



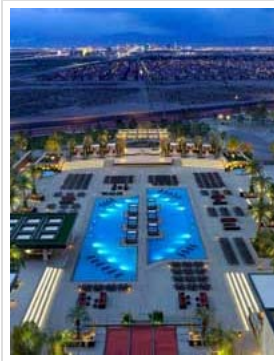
Strong local interest in IPI

June 7, 2012

(June 18: NOTE READERS' DISCUSSION AT END OF STORY.)

Leading Australian industry figures will be attending the annual IPI Member Retreat and Supplying Partner Trade Show in the US next week in unprecedented numbers, including Camera House executives and members, along with other photo specialty retailers and pro lab owners.

The event – which long-time PI member (*and conference-goer extraordinaire*) Phil Gresham, Fotofast, characterises as the best of the annual photo retailing conferences around the world – will be held at The M Resort, Las Vegas, June 10 – 14 (*pictured right*).



'The Conference is a massive event, and arguably the best and most relevant educational event that photo specialty retailers could attend to improve their businesses over the next 12 months,' said Stuart Holmes, managing director of Independent Photo (IPS), the A/NZ partner of the PI marketing group.

'Both Camera House and Kodak Australia (in conjunction with the Leading Edge Group) have given strong in principle agreement to becoming International members of the IPI Marketing Group for their members, which total over 200 storefronts.

'Camera House is sending (general manager) Paul Shearer and (Camera House retailer) Nigel Roper to the



2012 conference, starting this Sunday, June 10, to experience first hand the benefits of membership and connection to other photo specialty retailers across North America and Canada,' said Mr Holmes.

Other Australians attending include Peter & Fruma Michael, Michaels CVD; Alan & Catherine Logue, Hutt Street Photo; Phil & Will Gresham, Fotofast; and Paul Maietta, Fitzgerald Pro Lab, WA.

Kodak Australia will be represented by Independent Photo (a 'full-service' Kodak distributor in addition to its PI affiliation) who will be sending its executive team of Rob Voysey, Stuart Holmes and Bruno Polito.

Mr Holmes said that there were now 25 IPI members in Australia and New Zealand, up from two or three a year ago.

'Now we've reached critical mass it allows us to work on a Southern Hemisphere re-redevelopment of the program,' Mr Holmes told *Photo Counter* at The Digital Show in Melbourne.

This involves putting together a schedule of events and promotions – Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day ,etc, which fit with the local calendar and are culturally more suitable than marketing promotions and collateral created for the American market.

'There's no exclusivity involved in PI membership, except it's exclusive to photo specialists, and if we don't support independents and arrest the tide of commoditisation of our market, then its all to our peril,' said Mr Holmes.

Planned events at the IPI retreat – its 30th anniversary event – include:
- release of an expanded and enhanced IPI Marketing Solutions Program;

PhotoCounter Best Shots



"The Trees" by David Brandon (The Yamba Photo Store)

-We present outstanding images from the recently-completed Tamron Best Shots competition

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decor, B2B opportunities, and many others;

- member-to-member user group 'How to Demos';
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- networking opportunities.

'Next week's celebration is a huge milestone for PI members and IPI,' said Brent Bowyer, executive director at IPI. 'Our continued evolution and growth speaks volumes about the determination and perseverance of IPI members, the selfless volunteer nature of the IPI board of directors, and the dedication of the IPI staff.'

'With a trend line of innovation, IPI has remained relevant to its members and for 30 years provided a beacon for service specialty retailers not only in the United States, but today around the globe.'

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20 THOUGHTS ON "STRONG LOCAL INTEREST IN IPI"

Goferfoto on [June 8, 2012 at 8:47 am](#) said:

*Camera House at the Independent Photographic Imagers Retreat?
Nothing Independent about Camera House...
Follow the white rabbit boys, Wonderland awaits....
Nice way to unhinge an association's point of difference...*

Reply ↓



Rob Voysey - PS
on [June 18, 2012 at 12:27 pm](#) said:

Dear Goferfoto: I don't know about "wonderland", but the IPI Conference content and the Marketing Support Plan (MSP) offering are quite comprehensive and a conducive to producing a point of difference to the mass merchants.

