

Skål News

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International Association of Travel and Tourism Professionals
Founded 1934

Issue 249 | April-June | 2012

SKÅL 2012
WORLD CONGRESS
SEOUL & INCHEON
2-7 October 2012



MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

HELP YOUR CLUB TO INCREASE ITS MEMBERSHIP – AND WIN A SPECIAL CONGRESS PRIZE!

Every member who introduces a new member between 1 March and 30 August 2012 is eligible to win a Congress Only registration (not including accommodation) for the 74th Skål World Congress in New York in 2013.

The name of the prize-winner will be drawn at the International Council meeting to be held during the Korea Skål World Congress and announced at the President's Gala Dinner. Members do not have to be there to be eligible – though this would be preferable if possible!

There are no limits on how many times a member can enter, so everyone is encouraged to ask colleagues in the industry to join. Young professionals can either join the special "Young Skål" category or, if they hold a managerial post, can enrol in the "Active" membership category.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Skål website: www.skål.travel. Please ensure that you put your name on the form in the section "Introduced by".

SKÅL MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AWARD PROGRAMME

The Skål Membership Development Award Programme has proven to be very popular with Skål Clubs throughout the world. Skål Clubs that increase their membership over the previous year by a net 10 per cent or more, or that introduce 10 new members or more after allowing for members who leave, qualify for a commendation certificate which is presented at the President's Gala Dinner during the Skål World Congress each year. The programme was recently enhanced with the awarding of special framed commendations to the top three Skål Clubs: Platinum Award, Gold Award and Silver Award.

Yet again Skål International will provide a prize of a Congress Only registration to the Skål Congress in New York next year for the Skål Club that achieves the highest net increase of new members. These awards will be calculated on membership growth on the previous year as at 1 September 2012.

There are many Skål membership classifications and Skål members are encouraged to consider inviting potential members from all sections of the travel and tourism industry to join Skål.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SKÅL INTERNATIONAL LOOKS FORWARD TO ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR THIS SKÅL MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AWARD PROGRAMME.



What is it?

A certificate of commendation for Clubs that boost their membership. The three Skål Clubs with the highest net membership increase receive Platinum, Gold and Silver framed commendation certificates.

What is meant by net growth?

Net growth means an increase in new members minus members who leave for any reason.

What is the criteria to win this Award?

Any Club that increases its membership by a net 10 per cent or more, or gains a net 10 or more new members, qualifies for this Award.

What is the date that membership numbers are calculated for this Award?

The date chosen this year is 1 September year as this is deemed to be the least volatile period for Club membership changes.

When is this Award presented?

The Membership Development Award is presented to a representative of a qualifying Club by the President of Skål International during the President's Gala Dinner at the Skål World Congress.

For example:

A Club has 30 members	30
It brings in six new members	+6
Three members leave	-3
Net membership	33
Growth achieved =	10%

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Exciting year ahead...
in the true spirit of Skål*

Tourism is one of the major tools all countries have at their disposal to foster development, infrastructure and employment and to take advantage of and show to the world their natural beauty, values and traditions. With that in mind, we are proud to belong to Skål International, the only tourism organisation that brings together all branches of the industry, with approximately 20,000 members in 85 countries.

I am pleased to extend another cordial and affectionate welcome in conjunction with this new issue, and to inform you that – as I noted in my previous “Message from the President” – I have maintained constant communication with Skål Clubs and (at the time of writing) have visited Rome, Hamburg for the first Executive Committee meeting, Spain (General Secretariat in Torremolinos and Skål International Málaga-Costa del Sol), Mexico City for the swearing-in ceremony of the new Club President and Ixtapa for the swearing-in ceremony of the new National President.

In April and May I will be attending the NAASC Congress in Bermuda, the Mid-Year Meeting of the International Skål Council in Opatija (Croatia), the Latin American Congress in Panama and the Asian Area Congress in Penang (Malaysia).

We are continuing to make progress with the design of our new website, the opening of new Clubs, introducing new members to Skål Clubs and finalising details for the appointment of a new Secretary General.

I confidently believe the year ahead will continue to be an exciting one, together with my Skålleague friends, thanks to your support, dedication and commitment and the hard work of the Executive Committee in benefit of the Skål Movement, while never forgetting our principles of “Values, Tradition and Development” – a slogan that represents the true spirit of Skål.

Warm best wishes... and Skål.



FLORIMOND VOLCKAERT FUND

How does it work?

If a Skålleague is in need of help, an application should be sent to the three Trustees. They will assess the request and quickly come to a decision as to the form the assistance will take.

HOW TO DONATE NOW

Donations can be made by :

Bank transfer to the Florimond Volckaert Fund account:

Banco Bilbao Vizcaya

Plaza Costa del Sol 9, 29620 Torremolinos, Spain

US\$ Account No. 0182.0481.62.201121003.9

Swift: BBVAESMM

IBAN ES89 0182 0481 6220 1121 0039

EURO. Account No. 0182.0481.65.0011510764

Swift: BBVAESMM

IBAN ES94 0182 0481 6500 1151 0764

Cheque to the following address:

Skål International

Av. Palma de Mallorca 15, 1º

P.O. Box 466

29620 Torremolinos, Spain

Credit card by forwarding the details to yolanda.sanchez@skal.org

How to Apply for Grant

Go to our website and click on Members Only and Florimond Volckaert Fund. Here you will find the application form. Fill it out, and send it via your International Councillor or Club President to the three Trustees. You can also send it directly to the Trustees, but then the process might take longer.

Your Trustees are:

Trygve Sødning,

President Skål International 1993:

sodring@online.no

Alfonso Passera,

President Skål International 2001:

alfonso.passera@gmail.com

Richard Hawkins,

President Skål International 2000:

richard.hawkins@hawkrentacar.com

MALAI SAKOLVIPHAK

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUTES TO THE "FATHER OF SKÅL THAILAND"

It was with profound shock and sadness that Skålleagues from around the world learnt of the passing of Khun Malai Sakolviphak, a Membre d'Honneur and former Skål International Thailand President, Bangkok President and Thailand Councillor.

Robert "Bob" Lee, Immediate Past President of Skål International Bangkok, shared the news with Skål members during the AGM at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Bangkok in February. "It is with a very heavy heart that I have to inform Skålleagues around the world of the passing of our 'Skål Thailand Father', aka Khun Malai. This really came as a shock to us all. He was my teacher and Skål mentor. He was a friend to so many."

Born in 1932, Khun Malai Sakolviphak started his career by joining Pan American World Airways in 1949 and was appointed director for Thailand, Laos and Myanmar from 1982 to 1985. When Pan Am sold its trans-Pacific route he joined United Airlines and served as general manager from 1986 to 1992. He then joined the Pacific Leisure Group head office in Bangkok as senior executive director from 1993 to 2009.

Khun Malai was also a former chairman of the PATA Thailand chapter and past president of the Airlines Club of Thailand and World Airlines Club Association, as well as executive director of the Association of Thai Travel Agents.



Messages poured in from around the world, a true measure of the greatness and respect Khun Malai generated from those he met.

Skål International President Enrique Quesada: "Malai was an outstanding Skålleague and represented his country, Thailand, with impeccable dedication and wisdom."

Brian Sinclair-Thompson, Skål Thailand President: "Khun Malai's knowledge and experiences within the Skål movement were unmatched. Thailand and Skål are poorer places as a result of his passing."

Khun Somsak Kiratipanich, Vice President Skål Thailand: "He worked hard for others for more than 40 years in Skål. He was so well respected around the world."

Andrew Wood, Past President Skål Bangkok and former Skål Thailand Councillor: "Often referred to as

'Mr. Skål', Khun Malai frequently travelled around the world to almost single-handedly promote Thailand to fellow Skålleagues and senior tourism executives. He was responsible for bringing two Skål World Congresses (1996, 2006) and two Asian Area Congresses to Thailand, and was very often seen waving the Thailand flag alone at congresses around the world."

Gerry Perez, President Skål Asia: "When the Asia Area Committee under President Earl Wieman recommended Khun Malai

Sakolviphak to be awarded Honorary President of the Area in 2007 in Macau, it was the easiest decision we ever made. A truly great Skålleague and we are going to miss his wise council."

