

AEV AGM 2008
10th September 2008, The O₂

AEV Chairman's Report

I am delighted to report that 2007, and 2008 to date, have seen further periods of growth for AEV, both in a financial sense and, more importantly, with regard to the development of our products and services to the membership community. I would like to use this report to briefly convey some recent 'AEV highlights', and also offer some thoughts on the future.

However, before I do, I would like to start by reporting on a positive reaction to the closing remarks of my previous Chairman's report, which I delivered last year in Harrogate. One year ago, I stated the importance of increased engagement and participation from AEV members in association activity. AEV membership delivers so much more value to members that keep abreast of what's going on, and get involved where possible. It gives me great pleasure to say that participation by members has never been better.

AEV has more member contacts, in more member working groups and committees, than ever before. AEV members are attending the industry events on offer to them via the EIA community. The executive's ambition to increase AEV awareness, and develop business relationships with as many different contacts at individual member venues, is having a positive effect. In short, member engagement with AEV has gone up a gear, and that's excellent news for the association.

That said, there's always room for improvement, so here's to increased member involvement still, for the remainder of 2008, and into 2009!

Membership

AEV membership currently stands at 53, and the membership base is now realising the original association concept; for an all inclusive, established event venue community. AEV's focus has always been on creating a network of event centres of all types and size, and it is great to have observed the variety of venues that have recently joined. Going forward, the association must continue to deliver services that are of benefit to all its contributing venue types, and deal with the issues that affect us all, no matter the size of our show floor, or event types at the top of our business plans.

Increasing the membership's representation of venues is integral to the association's ability to represent the 'voice' of event venues, as well as develop the aforementioned service list to members. The AEV Board are driving a focussed sales strategy, which the executive has been tasked with delivering.

Working Groups / Committees

AEV's proactive working groups and committees represent a core strength of the association, and deal with a variety of relevant and important issues, which we all have to pay close attention to in our working lives.

The work of our Sustainability, Security and Technical committees is invaluable, as each continues to provide forums for debate and discussion amongst member contacts that share similar roles at their respective venues. These groups also progress key collective actions, delivering in 2008, for example, a free-to-attend member workshop on BS 8901 (the standard for sustainable event management). Another example includes the tireless work of the Technical Committee and its work regarding electrical regulations.

Another AEV-driven working group have delivered a remarkable new online tool in 2008, which is truly groundbreaking. Launched at International Confex, and hosted on the AEV

website, the 'eGuide' has successfully identified and communicated a vast range of common regulative policies that exist at participating member venues. If you haven't taken a look at this resource yet, do it today! If your venue hasn't expressed an interest in signing up to 'eGuide', then talk to AEV Director Tom Treverton, and he will assist you with this process. 'eGuide' is an incredible benefit to member venues, both as a tool for information sharing and also as a communication portal to organiser and supplier companies. The newly formed AEV Salary Survey Working group have delivered the first ever AEV Salary Survey!

AEV is also pulling together a group that will discuss the feasibility of 'bulk buying' energy resources, another example of the association reacting to real and current issues. The huge increases in energy costs that we are currently experiencing, and look set to endure for years to come, represent a significant issue for every venue. Consequently, it is well worth us investigating what the entire AEV UK-based community could achieve on this front if we were to work as a collective, as opposed to a selection individual venues. All input is welcome on this point.

My thanks go to all the Chairs and member contacts that participate in all of AEV's Working Groups – keep up the great work!

Research

AEV continues to play a key role in delivering high quality industry research. Yet again, AEV members have made a crucial contribution to the 'EIA Facts' report, which is fast-becoming *the* compendium of data for our industry. The AEV Salary survey is also a welcome addition to our service. Proving event effectiveness remains an industry 'must have', and AEV will continue to help drive EIA's delivery of this research.

Member satisfaction

In light of the much discussed economic climate, it is imperative that AEV does all it can to ensure that members are maximising the value derived from their membership fees. The executive is acutely aware of the need for a high degree of account management. It is pleasing, therefore, to learn that member feedback from recent meetings has been highly positive, with regard to the service the association is providing. Member satisfaction is of paramount importance to both the Board and the executive; positive member feedback is, therefore, great news.

The year ahead...

Going forward, AEV must ensure that ensure progress within all the aforementioned areas. AEV must attract new members, and ensure that the current membership is satisfied with the service. AEV must progress the important work of its Working Groups, and invest time in generating high quality industry research. As well as further engaging with the 'industry' networking events delivered by AEO, ESSA and EIA, AEV must also investigate the potential for more AEV-specific events.

The AEV business plan reflects these requirements, and all AEV members will remain fully updated, via the existing member communication portals, such as AEV e-news and the EIA Standard.

Final remarks

In closing, I would like to draw particular attention to the internal and external success of EIA, and the role AEV has in securing the organisation's future development.

Two years ago, the EIA concept fundamentally sought to bring the three key stakeholder groups within the events industry (represented by AEV, AEO and ESSA) together, with a view

to improving standards and bettering our service to our collective customer, i.e. the exhibitor or event participator. Since EIA's launch in 2006, the structure has been successful, maintaining close relations between stakeholders and driving 'industry' projects (where deemed beneficial), yet also ensuring that each stakeholder group possessed its own independent voice where required. The EIA structure also ensures AEV receives a high quality, yet equally cost effective executive service.

AEV has played a fundamental role within the EIA to date, which goes way beyond merely providing venue members. As mentioned previously, AEV drives the research that EIA uses to promote the industry. Furthermore, many of AEV's key projects (such as the 'eGuide' and electrical testing reviews) are being progressed by groups consisting of both AEV and ESSA members.

Improving relationships between stakeholder groups, in order to both progress standards internally, and promote the industry externally with one voice, has been the true success of EIA. I passionately believe that the EIA community is of integral importance to its owner associations, and the events industry at large.

On a related matter, I would like to pay tribute to Trevor Foley, who stepped down from his role as EIA CEO in August 2008. Trevor played a pivotal role in the creation and development of AEV, its sister associations, and EIA, and we thank him for that. EIA will now move forward under new leadership, the structure of which will be finalised by the EIA Board. With the support of the membership community, I am very confident that it will do so successfully.

Kevin Murphy
AEV Chairman and CEO of ExCeL London
September 2008