

Special focus on Internet marketing

by Gerald Oliver

The first IMHI Hotel Internet Marketing Strategy Conference took place in London on 28 May 2004, at the same venue and immediately following the HEDNA conference. The programme covered subjects crucial to the success of Internet marketing. They included: domain name protection, online brand protection, global differences in hotel Internet marketing, multi-lingual websites in an era of globalisation and European online customer behaviour.

"Internet marketing in Europe is different to what has already been experienced in the USA", according to Euan Mitchell, Director of e-Commerce at UK-based Thistle hotels and one of the organisers of the conference. "These differences are not in terms of the process itself but in terms of the key issues involved. This event represents the first major industry initiative aimed at tackling these challenges from a European perspective".

Speakers included Andrew Lothian of Demys Limited (speaking on domain name protection) and Kristofer Peterson of Cogent (safeguarding the brand online). Panel sessions - dealing with global differences in hotel Internet marketing, globalisation, and European online customer behaviour featured speakers from Accor, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Hilton International, Intercontinental, Jumeirah International, Le Meridien and Summit Hotels as well as technology companies such as Webabacus, Rightnow Technologies, Hitwise and Creative Virtual.

The conference was organised by the **Institut de Management Hotelier International (IMHI)** - an MBA program in International Hospitality Management jointly administered by the Cornell School of Hotel Administration (USA) and ESSEC Business School (France) in conjunction with the HSMIAI Hotel Internet Marketing Committee, Americas Board.