Earl Wieman, Past President Asia Area: "I proposed the honorary presidency for Malai because of his dedication to Skål, his (always quiet) efforts on behalf of the organisation, his ready willingness to help other Skålleagues, his warm friendship, his firm belief in the organisation and the contributions he made to it over so many years in Bangkok, Thailand, Asia, and internationally."

Alwin Zecha, Executive Chairman and founder of Pan-Asia (Pacific Leisure) Travel Group: "I first met him in the '70s through Pan Am and later with our business links with United Airlines. A man of immense integrity and honesty, it was my pleasure and honour to have been associated with Khun Malai Sakolviphak."



SKÅL | GOOD NEWS STORY

AT WORK ACROSS THE GLOBE

When Izzy McHarg joined the Young Skål category for travel and tourism professionals aged between 20 and 30 years of age and who have been in the industry for at least two years, little did she realise that it would soon be helping her to develop her career on the other side of the world.

Izzy, aged 24 and with a first class honours degree in adventure tourism, and her partner James decided to seek their fortunes in Australia and to that end she contacted Ian Hawkes, the current UK President of Skål International, to ask if he could help her find work in Sydney, their destination of choice Down Under.

Ian quickly made contact with two senior Skål colleagues in Sydney – his opposite number, Russell Butler, President of Skål Australia and National Sales Manager for Avis Cars, and Melinda Brown, Marketing Manager for the Australian Federation of Travel Agents – asking if they could help Izzy when she arrived in January 2012. As a result of this request, Russell immediately offered to set up opportunities for Izzy to meet with prospective employers and Melinda will provide Izzy with additional travel industry networking opportunities and one-to-one career development advice. Melinda will also put Izzy in touch with the youth branch of the Australian Tourism Export Council, whose Deputy Managing Director is an active Sydney Skål member.

Says Ian Hawkes, "This is a perfect example of Skål International at its best. When Izzy arrives in Sydney, she will be welcomed into the local Skål tourism community and be provided with career and professional support. She will also become a minor celebrity as we think she will be Sydney's first 'Young Skål' member!

"I want to use my year as UK President," continues Ian, "to raise awareness of Skål International as the world's premier organisation for travel and tourism professionals



Izzy McHarg

and I especially want to develop membership of Young Skål UK, which represents the future of our industry.

"I therefore urge all young professionals working or training in travel and tourism in the UK to join Young Skål UK by going to LinkedIn and visiting the 'Young Skål UK' group, or they can contact me at:

ian@skal-oxford.org.uk.



Skål International

73rd World Congress

Seoul & Incheon (Korea)
2-7 October 2012

HISTORY

Korea faced independence with the end of World War II. However, the nation divided into two at the 38th line in 1948 when the US and Russia took the south and the north, respectively. In the 1960s, Korea saw unprecedented success, which is referred to as the "miracle of the Han River". The Republic of Korea's growth and advancement continued, marked by hosting the Olympics in 1988 and the World Cup in 2002. In 2002 the nation was ranked 11th in the world in terms of economics.

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE RATE

The official currency of South Korea is the Won. Some hotels and duty-free shops do, however, accept the American dollar and other currencies, and credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. However, to go shopping at markets and street stalls, you must pay in Korean won.

The exchange rate changes all day, every day. You can find the exchange rate for the day in newspapers and on the internet but keep in mind that the rate may have changed from the time the newspaper was printed or from what you saw on the internet by the time you get to the currency exchange centre or bank. In addition, different exchange centres charge different fees and, therefore, the amount of money you receive when exchanging your currency will vary.

You can exchange your currency at local banks, airports, shopping malls and hotels. As a rule, you need to show your passport to exchange your currency.

WEATHER

Autumn (September to November) is said to be one of the most beautiful seasons in Korea. With clear-breezy



skies and moderate temperatures (14 degrees Celsius), October is the perfect month to spend your days outside. What to wear: Any knitwear or a thin coat is recommended. Avoid any garments that are too thin as it is still chilly.

SEOUL

Seoul is the capital of Korea and has a population of over 10 million people. The word "Seoul" means capital in traditional Korean. The Hangang River flows through Seoul, from east to west, and the city is surrounded by great mountains. It is steeped in both history and tradition, as well as the latest IT technology.

Seoul is a city of extensive and diverse culture. The city has over 700 museums, including the National Museum of Korea and the National Folk Museum, which all contain a countless number of articles; several performance centres, such as the Sejong Centre for Performing Arts and the National Theatre; and over 400 galleries featuring varied works of art. Ancient palaces are also located around the city and visitors can explore these historic sites easily.

Seoul is filled with cultural spaces in countless parts of the city centre. Daehakro and Hongdae are known as Seoul's representative outdoor cultural spaces, and the



Citizen's Park near the Hangang River is also widely used as a cultural venue.

Seoul is currently experiencing a new "Renaissance" period as the city pays significant attention to the environment, centring on Cheonggyecheon Stream and the Hangang River.

INCHEON

Incheon is the gateway to South Korea and is a dynamic and ever-growing city. The recently constructed Incheon bridge connects Incheon International Airport with Songdo City and is the fifth longest bridge in the world. Incheon and its surroundings have something for everyone, including picturesque beaches and quaint fishing villages.

A departure point to Incheon's nearby islands, Yeonan Pier is also home to numerous public hot seawater baths that are said to contain over 100 minerals beneficial to the skin. Nearby, Incheon seafood market sells a variety of fresh fish, and there are a number of excellent raw fish restaurants in this area.

Jayu Park is the perfect place in Incheon for a leisurely stroll, with attractive wooded paths that are flooded with cherry blossom trees during spring. Many places in the park offer great views over Incheon city and the sea.

For more information on Korea visit: www.visitseoul.net, www.seoulwelcome.com or www.visitkorea.or.kr

A free Mobile App is also available for Apple or Android platforms. Simply search for "iTour Seoul" in your iTunes or Android stores.



SKÅL⁷³ 2012 WORLD CONGRESS

SEOUL & INCHEON

2~7 October 2012

PROGRAMME

The 73rd World Congress will kick off in the city of Incheon with an Ecumenical Service in the Ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel (Headquarters Hotel in Incheon) on 2 October. This will be followed by a Get Together Party in the Ballroom of the SongdoConvensia, located next to the Sheraton Hotel, where participants will be welcomed and experience true Korean hospitality.

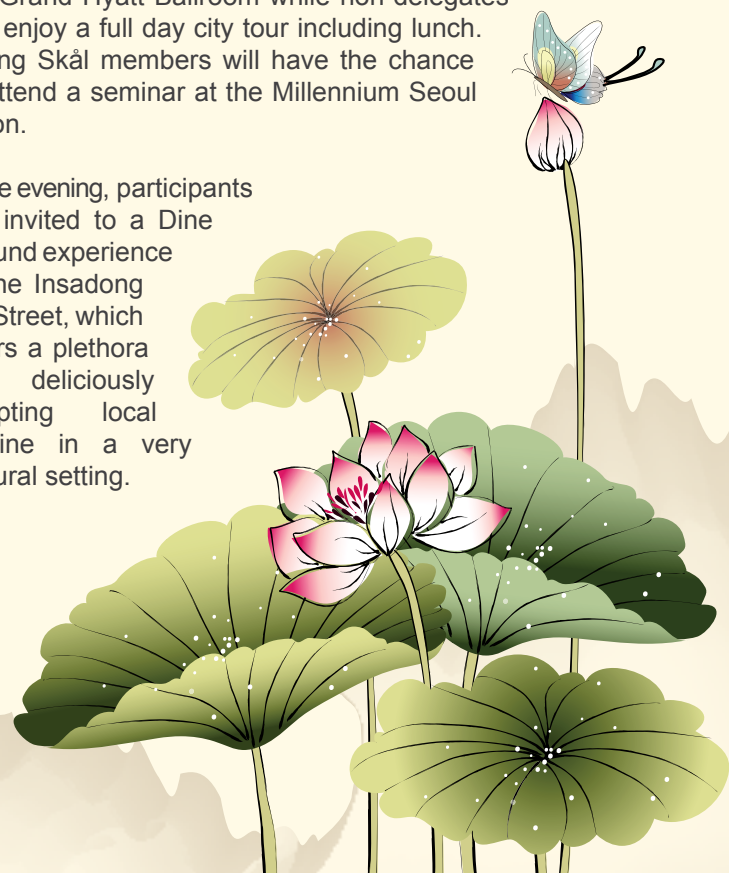
On 3 October, the SongdoConvensia will also be the site of the Opening Ceremony followed by a luncheon with the Mayor of Incheon.

