

# Workshops in May

We provide a guide to some of the workshops on offer for agents this month, including the Alphe workshops in Miami, USA and Vancouver, Canada; the Ialc workshop in Paris; and the Italian in Italy workshop in Rome.

## When is good for agencies?

Workshop organisers seem to organise events almost year round, but at a time of year convenient to many, if not all, possible delegates. Some agents applaud this.

"I personally think it is great that the workshops are not all at the same time so that you have the chance to attend several workshops every year," says Claudia Herrmann of GLS Sprachenzentrum in Germany.

And according to some of the agencies that spoke to *Language Travel Magazine*, spring time can be a convenient time to travel and attend industry events. Olga Namestnikova from Magister Agency in Russia says, "In Russia, we have May holidays at the beginning of May, so it is convenient enough". She adds, "We start to prepare the portfolio of schools just after the Christmas holidays."

In Argentina, Rebeca Natapof of Lenguas Educational Counseling says that she prefers to attend workshops in May or June since it is the low season. However, in Korea, Young Jang of BCM International Exchange Association Ltd., who assembles her client list in October to December, says that the best time to attend a workshop is February to March or August to September. "May/June is the busy season for Korean agencies," she explains.

Joanna Mitulska of Biuro Turystyki Jaworski in Poland agrees that autumn is also the best time of year to attend workshops, but says some trips are taken in May/June.

Late August/September has traditionally been the time of year for agents to meet established school partners and prospective new business associates and reassess their agency portfolios for the coming year. New products and offers are usually discussed with language schools and colleges at industry workshops such as Icef Berlin in November, and the English UK Fair and Alphe London workshop in August.

However, some of the long-standing agent workshops in the industry take place at a different time of the year, before the northern hemisphere's summer season really heats up. The International Association of Language Centres' (Ialc) annual agent workshop is one such event and Ialc's Executive Director, Jan Capper, explains why it is held in May. "Agents in certain major markets make their product plans for the following year as early as May or June," she relates. "Ialc moved its workshop to the April/May period in 1998 to meet [agents'] needs at a time when the number of workshops in August/September was increasing rapidly."

Italian in Italy, an Italian association of language schools and cultural training institutes, also picks the pre-summer season to hold its annual workshop. Giuseppina Foti observes that in the case of Italy, it is schools that "prepare their pricelist around April/May for the year [ahead] and it is a good opportunity for them to meet agents during this time". Foti adds, "Moreover, there are fewer workshops [at this time] and it is the ideal climate to visit Italy and get to know Italian in Italy schools personally."

The May Alphe workshops were initiated as an alternative option for agents who find it more convenient to travel at this time, and also as an opportunity to provide other locations to complement the London event. This year, the workshops take place in Miami, USA, and Vancouver, Canada, says Jane Gilham, Alphe Manager. "We moved our US venue from Las Vegas to Miami, following consultation with agents and educators," she relates, "and are pleased that our newest venue of Vancouver also seems to be going down well."

The American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP) has organised a session for agents to meet its members for the last two years, as part of the week-long Nafsa Conference. "It's an excellent opportunity for overseas advisors and recruiters to meet school directors personally and get more acquainted with their programmes, staff and facilities," says Beata Schmid, Vice President of Outreach at AAIEP. She adds that agents attending the AAIEP agent session are certain to meet the school directors and not the admissions staff. "So this is a possibility for advisers to ask very detailed questions in a more personal setting."

AAIEP expects between 40 and 50 schools at the event this year. "We don't want it to get too crowded as we want to preserve



the personal atmosphere of the event," says Schmid. Gilham relates that similar numbers are expected at the Alphe Canada Workshop, and slightly less at the Alphe USA Workshop. "As long as our agents meet a range of quality educators and remain busy throughout the workshop, then they are very satisfied with the Alphe experience," she confirms.

The Italian in Italy workshop is a smaller affair. "We foresee having approximately 15 to 20 participants at this year's workshop," says Foti. "On the first day, a conference with different institutions, such as the Ministry of Tourism [and] Ministry of Education, will take place. The second day will be dedicated to a workshop and the following two days will see fam trips in order to visit our schools in Rome and all over Italy."

At Ialc, the agent workshop is an annual highlight, taking place after its AGM and with great social events. As well as meeting up to 84 Ialc member schools, agents have the opportunity to take part in fam trips to visit schools in Paris and the south of France. Meanwhile, Alphe Canada delegates can take part in a local fam trip this year too. ●

## Spring events for agents

Ialc Workshop	Italian in Italy workshop
Date: 28 April – 1 May Venue: Paris, France W: <a href="http://www.ialc.org">www.ialc.org</a>	Date: 13-15 May Venue: Rome, Italy W: <a href="http://www.italianinitaly.it">www.italianinitaly.it</a>
Alphe Workshops	AAIEP Agents' and Advisors' Networking Session
Date: 23-25 May Venue: Miami, USA Date: 26-28 May Venue: Vancouver, Canada W: <a href="http://www.hothousemedia.com">www.hothousemedia.com</a>	Date: 31 May Venue: Seattle, Nafsa Conference W: <a href="http://www.aaiep.org">www.aaiep.org</a>