

# INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE

MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

## World Class Awards

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## Conference Centers

How They Are Changing  
With the Times

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Scott Shontz, Vice President Conference  
Centers, Aramark Conference Centers



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# INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

THE EXECUTIVE SOURCE FOR PLANNING MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011 Vol. 18 No. 5



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The Best of the Best



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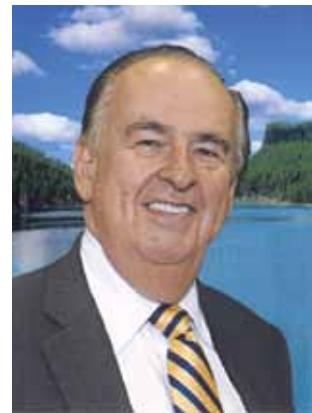
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# Publisher's Message

## Changing With the Times

Due to the economic and perception issues hounding insurance and financial companies over the last few years, many meeting professionals turned to staging meetings at conference centers. They discovered a silver lining to be sure — planners saved their organizations plenty of money and saved face as well. Because conference centers are strictly in the business of meetings, optics are rarely a problem, and the all-inclusive Complete Meeting Package (CMP) ensures that there are no surprise charges at the end of the event.



The International Association of Conference Centers (IACC) sets the standards for the industry. Tom Bolman, executive vice president for the St. Louis-based association, says, "IACC-certified centers are generally self-contained facilities that are built for meetings, and that provide the perfect environment for meetings. Our members don't just sell space, rates and dates. They partner with planners to accomplish their goals and objectives for their meetings."

Even as economic conditions improve and optic problems disappear, the many advantages of meeting at conference centers remain, especially for insurance and financial companies — IACC's second-largest market. At the cutting edge of technological innovation, centers can stage "hybrid" meetings, so people can attend in person or remotely; they are beginning to feature greater amenities, such as spas and fitness centers; and they're setting the standards for the industry in areas such as F&B. "We're finding out that some types of foods actually enhance learning in meetings," Bolman says, "while others impede it. Science is taking a leading role in the F&B aspect of our industry."

Aramark Conference Centers, one of the major players in the industry, manages more than 50 conference centers around the country, including the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA.

Scott Shontz, vice president conference centers, Aramark Conference Centers, who graces our cover this issue, says "Conference centers are a planner's best friend. And so is the CMP. It allows us to provide everything in one package, as opposed to the à la carte approach, and this saves planners a lot of money. The venues are distraction-free. They're built for meetings. And, because everything's in one location, it makes planning much easier."

