

MAJOR EVENT PROVIDERS DO NOT FEEL THE FULL HEAT OF THE CRISIS



Despite the constant moans and complaints, almost always justified, coming from the tourism sector around the planet that the recession is killing business, international association meetings have revealed that the negative effect on their business has been minimal. In fact, the attendance has even increased. The association meetings industry seems for now to be somewhat of a safe haven.

The results of a recent survey by the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA) of 120 association executives put a smile back on the face of the global tourism industry. This is true particularly in the countries with the most events, namely Germany, USA, France and Spain. With the airlines falling into bankruptcy, hotels becoming accustomed to empty rooms and the so-called euro zones forgetting what British and American tourists look like, **congress organisers claim that the effect of the recession has been minimal.**

It seems that many organisations wish to start their road to recovery by making new contacts, acquiring new knowledge and learning from others, thus they need to meet their partners. Absolutely no cancellations of events were reported last year. **More than half of survey respondents even reported having significantly higher attendance (9.3 percent), slightly higher attendance (15.5 percent) or flat attendance (37.1 percent)** at 2009 events compared with 2008. Only 14.4 % respondents reported having "significantly lower" financial support from sponsorship and exhibition revenue, yet airline and hotel owners will tell you that this is nothing.

70% of those involved in the questionnaire admitted that the recession has had some impact on their business. However, this rarely related to the amount of people attending or the fees they pay. Instead, it refers to the money ploughed into the events by bigger sponsors and other organisers, who sometimes have nothing to do with tourism. Tourist executives are going out on the attack to try to claw back the ground lost during the recession. Hugely important events such as the ones in Frankfurt and Madrid are a must on the road to recovery.

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