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IFES World Summit 2015 reaches the next level

Posted on July 6, 2015 by [Larry Kulchawik](#) —No Comments ↓

A trip to Vienna without seeing the Danube River, the Hofburg Palace, the Lipizzan horses or sampling some wiener schnitzel is like going to Chicago and not seeing the Wrigley Building and having a hot dog.

Held June 24-25 in Vienna, Austria, the 2015 International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services (IFES) World Summit delivered all you would expect and resulted in being the best IFES meeting ever! IFES has truly reached the next level as a tradeshow industry association of proud exhibit suppliers from 38 countries.

The IFES slogan, "Sharing Knowledge," was strongly in play throughout the Vienna experience. Our gracious hosts, Leslie and Birgit Zech, representing Austrian exhibit supplier association IM Austria, prepared a first class event that showcased Vienna at its best for its 250 guests.

The annual event was held in the prestigious Hofburg Palace – the former imperial palace in the center of Vienna and the official residence for the President of Austria. A walk through the royal courtyard and up the marble staircases to our meeting place made you feel you were really somewhere special. The majestic foyer area in the palace to the grand ballroom was occupied by IFES exhibitors to greet you along the way. As you entered the ballroom with ornate columns and chandeliers, the stage area contained a mammoth LED wall with visual clarity like you have never seen before. With a Mozart concerto playing in the background, you felt you were ready for something special. This is what creating a memorable event is all about!



Hofburg Palace hosted the 2015 IFES World Summit

The event opened with a video that reflected on the past 10 years of IFES World Summit locations and set the stage for IFES president Voicu Sferdianu of Expo Design/Romania to open the sessions. The focus of the meeting was "green" awareness and sustainability in the exposition industry.



An LED wall added modern technology to the historic elegance of the venue

Dr. Georg Polzl, director, Osterreichische Post, shared its success to transform mail delivery methods to a brighter shade of green. He was followed by Martin Bittner of Cisco Systems who leads a group to uncover and sponsor ideas from young entrepreneurs to grow and apply Cisco technology. Martin shared some clever ideas that have been submitted and now included as Cisco product offerings as a result of this initiative. The question of "What if?" can sometimes find its way to a workable solution.

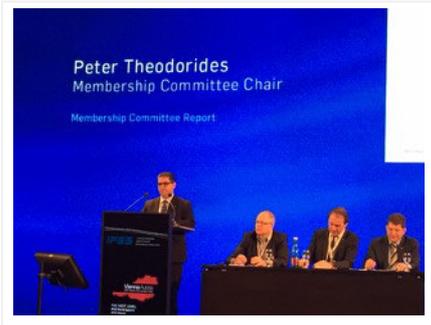
Considered the world umbrella organization in the exposition industry, Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) Managing Director Paul Woodward shared his thoughts on our industry's progress (or lack thereof) on green initiatives in the world of exposition events.

"As major event organizers and suppliers, we need to take the lead to implement 'green

standards' within each of the segments that make up the whole of the expo industry. The footprints from expos and events that we now make on this earth need not be as big as they now are. Begin with small steps when planning for events and they will lead to meaningful results. Together we can make a difference," he said.

One of the most interesting presentations took two hours to complete, but well worth time. A contest initiative called "The Sustainability Challenge" was launched several months ago. The concept of the contest was to seek the thoughts and business ideas from young entrepreneurs throughout Europe on what product or service business ideas can be offered that serves to lighten the footprints we make on this earth.

The top 12 entries were asked to share their ideas with the IFES audience, which was then voted on by a panel of judges for a winner. Ideas ranged from developing recyclable cardboard furniture to recycling food waste from restaurants.



Peter Theodorides
Membership Committee Chair
Membership Committee Report

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Each presented a business plan to explain how to implement their ideas. The top two ideas worthy of investor support were selected by the panel of judges.

Peter Theodorides, president and CEO, Vision Ltd.

Each of the topics and speakers over the two days were right on track to support the theme of sustainability in the expo industry as well as supporting the concept of sharing knowledge.

For the 250 attendees from 38 countries, the most valuable time spent at the conference was networking during sessions or dinner events. A bus ride to a dinner often resulted in meeting a new friend. The real value in IFES membership is achieved by attending a meeting of this nature and meeting exhibit suppliers from around the globe. Meeting new partners is best achieved with in-person contact. Just like a tradeshow, the power of face-to-face communication trumps all other forms of marketing tactics when it comes to uncovering and creating trusted relationships resulting in new business.

The next IFES World Summit will be held June 2-4, 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey. The theme "Bridge to the Future" will serve to connect the East with the West as well as offering a unique opportunity to experience the deep history of one of the most significant cities the world has known. Plan to attend!

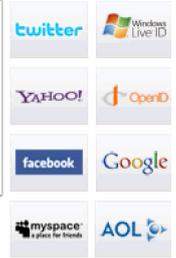
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