mia Reignites Sector With Its Engaging Annual Conference



Creativity, collaboration, innovation and sustainability were the key watchwords of the Meetings Industry Association's annual conference last week as it united, inspired and energised the sector to navigate the next normal.

The highly engaging full day REIGNITE conference featured a stellar line up of experts including futurologist Rohit Talwar who discussed growth opportunities during these uncertain times. In his opening keynote, he encouraged the 140 delegates gathered at Hilton Birmingham Metropole to get creative with their thinking, processes and financial models while being laser focused on the client experience.

As representatives of ABPCO, beam, and the mia discussed the state of the UK business meetings and events sector, while Australia's Karen Bolinger provided a global perspective, the importance of collaborative working and the essential role of each of the associations was apparent.

Professional networking specialist Andy Lopata provided a compelling session on the power of strategic relationships – demonstrating how when delegates build the right group of stakeholders and they join in, their activity its quickly multiplied.

With sustainability remaining high on the sector's agenda, the race to Net Zero went under the microscope alongside waste as Michael Foreman of Don't Waste UK

encouraged delegates to stop making commitments and start taking action. Dispelling myths, he highlighted how waste data in the UK is often inaccurate or presented incorrectly, so he urged event professionals to delve deeper into what actually happens to their waste.

Adding to the session, Stress Matters' Laura Cappell Abra persuasively highlighted how a sustainable business cannot happen without people and the crucial importance of organisation's investing in a wellbeing strategy.

After lunch panellists discussed how the sector can be a career of choice as it breaks through the noise, rebuilds skilled teams and moves towards full recovery to support the national and regional economies. Complementing this session Dr Samanth Hiew, founder of ADHD Girls, led a powerful session on ADHD and neurodiversity before moderator Michael Jackson discussed the next normal and facilitator Bev Hancock joined him on stage to provide an expert executive summary of the day.

Maria Scullion, head of sales at Levy UK and Ireland, commended the 'absolutely brilliant' event for its content, and said 'it made [her] feel quite proud to shout about our industry!'. Kat Buitrago, sales executive at Church House also praised the 'amazing event' for its 'wonderful energy from Michael and all the wonderful speakers!'

"We carefully curated our line-up of futurologists and industry leaders to deliver what our sector needs to know right now," said the mia's chief executive, Kerrin MacPhie. "REIGNITE allowed delegates to take the time to 'pause' from the day job and meet their peers. Over the coming days we will be sharing an executive report capturing all of the key points and takeaways, which will be an invaluable business planning tool for delegates."

She added: "We are very grateful to all of our speakers, partners and supporters who contributed to the successful event."

About the mia

The mia is one of the fastest growing associations in the conference, meetings and events sector, founded by a proactive group of hotel and conference centre operators and booking agents to lead the conference, meetings and events industry, providing accreditation, industry awards, research and a voice to government.

The mia supports over 700 members by:

- Providing extensive regional networking opportunities on a monthly basis.
- Helping them to achieve the highest standards of facilities and service through achievement of AIM, the industry standard of quality and excellence.
- Providing a library of best practice and quality standards guidelines.
- Promoting AIM to industry buyers.
- Delivering tangible benefits which support members in the achievement of their own business goals.
- By the provision of information, education, research and advice all of which lead to improved business performance.
- By sharing issues of sector importance with them. By raising the profile of business tourism with government.

www.mia-uk.org

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For media enquiries, please contact Custard on louis@custardcommunications.com / lesley@custardcommunications.com or call 01483 740747.