Harvey Grotsky

# INSURANCE & FINANCIAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

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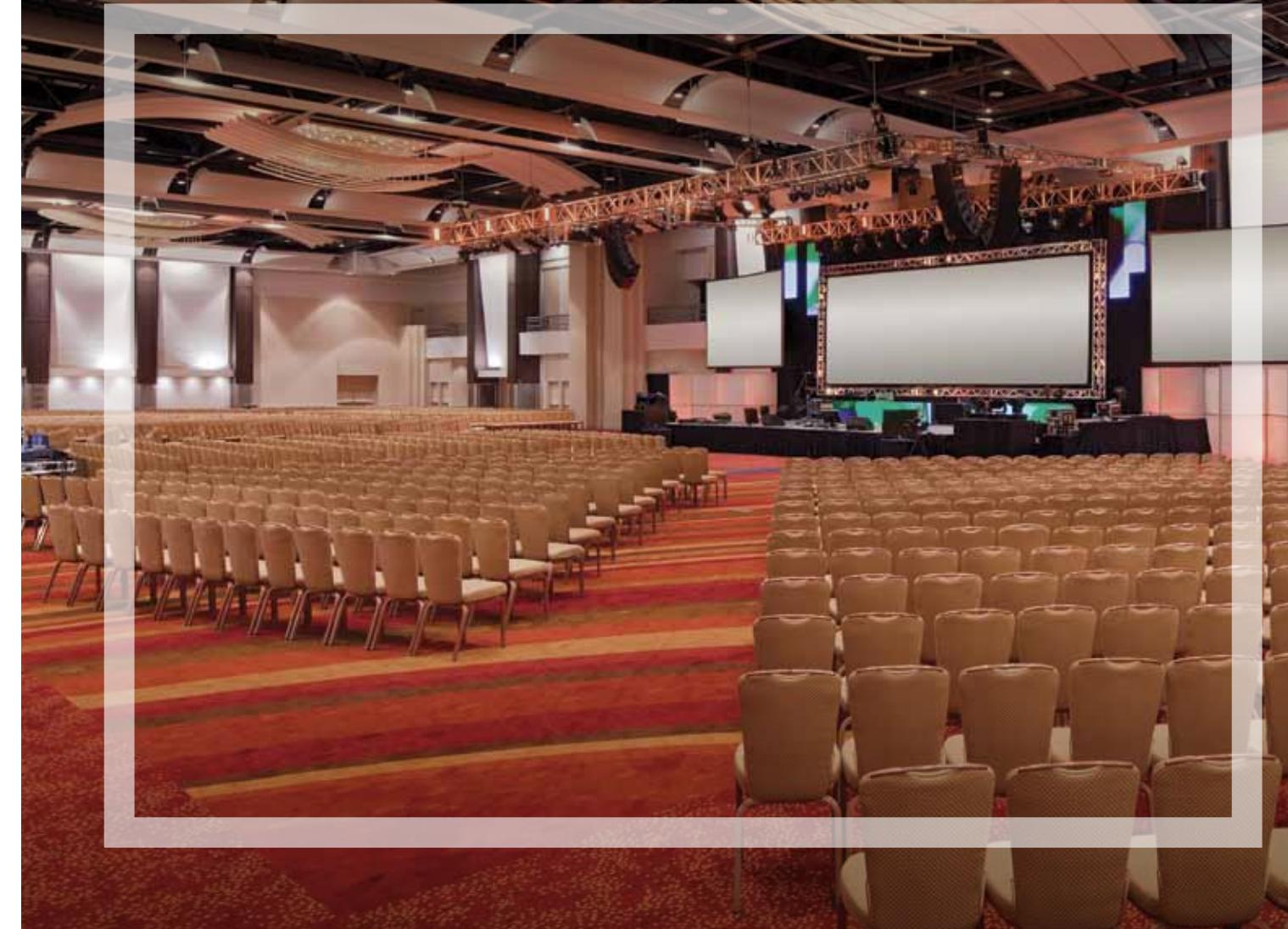
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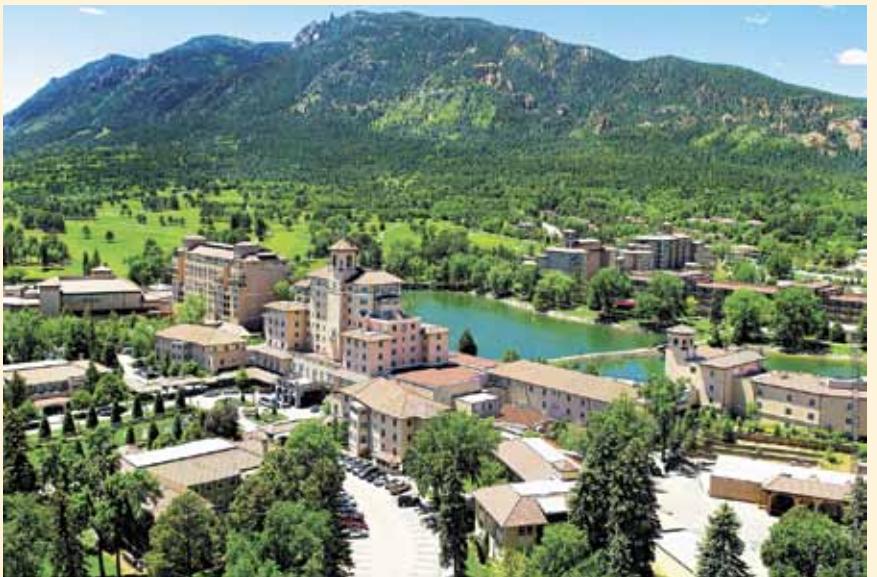
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# Meeting Value Line



**The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO.** Planners who book a meeting by the end of 2011 receive 25 percent attrition and a rebate of up to 10 percent off room revenue for meetings actualized November–April of any year. Additional incentives are offered for a meeting held in January–April 2012. For more details, visit [www.broadmoor.com](http://www.broadmoor.com) or call the sales department at 800-633-7711.

