



The Site Canada 2013 Education Day  
Photo courtesy of The Image Commission

## Welcome to the Year-end edition of 'sitelines' for 2013 your Site Canada Newsletter

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'sitelines' is published six times a year to keep you informed of what's happening in Canada and around the World, what's new, upcoming events, and linkages to members and other Site Global Chapters.

published November 28, 2013



## President's Message

Starting the year as "Chapter of the Year" for all of Site Global is a humbling beginning. How do you exceed expectations when you already are the best? Armed with a dedicated Board committed to a new Strategic Plan, and strong, growing membership, we have continued to exceed even our own expectations. We accomplished everything we set out to do in 2013.

Highlights of 2013 accomplishments:

- Launched our Value Proposition to define everything we do – 'Connect. Grow. Lead.'
- Record membership reached 133
- Sold out attendance at Chapter meetings and the Summer Social and Golf Tournament – our signature events
- Record breaking fund raising of \$32,000 at the Summer Social
- New Strategic Plan – where we completed almost every task and goal for 2013
- Initiation and launch of 'Gain InSite', Site's first loyalty program to provide members increased ROI
- Shortlisted for all 5 categories of the Chapter Excellence Awards to be announced at the Annual Site Global Conference in Orlando in December
- Celebrated both our Chapter's 25th anniversary and Site's 40th anniversary with a special event
- Conducted a social media survey and launched a Twitter account
- Produced 5 superb e-newsletters
- Re-designed our Sponsorship Program to include 2 years of sponsorship opportunity
- Sustained and embraced our successful Young Leaders program
- Conducted a formal review with our management company, Fletcher Wright Associates, and extended their contract for an additional 3 years
- Provided 2 scholarships to promising students
- Hosted the CIS exam for the first time in Canada
- Extended our Sister Chapter relationship by one year with Site Florida and Caribbean, and held 2 joint events
- Provided value to our Strategic Partners and event sponsors and donors

My warmest thanks to our outgoing Board members. Joanne Keating, our Past President served on the Board for 6 years. Her passion and dedication to Site is stellar. A true leader, she

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### ...President's Message continued

never missed a beat in between her extensive work commitments, her personal volunteer obligations, and her passion for all good things in life. Michael Drake has also been a long term Board member and in his most recent capacity, kept our finances in line and supported many of our endeavours through Starwood sponsorship. And finally, Yola Marshall: she spent only half a year with us as her job changed soon after she joined the Board. Her logic and commitment were immediate positive influences on the Board.

I am so pleased that Jenn Glynn, Ellie MacPherson, John Crowe, Sandra Eagle, Hayley Bishop, Maria Da Cunha and Vlad Haltigin are continuing on the Board. Each brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table.

I welcome the new Board members – Jennifer Moir, Lynne Coyne, Diane Alexander, Joanne Hall and Susan Bernad. You are joining an enthusiastic and dedicated team of busy and accomplished professionals. With Jenn Glynn at the helm, I know you will hit the floor running and you will catch her enthusiastic fever from your first day.

Education Day, led by Ellie MacPherson, was undoubtedly one of the best educational experiences that I have ever attended. The high quality of speakers who flew in from all corners of North America to share their knowledge in open and frank presentations was first class. The evaluations proved that we exceeded expectations, with over 90% saying that they plan to attend Education Day in 2014.

Our 25th Anniversary event in September was both a celebration with our past presidents and an insightful examination of the future of luxury hotel brands through the lens of Fairmont Hotels. It was rewarding, entertaining and inspiring to hear from our Past Presidents and acknowledge the contribution that they made in the growth of our industry and association.

We have one more event on our busy calendar. The Holiday Social on December 17th at the InterContinental Hotel Toronto Centre is a relaxed gathering to share the holiday season with colleagues and raise funds for Childhood Cancer Canada. I hope you will join us and contribute to our worthy charity of choice.

The year as president has been a most fulfilling experience. The Board started the year with an ambitious new strategic plan and never looked back. I am so impressed with the professionalism and dedication of the Board members and our industry members as we deliver on our Value Proposition of 'Connect. Grow. Lead.'

We are seen as leaders within the Site Global community and there is no doubt that it is a reputation well deserved. It has been an honour to serve as your President and I know that the momentum will continue with your new President, Jenn Glynn, the new Board, and the very capable support of our management company, Fletcher Wright Associates.

