



## **IMEX America Launch Press Conference, Las Vegas, 28 October 2011**

### **Speech: Ray Bloom, Chairman of the IMEX Group**

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank-you for joining us this morning.

I am delighted today, to be officially launching IMEX America – America’s new worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events. IMEX America will take place at the Sands Expo at the Venetian/Palazzo from 11 – 13 October 2011 and will be a part of the IMEX Group of exhibitions which are characterized by their keen business-focus, international hosted buyer programmes and industry-wide collaboration.

I have long felt that there was a need for a new dedicated and business-focused show in the US. Earlier this year, we began conversations with the industry about the level of interest and are delighted that MPI will be the Strategic Partner of IMEX America. As one of the largest associations worldwide for the meetings industry, MPI is focused on building a rich global community through knowledge and ideas, relationships and marketplaces. MPI’s strategic partnership with IMEX America fulfils its objectives at the same time as giving enormous strength to the IMEX America offering. We are already working closely with MPI on a range of global initiatives, including our successful Future Leaders Forum and we look forward to developing new strategies for the US market in the coming months. Bruce will be offering a few remarks on MPI’s involvement shortly.

Like IMEX in Frankfurt, IMEX America is a show for the entire meetings and incentive travel industry. As well as MPI’s Strategic Partnership, we are delighted to also have the support and backing of the major industry trade associations. Site –the leading association worldwide for incentive travel and motivational events – will be holding their 2011 Annual Conference

immediately following the first IMEX America, from 13 – 15 October. ICCA – the International Congress & Convention Association - will be officially supporting the show, as well as DMAI – Destination Marketing Association International ; AIPC – the International Association of Congress Centres and ECM – European Cities Marketing. We will be working closely with them all on a range of marketing and educational initiatives. ASAE – the American Society of Association Executives – will be holding an association-led educational event on the day preceding IMEX America. We expect to work closely with all of the industry associations and will be announcing further partnerships in the coming months.

IMEX America will benefit from the largest-scale hosted buyer programme to be delivered in North America, where top meetings and incentive buyers from across the US and the world travel and stay free as our guests. For the inaugural show in 2011, we are forecasting 1,500 such hosted buyers, of whom 80% will originate from within North America, the balance arriving from Europe, Asia and Latin America. A range of special travel and accommodation packages, together with large-scale visitor marketing campaigns are expected to attract several thousand more key decision-makers from across the country.

To support the show we will be opening a new office in Chicago, managed by IMEX America's US-based President, Kimberly Meyer – an accomplished and highly experienced meetings industry executive.

We are thrilled that IMEX America's home will be here in Las Vegas – one of the leading destinations worldwide for the meetings and incentive travel industry. With more than 140,000 hotel rooms, plus superb transport connections from across the US and the growing direct international links; we are confident that Las Vegas will provide IMEX America with a truly outstanding, long-term home. We are also delighted to be partnering with the Sands Expo and the Venetian/Palazzo Meetings- one of the largest and most modern convention centers in Las Vegas. We will be working extremely closely with both the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority and the Venetian/Palazzo over the coming months and years to ensure that the IMEX America experience is both faultlessly executed as well as extremely enjoyable.

We are also looking forward to working with other hotels in the city to ensure that both buyers and exhibitors are able to take full advantage of all that Las Vegas has to offer.

The IMEX model is one which drives the industry debate through a range of New Vision initiatives designed to address the key issues, drive growth and stimulate new ideas. IMEX America will also reflect these core values with an outstanding educational programme led by the industry trade associations, as well as a focus on environmental sustainability– made possible through the best practices adopted by our partners at the Sands Expo. Other initiatives will include the largest IMEX-MPI Future Leaders Forum to take place in North America - a programme which has already introduced over 3,000 students worldwide to our industry. Raising the profile of the industry amongst political leaders and the corporate world has always been fundamental to IMEX's vision. Now, through IMEX America, we will align ourselves closely with others in the US industry who share the same mission, adding our voice and backing to relevant campaigns.

We are truly excited to be launching IMEX America in Las Vegas for the benefit of the worldwide meetings and incentive travel community. We are looking forward to October 2011.

I would now like to handover to Bruce MacMillan, President and CEO of MPI.

- Ends.