■ **Vail Cascade, Vail, CO.** The Work and Play in Vail for \$99 Per Day meeting package includes: one-hour continental breakfast in a private dining room; 30-minute mid-morning break in meeting room or adjacent foyer; one-hour lunch in a private dining room or the Atwater Dining Room; 30-minute mid-afternoon break in meeting room or adjacent foyer. Lodging is additional. Planners who book a meeting by December 31, 2011 also receive 5 percent off the master bill (\$10,000 minimum); 1/25 comp room; five VIP upgrades; and more. 800-303-7481, [www.cascademeetings.com](http://www.cascademeetings.com)

■ **MGM Grand, Las Vegas, NV.** Planners booking a minimum of 500 room nights for three nights peak on or before December 31, 2011 for 2012 dates receive the following exclusive offer: 25 percent attrition, 30 percent off published rates for MGM-owned AV; 1/40

comp room; 1/40 comp upgrade to Skylofts suite; 1/40 VIP amenity; special group pricing for KA by Cirque du Soleil; 15 percent off spa treatments and facility; 15 percent off salon services; 10 percent discount at Conference Center Business Center; and complimentary meeting room rental. 702-891-1199, [www.mgmgrand.com](http://www.mgmgrand.com)

■ **St. Regis Princeville Resort, Kauai, HI.** A \$300 airfare credit will be offered per room on the peak night of the group stay. Groups who reserve 25 to 100 rooms for a minimum of four nights, and who reach the established food and beverage minimums, are eligible for this offer. This special offer is available from October 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012, and again on October 1, 2012 to February 28, 2013. For reservations or further information call 877-787-3447 or visit [www.stregisprinceville.com/offers](http://www.stregisprinceville.com/offers).

## Industry News

### Las Vegas Sands Launches Custom Sands Eco 360° Meetings

LAS VEGAS, NV — Las Vegas Sands Corp.'s new custom Sands Eco 360° Meetings program extends the Las Vegas Sands' sustainability efforts to its large meeting and convention customers, giving them the opportunity to host gatherings in the largest LEED building in the world in a more environmentally friendly way. The combined Venetian, Sands Expo, and Palazzo Las Vegas comprise the largest LEED building in the world. The company's property-wide recycling program recycles enough materials to make it one of the largest single-property recyclers in Las Vegas. "What's unique about Las Vegas Sands for meeting planners is that our team will customize our offering to meet each client's sustainability goals," says Michael Leven, president and COO of Las Vegas Sands Corp. "We build upon a solid foundation of leading environmental practices, but will work to make even further changes according to our customers' individual goals."

Meeting planners have the option of selecting banquet menus that feature dishes made with organic foods, as well as sustainable seafood and fair trade, shade-grown coffee and tea. The company also recycles leftover materials from large meetings and distributes unused food from meetings to those in need. A full description of the Sands Eco 360° Meetings program is available at [www.venetian.com/las-vegas-meetings/eco360/](http://www.venetian.com/las-vegas-meetings/eco360/).

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### Dennis Lesko Rejoins The Broadmoor

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — President and CEO Steve Bartolin of The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO, has named Dennis Lesko as vice president of marketing. Lesko served in the same capacity for the Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond resort from 1993 until 2001. Before 1993,

Lesko represented Marriott Corporation as director of sales and marketing in Hilton Head, NC, as well as in Hawaii and at the Orlando World Center. "I am truly honored and very excited to return to The Broadmoor," says Lesko. "My appointment provides me with the opportunity to represent one of the most prestigious destination resorts in the world, and I look forward to contributing to its continued success." [www.broadmoor.com](http://www.broadmoor.com)