Happy and safe holidays,

**Pam Graham, DMCP**  
**President, Site Canada**



## 2014 Site Canada Board Announced:

On November 13, 2013, Site Canada announced the election of its 2014 Board of Directors. The Board comprises a team of proven industry specialists and veterans, who continue the strong representation of Site Canada within the Site Global family.

**Site Canada's President for 2014 is Jennifer Glynn, Partner, Meeting Encore Ltd.**

Serving with Ms Glynn as Officers on the Executive Committee are:

- **President-Elect: Hayley Bishop, CMP**, Corporate Sales and Hospitality Manager, Stratus Vineyards
- **Immediate Past-President: Pam Graham, DMCP**, Senior Advisor, MCI Toronto
- **Vice President, Finance: Ellie MacPherson**, Senior Vice President, S-M+i, Strategic Meetings + Incentives, a division of Vision Travel Solutions
- **Vice President, Golf: John Crowe**, President, Metracon Travel Group

Also on the board are Site Canada Directors:

- **Director, Communications: Sandra Eagle**, Editor, Digital + Special Projects, Ignite Magazine
- **Director, Chapter Meetings: Lynne Coyne, CMP**, Senior Events Consultant, Manulife Financial
- **Director, Education: Susan Bernad**, Area Sales Director, Associated Luxury Hotels International
- **Director, Membership: Joanne Hall**, Senior Sales Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver
- **Director, Sponsorship: Maria da Cunha, CITC, CMP**, Independent Planner
- **Director, Young Leaders: Diane Alexander**, Business Development Manager, North America, Meridican Incentive Consultants
- **Director-at-Large: Vlad Haltigin, CITE**, Producer, Dreams and Memories, PDM(i)
- **Chair Social: Jennifer Moir**, Conference Sales Manager, White Oaks Conference Resort & Spa

Site Canada extends gratitude to those departing the Board at the end of the year:

- **Joanne Keating**, Program Manager and Industry Relations, Meridican Incentive Consultants
- **Michael Drake**, Toronto Metro Market Group Account Director, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide
- **Yola Marshall**, Director of Sales & Marketing, InterContinental Hotels

## Marking Milestones – Site Canada’s 25th Anniversary

It was an evening of celebration, reflection and a peek into the future at the 25th anniversary Chapter meeting for Site Canada, and the 40th anniversary of the founding of Site.

Past Presidents of the Canada Chapter, current members and industry colleagues met at the eclectic House of Moments. Over dinner, Hayley Bishop (speaking on behalf of current President Pam Graham) presented a brief overview of Site Canada’s accomplishments, that over the years included three ‘Chapter of the Year’ awards and two ‘Chapter Excellence Awards’ for Membership.

Past Presidents Don Brommet (founding member of Site Canada) spoke fondly of the earliest days of the organization, with nods to his cohorts Duff Shaw and the late Moira Hearn, mentioning that there was a need at that time to understand what incentives were all about. As the full service incentive companies were born, Site fulfilled the need to educate specialists in the burgeoning marketplace.

Paul Marchildon, (President during the 90s) told the audience that getting involved with the chapter on various committees was an essential component of his professional growth and the mentoring he received returned his investment in the chapter many times over. He reminisced about starting the Site summer social and the business ethics our members continue to uphold.

Rounding out Past President presentations, Susan Prophet (President 2009) with a huge paper heart cut-out, carried a thick binder to the podium which contained the application forms that earned the second Site Chapter of the Year award. As she reminisced about her year at the helm with her “captains” she outlined the clear vision and a strategic plan that included the annual Site Golf Tournament, the rebranding effort from Site Global and communication outreach.



Photos courtesy of The Image Commission

Our featured guest speaker for the evening was Jeff Doane, Vice-President of Sales and Marketing, North America, for Fairmont Raffles Hotels International. He shared proprietary research that his company had done on the Fairmont brand and the future of luxury travel with our group. He noted the synergies between our two groups: we are both growing internationally. We need to stop and think: do the things we stand for still resonate with our current guests/members and the guests/members we will have in the future?