However if you already have:

- A fully competitive print/photo product solution – that differentiates and outclasses any mass merchant offering.
- A marketing program, 1000+ fully editable layered templates; how to's; email blasts; promotional material; offering 1000's of unique products that aren't mirrored by Mass Merchants web sites.
- An on-line / in store kiosk solution, totally your brand, where you own your customer; fully flexible, to post all of the marketing program unique products to the latest promotion; integrated by product, to be manufactured in



- A fully integrated Social media training and support package (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Blogs etc.) that shows you how to run this stuff without destroying your life (!)

- Forum access to over 800+ businesses that are willing to share their experiences in the interest of your success.

- And a whole lot more!

Then you are "all sorted" and please cast the first stone!

Otherwise don't be a "Gopher" Photo and climb out of your hole. There are no delusional white rabbits here!

Reply ↓



Tony on [June 11, 2012 at 9:52 pm](#) said:

I'd say that there is some interest in IPI but strong local interest might be pushing the point ?

Many of us have just been to a fine local convention and would struggle to justify an overseas sojourn right now!

And when you look at the whole IPI thing, why would CH and the KEX look at it really? It must only be to save money on local production.

We all could do with some promotional help but I reckon we need stuff from here with people who know what sort of promotions appeal to our customers. And we certainly need some more strategic and creative marketing than some Aussie or Kiwi version of a US Mothers Day/Fathers day/Easter/Thanksgiving rollup!

The US market is not the same as our market. We have different ideas and so do our customers! I don't know if the rest of you looked at the great promotional stuff that PMA put out a few years ago but it really wasn't suitable for our market and it didn't work.

So we have been down this track!

Lets get over it, our customers are different.

And the US dealers themselves are different. Traditionally IPI have thrived because the US dealers were more fragmented than here. Nothing like the committed programs and concentration we had with our yellow guys and our green guys. So a huge market for a middleman to do deals for the benefit of their members. Hence IPI. They have done a great job in the US, but perhaps not needed here.

I can understand that we should all work together these days and as an industry perhaps should have promotions Australia wide, but surely there is somebody here in Australia or New Zealand who can do the job effectively enough! Surely!



Laurie on [June 12, 2012 at 4:02 pm](#) said:

Tony, I couldn't have summed up better if I tried.

A conference straight after PMA? Would love to know who these companies could have afforded to send given the current market. No naming and shaming pls.

How also, can Camera House justify anyone in their marketing department if they are considering importing promotions from the US? Same for Kodak / Leading Edge.

Seems some people have been consumed by the hype. Perhaps a visit to leading IPI stores may provide perspective on Aussie photo retailing vs US equivalents.

Reply ↓



Rob Voysey - PS

on [June 18, 2012 at 12:42 pm](#) said:

Hi Laurie,

Affordable Conference? In backing up Alan's comments: Being the low season, return airfares to Las Vegas are around \$1800. Sponsored accommodation at \$120 per night – compare that to Aussie hotel prices; The conference: \$600 – 4 days – including all meals: breakfasts, lunches, dinners, morning and afternoon breaks. A whole day trade fair and over 50 of the most focused sessions on growing "print services" business on the planet – Overall, a great investment for your own business growth!

The reality is that Photo specialty can no longer afford NOT to organize and must open their eyes to what is available around the world.

Reply ↓



Trevor on [June 13, 2012 at 2:00 pm](#) said:

There are so many people trying to make a buck out of our diminished industry. And we already have a body in PMA who organise meetings and have other activities at minimal cost. Time to draw a line, tell PMA what we need and go from there!

Reply ↓

John Swainston on [June 14, 2012 at 7:32 pm](#) said:

The US Specialty channel represents about 6%-8% of the photo business there. In Australia Specialty still has over 30% share of the hardware market, in some areas over 50%! My question is: Did independent US Specialty retailers ever consider joining Australian retail marketing groups and attending our PMA Convention, instead?

Many might reasonably say that we do it better down here, in fact in almost every field. Nothing comes close to how well we integrate supplier, retailer and pro events anywhere in the world, as we did in Melbourne in May. Let's just stop this cultural cringe, and celebrate the damn good job that a lot of our local buying/marketing groups, suppliers and pro customers do better than anyone else – anywhere! That's my two cents.

