



## Travel: how to catch new international audiences

**SPEAKER:** Jean-Michel Dancoisne, General Manager, Thalys International

Before joining Thalys, the Franco-Belgian group which provides high speed trains, Jean-Michel played an active role in the French Railways (SNCF) and was instrumental in the launch of Eurostar.

[www.thalys.com](http://www.thalys.com)

**CHAIR:** Richard Hadley, Cultural Consultant, Audiences Europe Network (UK)

Richard Hadley is a leading UK consultant and trainer specialising in business strategy, marketing and creative learning programmes for forward thinking managers in the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors. Developed by a team of cultural practitioners from across Europe, AEN provides a place for ideas, inspiration and short cuts to best practice.

[www.audienceseurope.net](http://www.audienceseurope.net)



### CASE STUDY NOTES:

The key message from the case study was that the high speed train service, Thalys, and museums in the countries in which it operates (France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands) are natural partners.

#### The benefits to museums of working with Thalys include:

- Numbers of people: Thalys has 6.18 million passengers a year and is growing at a rate of 40%. Current passengers are 28% French, 19% Belgian, 17% Dutch, 13% German. 52% travel for leisure and 48% for business.
- Type of customer: mostly CSP+ (Catégorie Socio-Professionnelle Supérieure)
- Good brand image : customers rank Thalys highly for innovation and customer service
- Focus on marketing, including direct mail campaigns, advertising, fidelity programmes, special offer, etc.
- Customer-focused website with 500,000 visitors per month

What Thalys (and other transport companies) are looking for from museums?

- Incentives to travel for customers e.g. museums often provide an added value to destinations
- Increased levels of service and benefit to customers e.g. ticket discounts, special packages, etc. Jean-Michel Dancoisne said that he would value museums working together to put together special offers and packages.
- Partnerships with high-quality institutions and events, to reinforce their brand image e.g. Thalys has been involved in:
  - Tefaf, Maastricht,
  - Boijmans van Beuningen for the DALI exhibition (2005)
  - Pompidou Center for the DADA exhibition (2005)
  - Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn for the Guggenheim exhibition (2006/07)
- Long-term partnerships which allow for developing a better understanding of each other's aims and ways of working, as well as delivering on-going benefits.
- Good information in good time.