and with their no surprises prices, all encompassing packages and no dry hire policy, pulling events together quickly...

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Shakespeare Country Launches "Ultimate 2 Day Ticket" For Groups

Following on from the success of the joint ticket offer for groups to visit both Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle on the same day, Shakespeare Country is to launch an enhanced ticket offer incorporating an overnight package. Shakespeare Country, Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle have joined forces with Macdonald Hotels to offer extra special discounted rates at...

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The Mersey Partnership Appoints New Director

Liverpool City Region's official tourist board, The Mersey Partnership (TMP), has appointed a new director to oversee development of the area's £1.3bn a year Visitor Economy. David Andrews will take up his new post of Director of Visitor Economy on 30th March, 2010.

David brings a wealth of experience to the role having worked for the UK's national tourist body VisitBritain and its forerunner the British Tourist Authority for over 16 years. During this time he managed their offices in Chicago, Singapore and Amsterdam for eight years...

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Moscow & Dublin Edge Into Most Popular Cities For Business

Air Partner, a leading provider of private aviation services, has disclosed the top 10 cities for private air charter and predicted that new entrants will be joining the league this year as destinations such as Sardinia in Italy gear up to cater for the MICE market.

There are no surprises among the top five: London, Frankfurt, Paris, Geneva and Zurich. Next come Edinburgh, Amsterdam, then, increasingly, Madrid, Dublin and Stockholm. Dublin is a relatively new and increasingly popular city, especially on the conference and incentive circuit, while Moscow is also on the radar, but mainly for stand-alone business trips. As it is more 'remote,' conference and meeting planners tend to bolt on private flights to scheduled services to save money, Air Partner notes.

Air Partner Sales Director David Macdonald highlights that flying privately is becoming more and more affordable with the arrival of new Very Light Jets (VLJs) that are starting to debut in the UK and Europe. Throughout 2009 Air Partner UK saw a steady pick up of first time users calling to enquire about these aircraft. "Savvy air travellers with short range needs want to fly them. Everyone likes to fly an aircraft that is brand new, with that fresh leather smell."

The trend of 2009 continues whereby executives flying on business are chartering jets closer to the travel time, says Macdonald. During the Christmas and New Year period with the threat of strike action by British Airways, Eurostar breaking down and weeks of unprecedented snowfall throughout much of the UK Air Partner was inundated arranging the dispatch of private aircraft back for executives stranded – either on holiday with family or stuck at a hub airport on business with all scheduled flights home cancelled.

Another factor boosting the move to ad hoc private charter has come from the large corporations. Those who have already experienced the time-saving benefits of flying privately but were required to sell the chief executive's company jet when the economic crisis struck, or are having to extricate themselves from costly, inflexible and restrictive fractional ownership contracts, remain convinced of the value of a private jet as a business tool. Such companies have turned to ad hoc charter or flexible jet card programmes, such as Air Partner's JetCard. With JetCard, flight hours never expire and unused hours are fully refundable upon request. The card fee structure is transparent and incorporates fixed hourly rates with no fuel or landing surcharges or positioning fees and provides access to the broadest range of aircraft with an average age of just four years.

The success of long range business jets such as the Gulfstream G550 and Bombardier Global Express that can fly non-stop from London to Tokyo or Johannesburg has made the greatest impact on aiding global travel over the past decade for high flying business executives," says David Macdonald. "We are pleased to say that today there is a healthy availability of these jets flying today for those who can afford it."

www.airpartner.com

Cvent Announces Marketing Alliance With Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants

Cvent, a leader in group business lead channels for hotels and a premier provider of event management, site selection, and sourcing solutions for meeting and event planners, has

announced a marketing alliance with Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants on the Cvent Supplier Network. The Cvent Supplier Network is an online directory of venues and an electronic Request for Proposal (eRFP) engine that meeting planners use to search for event venues, send out eRFPs, and receive supplier proposals back regarding pricing and availability. In the fall of 2009, Kimpton implemented a marketing partnership

HBAA and ABC Connection Announce Strategic Partnership

The Hotel Booking Agents Association and online publisher ABC Connection have embarked on a new chapter in their existing relationship by announcing a three-year strategic partnership to benefit HBAA's members (agencies) and partners (hotels and venues). This is the first such partnership for the HBAA, which represents the collective interests of its members in the procurement and management of conference, meeting and accommodation facilities in the UK and overseas.

The scope of the agreement includes collaboration on industry research and white papers, and the provision of co-branded systems and online tools to be made available to member agencies. ABC Connection will be the exclusive provider of hotel and venue content to the HBAA.

Peter Ducker, HBAA Executive Director, said: "ABC Connection has become an industry authority on content and publishing and provides that independent link between our members and their suppliers. We will be exploring a number of initiatives to support our members. One of our key objectives is to encourage and nurture innovation that will advance our industry. ABC Connection's experience and expertise in developing technology tools that simplify processes between agencies and their hotel and venue suppliers will be invaluable in this area."

Brian Farrugia, ABC Connection CEO, said: "We are delighted to have concluded this new long term agreement. We began working with HBAA in 2003 and have a well-established relationship with the association, its members and partners. We look forward to taking this to another level and are excited about the opportunities ahead."

www.hbaa.org.uk
www.abconnection.com

on the Cvent Supplier Network for select hotels in order to increase their online exposure for group business leads. Kimpton has now opted to enhance its marketing with an enterprise-wide upgrade on the Cvent Supplier Network in 2010.

Kimpton's marketing alliance on the Cvent Supplier Network positions its properties as an ideal fit for small-to-medium-sized meetings. Overall, Cvent's RFPs in 2009 averaged 316 total room nights with an average of 82 room nights booked for the peak night of the program. In the small-to medium-sized meetings segment, Cvent's average total room nights per RFP were 131, with an average of 46 peak room nights. These numbers demonstrate that the Cvent Supplier Network delivered group business leads that fit with Kimpton's desire to target the small-to-medium-sized meeting market.

"As the largest boutique hotel brand in the US, our ultimate goal is to be our customers' premier brand of choice. Our relationship with Cvent provides us the opportunity to connect to new planners, to continue to support our existing customers and to provide these customers with the personal and high end services Kimpton is known for within the industry," said Christine Lawson, Vice President of Sales at Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants. "Since the Cvent Supplier Network is the sourcing tool of choice for thousands of meeting planners across the country, it is logical to align our group sales and marketing efforts with Cvent."

