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ORGANISERS WORKING GROUP

▶▶ **“JUST ONE”**
In many ways, 2008 will be a year to remember. (Many would say a year to forget!) But, for IELA, I believe it was, indeed, a good year. Our new Chairman “Elect”, Greg Keh was confirmed to assume that position in 2009 – a very good move for IELA!

And the very capable Chairs of the Training, Standards and Customs Committees, Achim Lotzwick, Neil Goatcher and Peter Fritz, have turned over their responsibilities to Jim Kelty, Sabine Schlosser and Tijen Ozer: again, a very fortunate transfer of responsibility for IELA, my compliments to all.

Also, my sincere compliments to IELA’s current Chairman, Phil Powell, for his service. I would cite particularly, among other accomplishments, his guidance of the IELA Secretariat transition under his “watch”.

And, it is with the establishment of the new Secretariat in 2008 that, I believe, the Organisers Working Group, perhaps, may be the greatest beneficiary. Trevor Foley, Declan Gane and company bring their industry organiser, association management experience and much more to the Organisers Working Group efforts. Their quality and potential were on display in Melbourne. They’re bringing their established industry relationships to the “IELA table” now. Much of this is a net gain in recognition for IELA – work already accomplished for us.

The Secretariat’s plans to support and bolster our theme of “The Mission is Recognition” are ambitious and proactive. Already, their e-mail newsletters and PR pieces are having an impact. I, for one, can confirm that UniGroup has received business (and so our IELA partners) as a direct, measurable result of the new IELA links we have established with industry associations and from the communications being produced by Declan and the

new Secretariat.

The Secretariat’s plan for the new IELA web site is very encouraging. It will place IELA even more firmly in the “Industry’s eye” as the premier International Exhibition Logistic Industry Association.

I know we all believe in the need to have a strong IELA presence on the Internet. This is nothing new. But, forgive me, and allow me to once again reaffirm the need for a strong, strategic IELA presence on the Net.

Since it’s very topical in the US right now, I’ll cite the example of Barack Obama. Two years ago, Mr Obama was a relatively unknown politician in the US. Now the President of the United States. How did he accomplish this in two years? Of course, there are numerous reasons, but here’s one.

Among much acclaim, Obama received an endorsement from Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google. Schmidt not only vouched for Obama as a candidate for the Oval office, but deadpanned that the Candidate might be qualified to take the reins at the Googleplex. “These guys (Obama’s team) managed to hire 3,000 people, create a billion dollars in revenue, and recruit a million volunteers in two years. Those numbers are faster than Google’s – and Google was the fastest thing I’ve ever seen.” Without speculating, it’s not much of a stretch to say that Barack Obama may be the first President of the US to be elected, in good measure, because of the Internet.

Obviously, IELA is not in the business of running a political campaign or search engine. But the Organiser Working Group is in the business of spreading the IELA Brand. So, here’s a point to consider. If IELA, for example, could emulate and produce even 1/10 of 1% of the success Obama achieved with his Net strategy, IELA could, at least, double our industry exposure next year which = more business for IELA member companies.

The new Secretariat, in conjunction with the excellent work being produced by the IELA Organiser Working Group members, are opening doors of recognition. But there could and should be more activity. All IELA members can assist. We need every IELA member to “sign on” and help create IELA exposure within our industry. Why not? It enhances the value of our IELA membership!

How do we “sign on”? Well, there is a modest proposal and request: we ask that, in 2009, each individual IELA member create ONE website link with an organiser, or an industry association, or publication or industry-related governmental agency. JUST ONE – THAT’S IT – nothing more or nothing less!

But before you create JUST ONE link, devote a little time here at the beginning of ‘09, to think about, consider and suggest what each of you, your clients and colleagues would like to see in the new IELA web site. Let’s get those ideas to Declan. If we’re going to restructure the site let’s do it right in the first place. Let’s make our site an attractive “sell”. Anytime our web site is reviewed, there is a very good possibility that a “seed for business” is planted.

A famous author once wrote, “You can count how many seeds are in the apple, but not how many apples are in the seed!” Hmmmmmm.....???

I expect that 2009 will be a challenging year for us. But we’ll be fine because the quality of IELA’s strength is in our numbers and our collaboration with each other. If the Organiser Working Group can do nothing more in ‘09 than prompt “JUST ONE” to a successful completion, I’d take it. (I know, however, that we can and will do more). But, having said that, I believe an encore will be expected and most appreciated for 2010. See you in London!