

## TODAY'S MARKET

## THE KEY INGREDIENTS OF A SOCIAL PROGRAMME – FEEL, TASTE, SMELL, SEE, LISTEN, EXPERIENCE

'The social programme' was one of 16 subjects covered by presentations at the 31st Wolfsberg IAPCO Seminar in Switzerland in January. Susanne Kostka, General

Manager of AIMS International Group, gave a moving talk on the key ingredients of a quality social programme – feel, taste, smell, see, listen, experience. Her focus was, simply, how to excel. Conference social programmes retain a great deal of importance, for their key ingredients cannot be obtained

within a session hall, or through a scientific programme, or via multimedia technology. Owing to the increasing financial pressures in today's market, Susanne explained that it is important to look at different ways of delivering a quality social element to a conference – and, as with all aspects of PCOs' work, creativity is essential.

Susanne's presentation was supported by **Patrizia Semprebene Buorgiorno, of AISC & MGR – AIM Group**, who offered ingenious ways of creating simple but effective décor on a tight budget, and by Jorge Castex, of ICS Amsterdam, who discussed the key administrative elements – 'Check,

check, and double check'. Overall, the presentation encapsulated the role of the PCO today – that of providing administrative exactness, all the way



down to the minutiae, and working within either tight or extensive budgets, but in all aspects, working with creativity.

Many organizers are good at the theory, but do not always deliver in reality. Susanne was able to prove herself the exception to this rule and to put her ideas on creating an excellent social programme into practice at the 36th IAPCO General Assembly in Vienna, Austria, which was held on 10-14 February at the Hilton Vienna and organized by AIMS International Group. Susanne served up a feast of exotic hospitality, an informed programme and, most notably of all, music

to suit all tastes. The Viennese-style hospitality was generous, exciting and moving. Susanne delivered exclusive entertainment at the opening ceremony for the general assembly in the form of a short recital by members of the brass section of the Viennese Symphony Orchestra, and again, in complete contrast, with the Whistler at an informal Heurigen Evening. However, nothing exceeded expectations as greatly as the concert performed at the Hofburg Convention Centre by the Salzburg Court Theatre Ensemble with the Ambassade Orchestra Vienna. This remarkable performance by extremely talented young opera singers, which generated tears of sheer admiration, brought to life the works and times of

Mozart in the very venue in which he worked, performed and indeed 'lived'. The concert was particularly timely – 2006 will see the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth. Add to this the jazz evening held in the ultra-modern Rooftop Foyer of the Hofburg, and all 75 delegates – a record-breaking attendance – were quite simply 'wowed'.

The whole IAPCO General

Assembly was well supported by the meetings industry in Vienna, with major sponsorship from hotels and artistes alike. The service offered by the Hilton Vienna was delightful, a pleasure for the seasoned and jaded conference traveller. Overall, the hospitality provided in Vienna was exceptional – a perfect example of delivering a high-value product within economic restraints.

#### Next meetings

Traditionally a 'sell-out' by December, the 32nd Wolfsberg IAPCO Seminar will take place on 14-20 January 2006. The 37th IAPCO General Assembly will take place in Mexico City on 16-19 February 2006.