Doane explained that Fairmont needed to review their branding “as we were a North American company turning into an international brand, at the same time as the luxury hotel space was becoming increasingly crowded.” Their essential branding —Turning moments into memories for our guests— needed to be revisited. As they turned to experts in neurology, memory and psychology, they discovered that they didn’t have to turn moments into memories for their guests, people make their own memories, all the hotel has to do is to provide the landscape or the setting for them to create memories for themselves.



Luxury travelers define themselves by their travel experiences. They want authentic experiences, not in a controlled environment, they want to eat like the locals. They love history, bring the history of the destination to the hotel. Inspired by a higher level of experience than what they have in their day-to-day lives. With business travellers, if they have a little time, they want to explore the city and create destination event memories that will make them want to come back to those places.

If they’re well travelled, they will have stories if our hotel experience sets the landscape to make those memories our luxury traveller will return. Today’s world is so transparent, everything happens in real time. Before we even start to market, you have to own this space, we have to make it true for our brand, it has to be meaningful and resonate for the guests we want to bring to our brand.

It was a memorable and most enjoyable evening of celebration, which left members proud of their membership in Site, and in particular in the Canadian Chapter.

**Sandra Eagle**  
Director Chapter Meetings

## A Thought Provoking Education Day

On Wednesday, November 13th, the annual Site Canada Education day was held at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel. The roster of speakers was varied and surely offered “takeaways” for all attendees regardless of their role in the industry. Corporate planners, Incentive houses, DMC’s, Hoteliers, Tourism Boards, Venues and Industry publications would find aspects of the content relevant to their business.



Photos courtesy of The Image Commission

Our MC and Storyteller throughout the day was Doug Keeley, CEO and Founder of The Mark of A Leader, a revolutionary program designed to inspire new thinking in the workforce about leadership, engagement and corporate culture. A globally recognized communicator, Doug presented a powerful concept called Five Level Leadership using incredible video stories to share insights into the success of great leaders and brands. He showed how their leadership principles can be applied to business today.



From Las Vegas and MGM Resorts International, Michael Dominguez, SVP Hotel Sales, provided an in-depth look at how the economy has changed the way hotels do business. Michael provided insight into how hotels develop their pricing, and how this impacts meetings. The economic conditions for 2014 and beyond will play a role in pricing with supply growth very slow against heavy demand. Michael illustrated how understanding the value of your business will be critical in negotiating and leveraging costs.

Angie Pfeifer, Vice President, Event Marketing and Corporate Travel with the Investors Group presented insight on the value and strategy in delivering incentive programs that translate into a return on objectives, create pride in the organization and provide a unique and memorable experience for qualifiers. Angie shared specific tools and techniques around driving business value and taking the global experience to maximize attendee and corporate experience while ensuring brand attributes and culture.

Kevin Hinton, Chief Staff Officer of Site & Site International Foundation presented on the direction of Site on a global basis – the strategic and operational goals, and how the work of the Foundation is aligned to the Industry.

From redbutton.tv, Sam Stanton, Chief Experience Officer, helped everyone understand what social media really is and why you SHOULD care! Sam provided steps and a roadmap for attendees to engage and be successful in utilizing social media at events along with how/why you need to manage your digital reputation.



Our closing keynote was Stuart Ellis-Myers, a.k.a. “Twitchy”. Twitchy has Tourette’s Syndrome and is living proof that anyone who overcomes overwhelming circumstances tends to develop extraordinary approaches to every day challenges – often achieving extraordinary results. Stuart inspires and moves people with humour and emotion. His messages are proven and powerful. Think about it – if a guy with Tourettes Syndrome can become a professional speaker, then what in the world is holding you back from achieving your goals and embracing your dreams!

The scope of Education Day would not be successful without the support of our Speakers who shared their time, knowledge and experience and we are grateful to them.



A huge thank you is due to our generous sponsors who make the day possible. Sincere thanks to:

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Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts

#### Venue Sponsor

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Fletcher Wright Associates  
Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau

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**Ellie MacPherson**  
**Director Education Day**

## Effective Leadership Strategy...a Young Leader's Perspective

Education Day was a fantastic day of learning put together by an outstanding committee of volunteers led by Ellie MacPherson. The topics were relevant, the speakers engaging and there was a great deal of fun had by all. One take away that resonated for me (among so many others) is the thought that leadership is not about hierarchy but about team work and helping others to be their best. According to Doug Keeley, **the most effective leaders, are the ones who engage the spirit, imagination, intellect, heart and hands of the people they are leading.** Whether you're in a leadership role, or looking to someone for guidance, meeting the needs of these five areas will ensure the success of any project. If you notice a colleague seems to be disengaged, a quick check of the status of these elements makes it easier to find a solution and get your team back on track.