Reply ↓



PG

on June 15, 2012 at 11:08 am said:

John you are so wrong, for a guy who is usually so right. Don't judge until you have been and seen for yourself. Could I join the illustrious KEX or FIP groups without using their paper, IPI doesn't care what paper you use, the I in IPS stands for Independent. I don't know how good the KEX, Fuji Image Plaza or Camera House online forums are or if they have them at all?. What marketing materials do they provide for their members if any these days, most were about increasing paper burn in times gone by while not increasing the retailers profits to any great extent.

We joined IPI years ago just as a means of having a forum with like minded retailers and the ability to share and discuss ideas and opportunities with retailers. Forget your prejudices about Yanks, I did, they may have funny accents but they face the day to day challenges and opportunities like us in the colonies.

Re PMA they provided some resources but not enough and the depth of discussion didn't bring the results we needed or required. This is changing and the new PMA programs will be very useful but for some of us we need the ability to see what else is happening that will suit our market and IPI provides that and more.

Probably the greatest resource is the MSP or Marketing Solutions Program. This is largely underwritten by FujiFilm USA, who have an amazing affinity and support for independents, they rate very highly independent operators, can the same be said for FujiFilm Australia?

The program provides 6 DVD's of many 100's of templates for a huge range of gifting, greeting cards, posters and banners. Each one is fully layered so you can keep the "American" look, not sure what that is. You can use bits or all or change the templates to suit your stores style guide, if in fact you have one.

Trevor says "There are so many people trying to make a

what IPS is getting out of this is not purely monetary, their real return is to further increase the strength of the independent operator by providing resources, supporting IPI is yet another example of this.

Reply ↓

 Stuart Holmes on [June 15, 2012 at 11:05 am](#) said:

'My fellow Australians to paraphrase...what are you guys on about? 10 Years ago there was over 2,500 independent Photo Specialty labs in Australia – now there are what 500 ?? The specialty photo business is being eaten up by the Mass Merchants and the Supermarkets, precious images have been commoditised and there appears to be some naysayers amongst us that are prepared to sit back and be parochial about clinging to some dreams that "someone" will produce Aussie marketing for them?

And BTW Mr Swainston, IPI is all about promoting photo specialty printing & services – Not Hardware Sales....

Finally, after just completing one of the most exhilarating, relevant & challenging conventions at the IPI Conference in (yes, cringe the USA) I'd have to say this country's photo specialty retailers have EXACTLY the same issues as we Australian & New Zealand independent photo retailers do, BUT, by Photo retailers in the USA & Canada being part of something bigger than just themselves have managed to be the ONLY growth sector of the Country's photo printing market! (source Fujifilm USA) bet you couldn't say that in Australia!

Come on guys before you get all defensive and cringeworthy how about you challenge yourselves, get off the sidelines and invest in your own businesses success? we have more in common with the 500+ photo Specialty retailers who have just taken time out of their business to attend the IPI Convention than you think.

In fact call me next week and let's have a reasonable chat about it? Stuart Holmes – independent Photo (IPS)

Reply ↓

 Tim on [June 15, 2012 at 3:39 pm](#) said:

An interesting thread! Can't wait for the first Xmas poster. It will definitely have kangaroos on it and maybe the words "Happy Holidays Cobber"

Reply ↓

 Alan Logue on [June 15, 2012 at 6:03 pm](#) said:

Geez, where did this come from?

We joined IPI 5 years ago because we wanted more ideas on how to grow our business.

It worked!

We have been to the last 3 IPI 'Retreats' and when we combine

ideas and profit lines in the business.

IPI is about SHARING information. They are similar businesses to ours, (although most are larger), they are generally not aligned with any marketing groups like we have back home, and they have to survive the same economic issues we do (probably worse than we do).

Our business will grow even more in the next 12 months as a result of being in Las Vegas this week. I have more ideas than I have ever had for us to implement during the rest of this year and into 2013.

The number of stores in Australia is far less than over here, and whilst we might do a lot of things better than the US, the sheer number of independent stores over here generate a huge number of marketing opportunities for us to take advantage of. IPI makes that sharing of information easy. I would also like to think that I have been able to help some of my new mates over here with some ideas as well.

I don't think anyone in their right mind expects the IPI group to offer buying advantages to Australian members, however Stuart at IPS might be able to offer potential IPI Australian members some additional deals through his business – and that is entirely up to him, and how he runs his business.