In the afternoon, participants have the opportunity to enjoy a tour of Incheon's many attractions, including the famous Chinatown District.

When the tour concludes, all participants will be transferred to Seoul, a pleasant and scenic 60-minute journey, where they will check into their hotels and then dine at leisure at restaurants in their respective establishments. "Congress Only" participants will dine at the Millennium Seoul Hilton (Headquarters Hotel in Seoul).

On 4 October, the General Assembly will be held at the Grand Hyatt Ballroom while non-delegates can enjoy a full day city tour including lunch. Young Skål members will have the chance to attend a seminar at the Millennium Seoul Hilton.

In the evening, participants are invited to a Dine Around experience at the Insadong Art Street, which offers a plethora of deliciously tempting local cuisine in a very cultural setting.



On 5 October, participants can attend the Tourism Forum at Millennium Seoul Hilton's Grand Ballroom. The theme for the Tourism Forum will be "New Frontiers In Tourism" and a variety of speakers will make presentations on emerging opportunities in the tourist industry such as Medical Tourism and Green Tourism. A B2B session will take place after the Tourism Forum and then participants will have lunch.

An afternoon tour is available to allow participants to explore the various shopping areas in Seoul such as the world famous Namdae mun market, Myoungdong fashion street and Itaewon.

In the evening the Grand Hyatt will host the President's Gala Dinner and guests will be treated to a night of dynamic local live entertainment and cultural presentations together with live music after dinner.

On 6 October, all participants will join a full day tour to the historic Korean Folk Village, less than two hours drive from Seoul, which will include a traditional Korean lunch. Young Skål members will join a full day tour to Jeongson where they will enjoy riding rail bikes and other physical activities in the beautiful Korean countryside. The Farewell Party at the end of the day is to be held at the Millennium Seoul Hilton Ballroom & Lower Lobby with a delicious buffet spread, a live cultural show and views of the beautiful Pagoda Lake and Mount Namsan.

For more information or updates visit:
www.skalkorea2012.org

REGISTRATION AREA

When guests arrive in Incheon, they will be able to register in the main lobby of the Sheraton Incheon Hotel, which is the Headquarters Hotel for Incheon and is located next to the SongdoConvensia – the venue for the Get Together Party. The Registration Desk will be operational all day on 1 October and 2 October up until the commencement of the Get Together Party. All participants will receive a Congress kit which includes relevant information on the Congress, name badge, Dine Around information, departure transfers and Post Tours. If you are a voting delegate please collect your voting ballots at Credentials located at the Registration Area.

IMMIGRATION

All visitors to South Korea will require a visa. Please contact your closest South Korean consulate to obtain information on obtaining an appropriate visa. The visa processing can take up to three weeks, depending on the country of application.

For more information, visit http://www.mofat.go.kr/ENG/visa/application/index.jsp?menu=m_40_10



KOREAN AIR

The offer from Korean Air to all participants attending the 73rd Skål World Congress is included below. Participants should check with their local Korean Air office to obtain more details on the discounted fares from their region.

Korean Air is one of the world's top 20 airlines and top ranking commercial cargo carrier, flying to 119 cities in 40 countries with a fleet of 144 aircraft. For over forty years, Korean Air has expanded its operations in terms of both quality and quantity. Its slogan "Excellence in flight" expresses the airline's will to further pursue its vision "to be a respected leader in the world airline community." Investing in new aircraft such as the A380 and B787, cabin product upgrades and network expansion, Korean Air is firmly committed to providing service that exceeds expectations, products the customers can value and trust, and a corporate culture that encourages innovation.

Terms and conditions of the international tickets offered by Korean Air for the delegates:

PR/CLS	Delegate & Accompanying Person 50% Discount / Fare Basis: JRT, CRT **
EY/CLS	Delegate 75%, Accompanying Person 50% Discount / Fare Basis: YRTKE, BLXEUS/BLWEUS ***

** JRT will be applicable for the J-class routes

*** In case of American routes, BLXEUS (Sunday to Thursday) and BLWEUS (Friday & Saturday) will be applicable.

- Period of Application: 25 September 2012 – 14 October 2012
- Places of Issuance: Korean Air international offices only (<http://www.koreanair.com> => Customer Support // Contact KAL)
- Applicable Flights: Korean Air operating flight only (Excluding Korean Air marketing flight, not acceptable mixing with other carriers.)
- Other Terms
- Excluding tax and fuel surcharge
- Non-applicable for airline mileage and up-grade
- Non-applicable for change of route and dates.
- Bookings are effective from 13 February 2012 but Confirmation Form of Congress Registration is required to get the tickets issued.

PROGRAMME (subject to change)

TUESDAY 2 OCTOBER	09:30 19:30 20:00	Registration Area open at Sheraton Incheon Hotel Ecumenical Service at Sheraton Incheon Hotel Ballroom Get-together Party at Songdo Convensia Ballroom next to Sheraton Incheon Hotel
WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER	10:00 12:00 13:45 17:00 19:00	Opening Ceremony at Songdo Convensia Hall "A" located at the Ground Floor Lunch with the Mayor of Incheon at the Songdo Convensia Ballroom on 1st Floor Tour of Incheon All participants transported by coach to Seoul's Congress hotels and check-in Dinner at leisure in Congress hotels. Congress Only participants dine at Millennium Hilton
THURSDAY 4 OCTOBER	09:00 12:30 18:00 19:30	General Assembly at Grand Hyatt Ballroom Full day city tour for non-delegates including lunch. Pick-up from Congress hotels Informal lunch for General Assembly attendees at the Grand Hyatt Regency Room Coaches transport General Assembly attendees back to Congress hotels Dine Around Dinner at the Insadong Art Street
FRIDAY 5 OCTOBER	09:00 10:30 13:00 14:30 19:30	Tourism Forum at Millennium Seoul Hilton Grand Ballroom "New Frontiers in Tourism" B2B Workshop at the Millennium Seoul Hilton Ballroom Lunch for all participants at the Millennium Seoul Hilton Afternoon tour of major shopping destinations in Seoul President's Gala Dinner at the Grand Hyatt Ballroom
SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER	09:00 18:00 19:30	Full day tour with lunch for all participants to the Korean Folk Village Return to Seoul and Congress hotels Farewell Party at the Millennium Seoul Hilton Grand Ballroom & Lower Lobby

PRE & POST TOURS SELECTION

FANTASY ISLAND OF JEJUDO (3D2N)

Jeju Island is one of nine provinces in Korea and takes only one hour from Seoul by air. It has become a favourite resort area among honeymooners and tourists. It has a mild marine climate with four distinct seasons and an average yearly temperature of 15°C (60°F). Blessed with spectacles of nature created by volcanic activities, the entire island and its lava tubes were designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in June 2007.

GOLFING IN JEJU (3D2N)

Jeju Island is emerging as a mecca of the "Korean Golfing Wave". Elysian Jeju Country Club is a prestigious golf course well known among Korea's golf aficionados. Raon Golf Club sits in the sub-tropical forest stretching all the way to the sea in the north-west tip of Mount Halla, surrounded by mysterious parasitic volcanoes. The pleasant and comfortable course of Raon Golf Club has been designed by Scottish golfing superstar Colin Montgomerie to provide golfers with a nature-friendly and challenging layout.





TEMPLE STAY (2D1N)

Temple Stay is a cultural-experience program designed to help people better understand Korean Buddhism. Temple stays offer various kinds of practising methods such as Yebul, Chamseon, Dado and Baru Gongyang. Participants can find their “true self” amongst the harmony of nature while staying at a temple. Jeondeungsa Temple is situated on a mountain on Ganghwa Island. The temple is said to date to 381, which would make it the oldest temple in Korea.