Bharet Malhotra, Cvent's Vice President of Sales, says, "We are thrilled to work with Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants as marketing partners on the Supplier Network. Kimpton's upper-upscale properties are a great fit for Cvent planners seeking a boutique venue for their meetings or events. With almost 100,000 gross RFPs sent through the system in Q4 of 2009, we're confident that our relationship with Kimpton will be fruitful for both parties."

As part of the Kimpton marketing partnership on the Cvent Supplier Network, all featured hotels will showcase Kimpton's exclusive Pick Your Perk campaign, offering 5 percent off the master bill. Meeting planners can also get a jump-start at booking meetings at Kimpton's brand-new hotels, including the Hotel Palomar Chicago and Eventi Hotel in New York City, both opening in early 2010.

www.KimptonHotels.com
www.cvent.com

HSMAI Announces Day-Long Meeting Planners' "Boot Camp"

Acknowledged for its high quality educational programs, the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International's (HSMAI) Affordable

Worktopia Unveils Universal Meeting Solution (UMS)

Worktopia, Inc. has unveiled the latest release of its Universal Meeting Solution (UMS), which now allows corporate customers to search, compare and book internal meeting rooms and video/telepresence facilities in the same real-time booking workflow as used for sourcing offsite meeting venues.

UMS now provides meeting planners the ability to easily determine whether an onsite facility is available or if an offsite meeting venue is best aligned with the value of the meeting itself. "Small on-site meetings, those held in corporate training facilities, internal meeting rooms and video conferencing studios can play an important role in managing costs if they are made available as an alternative during the sourcing process," said John Arenas, Worktopia CEO. He added, "The reporting and data made available by bringing on-site and off-site meeting sourcing together will mean a new level of visibility and control allowing travel and procurement executives to further optimize return on meeting spend."

Worktopia's Universal Meeting Solution (UMS), automates the sourcing process for meeting arrangers, allowing them to search, compare costs and book meeting space, video conferencing studios, as well as guest room reservations for up to 50 guests, in one real-time session. UMS-Corporate Edition (UMS-CE) allows companies to access pre-negotiated group guest room and meeting space rates, to configure custom contracts. The new internal meeting room management service is available to UMS-CE subscribers.

www.worktopia.com

Indesit Appoints BSI Meetings & Events

Having successfully managed and delivered Indesit's presence at the CIH Euronics suppliers tradeshow in September 2009, BSI Meetings & Events have now been appointed to supply venue finding, event production, logistics and creative design services as part of Indesit's recent agency review.

As a direct result, BSI Meetings & Events have already been appointed to manage a three week high profile visit to Milan by the Indesit UK sales team, together with a number of VIP guests. The trip in May 2010 will coincide with the Eurocucina trade fair, with BSI Meetings & Events managing a programme of both business and social activities.

Indesit's Event Manager, Jayson Weston commented: "Having delivered a high quality stand with half the usual budget at CIH Euronics, BSI Meetings & Events clearly understand our ROI considerations as well as the essence of our brands and product ranges. We look forward to working with them in the future."

BSI Meetings & Events (formally Olive360°) are the events division of BSI – Booking Services International. Over the last 25 years, BSI has nurtured an enviable reputation in the marketplace as an innovative, market-leading specialist accommodation, meetings and event management service provider delivering significant cost savings to the bottom-line for many blue chip and public sector organisations with a combined transactional turnover in excess of £155m.

Meetings will host a "Meeting Planning Boot Camp" on Tuesday, April 13 in Navy Pier, Chicago, Ill., prior to HSMAI's Affordable Meetings Mid-America exhibition and conference, April 14-15.

"The suggestion for this new approach to '101' education came from Affordable Meetings' Planner and Exhibitor Advisory Boards," says

Fran Brasseux, HSMAI executive vice president. "The senior leaders from both sides of the industry encouraged us to consolidate the education for newer meeting planners in order to give it more cohesion and more of an impact. This allows us to include more programming on the main conference agenda for topics of greater interest to advanced and intermediate planners."

Vicky A. Betzig, CMP, president and owner of Meetings Industry Consulting, will lead the boot camp. Betzig has more than 25 years of experience and expertise in the meetings industry. A sought-after consultant, speaker and trainer, her diverse range of experience includes event management, meeting planning and marketing. Betzig is an active member in meetings industry organizations, having served on the board of directors for the Greater Midwest Chapter of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) and for both the Chicago and Wisconsin chapters of Meeting Professionals International (MPI).

The boot camp serves to provide professionals with access to training, knowledge and insight into both meeting and event planning. Both industry veterans and new professionals will walk away from the boot camp with the necessary information, skills, and supporting resources needed to effectively plan and produce a meeting.

Boot Camp topics include:

- *Establishing meeting goals and objectives*
- *Designing programs to meet your targeted audience's needs*
- *Selecting speakers*
- *Budgeting and budget monitoring*
- *Reviewing and negotiating facility contracts*
- *Planning and managing food and beverage*
- *Developing comprehensive meeting specifications*
- *On-site management: pre-planning to customer service, trouble shooting, and more*

Registration for the Meeting Planning "Boot Camp" is \$99 for the day-long session and lunch. Meeting planners who attend can earn up to 6.0 continuing education contact hours towards CMP certification or recertification.

www.affordablemeetings.com
www.hsmi.org

QEIIIC Supports Convention 2020, A 'Strategic Foresight' Study

The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEIIIC), London's most prestigious purpose built centre for professional meetings and events, has announced its support as a leading sponsor for Convention 2020, a 'strategic foresight' study designed to help all members of the meetings industry prepare for the decade ahead

Site Meetings In Paris Focus On European Market and Members

Site leaders gathered in Paris, France for three Site events that focused on European market conditions and supporting European members in achieving their business objectives. With Site's Executive Summit, a meeting of the International Board of Directors and a European Chapter leadership meeting, the week held a powerful mix of shared business intelligence, education and insight into what 2010 holds for the motivational events industry. Professionals from all industry facets converged for a thought provoking discussion about needs of partners in Europe and to analyze current trends.

Site President, Sean Mahoney, comments; "We were inspired to be involved with the local community in France to create such an important week for the Site organization. Throughout the dialogue it was clear that industry organizations who apply sensibility and transparency will achieve growth as the economy picks up."