LESKO

### Disney's Aulani Resort Now Open

OAHU, HI — Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, welcomed its first guests on August 29. Aulani, which has been under construction since November 2008, is built on 21 acres of oceanfront property in Ko Olina, adjacent to a lagoon and a white-sand beach. Ko Olina is 17 miles from Honolulu International Airport and approximately 30 minutes from Waikiki. Currently, 217 of the 359 guest rooms are available. The rest of the guest rooms will become available in late 2011 and in 2013. The resort offers 50,000 sf of ballroom, meeting and outdoor function space, including a 15,000-sf conference center. Resort amenities include an 18,000-sf spa, two restaurants, a conference center and a themed pool area with swimming pool, wading pool, tube slides, sunset-facing hot tubs and a snorkel lagoon. [www.disneymeetings.com/hawaii](http://www.disneymeetings.com/hawaii)



Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa on Oahu.



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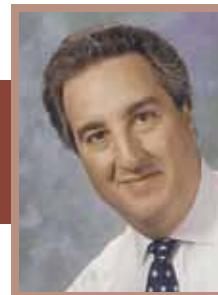


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# Music Licensing

By Mark Sonder, MM, CSEP



## Important Legalities Planners Need to Know

The first time meeting and event planners attempt to figure out the ABCs of music licensing can be a daunting exercise. To make an already challenging job a little easier, I've prepared a simple primer on music licensing fees for your edification.

### The Legal, Ethical Question

If you are utilizing music, whether it's live or played by a disc jockey, you as the organizer/presenter of a meeting, convention, special event, etc. are responsible for licensing all music played at those events. I find that although this law has been "on the books" for more than two decades, many hospitality schools are generally not educating their students on this issue, nor are the professional associations in the industry raising awareness of this important topic. I find this strange, as the penalties are so high, approximately \$500,000 per infringement. An infringement equals one tune! Most tunes are approximately four minutes. Most events range from a one-hour reception to a four-hour gala event. How many four-minute tunes can be played/Performed during that time, and what will it cost you? Suffice to say, a lot!

Some planners may ask, "How will they find my musical meeting?" Answer: They are a matter of public record. The local convention and visitors bureau publishes news of the event along with the approximate number of registrants and host hotels. It's on the reader board at the property. Even with the doors shut, it is easy to listen in the hallways without disturbing the meeting, to hear if music is being performed/played.

So why not conduct yourself in a legal and ethical manner by licensing your music? This is a

legitimate line item on one's expense report and is tax deductible for your client.

### What's Involved

Two different licensing agencies, ASCAP (American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers) and BMI (Broadcast Music Inc.) need to be paid, not the band/disc jockey or favorite music purveyor. ASCAP and BMI each offer two different licenses.

BMI's licenses for the hospitality industry are:

- Music License for Meetings, Conventions, Trade Shows and Expositions.
- Music License for Business Multiple Use. ASCAP's licenses for the hospitality industry are:
- Music License for Conventions, Expositions, Industrial Shows, Meetings and Trade Shows.
- Music License for Music-In-Business Blanket License.

To clarify, business multiple use covers the following six items:

1. Location owned by the company.
2. Location where company conducts managerial and/or administrative business.
3. An industrial facility (warehouse, manufacturing plant, etc.).
4. Offsite location that would be "attended" solely by the location's employees, their families and social acquaintances, and intra-corporate invitees."
5. For its full or part-time employees.
6. For its wholly-owned subsidiaries.

### Calculating the Costs

#### ASCAP formula examples:

Daily live music fee for 250 guests or less = \$45; 251–500 guests = \$85; 500–750 guests =

\$130; 751–1,000 guests = \$175 and so on. For mechanical music, the rate is \$0.078 per attendee, per event. The Music-In-Business rate is \$0.47 for the first 10,000 employees and so on.

As an example, using the two options above for a company with 1,000 and 500 attendees respectively, the numbers look like this: \$470 annually for Music-In-Business, \$175 for live music and \$78 for disc jockey/mechanical music for each convention/exposition, etc.

For 500 employees the costs would be: \$235 for Music-In-Business, \$85 for use of a live performance and \$39 for disc jockey/mechanical music for each convention/exposition.

