



venues of excellence

NEWS | VIEWS | REVIEWS



BEST YEAR EVER!

An Excellent Year of
inspiration, growth,
and possibilities!

Our dedication to excellence, innovation, and collaboration will propel us towards new horizons, unlocking opportunities that will exceed your wildest expectations.

Together, let's create a year of remarkable achievements that will leave a lasting impact on our industry and beyond.

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Welcome to the first edition of our Venues of Excellence newsletter!

Firstly a massive thank you for your commitment to another membership year, we really value your ongoing support.

It has been an outstanding year for us in 22/23 and as we have discussed at the Member Forums we have seen our best year for enquiries and conversion in our 30 year history. This means as an organisation we can continue to reinvest in marketing initiatives for our members, grow the team and continually strive to bring in new and exciting events and initiatives and take the organisation from strength to strength.

Our Annual Conference in January at the fabulous Silverstone truly got everyone revved up and showed us just how unique and extraordinary each and every one of our members are. We have been delighted to welcome 13 venues since last June - all offering fantastic facilities and service.

- Hilton Garden Inn Silverstone
- Horwood House
- Lilleshall House and Gardens
- IXL Centre
- MTC Liverpool
- The HAC
- thestudio Birmingham
- thestudio Glasgow
- thestudio Manchester
- Warwick Conferences Central Campus Venues
- Warwick Conferences Scarman
- Warwick Conferences Radcliffe
- Winter Gardens Blackpool Conference Centre

To start our new membership year with a bang we are delighted to announce the Old Thorns Hotel and Resort are the latest members to join the consortium, which is set in 400 acres of picturesque Hampshire countryside with excellent conference and event space up to 500 delegates, complemented by an 18-hole golf course, health club and spa. Jo Da Silva and myself are also working on a great list of prospect venues, so watch this space for more news on these!

One of our great achievements is putting our stamp back on our Quality Strategy and I was delighted that one of our past Chair's, David Vaughton joined our team as our Quality Ambassador. David is making great progress with the quality assessments and we are receiving really excellent feedback about this process and how useful it is for you. David will be presenting the progress at the upcoming VOE Summer Forum.

We couldn't have achieved this level of success without the unwavering dedication of our extraordinary team members and the steadfast support of our members. Your trust and partnership have been instrumental in our journey, enabling us to surpass expectations, seize opportunities, and set new industry benchmarks.

It is your belief in us that fuels our drive to continuously improve and innovate, pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

We are honoured to have the opportunity to serve you and are grateful for your trust in our organisation. Our commitment to excellence remains a priority, and we will continue to invest in the resources, partnerships, and expertise needed to support your success.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. We are excited to continue this remarkable adventure with you all, as we create a future filled with excellent possibilities and great success.

Kind regards

Mandy Jennings Chief Executive Officer



The past year has seen some experience with massive changes in our industry, the economy, a shift in customer need and expectations and an evolution of our markets, creating new and exciting opportunities to be embraced and fulfilled into the future.

Your Advisory Group has been delighted with the growth in membership and the diversity of venues which this has brought to enrich the quality of the VOE family's collective value to our customers and in support of each other.

We are considerably benefitting from our journey to realise our vision to lead the industry which we are achieving through our headline strategic objectives of developing contemporary sales and marketing activities underpinned with quality being delivered to our stakeholder groups.

Your invaluable feedback continually informs our objectives and modus operandi, to ensure alignment to our customer and membership requirements.

We remain committed on your behalf, to sustainability and innovation and technology as vital components of our cultural offering, together with wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion, which are intrinsic in our beliefs and values.

Your participation in our community adds significantly to our collective profile and to your individual successes.

Stewart Elsmore Chair of the Advisory Group

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Sales and Business Development

At the heart of all we do is our aim to share the best sales and marketing opportunities we can for your business. Our venue find business has grown dramatically in 2022/23 with the largest enquiry levels and conversion in VOE history.