The Executive Summit brought together the collective wisdom of professionals from 20 countries. Education seminars focused on understanding the evolving market place as well as a special emphasis on the pharmaceutical meetings, the incentives industry and new ways to look at business models and pricing structures.

Site CEO, Brenda Anderson, states; "Our global presence and connections inform us that the Global Economy is starting to show signs of change with powerful positioning occurring in the BRIC markets. Site's European chapter leaders converged in France to discuss how to provide critical education within their own countries so that Site members can support motivational programs and events with smarter degree of self regulation."

The diversity of professionals and topics of the week reflected Site's vision, promise and strategic plan, built on three core brand pillars: Global Connections, Motivational Experiences and Business Results. Site acknowledges its partners for supporting these meetings: Canadian Tourism Commission, Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Intercontinental Paris Le Grand, Yatchs de Paris and the community of Paris, France.

Online at siteglobal.com is the place to find out further information about Site and its educational programs that support unleashing human potential through extraordinary motivational experiences to move businesses forward. The pinnacle event in the motivational events industry is the Site International Conference, which in 2010 will take place Cape Town, South Africa 4-7 December.

and ensure they stay competitive.

The ultimate aim of the study, which has been launched with seed funding from founder sponsors ICCA, IMEX and Fast Future Research, is to develop rich insights into how the industry's future may play out in order to make better decisions today. This means exploring different scenarios for how live meetings might evolve, considering a range of models of what events could look like and examining the strategic implications for venues and destinations.

Comments Sue Etherington, acting commercial director at The QEIIIC: "The QEIIIC is delighted to be a platinum sponsor and key supporter of this excellent initiative by ICCA and IMEX, ensuring that the industry understands the needs of a rapidly changing market and client in these challenging times.

"As we move forward into the next

decade, The QEIIIC is fundamentally aware that the structure and challenges in the conference market are radically changing and, for us to be able to compete and thrive in this ever challenging market, we need to understand where our clients, and therefore the market, is leading us and where we might have to be in 2020. We look forward to being actively involved with ICCA, IMEX and Fast Future on driving this important research project forward.

"As a major conference venue in the London market, we are also delighted to be working alongside Visit London as leading sponsors of this important study."

The founding sponsors of Convention 2020 are ICCA, IMEX and Fast Future Research.

Martin Sirk, CEO of ICCA comments:

"We're delighted that The QEIIIC has joined the Convention 2020 research initiative as a major sponsor. I'm convinced that those organisations which get proactively involved in this way will be able to turn their engagement into powerful market positioning as thought-leaders and innovators, and will also be wonderfully placed to incorporate the very latest trends and future business opportunities into their own strategic planning process. Almost inevitably they will generate new competitive advantages in what is an ever more competitive and fast-changing world."

Comments Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX Group: "As a founding partner of the Convention 2020 research project, IMEX is delighted that The QEIIIC has joined as a sponsor of this initiative. We know that they will derive great benefit from their association with this piece of ground-breaking research; as well as being in the enviable position of gaining deep insight into the findings directly from the authors."

Rohit Talwar, CEO of Fast Future Research adds: "The Convention 2020 study marks a radical departure from the way in which the industry normally does research. The aim is to take a challenging view at the forces, trends and ideas that will shape the industry over the next ten years and to provide practical insights on how to prepare for the changes ahead. We are delighted that The QEIIIC and other industry leaders from around the world have given the study their wholehearted support and have chosen to become platinum sponsors. We are delighted at the way in which The QEIIIC team have really engaged with the study and are ensuring that they get the maximum benefit from their involvement."

Platinum sponsors of Convention 2020 are The Best Cities Global Alliance, Melbourne Convention Centre, Qatar National Convention Centre, The

QEIIIC, Visit London and Seoul Tourism Organization; and gold sponsors are Kenes.

www.qeiiic.co.uk

Shakespeare Country Launches "Ultimate 2 Day Ticket" For Groups

Following on from the success of the joint ticket offer for groups to visit both Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle on the same day, Shakespeare Country is to launch an enhanced ticket offer incorporating an overnight package. Shakespeare Country, Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle have joined forces with Macdonald Hotels to offer extra special discounted rates at either the Macdonald Alveston Manor in Stratford-upon-Avon, the Macdonald Bear Hotel in Woodstock or the Macdonald Randolph Hotel in Oxford.

The 'Ultimate 2 Day Ticket' offers groups the opportunity of visiting the magnificent glory of Warwick Castle and the timeless elegance of Blenheim Palace for an excellent, discounted admission rate of £22 per person. The ticket, which is exclusively available to groups and the travel trade, represents excellent value for money. This unique day out and overnight stay can be booked with just one phone call to the Shakespeare Country Groups Desk taking the stress of planning and organisation away from the organiser.

Shakespeare Country will be re-launching the 'Ultimate 2 Day Ticket' as the ultimate British experience in celebration of British Tourism Week which takes place from 15 - 21 March. Shakespeare Country will also be exhibiting at Best of Britain and Ireland from 17 - 20 March where group organisers can find out more information about this unique ticket.

Sian Smith, Conference & Event Manager at Shakespeare Country stated, "This unique tour has proved to be extremely popular enabling groups to enjoy the wonders of 'Britain's Greatest Palace and Britain's Ultimate Castle' with just one unique ticket. Combining the tour with an overnight stay not only enhances the offer but increases the visitor's experience giving them the opportunity of extending their stay".

The Shakespeare Country Groups Desk offers discounted group tickets for Warwick Castle, the Shakespeare Houses, Blenheim Palace, Alton Towers and Madame Tussauds.

www.shakespeare-country.co.uk
www.blenheimpalace.com
www.warwick-castle.co.uk
www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk

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ITM Sets Austin Powers Theme For Annual Conference Gala

The Institute of Travel & Meetings (ITM) UK & Ireland has announced the theme for the gala dinner night of its annual conference being held in Chelsea May 12th – 13th. Building on the incredible success of its “Strictly ITM” event held last year, the association has turned to Austin Powers to ensure it keeps its event “mojo”.

The “Austin Powers” themed gala dinner will entice attendees to dress in swinging 60’s style fancy dress (with optional black tie of course!), and organisers are planning to present a “mojo” award to the best-dressed Austin Powers character. The event will for the first time also allow sponsors to purchase tables to ensure industry professionals based in London who cannot attend conference are able to make the most of the networking event of the year.