As the new Director of Young Leaders, I look forward to putting this theory into practice to work with our excellent team and take the YL program to a new level. Watch for news about new YL events in 2014 and if you know someone who shows great potential in our industry, please contact me at [dalexander@meridican.com](mailto:dalexander@meridican.com). We are always looking to add to our roster!

**Diane Alexander**

## Education Day: Social Media in Action...

### Audience Engagement From The Guy in The Bow Tie

Sam Stanton is a memorable character. A guest speaker at the Site Canada Education Day, and a 'Bon Vivant' with a snappy bow tie, Sam told the story of his company [redbutton.tv](http://redbutton.tv) through a lens of social media applications.

Redbutton.tv works with Fortune 100 companies, supercharging their client's digital presence at large events. However, a key point Sam brought forward is that you don't have to be a big player to harness the power of social media in a business setting.

Sam showed a passion for applying basic social media tactics to the events that Site members plan and participate in every day.

Sam's message was simple; as the event curator, it is vitally important that you own, manage and participate in the online discussion that is taking place before, during and after your event.

Sam demonstrated the power of crowdsourcing (the act of collecting immediate responses from your audience) by encouraging the use of Twitter comments with the unique hash tag [#sitecanadaedday](https://twitter.com/sitecanadaedday).



Photos courtesy of The Image Commission

Participant's tweets were live streamed on screen at key points during the day's events. Tweets were coming in fast and furious as the audience took to describing the value they were getting from the various topics presented by guest speakers during the day. Extending beyond the cerebral learning, the crowd was very generous in the mouthwatering feedback provided on the afternoon coffee break and selection of snacks! #westincateringrocks

In fact, a number of sponsors and key Site members who were not able to physically attend joined in the Twitter conversation by following the Site Canada Day hash tag. This ability to broadcast a 'buzz' about your event, well beyond 'the ballroom' is a key teaching in Sam's tool kit.

Another key teaching from Sam is the need to have online interactions closely monitored. Not only may certain comments need to be 'filtered' for inappropriate content, but also the instant feedback received from your audience may allow you to thwart complaints. Providing an immediate response to a problem onsite could turn a negative situation around before the complaint leaves the venue floor.

When planning your online presence, choose easy, meaningful and searchable hash tags. Include the hash tag in all pre event communications. Incorporate online engagement during the sessions with survey's, contests or bragging rights for best tweet or photo. After your event, the hash tag lives on, allowing for an easy search for content or fact checking. You may want to use the same hash tag for multiple events to build momentum and create an easy 'go to' for participants.

The most important lesson of Sam's talk revolved around the need for 'VIP's' to be participating fully in the online discussion. This includes event sponsors, senior executives and the event coordinators. Listen intently to your audience – they are sharing invaluable information with you, in real time.

Taking it upon himself to walk the walk, Sam engaged with the audience on Twitter via @samstanton. After his talk, Sam continued to answer questions, and provoked online interaction by putting forward probing questions.

The hard dollar cost to operate via a free platform like Twitter is low. Data plans may be required for events outside of the participant's home country. The value gained by the ongoing output of audience participation? Priceless.

Dallyce Macas

## Site Canada Awards \$6750 in Scholarships to Members and Students

Each year, Site Canada awards two scholarships to full time students who are enrolled in a post secondary tourism or hospitality program. This year, the Site Canada Scholarship committee has selected two outstanding students:



Photos courtesy of The Image Commission

**Jan Navarro** is in his final year of the Tourism Marketing Diploma at B.C. Institute of Technology. Complementing his studies, Jan works part time at the Vancouver Convention Centre, gaining hands-on work experience in the industry. In his spare time, he volunteers as Director of Advertising for the Marketing Association Chapter at the Institute.