LUXURY JAPAN (3D2N)

Japan is the land of a million experiences. Its variety of natural surroundings, culture and history allows us to offer a breathtaking assortment of unique plans, sufficient to suit your taste. Japan is also famous for delicious food, including sushi, Kobe beef and much more. Its natural landscapes are breathtaking, too, with great options for each season.

HIGHLIGHTS OF KOREA (4D3N)

Gyeongju has a great concentration of historical buildings, temples and artefacts. The area is truly a museum without walls due to its wealth of historical

buildings and treasures. Busan is Korea’s principal port and second largest city. It is the primary port for ferry services to Japan and is the gateway to the Hallyehaesang National Park and its picturesque islands. As an international port city with a population of 3.6 million, Busan has first-class hotels and restaurants to match its excellent beaches, alongside outstanding shopping and sightseeing areas. Tongyeong was the place of Admiral Yi’s base camp, and is now a charming port city with tourist hotels, fine seafood restaurants and plenty of water sports facilities. There are also several shrines dedicated to the admiral. It is a short boat ride to Hansando Island. This city is also famous for its 400-year tradition of making exquisite najeonchilgi (mother-of-pearl lacquer ware).

DYNAMIC BEIJING (4D3N)

This four-day tour thoroughly explores Beijing, the ancient and vibrant capital city of China. You will admire many historical heritages, such as the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Great Wall and the Temple of Heaven. Wandering through the hutong, you can gain a glimpse of characteristic local culture. The special Peking duck dinner will also make this trip unforgettable.

Rates are quoted in euros and inclusive of service charges.

TOUR CODE	TOUR NAME	DATE	RATE (PER PERSON)	
			Twin / Double	Single Supplement
PRE TOUR				
PRT-01	Fantasy Island Jeju	Sep. 30-Oct. 2	€835	€298
PRT-02	Golfing in Jeju	Sep. 30-Oct. 2	€1,075	€298
PRT-03	Temple Stay	Oct. 1-2	€220	
PRT-04	Luxury Tokyo	Sep. 30-Oct. 2	€1,395	€160
POST TOUR				
PST-01	Fantasy Island Jeju	Oct. 7-9	€765	€258
PST-02	Highlight of Korea	Oct. 7-10	€800	€200
PST-03	Dynamic Beijing	Oct. 7-10	€1,010	€355

For more information about the Pre & Post Tours and registration, visit <http://skal.globaltour.co.kr/>



TOURISM INDUSTRY UPDATE

By Skål International

Ensuring fire safety for hotel guests and installations

Hotels are establishments open to members of the public where the golden rule as far as fire safety is concerned is the successful evacuation of guests. As the building is relatively foreign to them, guests will normally be unfamiliar with its installations and layout.

In the evenings, it is more than likely that guests will not become aware of an emergency situation when they are asleep. In fact, even though most fires occur during the day, it has been shown that evening fires cause the most deaths. With that in mind, it is essential that hotels follow fire safety regulations strictly and that management does not overlook any security measure. We all sadly recall the fire that broke out on 8 March in a hotel in central Bangkok.

Constructors, owners and the management of establishments open to the public should ensure they apply the following measures:

Adhere to prevention and protection measures that guarantee the safety of the building's occupants.

Undertake – during construction of the building and on a regular basis afterwards – any necessary inspections (insurance companies will also require a maintenance contract) using accredited companies or qualified professionals (plumber, electrician, etc.).

Fire safety measures should be applied in all establishments, independently of the age of building and its installations. It is also the manager's responsibility to ensure regular maintenance of the equipment and to check that security systems (fire alarms, evacuation drills...) are working correctly.

All hotels should have a complete alarm system and emergency lighting installed, comprising a detection panel with or without integrated CMSI (fire safety control panel), a CMSI, automatic detectors (optical smoke, heat and infra-red detectors), manual alarm switches, alarm transmission systems, holding electromagnets, emergency exit fittings, etc.

As far as extinction systems for hotels are concerned, automatic water extinction sprinklers are the most effective

in saving lives and avoiding material and environmental damage caused by fire. Even though a sprinkler system will not completely extinguish the fire, it will ensure it remains relatively contained – thus generating less heat and smoke.

In this way, conditions on the outside of the room where the fire has started will be safe and it is usually even possible to survive inside. Obviously, no one should remain inside a room where a fire has started. However, anyone who becomes trapped inside will have a reasonable chance of surviving thanks to the sprinkler system. In addition, this system prevents the fire from spreading to other rooms and the emergency exits. In this way, hotels have much more time to carry out the evacuation. It is worthwhile citing the example of US airlines, which never book rooms in hotels without a sprinkler system. Sprinklers have been around for more than a century.

Water mist technology, introduced in North America in the early 1990s, has proved to be extremely efficient in putting out fires, gaining credibility and recognition as a sound alternative to sprinkler systems. This system controls and extinguishes a fire with complete security, sprinkling a fine mist of micro-drops at high speed. An added advantage is that it lessens the material and environmental damage caused by water when the system is activated.

The management of hotels and other tourist establishments open to the public should ensure that safety regulations against the risk of fire and panic are strictly adhered to. National Spanish regulations are aimed at limiting the risk of fires spreading and facilitating evacuation by guests. Failure to abide by the regulations can lead to a prison sentence of up to five years and a €45,000 fine.

In addition, in the case of physical damage caused by a fire (injury, death), responsibility is borne by the general management.

Skål International encourages all members in the hotel sector to ensure that establishments adhere to the relevant legislation in relation to fire prevention.

TRADE FAIRS

FITUR MADRID - Successful Skål stand



The Skål International stand at this year's FITUR tourism fair in Madrid was once again a resounding success. The "Importante del Turismo" award, honouring a key figure in the world of tourism, was presented to journalist-broadcaster Esther Eiros. The presenter of "Gente Viajera" ("People Who Travel") on Onda Cero Radio, Esther received her award from the President of Skål International Spain, Gracia Peregrin, during a cocktail reception coordinated – as in previous years – by Andres Arcos Pitarque.

ITB BERLIN - Skål booth highlights advantages of membership

Skål International Berlin was honoured once again to organise the Skål International booth at this year's ITB in March. Situated next to one of the main entrances as well as the main restaurant and lounge Palais am Funkturm, where this year's "get-together" took place, the booth sent out a clear message about the advantages of being a Skål member and using the worldwide network to link business with friends worldwide.

On the Friday, Skål International Berlin President Hans-Joerg Schulze proudly greeted more than 86 Skålleagues from 11 countries throughout the world, including VIP guests Mok Singh, Vice President, Skål International; Marianne Krohn, Director of Finance, Skål International; Ann Lootens, Director Young Skål, Skål International; Salih Cene, Director of Development and Business Affairs, Skål International; Thomas Aurich, President, Skål International Germany; Christian Wiesenhuetter, Vice President, Skål International Germany and Past President Berlin; and Katja Kruse, Secretary, Skål International Germany.

As a change to the seated lunch receptions held in the past, the Skål International Berlin board decided this year that the event would be organised as a more informal "get-together", with a snack buffet featuring specialities from



(ITB Berlin report by Martina Grille-Jodehl, honorary member of the Board of Skål International Berlin)

Berlin. Most of the participants preferred this option as it gave all Skålleagues the possibility of talking to numerous visitors.

This year's ITB was another resounding success, with more than 170,000 visitors and 11,000 exhibitors.

In other news from Berlin, Director Salih Cene attended the ECPAT International board meeting and AGM on 9 and 10 March in representation of Skål International. He acquired relevant information and discussed ways and means of developing our cooperation.

TUR TRAVEL FAIR - Excellent exposure for Skål in Göteborg

TUR is the major Scandinavian annual travel fair and this year it attracted 40,000 visitors. The fair is open to both trade and public visitors (two days each).

In previous years we have only hosted a Skål reception at TUR but through good contacts and generous sponsorship by the organisers (the TUR sales manager

is, of course, a Skål member), this year we were exhibitors with our own Skål stand in an excellent location. Our aim was to attract new members, not only

for the Göteborg Club but also for Stockholm and Malmö.

To that end, our stand was manned by the Skål board and members from Göteborg, Stockholm and Malmö.