1,107 enquiries worth £9.72m, average enquiry value £8.8k

Confirmed 523 of these enquiries worth £2.25M which is conversion rate of 47% of enquiries

Our highest source of enquiries is from repeat clients and referrals

Industry segments - 95% of our business is direct via corporate, association, charity and government as the key sectors

With the increased commission converted we have been able to grow the venue find team and we were delighted to welcome Lindsey Smith as our newest recruit. This means that the entire team of six venue find agents now work the maximum hours available.

Nicola Jenkinson has been working hard to ensure we maximise the opportunities from our national and repeat clients. She has 18 accounts identified, who are now delivering £850K+ of revenue.

The #AgencyExcellence programme has ensured we capitalise on the great relationships we have with agency partners, attending agency events with MCOCO, AIEA and MIA to fly the flag for our members. We have just invested in a new database to enhance this activity and will be doing a telesales campaign over the next couple of months.

New VENUE FIND Team Member



Lindsey is excited to join the Venues of Excellence team as one of our Venue Finding Consultants.

With over 10 years' experience in various agencies across the industry, Lindsey has worked in a variety of roles supporting clients with accommodation, venue finding and full execution of events. Her passion sits with ensuring clients' events are a success and building relationships. Lindsey is looking forward to working closely with our member venues.

Lindsey Smith
Venue Finding Consultant

Marketing Initiatives and Exhibitions

Get ready to witness the power of our marketing initiatives and investments in exhibitions as we take the industry by storm!

We seek out the very best partnerships to showcase Venues of Excellence and you our member venues. By working with us, we can help you make your marketing budget go further. We look after the logistics of exhibitions and the organisation for our networking events, which lets your sales team concentrate on driving your business forward, maximising your sales pipeline.

ROI is important to us, so we thought we'd share the resounding success of The Meetings Show 2023....

- 12 Stand Partners representing 15 venues**
- 68 Confirmed Hosted Buyer Appointments for VOE**
- 508 Visitors to the VOE Stand**
- 310 Unique Buyers**

The business development team are following up all our leads and will share more information in due course.

Venues of Excellence had 9 enquiries from new venues interested in membership and held conversations with 4 venues with regards to their membership proposals.

“It was great to be a part of the Venues of Excellence stand at this year’s Meetings Show. As always there was great camaraderie between all of the venues represented and it’s always refreshing to see how well our values are aligned. The amount of pre-event preparation was obvious with over 500 visitors to the stand, a healthy appointment diary and some great enquiries from both new and existing clients alike.”

Julian Kettleborough,
Commercial Director, Studio Venues

Marketing Opportunities for 2023/24

EXHIBITION DATES

The BNC Show - 20th September 2023
The HAC, London

CHS Leeds – 23rd April 2024
Royal Armouries, Leeds

The Meetings Show – June 2024
ExCeL, London

LIST OF MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Venues of Excellence Venue Spotlight Package – Monthly in 2023/2024

Prestige Events Venues of Excellence Newsletter – September 2023

PA Life/Forum Events Venues of Excellence Newsletter – February 2024

Prestige Events Venues of Excellence Newsletter – April 2024

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Meet Up in London – November 2023

Meet Up in Birmingham – March 2024





20 24

**Attention,
Food & Beverage
Teams!**

Brace yourselves for
a culinary challenge
like never before!

**OUR ANNUAL COOK AND
SERVE CHALLENGE IS
BACK FOR 2024!**

wilsonvale
cateri n g m a n a g e m e n t



COOK & SERVE CHALLENGE

Saturday 27th April 2024

We are really excited about the Cook and Serve Challenge 2024. This event is truly a special date in the Venues of Excellence calendar and to see the awesome hospitality that our venues have is fantastic.

Once again, we are in partnership with Wilson Vale to coordinate the competition for the food and beverage teams which will see chefs and hospitality staff at all levels compete and learn from each other in a supportive and creative environment.

The competition sees kitchen and front of house teams battle it out in categories including best individual courses and best service in both junior and senior categories, as well as Champion Chef, Best Server, and the Advisory Group Chairman's Prize for Best Team.

The lunch competition will be followed by a dinner and awards ceremony.

Join us as we celebrate the art of cooking and exceptional service in this fantastic challenge!



