

# CONFERENCE & INCENTIVE TRAVEL



## Cadbury rallies its sales force

Access and capacity at the Sofitel London Heathrow made it the ideal setting for the chocolate giant's 'Battle for Britain' sales AGM **Page 40**



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Car maker goes urban for XC60 dealer reveal **Page 16**



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*Inside* Keeping numbers up in the midst of a downturn

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The high street retailer's events head on suppliers, schedules and the joy of shopping **Page 27**



# Feedback

Get it off your chest – this is your chance to have your say on the issues that matter most



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## SOUNDING OFF

### When the dust settles...



**Des McLaughlin**,  
managing director,  
Grass Roots  
HBI

While the final three months of 2008 were extremely turbulent, I feel that the first quarter of this year will, at the very least, be the time when the meetings industry will be given a clear idea of the new landscape that it is dealing with.

Companies still know the value of events to their business. People still need to do business, and people still need to be trained.

While it is not 'new' news to anyone to forecast that 2009 will be characterised by consolidation and cost reduction by corporates, there has been something of a phoney war taking place since the global financial turmoil began, with knee-jerk cancellation reactions impacting event programmes.

As we start new financial years now and in April, we shall start to see a more considered spending plan for the new financial horizon.

We forecast that not only will the cost of holding the meeting be thoroughly scrutinised, return on investment will be evermore validated, and the cost of managing the meeting process will come under even more pressure.

This, inevitably, will lead to outsourcing of events teams and a greater use of automation in the meetings industry.

Research currently being carried out by the Independent Body Travel Intelligence Network for our annual Meetings Industry Report, due out in March 2009, indicates that much of the planned remodelling has now taken place and the resultant strategies will become apparent.

If you want to sound off about an industry issue, contact [ci@haymarket.com](mailto:ci@haymarket.com)

### Pharma is flexible enough to meet financial crisis head-on

As I explained at an educational forum at December's EIBTM show, I believe the pharmaceutical industry is one of the strongest placed to survive the economic downturn. This is because pharma companies are continually restructuring to meet stringent demands laid down by NICE to bring new drugs to market, and to comply with the ABPI in terms of how they engage with UK customers.

Despite the pressures that have been laid down by the government, with the latest deal to reduce drug prices by 5% by January 2010, the global market for pharmaceutical companies is still predicted to be worth £62.3bn by 2012.

The global recession will put pressure on this sector during 2009, in terms of cutting costs. This will impact on the events industry. However, it is predicted that both Novartis and Roche are expected to grow faster than the rest of their contemporaries due to their excellent product portfolio and pipeline development over the next five years. *Simon Cape, director, Generation For Growth*

### In turbulent times it's your people that matter most

As the recession becomes reality, many companies are making the critical mistake of thinking only in the short term about their most important assets: their people.

In a downturn, your customers are not necessarily looking for the cheapest option. What they really want is safety – absolute assurance that they will get what they pay for.

Your ability to offer a differentiated level of "safety" has little to do with what you sell (your competitors sell very similar products, in similar ways, at similar prices), and much more to do with who you are. And this

has everything to do with who you employ and how they represent you.

Now, more than ever, you need well trained, passionate staff, focused on delivering consistent, high-quality services and products. An essential component of any strategic plan, therefore, is the ability of leaders to connect effectively with the people they lead and the customers they serve.

Understanding exactly what motivates the attitudes and behavior of these people is therefore vital to business success, not only during the downturn, but also in preparation for when the economy picks up again.

*Dr Graeme Cudrington, business strategist and keynote presenter*