The positive engagement of our members and the first-rate location of our stand gave us impressive exposure, providing Skål International with an even greater profile on the Swedish trade map.

A few "firm applications" were received at the stand and many visitors left their business cards and asked for more information. They will be invited to our next Skål event, a visit to the Volvo Car museum in Göteborg and a sponsored study visit to Best Western Arken hotel and art garden spa on 24 April.

We also had a remarkable number of inquiries from Young Skål candidates: students at various Swedish trade/tourism management schools. We would never have had that kind of interest for Skål without our participation as an exhibitor.

Finally, our reception in the TUR premises brought together 50 members and guests from Sweden, Norway, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and Andorra. As my first TUR reception as President, I was delighted to welcome the Swedish and international guests with a small speech and, of course, proposed a Skål!



Report by Göran Blomquist, President Skål International Göteborg

Trade Fairs

MAY 2012

2-5 ATM 12. Arabian Travel Market

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
www.arabiantravelmarket.co.uk

6-10 NAASC CONGRESS

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

7-10 INDABA TRAVEL SHOW

Durban, South Africa
www.indaba-southafrica.co.za

13-16 RENDEZ-VOUS CANADA

Edmonton EXPO Centre,
Edmonton, Canada
www.rendezvouscanada.travel

11-13 EXPOTUR 2012

San Jose, Costa Rica
www.expotur.com

17-19 OTM

Muscat, Oman
www.otm.travel

17-19 EUROAL



Palacio de Congresos y
Exposiciones de la Costa del Sol
Malaga, Spain
www.euroal.net

18-20 BULA FIJI TOURISM EXCHANGE

Venue- Port Denerau, Fiji Islands
www.bfte.com.fj

22-24 IMEX



Frankfurt, Germany
www.imex-frankfurt.com

SKÅL AT IMEX FRANKFURT: 22-24 May 2012

Again Skål International Frankfurt am Main and the German Convention Bureau (GCB) will organise a Networking Flying Breakfast Get-together during IMEX with Hans-Jürgen Thien, President Skål International Frankfurt am Main, Matthias Schultze, Managing Director GCB and Ray Bloom, Chairman IMEX Group (invited), attending the event. We also hope to have members of the Executive Committee, the International Skål Council, as well as Past-Presidents and other Skål officials from Germany and all over the world as our guests. This will take place on 24 May 2012, IMEX Hall at the German booth from 10am-11am.

There will also be a Get-together at the Skål booth (number to be confirmed) at 4.30pm on Tuesday and Wednesday 22 and 23 May. The Get-together is sponsored by the Croatian Convention and Incentive Bureau and the Hotel InterContinental Frankfurt.

Vice President Karine Coulanges and ISC President Bent Hadler will be present at IMEX Frankfurt.

SKÅL "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM" AWARDS - Deadline for entries 31 May 2012

The guidelines and application form can be found on the Skål website www.skal.org



SKÅL MEMORIES

IN THIS THIRD PART OF A NOSTALGIC JOURNEY BACK THROUGH THE YEARS, PRESIDENT 1986 AND HONORARY PRESIDENT ANTONIO GARCÍA DEL VALLE RECALLS THE ORIGINS OF THE “SKÅL” GREETING.

The Meaning of Skål

After previously writing about the inaugural flights and aircraft used by our founders, now I would like to take a look back at our greeting, Skål! In the Nordic countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the word means: Happiness, Health, Friendship and Long Life. But what are its origins.

I am sure that, within our Association, there are many members who know more than I do about the subject. Some have already shown that clearly in their own articles – and I refer specifically to Birger Bäckman. Nevertheless, I have also researched the subject and sought the help of several people in order to reach a conclusion that I believe is accurate.

The word Skål already existed in the old Swedish language and it was, among other things, a container used for drinking, in various forms and usually made of wood – easy to find in Sweden. Olaus Magni (1490-1557), a Swedish historian in the Middle Ages, encouraged the use of this utensil over those made of glass. “Glass is not used at Nordic dining tables because, as the custom is to break them, accidents could happen, and that isn’t the case with containers made of wood.” The people of that era drank prudently from their “Skålar”, or wooden cup, and toasted “Skål” as they did so.

The ritual in those days was more formal than it is now. Older people considered it to be just as important as a Communion, and with that in mind 17th century clergymen would not sanction the so-called “host’s toast”. The 1619 Church Law “Thesaurus Epistolicus” did accept it, though always before sitting down at the dining table. The Skål ritual was a civil accompaniment to religious wedding ceremonies.

Swedish philosopher Dr. Bo Lagercrantz described these Skål customs in a relevant document, providing various examples of the “host’s toast”, also known as the “farmer’s toast”. This custom was also widespread in Norway, according to the “Nordlands Trompet”, a story by Petter Dass (1680). They are pre-Christian rituals, like the holy sacraments of the patriarchal society. In the Middle Ages vassals swore allegiance to the king with a Skål toast. Business was also sealed with a Skål toast. Later, its prestige gradually declined until it almost disappeared. Dr. Lagercrantz referred to the old saying, “Din Skål, min Skål, alla vackra flickors Skål” (“To your health, to mine and to that of all attractive young



women”). This toast was used in older times and some foreigners repeated it, and still do, to demonstrate their knowledge of the Swedish language.

Today, the greeting/toast is well known thanks to its diffusion by Skål International. David Helsing, a former International Councillor for Sweden, visited the Swedish Academy, under whose auspices the Nobel Prize in Literature is awarded, to determine the exact meaning of the word. He eventually received confirmation and, in return, the Academy sought information about our Skål Club to include it in their dictionary.

Our history includes different uses of the word, which I have highlighted here:

On the inaugural flight, on 5 June 1932, “The invited travel agents learned, bit by bit, to reply and discovered that the word Skål fulfilled all their expectations of Happiness, Health, Friendship and Long Life.” When the Skål Club of Paris was founded, Florimond Volckaert noted: “In that country (referring to Sweden) we received such a special welcome and warm conviviality that we decided to preserve the spirit in a long-lasting way, as well as the friendships that had been born spontaneously among us. With that in mind we had the idea of creating a group or club whose name would be a symbol of that friendship and a tribute to its origins. What better name could we have found than Skål, which comprises the initials of four Scandinavian words, Sunvet, Karlek, Ålder, Lycka, meaning Happiness, Health, Friendship and Long Life.

Our Skål anthem includes the greeting in the three official languages, although it has also been translated into German, Italian, Swedish, Hebrew, etc.

In French the original text is:

Skål, Union de tous les pays
 Auxquels nous souhaitons longue vie,
 Santé, joie, bonheur sans pareil,
 Amour fraternel!
 Skål, Symbole de l'amitié
 Nous te jurons fidélité.
 En chœur nous chanterons toujours
 Ton Hymne d'Amitié

In English:

Skål, Union linking every land,
 Long may we prosper and expand,
 Health, joy and happiness our goal,
 Friendship fraternal!
 Skål, Bond of peoples understood,
 One worldwide creed and brotherhood,
 Joyful we sing with heart and soul
 Heaven bless our Skål!

In Spanish:

Levantemos el corazón
 al entonar nuestra canción
 ¡Skål es el símbolo cordial
 de amor fraternal!
 Amor, salud y felicidad,
 venturosa longevidad,
 ¡emblemas son doquier vas,
 de radiante paz!

In the July 1985 issue of the magazine "News-Nouvelles-
 Noticias AISC" (N°158), Birger Bäckman – at the time

Director for Statutes – wrote in a well-informed article
 the following:

"The word Skål, in its pure form and as understood in
 normal language today means "bowl"... Between 600
 and 1000 it was written Scåla (in old German) and Skåla
 (in old Saxon). In Nordic countries it has appeared in
 different forms such as skaal, skal, skoal... Our Skål has
 much deeper values than a toast... The Skål is mentioned
 and accepted in Ecclesiastical law from 1686... It is an
 inner feeling of friendship... The privilege of being a
 Skål member goes far beyond normal business ethics
 and morals. It is like doing business under oath. Skål is
 a confirmation of a friendship without limits".