The IPI marketing program is more than Kodak Express ever offered me, and that is NOT a put down of the KEX plan. There is just so much in the IPI plan (even with its UScentric visuals) that it is a no brainer for us not to be involved in it.

We will change some of the US material to suit our market, and we probably won't go with Happy Holidays Cobber as it does not suit our customers or our market.

The PMA shows that I have attended have been great, but this last week has probably given me more ideas than anything else I've ever been to, so I consider the airfare costs for Catherine and I, plus my accommodation costs here in Vegas and all the other on costs to be a necessary expense for me to grow my business.

Golly, I'm even taking some stock back home with me from the show because the stuff we have seen is simply not available in Australia because no one has developed it or decided to import it.

If this seems like an IPI testimonial, then please take it that way – they have been great for our business, and I would simply urge other Australian stores to have a good look at joining, and investing in their business.

Most people know I have yellow blood. Let me say that I am VERY impressed with Fujifilm USA and their support of independent photo retailers here in the USA, and I have taken the time to congratulate Bing Liem (VP Sales and Marketing Fujifilm USA) on what he has done over here.

It's now after midnight here in Vegas, and I want a good night's sleep so I can drive up to Lake Tahoe for a week's holiday where I'll be thinking about where and when I can implement the first of my ideas from this retreat.

Good Night

Reply ↓

PG on June 15, 2012 at 7:55 pm said:

Only if you want it to Tim, remember those old KEX days this was what you got to use, like it or not!

Reply ↓



Larry the Lab Guy on [June 16, 2012 at 1:18 pm](#) said:

I just finished with the conference (I am a US member). The Australian (and NZ and Canadian) members who attended are clearly the cream of the crop. I noted right away that there is a lot learn from downunder. I personally learned a lot from several of the international members. The beauty of the event is the interchange of ideas. The MSP is getting more "open" and becoming a toolbox that nearly any independent retailer who is mostly services oriented (not hard goods) can use. The concept is to provide a range of tools and new initiatives that you can buy for pennies instead of the dollars that it would cost you to develop on your own. Promo materials , services brochures, templates and other items are made by a professional marketer with deep industry experience. And, as always some new concepts that gets you set up and running 6-18 months earlier than the competition – the competition being big-box stores. Every region has some super-operators, when they let me in the tent and share like they do in this organization, I am grateful and work hard to take the advantage. And, the 600,000+ posts in the private member forums might give some so many new ideas that might never need to go to another conference – so, a real money saver for some.

Seeing some returning friends from the other hemisphere each year is remarkable to me because I understand the substantial expense. There must be a substantial return on investment?

Reply ↓



Tom Bailey - USA on [June 17, 2012 at 8:46 am](#) said:

As one of the Yanks with a funny accent, I am sorry to read that so many of you think your problems are different than ours. I understand it costs a bloody fortune to get from Oz to LasVegas, heck I bitch about the time and money from Florida.

Even if you do not attend the meeting I truly believe you will find the marketing materials and the willingness to assist one another on the IPI forum to be amazing.

Also I for one really appreciate those members from down under who did attend the meeting, despite the funny accent they had. Additionally the gift of a package of Tim Tams is really appreciated.

Reply ↓



Rob Voysey - IPS on [June 18, 2012 at 12:23 pm](#) said:

In thanking Larry and Tom s input we need to say that it is really refreshing to have US lab owners commenting on an AUS forum. The world is suddenly a smaller place and we need to be forging the right international links.

IPI has been fighting the "box shifters" for 30 years and I am sure we would have a healthier Independent Photo Specialty Retail industry here if we had joined forces sooner.

The Independent Photo Imagers (IPI) association is all and only about imaging – NOT hardware. They represent over 500 family and individual owned photo stores in the US with the 200+ group called Photo Source having recently joined from Canada.

They are a group that empowers their members to innovate and differentiate with different photo specialty print/imaging solutions: printing wet/dry wide format; unique gifts; products books; and many other great ideas. (Not Hardware)

IPI members are also PMA members.

Jim Esp, the newly appointed PMA president attended the full 4 days of the conference and spoke in the closing session. He addressed the conference with the new PMA mission statement. He spoke highly of the efforts PMA Australia has made recently and projected screen shots of PMA Australia s publicity to this American audience.

He presented the new efforts that PMA, DIMA would be making over the coming year. (Photos and mpeg footage to be posted shortly).

