

Comments on the IHIF and ITB Conferences

Comments on the Investment Conference

The Investment Conference started with a group of highly noted economists whom from the beginning preached “*doom and gloom*” for our industry, especially in Europe; or as was said “Europe only moves forward at gun point”. But it does not take an economist to figure that out especially when at the end of their scary prediction they said “we could be wrong?”

Then came the CEO’s to share their thoughts on the future.

- Chris Nassetta, President & CEO Hilton Worldwide
- Richard Solomons, Chief Executive Officer, IHG
- Arne Sorenson, President & CEO, Marriott International Inc.
- Frits van Paasschen, President & CEO, Starwood Hotels & Resorts



After an hour of very positive conversation we all felt warm and cuddly and could go home and kiss our family knowing that the hotel world was safe in their good hands.

There were also some interesting statements made by the CEO’s regarding a “one global visa policy and corporate espionage”. They gave birth to some “*buzz words*” that I liked.

- Earning Economic Growth
- Low Hanging Fruit
- Line of Sight
- Mobilized Leadership Team
- Great Career Drivers
- Black Swans/uncertainty
- Centre of Gravity

Overall, the Investment Conference didn’t shed much light on the future other than the fact that “the pendulum is swinging East” referring to the development in the Far East which is driving the hotel industry.

Comments on the ITB

I think the ITB is two days too long. The show starts on Wednesday and continues till Sunday which is 5 days a long period for a trade show; but with really only two business days, Wednesday and Thursday. Since Friday is “Jump Off” day for Europeans to go home for the weekend (they don’t get paid for working on weekends) and other cultures where their weekend starts on Friday so they are gone too. Saturday and Sunday are for students, and visitors who are looking for retail travel.

If the show was to start on Tuesday it would give us three solid business days, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Friday could still be the getaway day and Saturday would be a great day for students and those who wanted to fill their bushels with brochures that most companies want to give away rather than drag them back around the world.

I also felt that the amount of traffic at the ITB & IHIF was not as great as previous years, perhaps because companies either decided not to come this year or to cut back on the amount of employees they send. What was your opinion?