The "Canto a la Amistad Skål" ("Song for Skål
 Friendship") was presented at the XV Latin American
 Congress, from 16 to 20 March 1988 in Punta del Este
 – featuring lyrics and music by Club President Nestor
 Omar Testa and an arrangement by Juan Miguel
 Kemerle. The song has become so popular and is so
 catchy it is frequently played and sung in South America.

Its verses include:

**Romantic Skål pennant
 Travels the world with loyalty
 Each message includes a flower
 In each hug there is brotherhood**

**Join our hands together
 Let us seek friendship,
 health, happiness and long life
 With much love and cordiality
 Following our philosophy
 Spreading peace and brotherhood**

SKÅL | SOLIDARITY

SYDNEY LUNCHEON

GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR LEUKAEMIA FOUNDATION

Skål International Sydney President Gary Gelenter
 and Skålleague Paul Highams were delighted to
 present a cheque for \$5,600 to Richard Gardner,
 Business Relationship Manager, NSW/ACT, for the
 Leukaemia Foundation.

Held at the Four Seasons Hotel Sydney, the
 memorable Skål Sydney Christmas luncheon was
 attended by over 200 Skålleagues and guests.
 Support for this wonderful event had been provided
 by a vast array of travel and hospitality organisations
 and planned under the leadership of Skål Sydney
 committee member Paul Highams.

"The size of this donation was a wonderful tribute
 to the generosity of our members and their guests



and a reflection on the strength and commitment of
 the supporting organisations, commented President
 Gary Gelenter. "The Sydney Club continues to be
 well supported, with excellent attendance at our
 luncheons on the second Wednesday of each month.
 We look forward to this continuing through 2012 so
 that we can again support a deserving charity."

SNOWBALL EXPRESS

SPECIAL EVENT IN AID OF CHILDREN OF FALLEN US MILITARY

The mission of Snowball Express is to help create new memories and a few days of joy for young lives that have been shattered by the loss of their fallen hero.

It's America's chance to give a gift of gratitude to the children and spouses of those men and women in the US Armed Forces who have died since 11 September 2001.

Missy Givens, the Snowball Express mum who first told an Orange County Rotarian that her husband once promised to take their kids to Disneyland when he returned from service in Iraq but was killed before he could fulfil that promise, told a reporter at the first Snowball Express in 2006, "Everyone else goes on with their lives but we can't; normal is gone." Missy's son, Dakota, added, "My father died for my family's freedom."

Another Snowball Express mum, Wendy Rafferty, said, "A lot is done for adults but there is nothing for the kids. This is a wonderful event for them, and the best part is my daughters get to meet other kids in the same situation."

The first all-expenses paid event in December 2006 was hosted by 14 Orange County hotels, Southwest Airlines and Oakley Corp, and hundreds of volunteers.



John N. Mavros, Vice President Region VI, Skål International USA, and Trustee of Snowball Express, served as a volunteer on the National Board for four years.

After two more well-supported events in 2007 and 2008, the Snowball Express was moved to Dallas (Texas), where in 2009 the new Dallas Cowboy Stadium was the venue for a fabulous dinner served on the field.

Skål International Dallas has adopted Snowball Express as its "Charity of Choice", and is creating a fund-raising example for all Skål leagues by establishing August as Snowball Express Donation Month.

To help Snowball Express, please visit: www.SnowballExpress.org. All donations are greatly appreciated.

By John N. Mavros Skål International Orange Coast

SKÅL INTERNATIONAL HYDERABAD

GIVING YOUNG GIRLS A NEW LIFE



At the beginning of 2011, the Executive Committee of Skål International Hyderabad decided to take constructive measures to help a young girl find a place for herself in society – by educating her and helping her gain independence. In India a female child is usually not welcome and is considered a burden on society.

We identified a girl from Asha Kiran Children's Home, Akhila, a 13-year-old whose father murdered her

mother and is in prison awaiting a death sentence. She studies in seventh grade in an English medium school and, with the help of Skål Hyderabad members, she will be able to complete two years of her study.

"Asha Kiran" means "A Ray of Hope", and the home is managed by the sisters of charity and run by Sister Rosy Gabriel and Sister Irma, who visit prisons and bring children born to prisoners' families into their fold, educating and nurturing them until they are ready to go out into the world.

The children at the home come from the various districts of Andhra Pradesh, with varied religious and poor economic backgrounds. The children at the home are orphaned, deserted by parents, from broken homes or the victims of a disturbed childhood.

From a modest beginning in 2005 with six children, today Asha Kiran is home to 45 girls from the tender age of three through to 16 years. They are brought up with love and affection, while also learning discipline, and after a basic education they are put into occupational

courses that prepare them for future independence. Over the past three years, Skål International Hyderabad has been committed to organising an annual pre-Christmas activity to visit Asha Kiran, taking provisions and commodities to accommodate their requirements. There has always been an overwhelming response from members, who contribute generously in both kind and cash.

Akhila and Sisters Rosy and Irma were invited by the club to a high tea sponsored by our hotelier Skålleague and attended by members. The President Asha Kumar handed over a cheque for INR15,000 with a school bag to Akhila on behalf of the club. Members were pleased to be able to interact with Akhila and this gave Sister

Rosy the opportunity to speak about the home. Those present were hugely impressed by their excellent work. As customary, we visited the home again in December with a Christmas cake, snacks and colourful goodie bags which contained biscuits, chocolates, toiletry kits and stationery items. Food groceries in cartons were also handed over to the children.

We returned from the home truly blessed and believing, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" – and all in the spirit of Skål.

By Patricia Hassan

Immediate Past President & Committee Member
Skål International India

OPERATION HOPE

SPECIAL MONTEVIDEO SCHOOL TRIP FOR RURAL STUDENTS



The Montevideo Skål International lunch in November was a particularly special one for members, as they welcomed visiting pupils from rural schools in the Florida Department area.

Enabling youngsters to visit and get to know Montevideo, these trips form a key part of Operation Esperanza (Operation Hope), which Montevideo Skålleagues have

been developing over the past few years.

On this occasion, 30 pupils and six teachers visited Uruguay's capital city, most of them for the first time in their lives and, in spite of it being a rainy day, they were able to take in the city's main sights, ending their visit in Parque Rodó before returning home.

Lunch was arranged at the Air Force Club restaurant and, on arrival by bus, the students dedicated an appreciative S-K-Å-L. to their hosts, in response to the warm welcome by President Carlos Trelles and the presentation of various gifts that make an important contribution to the running of the classrooms, as many rural schools have major needs.

The City of Florida bus returned with computers, air-conditioning units, a refrigerator and freezer, heaters, printers, fans, a water heater, a TV set, a microwave oven, paintings, board games, cooking pots, cutlery, glasses, chairs and many other articles donated by Skålleagues.

SKÅL BANGKOK / PATA THAILAND

GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CHARITY

Sister Mercedes Karuna Placin, from the Daughters of Charity-Holy Redeemer Church in Bangkok, is pictured receiving a cheque for 42,000 Thai Baht.

This was the sum raised at the joint Skål Bangkok/PATA Thailand Chapter Christmas luncheon during an auction of prizes generously donated by members of both organisations.

The auctioneer was Dale Lawrence, newly-elected President of Skål Bangkok.

The funds will be used to buy government-approved milk for babies affected by HIV in Phayao, Loei and Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Bert van Walbeek (right), Chairman of the PATA Thailand Chapter, presented the cheque accompanied by Dale Lawrence (left).



Changes afoot for 10th anniversary show in Frankfurt

Momentum continues to build for the 10th edition of IMEX in Frankfurt from May 22 to 24, with planned developments and changes to the IMEX Association Day, the trade show's hallmark "contact the buyers" system, its education programme and the popular IMEX App. The continued expansion of the hosted buyer programme will also be a key feature of this 10th IMEX show.

More hosted buyers are set to attend from central European countries as well as key long-haul markets including the USA, Brazil and Asia. Hyatt Hotels will be bringing their clients to the show for the first time, alongside a host of new US intermediaries – attracted to the Frankfurt show by the success of the inaugural IMEX America in October.

