



Well, after a rather bleak and snowy start, here's hoping that 2009 is brighter and more rewarding than the press will have us all believe!

2008 was a great year for us and I would really like to thank all our clients for the interesting and varied events they gave us to manage (especially the one where I got to meet Anton du Beke – see photo!) and our fantastic suppliers, who helped to deliver them, despite some very short deadlines and unusual requests!

There's no doubt that 2009 is set to be a very interesting year, and as a lean, flexible and creative agency we are confident about producing premium events and achieving fantastic results for less money.

Janet Walkden

Serving the South West



After winning a 7 way pitch, to become one of three agencies on a framework agreement for the South West Regional Development Agency, we were asked to manage their flagship conference in November 2008.

Initially the focus was on productivity-led growth, but as autumn progressed, we encouraged the client to keep the agenda flexible to ensure that it answered the latest needs of businesses in the region as the credit crunch started to hit home. Stephanie Flanders, BBC economics editor, hosted a closed Breakfast Forum followed by the

Business Stakeholder Conference, with Ben Bradshaw, MP for the South West, addressing the Annual Public Meeting. The event website, built by us, became the main hub for information, with interactive question and answers areas, delegate registration and post event webcasts, feedback and photographs. This ensured that, as an event following the Greener Events Guide, it could become as paperless as possible with all delegate management taking place online.



This event was quickly followed up with another conference at the beginning of February bringing a wide spectrum of regional partners together to discuss and plan for the future and encourage joint working and sharing of good practice in the current rapidly changing environment.

Looking good at the Clothes Show 2008



In December we took Rimmel London back to the Clothes Show Live for the 7th consecutive year. This ongoing project provides a great example of a client taking the long view and extracting maximum value for money from an exhibition stand originally built for a single roadshow but subsequently adapted and re-themed each year for installation at this hugely popular consumer show.

As well as providing opportunities for trial with our own team of professional make-up artists, the stand does a roaring trade in goodie bags selling to one in ten visitors to the show. With 180,000 visitors over 6 days, that's a lot of goodie bags!

meet the team: David Bland



As Commercial Director, David is responsible for the critical business functions and to ensure the smooth running of the event

business – he is our 'voice of reason' our 'Mr Calm'. However his very British demeanour is only one side of his personality and he is full of surprises – as his recent skydiving adventure and the frog tattoo on his left buttock demonstrate!

As well as keeping the company ticking, David still oversees projects for a number of clients. For long-standing cosmetic client Coty, he is still involved in many of their events and seems to have become a bit of a specialist in their sector - what the man doesn't know about make up isn't worth knowing!



As we are continually striving to improve our business and our offering to our clients, we have recently been independently audited and certified to be in conformance of ISO 9001:2000 – the Quality Management Standard. Having organised a few events under the Greener events Guide we are now also taking steps towards BS 8901, the new British Standard which has been developed specifically for the events industry with a purpose of helping the industry to operate in a more sustainable manner. If you would like your next event to fly with the BS 8901 kitemark, please contact us to assist you.

Out of adversity comes opportunity

I have been reading a lot of opinion lately about the recession, its causes, effects and how best to survive or even thrive in it. Not surprisingly there are as many opinions as pundits, but there have been some enlightening observations and encouraging research.

Many people in business, faced with a recession, simply batten down the hatches and slash their marketing expenditure. But that's one of the biggest mistakes you can make. A study by McGraw-Hill of the 1981-82 recession found that, whereas companies that cut their marketing in the 1981-82 period increased sales by only 19% from 1980 to 1985, those companies that maintained their marketing spend during the downturn enjoyed a 275% sales increase over the same period.

It is certainly the case that those companies that maintain or even increase their marketing spend can take advantage of falling prices to steal a march on the competition. It's a buyers market and a good time for the brave to stretch the budget and get a greater bang for their buck.

Which brings me to the pay-off! A good brand experience can enhance brand values and create real trust, loyalty and confidence through a two-way engagement between consumer and brand. It can also create brand advocacy and generate word-of-mouth, often the most powerful persuader of all.

One final opinion that I picked up is that we can achieve nothing by sitting out and worrying or hoping it will all just go away. We just have to keep doing what we're good at and try to make it rewarding for all concerned.

After all, unless you're a banker, the recession is not your fault!

Added Value Locations

for further information call Charlotte on 01295 268111

ICELAND

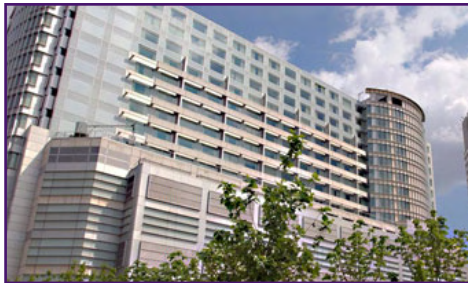


Iceland is now more affordable

The economic and financial turmoil has not treated Iceland favourably, to say the least. However, there are opportunities in the current situation and the considerable devaluation of the local currency has created rates that are extremely favourable! In spite of the financial turmoil, all services in Iceland are still functioning as ever and Iceland is still a very exciting venue to visit, a venue for meetings, corporate events, product launches and as a par excellence incentive destination to motivate today's seen-it-all achievers.

- Highlights:** SuperJeeps • Monster Trucks • Blue Lagoon • River rafting • Dogsleds • Overnight in an Igloo • Salmon Fishing • Whale watching • Hot Springs

LONDON CALLING



A venue with a can-do attitude

The 4-star Hilton London Metropole is one of Europe's largest hotel and conference centres, with the space and flexibility to hold meetings for as few as 10 people, a dinner for 800 or a conference for 1600. The West Wing allows a dedicated delegate check-in which can be fully branded and the logistics and attention to detail by the event team are second to none. Their flexibility stretches through to their rates and FOC enhancements. At present they are matching or even bettering 2008 prices, offering eye-popping 24hr-delegate rates, upgrading DDR inclusions, incentivising new clients and rewarding loyal ones.

- Highlights:** 1,054 bedrooms • 44 meeting rooms • excellent transport access • on-site parking • Health Club • 4 restaurants & bars • outside the congestion zone!

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



The Big Apple has reacted...

With the British Pound so weak against the American Dollar, UK clients are shying away from going stateside... but all is not lost. New York hotels, venues and suppliers have been quick to react and even with the devalued £ it is again affordable. It's not just knocked down rates – in addition hotels are adding value with enhancements such as complimentary drinks receptions, entire group room upgrades and higher commission which we can pass on. Suppliers are being more creative, thinking out of the box and stretching your money that bit further.

- Highlights:** Backstage on Broadway • SoHo Loft party • Yankee Baseball Game • Statue of Liberty • NYPD tour • Harbour Cruise • Rollerblading in Central Park • Sales in Couture