

Press release 14th October 2004

Discreet service in the "centre of power". The axica Congress and Convention Centre on Pariser Platz turns five

National and international politicians, ambassadors and royalty feel very much at ease at the axica. Over 300 events of outstanding quality and with the highest organisational demands have been hosted here over the last five years.

Past guests have included Prof. Dr. Roman Herzog, Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker, Gerhard Schröder, Hans Eichel, Dr. Guido Westerwelle, Dr. Günther Rexrodt, Dr. Angela Merkel, Walter Riester, Laurenz Meyer, Prof. Dr. Gesine Schwan, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, John Major, Madeleine Albright, Valéry Giscard D'Estaing and Lothar Späth.

The list of visitors including all the high-ranking representatives of the economy and the media who regularly attend symposiums, conferences, receptions and private functions here at the axica would be much longer. However, most of their names are never disclosed to the public. Their identities are in fact guarded as closely as the famed address book of Berlin's Countess Isa von Hardenberg! Suffice to say that those looking for exceptional service will do so on Pariser Platz, and that they will always find it at the axica. Discretion is the foremost virtue practised at the axica, closely followed by our fully professional security management.

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF BERLIN MITTE.

In the German capital, there are more than 90 professional operators of event locations. What sets the axica apart from the rest is its prime location, its much-lauded architecture, and all the commitments to excellence that come with this exquisite location.

Thousands of people visit the Brandenburg Gate every day. Many of these also take the opportunity to view the building designed by Californian star architect Frank O. Gehry - the DZ BANK building, home to the axica.

For buildings such as the American Center in Paris, the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein (Germany) and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Gehry has won the highest international awards. "The best thing I've ever done", is how Gehry describes the DZ BANK building. Indeed this is a masterpiece, a masterpiece that unfolds its creative potential in its interior design.

On days when the building is not used to host events, visitors are allowed into the entrance to view the inner spaces of this fascinating work of architectural

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art. There are nearly 900 visitors every day, which adds up to more than 1.5 million visitors over the last five years.

The interior courtyard presents a dynamic interrelationship of geometric and organic shapes. Designed as an atrium with a glass roof, the courtyard is home to the axica's conference and meeting rooms: Forum, Plenum, Auditorium and a number of conference spaces.

It is evident in the choice of building materials, natural lighting design, spatial layout and the colour scheme that Frank O. Gehry never once neglected his prime objective in designing the axica: to facilitate encounters between people. Gehry has created an "open house" for people with common greater goals – people who want to share their work, their successes and their lives. The axica represents the concept of commitment; it stimulates inspiration and encourages changes of perspective. This is the perfect location for evolving new ideas.

DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT

The bank's board of directors gave the 15-strong axica team, headed by the German-Scottish Managing Director Jochen A. Lohmar-McKinnon, the time and resources required to develop exactly the right profile for the centre and to lay the foundations for mid- and long-term development. Right from the beginning, the axica's creative heads have been aiming to provide "more" - more quality, more service, more dedication.

The resultant business model is one that is characterised by ongoing commitment. One single operator for a flawless range of services: the axica provides all the conceptual, organisational, gastronomic and technical services required for staging a successful premium event.

Since its opening five years ago, the axica has hosted more than 300 events – ample evidence of the Centre's role as a trusted event partner to its discerning clients.

The overly competitive pricing battles in the field of event hosting, a result of the negative economic tendencies of the last few years, have been consistently rejected by the axica. Our Congress and Convention Centre provides a premium service, not a discount product. This attitude also extends to outsourced services such as the event chauffeur service, hospitality and catering. Our team has managed to gather a very high level of quality and competence; the wishes of our clients, who expect nothing but the best, are met effectively and with transparent cost structures.

Because personal contact to high-ranking clients and the trust associated with

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this is paramount to the success of a high-class event, we have decided here on Pariser Platz to stop working together with unprofessional or badly managed agencies. We prefer to take care of our discerning clients directly – who in most cases will return themselves, or recommend us to others.

THE AXICA APPROACH IS TO ATTRACT, ENTERTAIN, AND KEEP CLIENTS. A member of the team right from the start, our Marketing and Sales Director Jadwiga S. Kusch puts the company philosophy like this: “As service-providing hosts, we are not just behind the scenes of an event – we are right at the centre of it! To us, business functions, political functions and social functions are high-class events, and we are committed to attend to every single service detail.” Our Convention Sales Director Nathalie Dahmann is another crucial team member who has been with us from the beginning – she is responsible for ensuring that the clients’ wishes and demands are met without causing any detriment to the building’s sophisticated architecture and interior.

A CAPITAL WITHOUT A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT?

Berlin is a first-choice destination when it comes to hosting congresses and conferences. However, seeing that operators of event locations are very directly involved in the promotion of the city they are part of, infrastructure deficiencies can be difficult to compensate even with the best business model. Being a capital without a major international airport certainly doesn’t make the international congress business with the US and Asia any easier.

The axica nevertheless has plenty of optimism for the future. Once all the construction sites have disappeared from the face of Pariser Platz, the location will become even more profitable. In comparison to many other European capitals, Berlin’s pricing structures are very attractive – the city should not be afraid to boldly step out and promote itself.

To the axica team, location signifies commitment: Berlin is the geographical centre of Europe, and Berlin Mitte is the centre of German politics. The axica logo symbolises this junction – a stylised name with a radiant red background and intersecting lines.

Our relationship to the British Embassy is excellent, and we are already looking forward to our American neighbours – who will finally commence building their new embassy in October.

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