

MAARTEN VANNESTE

BIO: April 2005

Maarten Vanneste was born on April 8 in 1963 in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium as the third of five children from Werner, a blind piano tuner and Rita, a supporting housewife.

On April 1st 1982 still at the age of 18 he started ABBIT VIDEO in his native province town Turnhout in Belgium. With a small start-up capital of 500.000Bef (12.395€)

He invested in a camera, a portable VHS recorder and a 2-machine VHS editing system. With some luck, he survived the first years by organising video shows in clubs and providing technical support for road shows with a Belgian TV celebrity. Soon the first employee was hired and the company grew with a steady 10% per year towards an audiovisual company.

Janssen Pharmaceutica, a multinational in the region, challenged the company and made it focus towards professional meeting and conference support: in 1998 Abbit Meeting Support was born.

In 1998 Maarten moved the company to an old industrial building. On 1/1/1999 in the early morning, the ltd ABBIT BVBA was founded as the first ever LTD to be founded in Euros. 1999 shares of 10 Euro to be precise. That year Maarten became member of MPI (Meeting Professionals International) and the company grew with 77%. In 2005 a record growth of 80% was achieved. Abbit currently employs 13 fulltime and has a turnover of 2 million Euro doing 66% export and almost 50% for US based clients.

Maarten attained his CMM (Global Certification in Meetings Management) from MPI in 2004.

AWARDS

Maarten Vanneste won the IMEX Academy award 2005 for "...going beyond the call of duty to promote change, encourage high standards in the meetings industry."

MEMBERSHIPS AND VOLUNTARY WORK

MPI: Maarten is an active member of MPI since 1999:

Member of following committees:

- International Membership Committee 2002-2003
- ICLC 2005-2006 (International Chapter Leadership Council)
- PDSG 2006 – 2007 (Professional Development Strategic Group)
- International Relations Committee of MPI New York 2003-2004
- Educational Subcommittee for the PEC-E conference in 2002, 2003, 2004

Other MPI engagements

- Co-author of MPI e-Learning Series "Fundamentals of Audio-Visual " 2003
- Board member of MPI Belgium 2000 - 2005
- President of MPI Belgium in 2003-2004

CIC (Convention Industry Council)

2003: Writer of a technology chapter in the CMP International manual, 1st edition (CMP = Certified Meeting Professional)

2005: Member of the International Committee for the CMP Board of Directors

Maarten is also involved in many other associations as a speaker, sponsor, participant, (ICCA, SITE, AC-Forum, EFCT and many national associations)

His active participation and sponsoring of tradeshows like EIBTM and IMEX, BTC, EMIF shows his dedication to this industry.

AREA OF EXPERTISE = MEETING SUPPORT

Improving meetings for Education, Networking and Motivation by strategic selection of Creative, Technical and Technological tools and services. (Not logistical activities) Making a strategic plan for meetings, defining key objectives, improving ROI, commoditising, innovating, regulatory issues in medical meetings, procurement relations...

Using the Meeting Support Matrix © to generate a mind shift with planners, building bridges between all the above and giving meeting planners a more important and more strategic role in meetings.