



There is a growing awareness of this industry as a key factor in today's top economic and community development concerns

JMIC

- JOACHIM KÖNIG

Reaching out

JOACHIM KÖNIG, PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT MEETINGS INDUSTRY COUNCIL (JMIC) TELLS CMW ABOUT TASKS, TRENDS AND FUTURE PLANS FOR THE INDUSTRY'S UMBRELLA ASSOCIATION



Joachim König

How many associations do you have represented now on the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC)?

JMIC has existed for more than 50 years, first as simply a forum for industry exchange and subsequently to promote greater co-operation, achieve consensus on important industry issues and recognise excellence. Today, our primary focus is on expanding awareness of the industry and its values and creating the tools to support a more credible and consistent message. We currently have 19 members and partners, which together represent all the major international associations and regions active in the industry worldwide.

What current trends are you seeing within the industry worldwide?

There are many, including more sophisticated events, the challenges of new technology and rapidly growing competition, but, for the industry overall, there are two big issues:

The first is a growing awareness of this industry as a key factor in most of today's top economic and community development concerns, including knowledge and innovation, economic growth and diversification, academic and professional enhancement and inward investment. These make the industry of critical importance to both overall government policy and community development, which goes far beyond the traditional tourism role that has characterised this area for so

long. Such an understanding has all kinds of implications for how the industry presents itself and how governments regard its importance, and we have only begun to address these in a serious way.

The second is the impact of global terrorist-inspired incidents, and the potential these have for disrupting events and the travel involved in accessing them. This is an immediate concern that we must respond to vigorously.

What does the meetings industry need to be recognised as a transcendental industry for governments?

Our experience has been that governments have no difficulty understanding the broader role of the industry in economic and social development once the facts are put before them. However, we have had to go through something of a transition of our own to organise these arguments and come up with the

documentation to support them, and this job is far from complete. Now that we are finally getting these required resources we need to do a better job of reaching out to governments at all levels with our story, and of recruiting others in the community – business, academic and professional leaders, for example – who may have better access and credibility with government audiences.

What are the plans for JMIC in the near future?

We need to enhance industry unity, ensure consistency and credibility in our messaging and seek both vehicles and allies for delivering and documenting our industry values in ways that will resonate with governments. That means making sure our arguments relate directly to their own policy issues rather than ours, and that is the next big challenge we have to overcome.

To do all this we will need a lot of support from within the industry itself, not simply as a matter of resources, but because individual industry members are best positioned to understand and access government representatives in their respective communities and, in the end, will benefit most from the results. ■

Close up:

- Favourite musician: Frank Sinatra
- Favourite movie actor: Kenneth Branagh
- Favourite book of the moment: 1913 The Summer of a Century by Florian Illies
- Favourite City: Hannover, of course
- Favourite food/dish: Italian cuisine in general
- An object that always travels with you (besides smartphones and tablets): A small lucky charm my daughter once gave to me when she was a little girl.



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