Speaking about the theme, ITM Chairman and parttime “International man of mystery” Jamie Hindhaugh said: ITM engages in a number of serious matters during our annual conference and the gala dinner gives us a chance to relax, catch up with new and old friends and have some fun. Austin Powers symbolises the journey from the swinging sixties, which links into the Chelsea location in its hey day, through to today. So it is “the” perfect theme for the icing on the cake event of this year’s conference, “The Journey” - Oh yeah, Groovy baby.....”

Dr Evil, (aka ITM CEO Paul Tilstone) responded, “That Austin is so annoying. Here I am trying to take over the world and he’s creating the best party the industry has ever seen. Mini-me and I will certainly be there.”

www.itmconference.org

The Mersey Partnership (TMP) Appoints New Director

Liverpool City Region’s official tourist board, The Mersey Partnership (TMP), has appointed a new director to oversee development of the area’s £1.3bn a year Visitor Economy.

David Andrews will take up his new post

You Are What You Eat...

Chefs have identified a novel way to choose who to talk to at a business event - by checking their choice of canapes.

According to a survey conducted by Merseyside-based bespoke catering company Pickled Walnut, the kind of food we eat says a lot about the sort of business person we are.

The research suggests that if you want to deal with adventurous professionals target those trying the sushi, as 64% of sushi-eaters analysed saw themselves as risk takers.

More traditional business people should strike up a conversation with those eating quiches and vol-au-vents, as 56% of these saw themselves as more conventional.

Jamie Anderson, managing director of Pickled Walnut Bespoke Catering, said: “Networking is all about talking to the right people. So, take a quick scan as soon as you get in, focus on the food, and then target the right people. It’s simple culinary psychology”.

Results from the survey also found that 51% of people who choose mini bites - such as fish and chips and burgers - saw themselves as being decisive business people, while 42% who lingered near the dessert trolley were classed as enthusiastic.

Unsurprisingly, 61% of those who said they would “eat anything at hand” admitted to being impulsive - perhaps making them the most spontaneous networking companions.

Pickled Walnut Bespoke Caterers has catered for the likes of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Prince Charles and tennis champions Martina Hingis and Goran Ivanisevic.

of Director of Visitor Economy on 30th March, 2010.

David brings a wealth of experience to the role having worked for the UK’s national tourist body VisitBritain and its forerunner the British Tourist Authority for over 16 years. During this time he managed their offices in Chicago, Singapore and Amsterdam for eight years

He is currently completing a contract for the Abu Dhabi Tourist Authority – the body responsible for promoting the UAE State’s emergence as a global tourism destination.

TMP Chief Executive Lorraine Rogers said; “David’s knowledge and experience of virtually every aspect of developing successful and appealing visitor destinations, and forging a strong allegiance among partners, is extensive. He has a wealth of international experience in Asia, North America and Europe that is very relevant to the ambitions and strategy for the Liverpool City Region’s Visitor Economy. We are delighted that he is joining TMP as our Director of Visitor Economy.”

David Andrews said: “With the city of Liverpool at its heart, the region is right up there among the world’s very best destination brands and I am thrilled

to have the opportunity to join The Mersey Partnership. Delivering the full potential of the Visitor Economy in terms of creating new jobs and opportunities across the City Region is going to be an exciting challenge for everyone involved in the sector. I am looking forward to meeting my new colleagues at TMP and the organisation’s Members, partners and stakeholders whose contribution and commitment to seeing the destination deliver is so strong.”

Liverpool City Region has the potential to generate £2bn visitor spend by 2020 and support the creation of 14,000 new tourism jobs, according to TMP’s Visitor Economy Strategy to 2020.

The Visitor Economy is one of four Transformational Actions identified by TMP and its public and private sector partners to deliver sustainable economic growth across Liverpool City Region. These economic development plans are embedded in Liverpool City Region’s Multi Area Agreement (MAA) with Government.

In recent months TMP has completed a restructuring to meet new responsibilities set out in the MAA. TMP’s former Tourist Board has been replaced with a smaller Visitor Economy Committee chaired by Liverpool

Football Club's Commercial Director, Ian Ayre.

Commenting on David's appointment Ian Ayre said: "David has a fine reputation and a track record to match. His knowledge and experience spans destination marketing as well as the development of the important networks and relationships that

make destinations successful. His appointment is an important step in helping us deliver the huge potential identified in Liverpool City Region's Visitor Economy Strategy."

Nick Brooks-Sykes, Director of Tourism at the Northwest Regional Development Agency said: "I am delighted to welcome David as the new Director of Visitor

Economy at TMP. The organisation has ambitious plans for the Visitor Economy over the next ten years and David is well placed to lead these. His experience in international tourism will be of huge benefit to the Liverpool City Region as we work to build the brand on a global scale."

www.merseyside.org.uk

VENUES

Heritage Motor Centre, England: Unrivalled Conference & Event Facilities

The Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, Warwickshire is an award winning, high-profile contemporary venue offering up-to-date technology and versatility to suit any event. Providing a unique environment for conferences, exhibitions, events, product launches and gala dinners, the centre was purpose built to eliminate compromise.

The conference centre is ideally located off junction 12 of the M40 providing congestion free conferencing. The stylish 22 conference and meeting rooms include; the Conference and Exhibition suite (600 theatre style) with its own private entrance and registration desk along with two conference rooms (250 theatre style) leading onto the 750sqm exhibition gallery. The centre boasts a total of 2000sqm of flexible indoor exhibition space. In addition there is a traditional Boardroom and stunning rooftop Kestrel Suite and bar, all of which can be branded.

Set in 65 acres, the centre boasts its own meadow, ideal for teambuilding and a 4X4 off road experience along with free parking for 2000 cars. The centre also has the additional benefit of 9950 sq metres of hard standing arena space available for product presentations and ride and drive events with further areas available for the erection of marquees or multi-activity events.

Home to the largest collection of British motor vehicles in the world, all delegates can enjoy free access to the museum. Complemented by some fantastic hotel accommodation within 10 minutes drive, the Heritage Motor Centre is an impressive and versatile location for all manner of events.

www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

QHotels' Chesford Grange £400,000 Conference Suite Unveiled

Today sees QHotels' Warwickshire hotel Chesford Grange, unveil its brand new £400,000 event suite. The Stratford Suite, which has taken just 6 weeks to complete, is equipped with the latest audio visual technology, enjoys natural daylight, impressive views over the hotel's gardens and has ample space to accommodate 180 delegates theatre style, and 120 for a banquet.