#### BMI formula examples:

For live or mechanical for meetings/conventions, etc. the rate is \$0.06 per attendee. For Multiple Use it is a tier-rate schedule. Tiers are successive, not cumulative. The first 250 employees = \$.76, 251–500 employees = \$.60, for 501–10,000 employees = \$.45 and so on.

For example, if your company has 1,000 employees, the annual rate for Multiple Use is \$565. In comparison, for each meeting/convention, etc. in which 1,000 people would be present the cost would be \$60. If your company has 500 employees, the fee is \$340 for Multiple Use and \$30 for each meeting/convention, etc.

In addition, there are various annual minimum fees for each license category, not to mention variables having to do with the differences in the number of people. I recommend you and your legal department review the actual licenses as well before paying. To view the actual licenses, go to <http://marksonderproductions.com/headline/MusicLicenses.html>.

Furthermore, if you want to synchronize music

### Additional Resources:

- ASCAP 800-910-7346 [www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com)
- BMI 877-264-2137 [www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com)
- Link to music licenses: <http://marksonderproductions.com/headline/MusicLicenses.html>

with images on video or film, etc., such as a sales-training tape containing video and music, you will be required to acquire a "sync" license. You are required to get permission from (read: pay what they tell you) the music publisher and the recording company, and pay the fees for the applicable license to ASCAP and BMI.

### Who Is Exempt

Are you exempt? Yes, if you are not involved in the planning of the types of events mentioned above. For example, if you are planning a gathering of friends (weddings, bar/bat mitzvahs, birthday parties, anniversaries, etc.) there is no license agreement for you, hence, you/your client will not have any liability.

The laws governing music licenses are protected by the U.S. copyright law. It doesn't have to be right, fair or equitable, and it can be a feeling of "double-taxation." Bottom line: It's the law and as professional planners, it is our responsibility to protect our companies, our clients and their brand from wrongdoing.

I&FMM

Mark Sonder, MM, CSEP, Chief Entertainment Officer at Mark Sonder Productions Inc. since 1985, [www.marksonderproductions.com](http://www.marksonderproductions.com), 540-636-1640.

# Great Presentations

By Patricia Fripp,  
CSP, CPAE



## 7 Ways to Become a Speaking Star

Imagine that you have unlimited resources to design a speech that will make you the hottest business presenter, inspire your team or close more sales. Where would you go to get the best, highest-priced writers and directors in the world? Hollywood!

What makes a good Hollywood movie? Exactly the same principles that make a great keynote speech, executive presentation or sales conversation.

The good news is that you don't need to hire an Oscar-winning writer and director to produce blockbuster presentations. Just learn to adapt seven basic Hollywood techniques to increase the impact of your speeches, business presentations and persuasive sales conversations.

### 1. Embrace the Creative Process.

The first step is to look at the creative process. The late, great comedian George Carlin said, "Creating a great speech or comedy routine is more like going on a field trip than working in a laboratory." In other words, the creative process is messy, more free-flowing, so just embrace it. Forget the PowerPoint. That's tidy. With a yellow pad, a flip chart or a whiteboard, just list or mind map what content could go in your presentation. You want stories, examples, quotes, statistics, your corporate message and client successes. Then organize the structure of your presentation in a conversational and logical way and add the visuals. Special effects are not consulted until the "Storyboard" is created.

### 2. Consider Collaborating.

Collaboration is the norm in Hollywood, and it can work for speakers and presenters no matter what their audience or venue. In Hollywood, directors, producers, actors, set designers, makeup artists and editors all work together in front of

and behind the camera. Remember, it is very difficult to be creative in isolation. When creating the next great masterpiece speech, presentation or sales conversation, who can you get to help? Call upon your mastermind group, speaking buddies, team members, sales manager or professional speech coach.

### 3. Start With a Great Story.

We all love stories. With your corporate stories, identify your main theme, premise or purpose, your plot and any subplots. I coached a recently promoted retail executive who was invited to speak to 500 young store managers at the company sales meeting. His challenge was to inspire the managers to enthusiastically embrace a program to get their employees to contribute money-saving ideas.