**Erica Danielsson** is an International Student, from Sweden who is currently enrolled at Niagara College. Erica has already received two Honour Standing Awards from the college in her short time there. This Fall, she volunteered at the Niagara Grape and Wine festival providing her with invaluable and hands-on experience with the events industry. Erica is in her second year of the Bachelor of Applied Business - Hospitality Operations Management program.

Congratulations to both students. Site Canada wishes you a successful year ahead.

Site Canada also awarded three scholarships to our members to attend the Site Global Conference in Orlando in December. Congratulations to:

- **Natalie Lowe**, Celebrate Niagara
- **Diane Alexander**, Meridian Incentive Consultants
- **Melaya Horsten**, Ignite Magazine

Two of these award winners this year are Site Canada Young Leaders, a testament to the strength, the commitment, and the future of our industry.

I would like to thank the Scholarship committee for their time and commitment with the scholarship selection process. The committee consisted of

- **Joe Orecchio**, Road Ahead Meetings and Events
- **Debbie Cotton Burinski**, Event Spectrum Inc.
- **Jonathan Buchwald**, PRIME Strategies, Inc.
- **Heather Douglas**, Meridian Incentive Consultants

Joanne Keating

Scholarship Committee Chair

# A Perspective For 2014: When values, vision and purpose in individuals and organizations come together

As the series of 2013 industry trade shows comes to a close, there have been some very interesting and significant facts that have emerged as directions and trends for 2014. Both IMEX America in Las Vegas in October, and EIBTM in Barcelona in November continue as the premier organizations to showcase the profession of meetings and incentives. They have invested heavily into education as a cornerstone of moving the industry forward, as well as mastering the opportunity for potential buyers to be hosted and to get exposure in one place of 'the wonderful world of incentives'.

**IMEX America** came to Las Vegas for the third year, and showed significant growth in suppliers and buyers alike. The scheduled appointment process, pioneered by IMEX, grew 27%, with a staggering 50,000 appointments over the three days of the show. A great contributor to rebuilding the strength and confidence in incentive travel, IMEX is very good at ensuring our industry gets outstanding press and visibility in corporate and government circles. This year IMEX hosted a Travel Association Policymakers Forum as well as an Executive Meetings Forum which attracted many top corporate meeting planners from around North America. Both of these are excellent examples of positive visibility for meetings and incentives. Additionally, the Education sessions through Smart Monday, and in small pod forums on the show floor gave buyers and suppliers alike superb opportunities for personal growth and learning. Site Global led some of these sessions which were very well received.

Based on its eyes and ears in both Europe and North America through IMEX in Frankfurt and IMEX America, IMEX offered some very interesting Industry predictions for 2014. More details can be seen in its press release at <http://www.imexamerica.com/press/news-releases/imex-news-releases/>



Photos courtesy of IMEX America

## 1. Content Gets Bigger as Attention Spans Grow Shorter

Expect meetings and event content to be delivered in ever more entertaining, diverse and digestible pieces. Meetings and events become multi-faceted and multi-dimensional for participants on and off-site. "The attention span of attendees is a big factor. The tolerance for a YouTube video is 60 seconds and it's done! That's a big challenge...both at the physical live event and online."

## 2. Happiness is Hip

The big watchword for working lives in the 90s and new millennium was 'work/life balance'. In 2014 this shifts to 'workplace spirituality'. A growing number of organizations recognize that employee loyalty and motivation hinges on a convergence of personal values with corporate ones. Think of happiness as a science that can be applied at work. "When values, vision and purpose in individuals and organizations come together, the impact can be so positive, and it's about much more than a happy worker being a productive worker."



Photos courtesy of IMEX America

## 3. Technology Connects the Dots

Convergence and connectivity. Both will be the next big technology wins the meetings industry strives for in 2014. Many big technology advances have been made, now they need to be managed. The future is "not about more technology but how that technology is delivered."

## 4. Social Media Shifts Up, Out and Everywhere

According to Sam Stanton, President of redbutton.tv, who presented a Site Canada's Education Day "Everyone's had their first go at social media. Now it's time for phase two; expect to see some really cool crossover where participants who are highly social at home find they can still behave that way at an event." In 2014 social begins to play a more meaningful and measurable part in marketing and communications strategies across the meetings and events industry.