2019
Champion Chef
Jack Jarman
College Court

The Champion
Dishes

Register your interest now for this event - email: christinepage@venuesofexcellence.co.uk

Quality Strategy and Assessments

For over 30 years, Venues of Excellence, previously Conference Centres of Excellence has operated as a leading UK sales and marketing consortium specifically focused on the conference and events market. The VOE key differentiator has always been its “promise of excellence” to customers, backed up by the bespoke quality criteria and audit which ensured each member was reviewed and approved on their ‘quality and service’ as part of the membership onboarding and throughout a venue’s membership.

At our Winter Forum, we launched our revised Quality Strategy, to take the consortium to its next business milestone. The Quality Pledge – “We will always strive to be excellent in everything we do” measures excellence for members against four ‘Pillars of Quality’ namely:

Customer Experience

A Great Place to Work

Efficient Operations

Business Planning

These pillars will enable the assessment to focus on the impact of customer satisfaction.

David Vaughton, one of our past VOE Chairs partnered with VOE as our independent Quality Ambassador. Over the past 6 months he has been pivotal to onboard the principles of the new Quality Assessment, and support future Quality Champions within the consortium to ensure audits are completed on member venues for the duration of their membership.

As a member you receive a complimentary quality assessment along with a report of best practice and recommendations from David. This has been really well received by our members and means we can credibly shout about our venues being excellent in both service and product.

Following our recent Quality Assessment **Renata Homer**, General Manager from Ashorne Hill, gave the following feedback on the process by saying:

“Thrilled to announce that we have just received a glowing report following our recent external quality assessment by David Vaughton in conjunction with Venues of Excellence. This was not just any venue quality assessment, but so much more. Venues of Excellence have introduced the four Pillars of Quality for assessment.”

“We will always strive to be excellent in everything we do”

Mandy reflecting on how well the Quality Strategy and Assessments are received by members feels: ***“It is critical VOE continues to strive for excellence and now we have such a diverse portfolio that we continue to develop our criteria and accreditation process, ensuring we have a continuous audit process to keep our venues at their “A” game and promote excellence.”***

As the rollout continues, David will be in touch with members to arrange their Quality Assessments, but if you have any queries or questions, then please contact Michelle Boyt, Membership Manager on michelleboyt@venuesofexcellence.co.uk

Network of Excellence

Welcome to our exclusive Network of Excellence, where connections flourish and opportunities abound.

Our network is a vibrant group that fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and growth. With a diverse community of industry leaders, professionals, and visionaries, VOE provides you with a platform to engage with like-minded individuals, exchange insights, and forge meaningful connections.

With this in mind, we have reviewed our previous “Buddy Scheme” and are relaunching this initiative as our new “Network of Excellence” programme, which will include the opportunity for all our members to have a senior level advocate from VOE to discuss their requirements, plus the option to join regional face to face events to share industry topics, and a new annual Peer to Peer event hosted by Venues of Excellence for the senior director in your business to join to share knowledge and exchange insights. Michelle will be sharing this as part of the calendar of events and your VOE advocate will be in touch to arrange a meeting with you soon.



Preferred Partner Programme and Supplier Directory

Our Preferred Partner Programme and Supplier Directory helps our venues source great hospitality products and services providers. Choosing from our partners can save you time and money when you are looking for key services to your venues.

Behind the scenes, Venues of Excellence forges great partnerships with our partners and here are just a few examples:

- **Wilson Vale** partner with us to manage the Cook and Serve Challenge
- **View It 360°** attend our events to capture on video, along with helping us to create great videos to promote membership, preferred partners and testimonials
- **Bright Vision Events** provide our AV for the Annual Conference
- **Leopold Marketing** are our Exhibition contractors bringing to life our exhibition stands with strong branding and key messages
- **Mayan Interiors** created some beautiful bespoke and sustainable furniture for us to be used at exhibitions

Each of our preferred partners are keen to collaborate with you and your business, so please do get in touch with them when you are sourcing their services.