"We are delighted with the new conference and event suite; this addition to our facilities will not only provide us with extra flexibility in the conference market and, being an easy-to-access business hotel in the heart

of England, means we can now cater for the mid-sized conference market," commented Joanne Barratt, General Manager, Chesford Grange.

"It's been important for us to provide facilities to accommodate over 100 delegates or banqueting guests and complement the Kenilworth Suite, one of the largest function suites in the area and able to hold up to 700 delegates. We are delighted with this further investment into Chesford Grange and look forward to The Stratford Suite being the host to many special wedding days and banquets in the very near future" concluded Joanne.

In addition to the new extended conference suite, the hotel has twelve state of the art meeting and event spaces accommodating up to 700 delegates, a premium health suite, a contemporary restaurant and 205 guest

rooms and suites.

www.QHotels.co.uk

Vancouver Convention Centre Goes Platinum

The Vancouver Convention Centre has announced that its iconic West building, opened in April 2009, has been awarded LEED Platinum certification for new construction by the Canada Green Building Council. Platinum is the highest level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

"The Vancouver Convention Centre is the only convention centre in the world to receive the highest level of LEED certification," says Kevin Krueger, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. "Not only is the expanded Vancouver Convention Centre bringing economic benefits to the province and the tourism industry, but it's a model of sustainability that will set a new standard."

"While the West building was to have been designed to a LEED Gold standard, the resulting quality of its design, construction and operations warranted a Platinum designation, making us a leader in environmental sustainability in our industry," says Ken Cretney, GM, Vancouver Convention Centre.

"This designation is a reflection of years of hard work and thorough planning by Vancouver Convention Centre staff and our outstanding project team. Without our dedicated team, this prestigious accomplishment would not be possible."

"From the very beginning of the expansion project, our goal was to create a building that is not only functional and beautiful, but also environmentally sustainable in every way, bringing urban ecology into the downtown core," adds Cretney. "We are committed to doing our part in reducing the facility's carbon footprint and to create a healthy environment for both our staff and guests."

Vancouver Convention Centre's sustainable design features and practices include:

- a six acre "living" roof, the largest living roof in Canada and the largest non-industrial living roof in North America
- a sophisticated drainage and water recovery system, which has successfully reduced potable water use by 72.6%
- 83% of construction waste has been diverted from landfill
- an extensive facility-wide recycling program that recycles an average of 180,000 kilograms of materials annually, nearly half of the total volume of waste generated
- purchases "green power" electricity generated from low-impact renewable sources
- a restored marine habitat built into the foundation of the building
- a seawater heating and cooling system that takes advantage of the adjacent seawater to produce cooling for the building during warmer months and heating in cooler months
- natural light and ventilation maximized throughout the building
- local BC wood products used throughout the building

LEED is a third-party certification program and an internationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water efficiency, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

The only two-time winner of the International Association of Congress Centres' APEX award for "World's Best Convention Centre," the Vancouver Convention Centre opened in July 1987 after originally serving as the Canada Pavilion at the World's Fair in 1986. Since inception, the facility has demonstrated a constant commitment to service, technical and culinary excellence, as well as environmental sustainability. With the expansion complete, the Centre has tripled its size to cover 1.1 million square feet (or four city blocks) for a combined total of 471,000 square feet of pre-function, meeting, exhibition, and ballroom space.

Allstream Centre Wins First Design Award

The Ontario Building Envelope Council – which focuses on building exteriors – presented Allstream Centre with its

Express Yourself At The Royal Horticultural Halls & Conference Centre

Need a quick turnaround on a conference, banquet, meeting or special event? Need a professional, experienced team who are flexible in organising events with short lead times and one that offers competitive prices? Look no further than The Royal Horticultural Halls and Conference Centre.

At The RHH, they know that organisers don't always have months to plan events and with their no surprises prices, all encompassing packages and no dry hire policy, pulling events together quickly has become second nature. If you've been thrown a curveball, you can rest assured The RHH will help you pull off a flawless event promptly and effortlessly.

The Halls deliver a versatile space, which has this year hosted big names such as Adventure Travel Live, the Conservative Party and Energy from Biomass & Waste UK. With 1830sqm of space, three flexible venues and a central location, the Halls continue to grow in popularity with organisers looking to host anything from conferences to fashion shows, product launches to trade exhibitions and award ceremonies to wedding receptions.

All their equipment is on site, making last minute bookings for up to 1000 hassle-free.

www.horticultural-halls.co.uk

** Last minute bookings are subject to availability*

first Award of Distinction for Design. The award recognizes a project team that has achieved excellence for either a new or retrofit design to a significant component of the building envelope.

Honouring the contribution of NORR Architects, the award highlights the many heritage challenges of renovating a building that is 80 years old. The architectural and construction team respectfully restored and re-constructed several important aspects of the heritage building envelope.

Allstream Centre was honoured to receive the Award of Distinction for Design during a ceremony that took place downtown Toronto in December 2009.

About Allstream Centre

Allstream Centre is Toronto's newest Conference Centre, offering meeting planners an environmentally friendly meeting venue for groups of 50 - 2000 delegates. Targeted to be the first LEED Silver (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) conference centre in Canada, Allstream Centre is conveniently located on the shores of Lake Ontario at Exhibition Place. Formerly the Automotive Building, an extensive renovation has transformed the 1920's Art Deco building into a purpose-built conference centre with 20 meeting rooms, and the largest divisible, column-free, ballroom in Toronto (43,900sf). Operating under the Exhibition Place GREENSmart Program, Allstream Centre offers linen free meeting rooms, 100% green energy,

natural light, local and organic foods, sophisticated HVAC system, 4-stream recycling program, Wifi capability and independently controlled room temperature in each room.

www.allstreamcentre.com

The Hawai'i Convention Center Enhances Profile In New York

Representatives of the Hawai'i Convention Center were recently in New York City to attend events sponsored by the New York Society of Association Executives (NYSAE). An alliance was formed by the two groups that put Hawai'i in the forefront of the New York metropolitan and tri-state area which is the third largest association market in the United States and is a key market for Hawai'i as a destination.

As part of the alliance, the HCC took advantage of an opportunity to brand an event on January 20, 2010 at the New Yorker Hotel in Manhattan. The HCC worked closely with the NYSAE to ensure that a message of "Where Business and Aloha Meet" was carried throughout the event with Rosa Say, author of "Managing with Aloha" featured as the key-note speaker in front of more than 100 New York metropolitan meeting planners and executives.