IMEX will also be introducing important new changes to the format and structure of its annual Association Day in Frankfurt, taking place at the Messe Frankfurt Congress Centre. These will allow for greater choice in the education and networking programme and will also take more account of the differing levels of seniority and experience amongst the hosted buyers attending. The hugely popular association evening, taking place at the Westin Hotel, will welcome 900 buyers and suppliers for a great evening of networking before doors to the trade show have opened.

High Exhibitor Demand

Exhibitor demand for the 2012 show has also been extremely strong. From Europe all the major central, northern and southern European destinations are confirmed including the German Convention Bureau and its anticipated 200 German exhibiting partners, plus a notable stand size increase from Turkey. Eastern European destinations, including Russia, will continue their strong participation and investment in the sector. From the Middle East and Latin America representation will be as robust as usual with all of the major destinations strongly represented. Exhibitor participation from the United States, Asia and the Caribbean is expected to be larger than ever before at IMEX 2012.

IMEX in Frankfurt's hallmark hotel sector is also set to grow, with space increases already having been confirmed by Fairmont,

Raffles, Swissotel and Kempinski. Over 50 hotel groups exhibit at the exhibition, with the majority taking part in the hosted buyer programme, bringing their key clients to the show.

A series of creative marketing campaigns is also planned to encourage German visitors from allied industry sectors to attend, as well as more meetings, events and incentive travel planners from the German-speaking countries. In addition, several new initiatives are planned to enhance the visitor experience including a series of exhibition guides to assist buyers in personalising their experience.

Enhanced Online Systems

The show's organisers will also use 2012 to test new ways of giving hosted buyers extra control over the emails and invitations they receive from exhibitors in the run-up to and during the trade show. The proposed new system will allow hosted buyers to have a unique IMEX inbox which will aggregate all exhibitor messages into a single, daily email alert. The system will be fully tested among several buyer groups for the 2012 show, with the aim of rolling it out come 2013.

Other enhancements will be made to the online appointment system to give buyers and visitors increased visibility and online functionality. In addition, the IMEX team will be introducing the IMEX App for Android users at the next IMEX in Frankfurt, as well as making improvements to the App's interface to enhance speed and usability on the move.

New Education Tracks

There will also be changes to the IMEX in Frankfurt education programme for 2012, which last year gave visitors a choice of more than 90 different sessions. Two new tracks, which will clearly separate meetings from events education, will be introduced to make seminar selection easier. Small, informal "campfires" (lasting no more than 30 minutes) are being introduced on the Sustainability Centre and the TechTap to give visitors quick introductions to these increasingly important professional development topics. Each campfire will be led by an industry expert and repeated regularly throughout the three-day trade show.

Findings from the recently announced "Power of 10" research study, being conducted by Fastfuture Research and sponsored by the German Convention Bureau (GCB), Frankfurt Tourist Office, CPO Hanser and Messe Frankfurt, will be presented as part of the show's education programme.

More information at : www.imex-frankfurt.com



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Diversey SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TIPS

A key ongoing initiative for business operations

There is a great deal written about sustainability, much of it confusing and even contradictory. Some even suggest that sustainability is the latest business “fad” and will soon be replaced by the next vogue.

It is true that sustainability has developed from the original “green” concept, and continues to go through further iterations and definitions. Moreover, as more organisations adopt sustainability practices and offer more sustainable products and services, any competitive advantage and differentiation will diminish, requiring businesses to differentiate themselves in different ways.

However, two enduring considerations will ensure that sustainability, whatever its title and, to some degree, interpretation will remain core to future business operations:

- The global economic recession toward the end of the last decade demonstrated to even the most eco-sceptic business leaders that they could operate efficiently with reduced resources – hence bolstering earnings.
- The world population will increase, placing greater demands on finite resources, such as oil, with the likely consequence of reduced availability and increased cost, requiring businesses to become even more efficient and sustainable.

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

There are many definitions and interpretations of what sustainability entails. Many use “sustainability” and “green” or “environmental” interchangeably; but the most widely cited and accepted definition came from the so-called “Brundtland Report”:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The Brundtland Commission, formally the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), known by the name of its Chair Gro Harlem Brundtland, was convened by the United Nations in 1983. The commission was created to address growing concern “about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development”.

In establishing the commission, the UN General Assembly recognised that environmental problems were global in nature and determined that it was in the common interest of all nations to establish policies for sustainable development.

The Brundtland definition has been further refined to the “triple bottom line” (TBL) and is currently the most common concept used by large national and international organisations. The triple bottom line of environmental, social and economic, also known as “people, planet, profit”, factors uses an expanded scale of values and criteria for measuring an organisation’s success.

“ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY”

Many products and services claim to be “environmentally friendly”, “eco-friendly”, “green” and so on. But what do these terms mean? To be “friendly”, it should mean that the product or service has no or negligible impact in or on the environment. But do the environmentally friendly products we buy have no or little environmental impact? Do we drive an environmentally friendly hybrid or electric car? But... how was the steel for the car made, where does the rubber for tyres come from, what happens to the toxic metals in the batteries, how is the electricity generated...? It may be the case that the electric car is more “environmentally friendly” than, say, an equivalent-size diesel car, but in what respect – greenhouse gas emissions, or heavy metal pollution, or...? As there is not an accepted definition or international standard for “environmentally friendly”, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) considers such labels too vague to be meaningful. Indeed, in many areas of the world such claims, applied to a product or service, are illegal.

FOUR PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. REDUCE...

By far the biggest impact we can have on global warming is to reduce our consumption. There are dozens of ways which have significant impact without really affecting our lifestyles. These include everything from switching off unneeded lights to car-pooling.

2. REUSE...

We can cut down considerably on waste if we use things more than once. Especially packaging and containers – we must do away with single-servings and introduce reusable containers. Additionally, many items we throw away could be given away or resold, to reduce the reliance of others on new goods.

3. RECYCLE...

Most of the waste products we pay others to take away could be turned into energy or money. Even rotting garbage gives off methane which could be used to power our cars. In addition, separating your rubbish provides the means for others to recycle (one man's trash is another man's treasure).

4. REPLACE...

At present, we are stripping resources from the world. Everything from the fish in the seas to the grain on the farms is being seriously depleted. As the human population grows, it's imperative that we are able to sustain ourselves at a "micro-" level. That means each and every one of us needs to put back what we take out.

Four Pillars in Action:

We should apply the principles of the four pillars, especially the first three, in the order that they are listed. It is much better to reduce the amount of, say, packaging waste rather than be primarily concerned about recycling that waste. Looking at the pillars as applied to cleaning products...

Cleaning products should be:

1. As concentrated as possible/practicable as this reduces the amount of manufacturing energy, transportation to and from the manufacturer and the customer and waste packaging... Other environmental benefits of super-concentrates are that they also reduce the environmental impacts of storage and possibly inventory management, invoicing, etc. Consider a one-litre bottle of product, with all of the associated environmental impacts, used neat produces one litre of in-use solution; if diluted at 10 per cent produces 10 litres of in-use solution, and at one per cent produces 100 litres.

For most cleaning and sanitation applications dilution rates of five per cent or better should be achievable. For some applications, it may be necessary to use higher concentrations of product but these should be as effective as possible. For example, oven cleaners should be thickened products to cling to the oven, reducing the amount of product required. Similarly, floor polishes should be as durable as possible as this reduces not only the amount of product, packaging, transportation, etc., of the polish, but also the polish stripper.

2. In the largest container as possible/practicable... Obviously very large containers create issues such as manual handling, storage, budgetary constraints, shelf-

life. etc. However, the smaller the pack size, generally the greater the proportion of packaging. For example, a typical ratio of plastic packaging to product for a one-litre bottle is 74 grams of plastic per litre of concentrate, for a two-litre bottle it is 50 grams per litre, and for five litres only 27 grams of plastic per litre of concentrate.

3. Products with integral dilution control measures not only reduce the amount of waste chemical due to over-dosing but also the resultant waste packaging, transportation, etc., impacts of using too much chemical. Of course, the control measures could range from simple training supported by wall charts but, unless managed carefully, trials have indicated that even this results in an over-consumption of up to 67 per cent. In-built portion control measures – that is, systems that are incorporated into the packaging that deliver a known quantity of concentrate – are much better. These systems are particularly effective for "fixed" volumes of cleaning solution, such as trigger sprays. The best systems in terms of product waste involve dilution control. These are systems where the product is automatically mixed with water. These are particularly effective for "bucket" applications as only the required amount of cleaning solution needs to be prepared.