Clearly, PMA sees the full relevance of IPI in the States, and is keen to demonstrate this partnership to their American audiences – Why can t it be the same down under?

So why do Australian photo stores need the IPI Marketing Group? Because the sign over your door – whatever the brand, is just not good enough any more. Because the super profits that the global brands have made out of the 'mums and dads business over the years, have been channeled into grabs for mass merchant market share – yes, we ve all paid for it!

Wouldn t it be nice to see a newspaper or TV ad for a branded paper that wasn t connected to a 10c promotion?

IPI is about empowerment – it s not about brands.

So which side of the fence are you on?

As a part owner of Independent Photographic Supplies I am happy to jump on my soap box and point out that we are firmly on the side of Photo Specialty.

Our mantra for the last 10 years has been, "We support you, we don t compete against you" and we do not supply the mass merchants.

We unashamedly go to these conference to find new ideas, to network with our leading industry retailers; to bring some thing back that is unique to photo specialty – to help grow a strong independent photo retail industry. Your survival and growth is our survival and hopefully growth too.

Our business has to be a 'Win – Win' in partnership to grow.

The IPI Group is also about sharing. We are amazed over the 4 days, the work and effort that individual store owners (IPI members) just like yourselves, have presented their growth stories – successes in amazing new print solutions and their eagerness for the whole group to benefit from their research and experimentation (no specifics – we are not going to give all the

The willingness to share good successful ideas with other store owners – that might be 20 minutes down the road – or on the other side of the world, is beyond reproach and it is to your own detriment to turn your backs on it.

Last point: There are no silver bullets in the photo industry and there is a lot of hard work required to keep your business profitable. Don't expect to stand behind your counter with all of the above handed to on a silver platter and think its all going to happen around you.

Modern retailing is tough and we all need as much help as we can get to stay a head and grow our businesses. But you have to do the work and drive it at the end of the day.

We applaud the likes of Phil Gresham that shares his experiences with the industry and advocates tirelessly in all of our industry representative groups.

We say to every individual KEX, FIP, Photo Edge, Camera House and Independent Photo store to lobby your supplier.

Get the facts, make a fully informed decision and get on board the IPI Marketing Group, and be part of something bigger than just yourself!

Reply ↓



Paul Maietta on [June 18, 2012 at 9:28 pm](#) said:

Clearly some of you just don't get it. I attended. Best 5k I've invested in my business in a long time. The way I saw it, how could I afford NOT to participate? End of story.

Reply ↓



Alan Logue on [June 20, 2012 at 3:39 am](#) said:

Paul – you summed it up well – we paid for 2 airfares, and it was money very well spent. We are still digesting everything we learned (and ate!!!!)

Reply ↓



Phil G on [June 20, 2012 at 9:50 am](#) said:

I better chime in too! I first was invited to attend a IPI social event, pizza and beer, at PMA 1995, where members would get together and share what they had seen on the trade show floor, 60 sets of eyes were better than one. I have been attending ever since the last 5 years as a member. IPI originally was a buying group and a marketing group a distant second, now it is marketing number one and buying a close second reason to join.

buying benefits like HP kiosks at \$600 each if you wondered why I had so many!

We have four pages, and adding to it still, of ideas and actions. We may think that we are so ahead in Oz, in most things we are, but there are many things we are not. Like the PMA s here, at IPI you tend to get the cream attending so if you want to find the answer to something or confirm what you are thinking about IPI is it.

Just because IPS followed us on IPI and Dakis doesn't mean it's not a good thing, quite the reverse.

Reply ↓



Peter Michael on [June 21, 2012 at 10:00 pm](#) said:

I can not understand why attending the IPI annual conference is so controversial. We all strive to continually develop our businesses. There are endless resources that can be drawn on to achieve this objective including PMA Australia, PMA USA, IPI USA, DIMAcasts, PMATV, magazines, books, Retail Associations, trainers, consultants, the Net. The choice is yours.

Reply ↓



Brian on [June 22, 2012 at 4:34 pm](#) said:

Terrific to see this amount of robust discussion from within our industry – thought we'd all nodded off.

IPI is doing something constructive and motivational. At best, many in our industry are in maintenance / whinge mode. Time to work together

Reply ↓

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June 19, 2012

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