"We are pleased to help bring a part of Hawai'i and aloha to the East Coast, and especially in such a critical market

that presents much opportunity," said Mike McCartney, president & CEO, Hawai'i Tourism Authority. "Hopefully these efforts further demonstrate how Hawaii's cultural values help set the tone for an incomparable and productive meetings experience in our islands."

SMG markets and manages the Hawai'i Convention Center under the direction and support of the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), the state's tourism agency. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority was created in 1998 to ensure a successful visitor industry well into the future. Its mission is to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with the state of Hawai'i's economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires and visitor industry needs.

www.hawaiiiconvention.com

The Convention Center Dublin Set to Host Leading European Conference

The Convention Centre Dublin was selected to host the 6th Congress of European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) in February 2011. Scheduled from February 24 to 26, 2011, the conference will focus on the latest research, therapies and procedures in treating inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD).

The event is expected to attract approximately 2,000 international delegates.

"We are delighted to stage our 2011 congress at The Convention Centre Dublin as it offers first class conference facilities in the centre of the exciting city of Dublin," said Professor Daan W. Hommes, President of the European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation. "With a state-of-the-art and flexible conference facility, a broad spectrum of hotel accommodation, excellent transport infrastructure, a unique cultural experience, and a supportive team, we are confident that our event will be a success and we look forward to taking our congress to Dublin in 2011."

The 2011 ECCO congress will be organized by Vereint, a professional conference organizer and association management company. Based in Vienna, Vereint works on behalf of national and international non-profit organizations, including European Council of Nuclear Cardiology, Pharma Marketing Club Austria and European Society of Neurogastroenterology and

Motility among others.

"We are honoured to be hosting The 2011 Congress of European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation," said Catherine Newhall-Caiger, The Convention Centre

EVENTS

The Second Britain & Ireland Marketplace Workshop (BIM10)

The second Britain and Ireland Marketplace (BIM) workshop will take place at a brand new venue, the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel in London, on 16th March 2010. The BIM workshop is a product of a partnership between UKinbound and ETOA (European Tour Operators Association).

Last year's workshop was attended by 90 top travel industry buyers, tour operators and online intermediaries, and 100 sellers. The principal feature of BIM is the placing of key purchasing managers at tables, where those with tourism products to promote can secure meetings.

"At this event we aim to gather all the main decision makers in one space, and give businesses a chance to sell. When it succeeds," said Tom Jenkins, Executive Director of ETOA "it is an immensely fulfilling day. And last year was very successful with over two and half thousand individual meetings."

"It is an invaluable new addition to British Tourism Week," said Ginette Goulston-Lincoln. "It easily paid for itself in new business" said Sally Jenkins of Stena Line.

"BIM10 will be an important curtain-raiser for the commercial activities that occur during British Tourism Week," said Mary Rance, Chief Executive of UKinbound. "All the big volume inbound operators will be present."

This is an important joint initiative by UKinbound and ETOA. UKinbound is the organisation responsible for providing information about the British tourism industry for tour operators and tourism suppliers to Britain whilst ETOA offers European level representation for the interests of inbound and intra-European tour operators, wholesalers and European suppliers.

Tom Jenkins, ETOA's Executive Director, comments: "This is a time of real stress and consequent change in the travel market. At such times it is vital that suppliers and distributors meet. The

Dublin. "This important event will help to establish Dublin and The Convention Centre Dublin as one of Europe's leading destinations for medical conferences in the future.

The First IMEX/MPI Future Leaders Forum

The first IMEX/MPI Future Leaders Forum, held in conjunction with the 4th EFAPCO Congress, took place in Brussels in early January in SQUARE, Brussels' spanking new congress centre.

A day of intensive sessions run in tandem with the Congress attracted 20 students from six universities, including students from Spain, Poland and Italy as well as Belgium

Tom Hulton IMEX's Director of International Relations said: "The Forum was the 43rd to have taken place since 2003 and over 3,200 students have participated over those past seven years, many of them joining the meetings industry and already achieving excellent positions. Some 14 Forums now take place around the world every year and the programme, continues to expand.

"This Forum was unique in that the students were given the opportunity to attend many of the very good educational sessions that proved to be pivotal features in the Congress programme. This enabled the students to not only meet and listen to a number of top meeting executives during the Forum but also meet and learn from the many delegates who attended the EFAPCO Congress."

Tom Hulton added: "The Forum was certainly appreciated by the students as it gave them a good insight into the meetings industry. One of the plenary sessions the students attended, focused on "Generation Y" and involved two of the Forum students debating the merits of the upcoming generation against the rather more traditional characteristics of previous generations represented by two senior and well respected industry executives."

www.efapco2010.eu
www.imex-frankfurt.com/aboutfutureleadersforum.html

challenge for any association is to create fresh contacts. One way of doing this is

to join forces with other associations. The workshop will introduce businesses that have not worked together before, generating new products that meet these changing conditions."

Mary Rance, Chief Executive of UKinbound, comments: "UKinbound is delighted to continue to join forces with ETOA for BIM10. It represents a unique business and networking platform with a critical mass of the travel trade in town. It is positioned as a central event in British Tourism Week."

www.bim.travel
www.etoa.org
www.ukinbound.org

Finnish Firm Wins EIBTM Best Evaluation Award

The value of meetings for stakeholders and the delivering of return on investment has been recognised in the EIBTM 2009 Best Event Evaluation Award, which has been won by Finland's Troi Helsinki for their F-Secure annual Global Channel meeting for their data security products.

Using Event ROI Institute methodology the event, which attracted 200 international distribution channel partners, gained evaluation feedback for satisfaction, learning and application,

pre-, during and post event from both participants and F-Secure staff with a 60% response rate.

A questionnaire issued four months after the event highlighted how the knowledge gained from the conference was used within organisations in areas ranging from best practice and client servicing to products and services and internal training.

"In these hard times, evaluation is more important than ever", said Dr. Elling Hamso, Managing Partner of Event ROI Institute. "Everybody is talking about ROI, but many don't know how to move from the rudimentary measures of satisfaction to something more meaningful, perhaps even the financial return on investment. This coveted award encourages companies that have this evaluation skill to show others how they do it, this is why I think it is such an important award.