The Supplier Directory launched earlier this year has a great range of companies; from PMS systems to catering equipment, social media to App-less and contactless solution consultancy, event theming and production to electric charging stations, it is a great ‘go to’ area of the website to see how these companies may be able to help your business.

As this grows, we welcome any recommendations and introductions from our member venues where you have worked with a supplier and feel they could fit into the Venues of Excellence family.

Assurity Consulting
Independent workplace compliance

BRIGHTVISION
EXCEPTIONAL EVENTS

ECOLAB®

LEOPOLD
full mix marketing

MAYAN INTERIORS LTD

OYSTER RECRUITMENT

PADDY & SCOTT'S®
fueling ambition

paje
Consultancy Ltd.

Tchibo SERVICE

VIEW IT 360

wilsonvale
catering management

Check out our new Supplier Directory

www.bit.ly/VOE-supplier-directory

Got someone in mind?
Email marketing@venuesofexcellence.co.uk

Study Tour

We were delighted to re-launch our first study tour for members post-covid recently, specifically focused on our venues located across the Midlands region

This exclusive behind-the-scenes tour was a unique discovery journey to experience venues “through the customer lens” and to open our eyes to new ways of doing things using exciting new products.

During the tour delegates were able to discuss key initiatives including sustainability, EV charging points, food waste, fair trade coffee and innovative ideas for new conference furniture.

It quickly became apparent that many valuable learning opportunities were created for all attendees on the tour whether they were new starters or experienced team members. What greater way to expand your knowledge and learn new skills than from experiencing these first-hand across Venues of Excellence members – taking peer to peer learning to the next level and enhancing staff development.

This tour visited seven membership venues within 36hrs – each one totally unique and showcasing different areas of specialty. Our thanks to everyone who attended the tour as delegates and also to every participating venue for hosting the informative group visits. Special thanks to Renata Homer and the team at Ashorne Hill for providing such a fabulous group dinner, escape room challenge and overnight accommodation for everyone.

ANOTHER STUDY TOUR WILL BE HELD LATER THIS YEAR



Renata Homer hosting delegates at Ashorne Hill Conference Centre

Sales and Marketing Meeting a hit at Alton Towers



Our Sales and Marketing workshops are a great way to meet other sales staff from within membership and share knowledge, industry updates and general news across the board.

This event hosted by Karen and the team at Alton Towers Resort was a great success and included a dedicated social media workshop delivered by Janet Bebb of Social Progress with hints and tips to improve engagement with customers and ideas to support new business research.

The afternoon session was hosted by Off Limits where a super-competitive team building treasure quest was held within the theme park.

Member Events

Summer Forum focused on

Technology, Innovation and Quality

19 - 20 July 2023 at Venue Henley

In a slightly different format to our normal events, this forum will be focused specifically around technology, innovation and quality – a great opportunity to speak with multiple CRM providers and technology innovators.

We will bring you a mini-expo style set up where you will be able to meet with industry suppliers and have quality conversations with them. This opportunity will start on the Wednesday evening commencing with a boat trip on the River Thames followed by networking BBQ and will continue throughout the day on Thursday.

This event is particularly suitable for your senior staff; Venue Directors, General Managers and anyone involved in your technology and systems provision who would like the opportunity to have open discussions with a wide range of industry suppliers under one roof. Lots of new suppliers already confirmed and more still to follow...



Boat Trip, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast is charged @ **£130** inc. VAT

Attendance at the Members Forum Meeting | **FREE**

Please register by email:

michelleboyt@venuesofexcellence.co.uk

REMINDER OF MEMBER EVENTS FOR THE REST OF 2023



Sales and Marketing Workshop
9 October - Whittlebury Park

Winter Members Forum
29 - 30 November - Hellidon Lakes Resort



Join us for our next Sales and Marketing Meeting which will be held on Monday 9 October at Whittlebury Park where our guest speakers will include The Delegate Wranglers and Bright Vision Events.

To register please email: michelleboyt@venuesofexcellence.co.uk

All of our Sales and Marketing Meetings are free to attend



“The leading collection of exceptional venues delivering excellence in conference, training and events”

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