I suggested he walk on stage, look at the audience and say, "We are here to talk about heroes." In seven words, he proved that this was not another dull, corporate speech. "We are here to talk about heroes. They may be sitting in front of you. They may be sitting behind you. They may be YOU. In-the-trenches heroes!"

He then added some Hollywood drama with characters, dialogue and an everyday hero. He told the story about a young man in the shipping department who noticed that he was shipping seven company newsletters to the same location on the same day in separate packets. This mailroom hero asked if he could package them together with a note requesting distribution at the other end. That year his idea saved the company \$200,000. Relating the money to something specific, he explained, "\$200,000 is 18 miles of shelving." That added specificity and color to the story. Statistics will not stick if they are not com-

pared to something memorable. Your audience remembers what they "see" while they hear.

### 4. Begin With a Flavor Scene.

Good movies open with what is called a "flavor scene," grabbing attention and positioning the audience for what is to come. A senior scientist at Genentech grabbed the interest of his audience by beginning: "Being a scientist is like doing a jigsaw puzzle, in a snow storm...at night...when you don't have all the pieces...or the picture you are trying to create." Everyone sat up and paid attention, they realized that they could understand and relate to the challenges and frustration of a scientist. That immediately proved it would not be a technical presentation.

### 5. Create Captivating Characters and Construct Vivid Dialogue.

"Gone with the Wind" doesn't begin with historical background on the Civil War. Instead, we find Scarlett O'Hara sulking about the impending conflict that might interfere with her social life. Immediately, we observe her frivolous, shallow, fun-loving personality. Characters also establish themselves by their decisions and actions. Rocky Balboa agrees to fight Apollo Creed in "Rocky 1." Elle Woods of "Legally Blonde" resolves to go to Harvard. The sooner this happens, the sooner the audience gets emotionally involved.

Nobody cares what you say about your product and service. They would rather hear from other "flesh and blood characters" who have overcome the same obstacles they now face. Add a back story to your speeches. Always use the character's dialogue to talk about their situation. You can tell the prospect what your solution was in your words; the success needs to be in the client/character's words.

### 6. Remember Scene Changes.

Early in nearly every movie we are introduced to a day in the life of our protagonist. Then something happens! The lead character overcomes one challenge and runs right into another. This involves scene changes. The movie literally moves from point to point, maintaining interest by changing settings, focal points, emotions and energy levels.

The biggest enemy of a speaker, no matter how good, is "sameness" or lack of variety. Each time you move from story to story or example to example, this is a scene change. Use variety to keep your audience interested.

### 7. Provide a Lesson Learned.

All great films — and speeches — have a message. However, when action and thrills serve a compelling story with a message and finish up with a heart-tugging or eye-opening conclusion, now we have what makes an unforgettable movie or speech.

Good questions will remind you of good stories and experiences. A simple question I use is "If you had one sentence rather than 45 minutes, what would you say?" The purpose is to simplify and clarify your central theme.

Stories are always compelling. Most people ask "Does the audience really want to hear these stories?" YES! It is important for the audience to see the person behind the position. We are all motivated when we see the life lessons beyond the corporate message.

**I&FMM**

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# Golf

## A Critical Part of the Meeting Environment



*Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club & Lodge in Orlando seals the deal for planners looking for a prestigious property that merges great golf with great meeting facilities.*

This sensational headline "Bailout Bank Blows Millions Partying in L.A.," which appeared on the celebrity website TMZ in 2009 seemed to be another body blow to financial and insurance meetings and incentives, and the sport — golf — which has always been such a critical part of the meeting environment.

Northern Trust, the "Bailout Bank" in question, had taken \$1.6 billion in TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) funds in the fall of 2008. Just a few months later, having just sponsored the Northern Trust Open at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles — as well as the entertaining that goes along with such a large event — it found itself the target of wrathful

By Mike Bassett

television talking heads, politicians, and taxpayers furious that Northern Trust seemed to be fiddling while the economy burned. All this led to the question: could companies continue to justify spending large amounts of money on golf-related events?

The short answer appears to be yes.

A survey of golf resorts across the U.S. released earlier this year by the Knowland Group found that while 45 percent of those surveyed reported seeing a "drastic" reduction in corporate golf bookings over the previous two years, 62 percent were now reporting that bookings were on the

rise, and 75 percent believed bookings would continue to rise in 2011.