"When event budgets are reduced or events are cancelled, meeting owners are simply not confident that the investment will give a positive return. Only proper evaluation procedures can take this uncertainty away. All meeting planners need to understand how their meetings create value for stakeholders and how to measure the effectiveness of the meeting for this purpose.

"I am very pleased to present this award to Troi Helsinki. Not only because they put forward a good evaluation project, but also because they have incorporated the ROI Methodology into their standard operating procedures more extensively than any other company I know. I don't think it is an overstatement to say that Troi Helsinki is one of the most competent event agencies in Europe when it comes to setting appropriate event objectives and measuring results."

Commenting on winning the prestigious award, Troi Helsinki's CEO Mika Lehtinen said: "Since adopting the ROI Methodology as our standard event planning and evaluation procedure, we have become a very different company. Many customers recognise how our mindset is much more focused on bottom line profit than creativity and participant satisfaction. We are grateful to F-Secure for recognising and sharing our approach and the planning and evaluation of the event was very much a joint effort."

Senior Marketing Manager and the event manager for the operator channel F-Secure's Mari Sylvia Wesanterä sums up the importance of evaluating the meeting: "This is our main channel meeting and we know evaluating

2nd Edition of IAPCO Regional Seminar Set For Macau

Subsequent to the successful organization of the first IAPCO (International Association of Professional Congress Organizers) Regional Seminar held in Macau last year, the Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) will host a second edition of the IAPCO Regional Seminar at the newly opened Grand Hyatt Macau from 15-17 March 2010.

"Whilst such seminars are recognized as a comprehensive course for beginners, it has proved to be equally rewarding for those who have been active in the meetings industry for many years," recommended Ms. Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, President of IAPCO. "As such the seminar is part of the continuous professional development of industry players who want to fine-tune their skills while meeting the demands of this fast-changing business world."

The first two days of the seminar will cover basic organization of an international event, whilst the third day will be dedicated to an in-depth seminar on Promoting a Destination and Bidding to Win.

Director of MGTO, Engineer Mr. João Manuel Costa Antunes, said that the seminar offers an opportunity to industry professionals from throughout the Asia Pacific.

"Macau will offer you opportunities to establish good networks with world wide professionals and hands on experience in Asia's newest and most exciting destination for meetings and incentives."

"We are delighted with the enthusiastic support of IAPCO and have no doubt that the collective expertise of their hand-picked speakers – all of whom are well respected industry professionals who will share invaluable insights – will make this seminar an un-missable event."

The speakers include Philippe Fournier, Vice President of IAPCO and managing director of MCI Europe (France), Roslyn McLeod, Council Member of IAPCO and managing director of arinex pty ltd (Australia), and Jan Tonkin, also Council Member of IAPCO and managing director of The Conference Company (New Zealand).

Since the first IAPCO seminar in 1975, IAPCO has built up an unequalled reputation in the field of international meetings management training. Over 2,700 participants worldwide, including at least 80 in Macau have since obtained an IAPCO Seminar Certificate of Attendance.

The IAPCO annual "Wolfsberg Seminar" is a much touted industry educational event, however with Macau hosting the regional seminar, many more meetings professionals in Asia will have the opportunity to tap into the collective expertise and experience of the speakers. The registration fee for seminar is MOP2,000.00 (USD250.00) for the first delegate of an entity, while the second (and beyond) will pay a special rate of MOP1,000.00 (USD125.00) for the 3-day workshop.

the event is a good and necessary investment. The evaluation planning made the meeting better, without a doubt. By defining clear objectives at different levels the meeting format and content became more focused and the post event evaluation told us how well we had succeeded in spending the budget effectively."

www.eibtm.com

Over 200 Delegates Attend Jamaica's 3rd Tourism Outlook Seminar

Over 200 local, regional & international delegates gathered recently in Jamaica's tourist capital to attend and participate in the two-day tourism outlook seminar, supported by the UNWTO, held at the Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort, Rose Hall. The theme for this year's seminar was Challenges, Changes & Opportunities in Tourism - Rising Above the Current Global Economic Landscape.

The presentations on day two, similar to the first day, were equally informative and stimulating, with discussions on the closing day ranging from green tourism to tax and visa issues to airlift challenges.

In a lively opening session: Innovation Through Technology chaired by Ian Neita, Executive Director of the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the areas of maximizing the benefits of non-traditional media and the impact of technology on the bottom line were addressed by Jim Brody, International Sales Manager – Destination Marketing at TripAdvisor and Chris Dehring, Chief Marketing Officer of LIME respectively.

The issue of airlift which was one of the highly anticipated topics explored at the seminar, and the second of two panel discussions was entitled The Roadmap to Recovery: Effective Airlift. The discussion featured a panel of experts including Air Jamaica's President and CEO Bruce Nobles; US Airways' Manager International Route Planning Brian Council; JetBlue Airways' Head of Sales Caribbean & Latin America Chad Meyerson; and British Airways Head of UK & Ireland Sales and Marketing Richard Tams.

Panelists were all in agreement as to the importance of airlift to tourism dependent economies with Brian Council emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between a destination and an airline. Chad Meyerson of JetBlue Airways provided his perspective from a superior service low fare carrier while Tams and Nobles, offered views from a

long haul carrier and a national carrier respectively.

Jamaica's Tourism Director John Lynch in his closing remarks commended the Ministry of Tourism and his team at the Jamaica Tourist Board for organizing

another successful seminar. He thanked all the delegates for attending, the presenters for sharing their insight and knowledge and the host hotel Ritz Carlton, plus Rose Hall Resort and Iberostar for their support.

GIBTM 2010 Attracts Top Destinations & Hotels

With less than two months before the opening of the fourth GIBTM in Abu Dhabi on 29 March, the event has recently confirmed the participation of some of the world's most important destinations and venues.

Recent signings to GIBTM, which is set to attract the largest gathering of meeting professionals in the Gulf in 2010, include Visit London, Dragonfly Africa, Beijing Tourism Administration, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Indonesia, Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions, Turkey, Cape Winelands District Municipality, Rotana Hotel Management Corporation, Yas Hotels and Tourism Ireland.

Both Jumeirah and Qatar Tourism and Exhibitions Authority have increased their stand space from 2009.

Commenting on Visit London's participation, Zanine Adams, Head of Event Solutions and UK sales said: "This is the second time that Visit London has attended GIBTM and we're extremely excited about continuing to understand the market. Last year was so successful and we hope to build on that momentum and gain further industry contacts and strengthen relationships we made this time last year.