It is important to note that other sustainability issues arise with over-concentrated cleaning solutions. For example, cleaning solutions that are too concentrated may require "rework" to remove smears, affecting productivity, and/or are more likely to damage the surface being cleaned. Similarly, under-concentrated cleaning solutions can create productivity issues in that extra work/effort may be required. Moreover, under-concentrated disinfection/sanitising products may lead to hygiene issues.

So, in principle, the most "environmentally friendly" cleaning product is one that is supplied as a super-concentrate, in a relatively large container that is fitted with an integral dilution control system.



Written and updated by Diversey sustainability expert
Ed Roberts

COUNCILLOR'S CORNER

Taking full advantage of new technology



We are fully aware of the responsibility we have, as International Councillors from our respective countries, to promote and draw attention to our beloved international association. When my Spanish Skål colleagues elected me as International Councillor in March 2009 at the 53rd National Congress of Skål International Spain, and the following year as President of Skål International Gerona, I understood that – in addition to my election being an honour and a matter of great pride – I was also obliged to put all my efforts into strengthening and enhancing links between all Skålleagues, as well as increasing the number of members and, in the process, boosting everyone's business opportunities.

Spain welcomed 52 million visitors to the country during 2011, according to figures of which you will already be aware.

Cities and destinations such as Barcelona, Girona, Málaga, Granada, Cádiz, Mallorca, Ibiza, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Madrid, Lanzarote, Marbella, Sevilla and Almeria have become well-positioned as leading tourist destinations offering quality and excellence, and it is not by chance that all of them have active Skål clubs.

All of which prompts my reflection that, in order for Skål International to become better known in Spain and to attract professionals from among the new generations, it is also indispensable to promote ambitious projects in tune with current trends around the world. And what better than entering the world of internet in our own name?

We are not pretending to have discovered something new if we note that business in the world of tourism is increasingly based on the internet. That is why in Spain we are promoting and encouraging the use of tools and opportunities offered by this technology, to attract leading professionals to our network of contacts. I am sure that the same applies in your own respective countries.

The first step is to create a website, in-skal.com, presented to the market as the availability of tourist establishments and businesses managed directly by their owners: that is, precisely who we are – tourism professionals with a strong commitment to improving, sharing experiences and offering personal and direct service.

What do we want to achieve with our in-skal.com tool?

In the first place, to help all Skålleagues who want to take part and carry out business over the internet. We believe that, even though the number of reservations portals is huge, there is room for projects with a distinctive philosophy, our own Skål spirit of "Doing Business Among Friends".

Who developed the project?

It was developed using technology tested over several years, undertaken in Barcelona by a team of Skålleagues with more than 30 years of experience in high-technology. It is simple to implement and use, and costs considerably less than what we are accustomed to paying – and suffering – through other channels with which we usually work.



Who can use the project?

It has been developed for hotels as well as apartments, rural accommodation, hostels, camping sites and lodgings; and we also want to include restaurants, travel agencies and service companies.

How does the system work?

In the same way as the usual reservations systems: daily rates, rooms or people, discounts per day, for last-minute, for early booking or for long stay. Set promotions and tourist packages, or gift vouchers. Promotional newsletters distributed by email marketing.

Can it be incorporated easily?

By using the establishment's own website and simply adding a button... but it can also be automatically linked to other reservations portals such as booking.com, venere.com or reservhotel.com. And, of course, linked to our own reservations portal, in-skal.com.

How much does it cost to take part in the project?

Zero euros to join up for Skålleagues who have been a member for at least one year, and a maintenance fee of one per cent of bookings received directly on their own website. For bookings received via the in-skal.com portal... just nine per cent.

Does it have a chance of being successful?

It only depends on you. If we want to take part in a reservations portal that reflects our philosophy, that is controlled and guided by us and highlights our own promotional strategy... and at an extremely low cost, about half the normal rate. We represent thousands of businesses. If we truly do work together we can have our own voice on the internet.

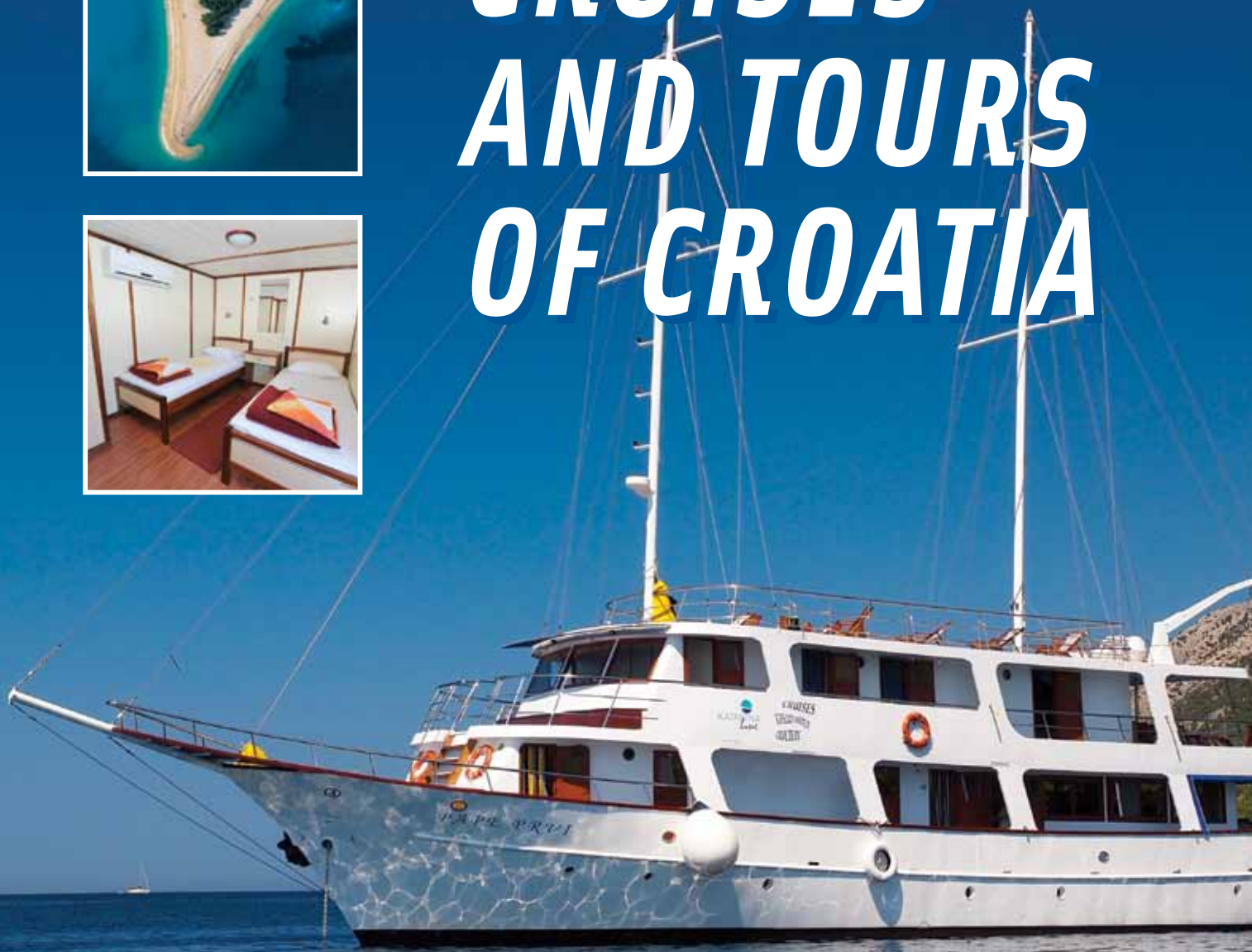
At the World Congress in Seoul in October you will be able to find us on our own stand, as well as at a workshop where we will have the opportunity of discussing the project in greater depth and detail.

What do you think? Would you like to take part in this internet project... "Doing Business Among Friends"?

By **Teresa Díaz Comas** | International Skål Councillor Spain



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