

## MICE specialists predict 2010 upturn - and industry 'renaissance'

A leaner, smarter, more cost-effective, and additionally creative MICE sector will stand to benefit from a predicted market upturn in 2010. These characteristics are described by some as being equivalent to an industry 'renaissance'.

True, opinion across a spectrum of over 1,000 leaders in the meetings and incentive travel sector currently remains divided as to current levels of demand. Broadly a third are doing well (depending on their country's economy, nature of business, market mix, etc.), a third are little changed from previous years, and a further third acknowledge the negative impact of the global downturn.

But the overall impression created in this post-IMEX exhibition poll (conducted in June) is that the worst is probably past. The following verbatim comments from buyers and agencies express this cautious optimism and many reveal hints that explain their buoyancy:

- *'to keep our prices competitive we package charter flights to business events'*
- *'most of our enquiries have a very short lead time, so we refuse to be depressed about long-term order books'*
- *'whilst it is true that the size, levels of luxury, format, budget, duration and travelling distances are all curtailed, the actual number of events is largely unchanged'*
- *'I place far more emphasis on achieving set objectives and demonstrating event ROI'*
- *'our positive and pro-active attitudes have led to new business relationships that already are proving fruitful for next year and 2011'*
- *'what is good for the most professional suppliers in this sector is that the market is now being 'cleansed' of those least fit and worthy to survive'*
- *'get the cost and location right in your proposals, and you get the booking'*
- *'our association members know that we do not put on events just for the sake of it'*

- *'be sure to add value for clients by lowering their risk and achieving greater flexibility in respect of reservation terms and conditions'*
- *'destination selection is changing – cheaper, nearer, less fancy locations – but numbers aren't dropping'*
- *'downplay any sense of extravagance in whatever you recommend'*
- *'don't argue against video conferences or Webex links, but build in these tools to help companies get better overall value from their employee communications and conferences'*
- *'the trick is to work hard to ensure that most of your clients repeat and what they are looking for are more innovative ideas, good value, and stronger partnerships and co-operation with their agencies'*
- *'I see this market shake up – in favour of sharper, more skilful and responsive suppliers – as effectively a Renaissance in our industry'*
- *'Associations are becoming more comfortable with forward booking again'*
- *'invest now in staff and resources in order to catch your competitors frightened and asleep'*
- *'medical and pharmaceutical meetings have hardly been affected'*
- *'the MICE market always has enormous rehabilitation power – and programmes and services are integral to success in pursuing businesses and organisations'*
- *'some of my clients are booming and others view 2010 very positively indeed'*
- *'use events like IMEX to improve your product and destination knowledge, meet hoteliers and network with buyers, and thereby prepare for the upturn'*