"For GIBTM 2010 our key message for GIBTM is the new content that London has to offer - major business benefits such as ExCeL phase two opening and the wealth of new hotels such as Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, The Jumeirah Hotel at Beetham Tower in Blackfriars and the eagerly anticipated Shard of Glass with the new Shangri - La. We will also be sharing information of London's luxury Michelin starred restaurants and shopping venues such as Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges, whilst highlighting the major business objectives and hospitality offerings for London both pre and post 2012 Olympics."

Eric Bakermans, Marketing Manager Meetings & Conventions, Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions, comments: "In our business, it's not about quick wins. It's about gaining trust, especially in this part of the world. When we first exhibited at GIBTM, we knew this was not going to be just for one year."

As first timers to the event, Robin Mcleod, Dragonfly Hotels said: "We at Dragonfly have heard good reports about the quality of Hosted Buyers at GIBTM, buyers that would not necessarily attend other shows. This show forms part of our global marketing plan to investigate new emerging markets."

Following successful attendance at last year's GIBTM, exhibitors who have chosen to return and take advantage of the unrivalled business opportunities include Shangri-la, the Seoul Tourism Organisation, Aldar, Bedouk Meetings & Events Media, Meet Taiwan, the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, Cape Town International Convention Center, Costa del Sol Convention Bureau, Cyprus Tourism Organisation, Czech Tourist Authority – Czech Tourism, ICCA, Moevenpick Hotels & Resorts, MPI, Silversea Cruises, Site, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, Toerisme Vlaanderen, Ungerboeck Systems International, Egyptian Tourist Authority, Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority, Etihad Airways, Government of Dubai, Oman Ministry of Tourism, IHG.

Graeme Barnett, GIBTM Exhibition Director comments: "Over the past three years GIBTM has established itself as the pivot of the MICE industry in the Region as exhibitors are continuing to recognise the importance GIBTM plays in maintaining, developing and attracting regional and international business. This year's exhibitor list is a testament to the event's growing influence and reputation."

www.gibtm.com - www.reedtravelexhibitions.com

SPOTLIGHT

Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) Update

Interview With Paul D'arcy, QNCC General Manager

Construction Progress To Date

The construction of the one of the Middle East's largest convention and exhibition centres, the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) is well on track for completion and opening in 2011. Stage 1 of the Convention Centre building is now fully enclosed. In the next two months, sections of the interior will be ready for 'hard-hat' viewing with two of the auditoria fitted out with tiered seating in place. The iconic Sidra Tree branch façade is changing colour daily with six undercoats being applied. QNCC's General Manager, Paul D'Arcy said "our first high profile event will be the World Petroleum Congress in December 2011, and we expect to have many local and regional events prior to this, the majority being sourced from the various institutes and members of the Qatar Foundation."

QNCC Committed To Long-Term Success

QNCC is committed to the positioning of Qatar to become known as one of the world's most inspirational destinations to host international conventions. QNCC is aware that it is their responsibility to be actively involved in identifying the challenges facing the meetings industry and the insufficient research data available. That is why QNCC is one of the first platinum sponsors for Conventions 2020 strategic research study launched last week. Global industry heavy weights, the International Convention & Congress Association (ICCA), IMEX Exhibitions, and Fast Future Research are the founders of this research program designed to take a wide ranging and forward looking perspective for the future of live events, venues and meetings destinations.

QNCC General Manager, Paul D'Arcy said 'as we head towards our opening next year, this research will help us shape our business model to best meet the needs and demands of the global meetings industry. Following the vision of Qatar Foundation's Chairperson, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, our aim is to set the benchmarks for the industry in the Middle East in terms of venue design, service excellence and corporate and social responsibility. The breadth of this study will assist us in achieving these goals and remaining relevant well into the future."

What challenges have you faced marketing a new centre in a relatively new meetings destination in today's economic climate?

- With Qatar's vibrant economy still growing at 9.2% per annum in 2009 and expected to reach a staggering 24.5% in 2010 we have not faced the same challenges as other parts of the world.
- Infrastructure projects such as the new Doha International Airport, with stage one to be operational in 2012 and the building of many new hotels have continued at breakneck speed. Their scheduled completion will coincide with the Centre's opening in 2011.
- Meeting planners can also be assured that Doha can deliver the support services required. The city has successfully hosted 13,000 Athletes from 45 nations during the 2006 Asian Games and the World Petroleum Council will hold their prestigious congress during our opening year with around 5,000 attendees.
- Now that our "Marketing Platform" is complete with the finalisation of our new website, brochure and other e-marketing tools the response from the market continues to be very positive.

What green or sustainability initiatives have been implemented in the Centre's design?

- QNCC is the first convention and exhibition centre of its kind to be built to the premium standard of the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. It is an internationally recognised benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance.
- From design stage, we placed a great deal of importance on sustainability. It is a key issue in the industry today and we are committed to ensuring targets are met in areas such as water savings, energy efficiency and indoor environment quality. For example, the Centre will house 3,676m² or 12,000 sqft of solar panels that occupy 7,080m² or 23,000 sqft of roof area to produce 12½% of the buildings total electrical requirement.

With technology moving at such a rapid pace, how do you know what will be required in 2011?

- Simply put we don't!! However, the building has been designed with the very latest technology infrastructure which will allow us to "hang" the most up to date technology off it. We will include systems such as Cisco Tele Presence in the belief that this technology will support our industry rather than detract from it.
- Other initiatives include interactive LCD screens for public use measuring 5 meters long by 2 meters high, Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) for tracking of delegates as well as building assets and a totally wireless conference management system.

What do you believe will be the most important factors in determining your company's success in 2010?

- QNCC is a member of Qatar Foundation, a non-profit organisation founded by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar. The foundation has a conviction to create Qatar's legacy of educational and scientific achievement.
- More than 30 elite institutions are also members including top American universities such as Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, Northwestern, Texas A&M, Virginia Commonwealth and Weill Cornell. In partnership, we will encourage these leaders to bid for international conventions to expose their research activities to the world.

If you could influence the industry, what would your legacy be and why?

- The first would be the eradication of the acronym "MICE" from our industry. Whilst not prevalent in North America, it is in this region and Asia Pacific. My view is that we are in the 'Meetings' or 'Business Events' industry.
- The second would be to influence the industry to be more cohesive so that we could clearly enunciate to the world (governments, cities etc) the true value of our business.