

New program offers a single voice

With the aim of providing a communications link between international associations engaged in the meetings industry, and to collectively review industry conditions and strategies, the Joint Meetings Industry Council was formed in 1978.

It has met twice annually since then, and has developed the Unity Award to recognise individuals and/or organisations that have helped advance the industry.

In 2003, JMIC commissioned a review of its role and the potential for developing a more aggressive industry advocacy program. The aim was to support members in their efforts to raise overall industry awareness and appreciation. As a result, the Profile & Power Program was developed, to both encourage and recognise initiatives enhancing the overall image of the industry and its economic and professional impacts.

This program consists primarily of establishing a consistent set of industry messaging along with tools such as guidebooks and promotional materials. As well as encouraging members to exchange information, it includes the Profile & Power Award. This is awarded annually to recognise individuals and organisations making significant contributions to advancing the awareness and influence of the meetings industry.

JMIC's objectives are to maintain a forum for the exchange of information and expertise among organisations representing the various sectors of the meetings industry; to support and carry out activities that promote the profile



JOINT MEETING INDUSTRY COUNCIL

www.themeetingsindustry.org

of the industry as a distinct and important part of the global economy; to provide a collective voice for the industry; and to formally recognise the individual achievement.

Member associations of the council include AIPC, COCAL (Latin American Confederation of PCO & Related Companies), DMAI (Destination Marketing Association International), ECM (European Cities Marketing), EFAPCO (European Federation of Associations of Professional Congress Organisers), EVVC (European Association of Event Centres), IAPCO, ICCA, MPI, PCMA (Professional Convention Association Management Association), SITE and UFI.


For most of its history, JMIC's administration has been rotated among member organisations. However, council members have agreed it should be maintained as a separate entity with the chairmanship rotating among members. This has enabled the development of a program that can be delivered on a multi-year basis. This activity plan is being rolled out as resources allow. It is developing a framework for interactions with other industry interests.

Rather than replace organisational activities, the program's intent is to complement these and to offer a single voice. As this is a diverse

industry, it has not always been possible to present a united front. By having an organisation that represents most major industry associations, JMIC is able to address that weakness and present a collective position. The initiative is being supported by council members and partnerships with the two industry exhibition organisations, IMEX and Reed Travel Exhibitions.

There are five elements in the program:

- Creating a unified voice for the industry by developing consensus on key issues and advancing these on behalf of the membership
- Enabling industry interactions and encouraging research and knowledge exchange by increasing awareness of member activities and improving access to resources
- Promoting the industry's profile and boosting awareness of the benefits generated by the industry through consistent communication with business, academic, government and community audiences
- Creating tools to measure the industry's value
- Convening industry meetings in key areas of common interest, and creating forums in which to demonstrate unanimity of purpose as well as raise the industry's profile.

Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre chief executive Leigh Harry is the JMIC president. 

EYE ON EXHIBITIONS



Using PR to effect

Since the arrival of online social media, all the tools for promoting a company's presence at an exhibition are, quite literally, at the fingertips.

Despite this, many exhibitors fail to estimate the power and value of public relations. It can tap into target markets and help reach an audience beyond onsite visitors. Most importantly, PR will help to set a company's personality and brand apart from its competitors.

Self-generated PR can be delivered electronically through snippets of information to friends and followers, but achieving editorial coverage in key industry media is a powerful way to reach a target market. It is also seen as more credible and more cost-effective than advertising.

PR is not tricky. The secret to a successful campaign is to plan ahead and research media relevant to both your company and its target audiences. Firstly, decide whether to appoint an in-house PR person or use an agency.

If appointing an in-house PR person, become familiar with the exhibition. Read the exhibitor pack and determine any promotional opportunities. Look for the chance to display product or media kits in the media lounge. Contact the editors of the relevant publications and see if there is anything you can contribute.

A couple of weeks before an exhibition, invite to your stand journalists who write about your industry. Be sure to include any offers and photo opportunities. Follow up with a phone call a few days out to gauge interest. After the show, call those who attended to see if they need any more information.

Prepare a media kit with a well-written press release, images (on CD), a company profile and your business card. Avoid brochures. Hand these out at your stand and post to journalists who did not attend.



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You said it...

Another opening, another show

I read a piece in *NewsBytes* about yet another events show, this time in Perth.

Not too long ago there were five major shows covering tourism and events – Confex (London), World Travel Mart (Berlin), EIBTM (then in Geneva), IT&ME (Chicago) and AIME (Melbourne); now, according to my calculations, there are at least 18, including this latest offering from Western Australia.

This list does not include shows like Meetings in New Zealand, which promotes only domestic product.

How many shows can hotel groups and other suppliers support? How many can a PCO or incentive practitioner attend?

Already, shows such as the ABEE seem to have lost their focus.

There was nothing at this show that wasn't at AIME, indeed considerably less. It was not offering anything new, just more of the "same old".

If the Perth show is yet another pale imitation of AIME, what is the point, except maybe to dilute attendance at AIME or any other show?

Peter J. Gray, *Motivating People*, Melbourne.

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