## 5. "Glocal" – Helping Hands on Your Doorstep

There is a growing sustainability trend: keeping it local. Where once the international nature of the meetings industry meant thousands of opportunities to 'do good and give back' in far flung corners of the world, the trend now is to reach out to help those right on your doorstep.

## 6. Meetings Sector as Leading Economic Indicator

Could 2014 be the year when the meetings and events industry is finally recognized as an important economic indicator? Economic impact studies are now commonplace in at least five

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### ...Perspective 2014 continued

mature markets, including Canada. It's most important to be engaged with government to influence decisions and to avoid 'if you're not at the table, then you're on the menu.' As Dan Berger, CEO of Social Tables declared "Those of us in the industry know that when meetings and events start to rise they are the pulse of growth."

#### 7. Workplace diversity

The big debate of 2014 looks set to be 'workplace diversity'. With so many generations working alongside each other (be it virtually or physically) and issues of gender balance and racial diversity still being addressed, organizations are having to look at their recruitment and talent development strategies with more creativity, and awareness.

These are fascinating observations, and typical of the leadership that IMEX provides.



Photos courtesy of EIBTM

Equally interesting are the developments at the EIBTM show in Barcelona. Like IMEX, it has an excellent hosted buyer program and scheduled appointments format, as well as strong education and networking opportunities. Also, like IMEX, EIBTM publishes a daily show report which has many interesting and up-to-the-minute developments. Now, EIBTM has taken it one step further by putting these daily reports on-line...a very interesting situation for those of us who were unable to attend the show in Barcelona. <http://www.eibtm.com/Onsite-Home/Official-Show-Daily-Opportunities/>

With its strength across all continents including AIBTM in North America, and CIBTM in China, EIBTM in Europe has observed some trends of their own for 2014 that are helpful to us, and complementary to those from IMEX. [http://www.eibtm.com/en/search-results/?epslanguage=en&kw=trendsx\\$px\\$wwatch#](http://www.eibtm.com/en/search-results/?epslanguage=en&kw=trendsx$px$wwatch#)

#### 1. Back in business.

The market is still very fragile, but leading into 2014, meetings, events and business travel will be critical drivers assisting organizations in their efforts to reach their strategic business objectives and effectively communicate with their employees, customers and partners worldwide."

#### 2. Trend switch

2013 has seen a double switch in the economic trend which had prevailed since 2008: "Advanced" economies have got stronger even as emerging markets were getting shakier, with India subject to lower growth, higher external deficit and high inflation;

Brazil as the "most volatile" of BRIC nations. China, despite some doubts about its stability, will remain the powerhouse of the world. Meanwhile, the US is back on the growth track and the Euro zone seems to be getting to positive territory, with improved investment, exports, consumption, and most of all, fading doubts about the survival of the Euro.



Photos courtesy of EIBTM

#### 3. Better corporate events

Companies are "sitting on stockpiles of cash" but were unwilling to spend it. This is changing. Over the past 12 months, there have been indications that they are loosening their purse-strings and boosting their spending on events. MPI's Business Barometer is among the many sources to underline this trend, noting that "meetings industry business conditions continue to improve due to perceived economic stability". (Vlad's note: this may be the situation in general, but it is critical to understand each client's position. Even though at Corporate Board level some Companies may be 'cash rich', it does not mean that internal departmental budgets will reflect that position. At department level, budgets can still be very tight and constrained).

#### 4. Associations

Optimism in this segment is also clearly strengthening, with, for instance, MPI's barometer indicating a much more positive outlook than in early 2013, noting, especially, a strengthening of the European market.

#### 5. Incentive is back

The image problems of the incentive market seem to be ending, and both Site and the Incentive Research Foundation see a positive outlook for the coming one to three years. The share of professionals seeing a positive outlook grew from 43% to 56% in a year (IRF).

#### 6. A seller's market?

Demand for meetings will grow steadily, predicts moderate meeting price increases across the board. It adds that, with a year of improved demand under their belts, hotels will look to increase meeting rates. There could be less availability for key dates, which will require earlier client scheduling, a greater need for client flexibility on dates, and rate increases.

(Vlad's note: this is exactly as commented at Site Canada Education Day by Michael Dominguez, SVP, MGM Resorts).

These are some interesting insights to be sure. Everything will have more meaning when it becomes important to you and when values, vision and purpose in individuals and organizations come together!

