



## **IMEX-MPI Future Leaders Forum Reykjavik, Iceland**

### **Speaker Bios**

#### **Tom Hulton**

##### **Director International Relations – IMEX**

Tom Hulton joined the international advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather in 1970 following a short career in the British army. With O&M, he was based in London and Singapore directing a number of hotel and tourism accounts.

He joined Trusthouse Forte Hotels for a period of 8 years as Director of Sales for the Asia Pacific and Middle East. During this time, he was also Director of Sales and Marketing at Grosvenor House Hotel in London. In 1985, Tom Hulton joined Supranational Hotels in London as Managing Director and over a period of seven years, developed this reservation and marketing hotel consortia into the third largest in the world.

Following three years as Secretary General of the International Hotel Association based in Paris, he joined the International Congress and Convention Association as Chief Executive Officer based in Amsterdam. In July 2002 and after nearly eight years with ICCA, Tom Hulton decided to return to the UK and set up his own consultancy.

He currently works with IMEX as Director of International Relations, with special responsibilities, for helping to raise the political profile of business tourism within Government circles in Europe. He has also developed the IMEX Future Leaders Forum and the Professional Development Pavilion.

#### **Paul Flackett**

##### **Managing Director, IMEX**

Paul Flackett has been involved in the M&IT industry for 30 years as an organizer of conferences and events, and in the media field. Paul joined EIBTM at its launch and Managing Director until it was sold to Reed Travel Exhibitions. In May 1999, he left Reed to set up his own company: pf.redseven and in September 2001, jointly announced with Ray Bloom the launch of IMEX and became its Managing Director.

Paul has been a SITE member since 1988 serving on the Great Britain and Ireland Chapter and International Board of Directors. He gained the CITE qualification in 1994, became International President in 1995 and President of the SITE Foundation in 2002 – 2004.

In 1998, Paul was voted 'Personality of the Year' by Meetings & Incentive Travel magazine and received the prestigious ICCA Moises Schuster award in 2003. He has given numerous seminars across the Globe on industry topics. His hobbies are football, specifically Manchester United and Rock music.

**Lutz P. Vogt,  
Managing Director, GCB German Convention Bureau e.V.**

Since July 2001 Lutz P. Vogt (57) is the Managing Director of the GCB German Convention Bureau. The GCB markets Germany as a destination for conventions, meetings, events and incentives both on a national and international level, and is the place to contact for anybody planning an event in Germany.

Its 250 members include leading hotels, convention centres, destinations, car hire firms, event agencies and service providers of the German meetings and convention industry. Strategic partners of the GCB are Lufthansa, Deutsche Bahn and German National Tourist Board. The GCB is an interface between organisers of meetings and conventions and suppliers of the German meetings market, offers advice and support for planning and organising events, and provides contacts and addresses. Its website <http://www.germany-meetings.com> features an online search facility for meeting venues, newsletter, Germany guide and a lot more.

Before joining the GCB, Lutz P. Vogt held various positions with Lufthansa German Airlines for 20 years, most recently as the group officer for Expo 2000. As a regional director and in the marketing department he managed operations in northern Europe, China, the Near and Middle East as well as Great Britain.

Even during his studies in Cologne, Mr Vogt, originally from Saxony, laid the foundations for his international career with his work at Inter Naciones and by organising and leading journeys to over 40 countries.

**Birkir Holm Gudnason  
CEO of Icelandair**

Birkir Holm Gudnason was appointed CEO of Icelandair in May 2008. Birkir has been with Icelandair for 9 years - his latest position being General Manager, Scandinavia. His first position was Sales Manager for Iceland, then as Sales Manager in North America, then as General Manager for Central Europe situated in Frankfurt and from 2006 – 2008 as General Manager for Scandinavia situated in Copenhagen.

He holds a Bsc degree in business Economics and Administration from Aalborg University in Denmark in 1998 and an MBA degree in International Business Economics from Aalborg University in Denmark in 2000.

**Gunnar Rafn Birgisson  
CEO and owner of Atlantik DMC**

Born in 1961. Married with three sons. Wife Thora Bjork Schram and boys Hjalti Rafn (23), Gunnar Steinn (13) and Birgir Rafn (9).

Atlantik is a family run business and Gunnar Rafn is the Managing Director of the company. Atlantik is a leading tour operator in Iceland with some 15 permanent staff. Atlantik is a well established DMC with 6 project managers dedicated for the MICE market and the company has some 30 years of history in the business.

Gunnar graduated from University of Minnesota in 1987 with an MBA degree in Marketing and Service Operations and has also a business degree in Finance from the University of Iceland.

Gunnar has been running Atlantik for the last 10 years, but before that he was Incoming Director at Samvinn Travel for 6 years, Marketing Manager at the Trade Council of Iceland for three years and Marketing Manager at Eimskip shipping company for nearly three years.

**Patrick M. Delaney**  
**Managing Director of Ovation Global DMC,**

Ovation Global DMC is a network of DMCs operating in 19 key destinations around the EU, Gulf States of the Middle East and China. The thought-leader in destination management, Ovation Global DMC draws on the experience of expert local teams in delivering consistent world class services at offices in Abu Dhabi/Dubai, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Copenhagen, Czech Republic, China, France, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong Macau, Italy, Ireland, Scandinavia, Shanghai, Spain, Switzerland and UK

Patrick has extensive experience in the meeting, incentive and travel industry having worked in the hotel and tourism sectors in Canada, Italy, Ireland and North America before founding Ovation Group (formerly Delaney Marketing) with Padraic Gilligan in 1993. In North America he headed up the marketing function of the Irish Tourist Board.

Current President of AIPCO (Association of Irish Professional Conference Organisers) Delaney is a former International President of the Society of Incentive & Travel Executives (SITE) and is also a past President of SITE Foundation. He holds a degree in Hotel and Catering Management and a BSc in Business Studies from Trinity College Dublin, as well as the prestigious designation CITE, Certified Incentive Travel Executive and the CMM, Certified Meeting Manager from MPI, Meeting Professionals International. He is a Fellow of the Irish Hotel & Catering Institute, the Marketing Institute of Ireland as well as attaining awards from EIBTM, IT&ME and IMEX the meeting and incentive industry's premier shows.

A highly sought after industry speaker, Patrick has given training seminars in the meetings and incentives business and in tourism and marketing across North and South America, Asia and Europe.

**Supported by:**



**The Icelandic Travel Industry Association**