Vlad Haltigin, CITE



## BEICC...let's support tourism in Canada!

Alarming new statistics have just been published that Canada's tourism industry has fallen in world tourism rankings to 18th place. Just a few years ago, Canada was 2nd only to Italy as a destination. What's worse? The number of international travelers to Canada has dropped 20% since 2000.

What are the reasons for such a dramatic change? There are likely many.

Based on recent research by Deloitte, [http://www.deloitte.com/view/en\\_CA/ca/insights/ideas/increase-in-tourism-to-canada-boosts-exports/index.htm](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_CA/ca/insights/ideas/increase-in-tourism-to-canada-boosts-exports/index.htm) comments like these have also been made by SKIFT, the daily on-line industry news service.

'While Canada remains a recognized and respected brand in international country rankings, it has been less successful at using its brand to attract travelers. Among the biggest reasons for this decline is that tourism hasn't been a national priority for the country for a long time now, either for the Government or the businesses in the country.'

The time has come for the BEICC (Business Events Industry Coalition of Canada) to partner with TICO (Travel Industry Council of Ontario) and other industry associations across Canada to lobby hard with MP's and with TIAC (Tourism Industry Association of Canada) to put pressure on the Federal Ministry of Trade, Tourism Sector, and to express our concern at the highest levels.

It isn't that the CTC (Canadian Tourism Commission) has been negligent. On the contrary, Michelle Mackenzie and her team are always searching for new ways to promote Canada, and are constantly shown to be one of the very best tourism brands in the world. However, they are forced by budget considerations to focus their marketing and promotion away from traditional markets, such as US, UK, Germany, France, and Australia, in order not to be left behind in the fast growing markets for tourism e.g. the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China).

When will the Feds understand the importance of tourism to the Canadian economy? According to the Deloitte report, consider these figures:

- 'The Canadian tourism sector employs over 600,000 people.
- It generated \$22.7 billion in government revenue for 2011.
- It accounted for 2% of Canada's 2011 GDP.

Those figures don't include the indirect impact of tourism on the economy. For example:

- Data from Statistics Canada indicates that a \$100-million increase in tourism revenues would generate \$69 million in indirect economic output through Canadian businesses in other sectors. This is more than the indirect output than would be generated from an equivalent increase in revenues for a number of other sectors including the following:
  - Automotive manufacturing: \$51 million.
  - Mining: \$50 million.
  - Oil and gas: \$41 million.'

One frequent statistic that the tourism industry uses is that tourism is larger than agriculture, forestry and mining combined, and Canada is known as a resource country! This bears thinking about!

Incidentally, USA share of tourism is around 2.6%, up to 30% higher than Canada's, while countries such as Mexico, even though they are more reliant on tourism are as high as 14% of GDP. There are hundreds of thousands of jobs, and billions of dollars at stake here in Canada, yet the Feds still don't get it!

To show that influence can be derived from strong lobbying, IMEX America in their Policymakers Forum made us aware that Roger Dow, President and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association reported on recent progress made in building understanding of the industry, "Six to seven years ago the travel industry was not all that relevant and was seen as more frivolous vs. other industries such as manufacturing, technology and healthcare. This time, when the Government shut down the White House, they first called the U.S. Travel Association to come in for a meeting and asked us our thoughts on the impact that could be expected to the tourism sector."

'There are several other considerations for Government. Flying in and out of Canada has been expensive; its air travel sector has high base fares, fees and taxes, all of which conspire to make Canada a less desirable destination. The government's Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications has recommended phasing out airport ground rents over the short term, and transferring airport ownership to airport authorities over the long term. These changes would help lower fares paid by travelers to Canadian airports, and create incentives for new airport development projects.

The country may also have to reform its visa issuance, where long wait times and labour disputes are making Canada inaccessible for many travelers.

And it may be more trouble ahead before it can get better: Canada also has an aging population, which means a looming labour shortage for Canadian businesses. The industry will have to think of new ways to offer career growth and development opportunities that attract and retain talent.

Besides the emerging economies of Asia and Latin America, the youth traveler demographic has been rising steadily, and yet Canada has done little to appeal to them and create a more exciting and young brand to attract youth travelers. Obviously, to regain its standing, Canada will have to create new products that appeal to new demographics and meet the needs of travelers from a range of cultural and geographic backgrounds.'

It is with great thanks to Deloitte and SKIFT that these vital facts have become known.

So, this is our opportunity to influence Government some more. With our own Site Canada member, and Past-President, Joe Orecchio, now heading up BEICC in 2014, there is an opportunity to leverage our influence on the tourism industry as the whole. Vlad Haltigin, CITE, will be the Site Canada Board member on the BEICC council. Your ideas and thoughts to both Joe and Vlad will be most welcome any time.

**Vlad Haltigin, CITE**

## An international friend is recognized by the industry

For those of us who have been around the incentives business for a few years or more, there are several legendary names that immediately spring to mind. In Canada, Don Brommet, Duff Shaw, and the late Moira Hearn, who were honored at our recent 40th Anniversary celebration play a very special part.

In the Site Global community, there is no bigger name than that of Patrick Delaney, one of the founders of Ovation DMC in Dublin, Ireland. Patrick is an incredibly knowledgeable dean of our business, whose Irish brogue and stories are legendary, yet with the personality, twinkling smile and great business sense to create many special moments over the years for his clients and employees alike. With this Irish ancestry he is never short of the mastery of language, using classical words, amusing recollections, and poignant tributes...each at precisely the right moment. Who of us in Canada can forget his moving eulogy to Moira Hearn last year.

So, it is with great joy that we see that Patrick was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the recent EIBTM show in Barcelona. In the official pronouncement, the feeling for Patrick is just like ours. "His passion, commitment and enthusiasm are endless; he relentlessly and positively impacts our industry, and his unique style and personality have endeared him to the many people he has met and worked alongside during his travels around the world.

A thousand congratulations, Patrick, from your friends at Site Canada!...you are always welcome here.

Vlad Haltigin, CITE

## Bits and Bites

### Sponsorship opportunities!

Does your organization wish to sponsor a Site Canada event in 2014 or 2015? Watch out shortly for a sponsorship document, or reach out directly to Maria da Cunha, Director of Sponsorships [mdacunha@sympatico.ca](mailto:mdacunha@sympatico.ca), or to the Site Canada Office [office@sitecanada.org](mailto:office@sitecanada.org)

### Renew your Membership!

Your present Site membership expires at the end of 2013, so renew soon at <http://www.siteglobal.com/p/cm/ld/fid=122>. You can now pay for a 2-year membership -2014 and 2015 – at a 10% discount for both years. Group membership for multiple staff members is also available. Renew before 31 January 2014 and become a member of the Site Presidential Club, which gives you access to many exciting benefits. **And don't forget, Site Canada members who renew before December 9, 2013 are eligible to win a pair of tickets on Porter Airlines in a draw to be held at the Holiday Social on December 17!**

## Upcoming Events...Save the Date

Tuesday, December 17, 2013  
*Holiday Social*

February 2014 - Date TBA  
*Annual General Meeting*

Tuesday, April 8, 2014  
*Site Spring Social*  
*(replacing the Summer Social)*

Wednesday, May 14, 2104  
*Chapter Meeting*

Wednesday, July 16, 2014  
*Chapter Meeting*

Monday, August 18, 2014  
*Site Canada Golf Tournament*

## Members Musings

### Welcome New Site Canada Members

A very warm welcome to our newest Site members:

<b>Christopher Carpenter</b>	The Edwardian Group London
<b>Erica Danielsson</b>	Niagara College
<b>Jan Navarro</b>	BCIT
<b>Ian Tillson</b>	Waterloo Investment Holdings
<b>Li Yan</b>	Topline Travel International

## Final Countdown to the 2013 Site Global Conference in Orlando.

Next week Loews Portofino Orlando will host 425 Site members from around the world. This year we have representatives from over 48 countries. This demonstrates the global reach of Site and the global footprint Site has achieved over the years. Canada has 17 members attending. Pam Graham, President and Jennifer Glynn, President-Elect will participate in Chapter Leaders meetings prior to the conference to share and gain knowledge from other Chapters.

Pam and Jenn will also be joined at the conference by our 3 scholarship winners- Melaya Horsten, Natalie Lowe and Diane Alexander. We look forward to sharing our feedback on the conference in our next edition of Sitelines.