And just a year later, Northern Trust was back at the Riviera Country Club, sponsoring the Northern Trust Open, which reported an increase in ticket sales of 35 percent. More critically, the company saw a resurgence in hospitality sales, signifying that despite a difficult economic environment, corporations still saw value in maintaining a connection with golf.

### Making the Business Case

Tom Nicholson, vice president of sales and marketing at DakotaCare, a healthcare coverage system that offers individual and group health insurance throughout South Dakota, has been

planning the organization's incentive trip for its top producers since 1995. Venues have included some of the nation's premier golf destinations such as Hammock Beach Resort in Palm Coast, FL, Hilton Head Island, SC, and Pinehurst, NC.

"It is a reward trip, after all, and our attendees are expecting to have access to golf. And in my company we think that providing golf is a big competitive advantage," says Nicholson, "particularly when we take (our top producers) to places they ordinarily wouldn't be able to go to on their own."

That doesn't mean that Nicholson has carte blanche when it comes to selecting a site. Since he targets venues with excellent golf facilities, the first question he gets from his CEO is, "How affordable is the golf?"

In today's environment, Nicholson says he can argue that the price of golf has turned into a relative advantage for planners. "The price of golf has actually gone down in the last couple of years," he says. "And more and more hotels are trying to tie in golf at the best golf courses at much more reasonable prices than they were ever able to do in the past."

He points out that he recently attended a meeting at the Four Seasons in Scottsdale, AZ, where the meeting

planners tied in some golf at one of the area's most expensive courses — one that only a couple of years ago would have cost \$350 to play. "In past years we would have gone to a less expensive tract, but now you can probably get a group deal there for under \$200," says Nicholson.

Mike Dern, an independent planner with the St. Louis-based Lexington Group, has been bringing groups to Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando for years and says he's had some groups, particularly from the farm and feed industry, where golf is barely part of the equation for meetings and incentives. On the other hand, Dern points out, insurance or financial services people are generally big earners who are usually more than just casual

golfers. So when it comes to groups, those from the insurance and financial services sectors, Dern says, "can't remember not doing a golf event."

Golf is the kind of sport that agents and producers play with their own customers — a common way for a broker or an agent to get together with their own clients, Dern says, which means they expect the same kind of treatment when they are being entertained at a meeting or an incentive.

### Price-Value Relationship

Like most corporate groups, those from insurance and financial services are concerned about costs, says Dern, "but insurance and financial services groups aren't just looking for cheap prices, they're also looking for a good price-value relationship." They'll pay for quality, Dern adds, and grab the highest value for the least expense.

Which is one of the reasons these groups like Disney, he says, pointing out that not only does Disney have excellent golf courses, but that they're reasonably priced, "particularly when it's not unheard of to have to pay \$300 or \$400 for some courses."

Fans of golf at Walt Disney World Resort will be pleased to hear that Arnold Palmer Golf Management has just signed a 20-year agreement to operate, manage, maintain and help promote all five Disney courses including Disney's Palm and Magnolia, Lake Buena Vista, Osprey Ridge and Oak Trail golf courses.

As part of this long-term alliance agreement, golf legend Arnold Palmer and his golf course design team will be actively engaged in implementing strategic and innovative design features for several of the golf courses. Future enhancements include plans for a full renovation of Disney's Palm under his direction to become an Arnold Palmer designed course.

"After 40 years as a golf course architect, I'm looking forward to this

opportunity to contribute to Disney's rich and storied golf legacy," says Arnold Palmer in a news release. "I've enjoyed a lifetime of memories playing golf and it will be a great reward to pass that on to those who share a passion both for Disney and the game of golf."

Over the past four decades, Disney World has hosted professional and amateur golf tournaments, including one of the longest-running events in PGA Tour

**Brokers "understand if they give us X amount of business they can continue to come to Bay Hill and enjoy the fruits of those placements. ...If we cut that off it would certainly impair our ability to influence them."**



**Skip Shewmaker**  
Vice President Marketing  
Safety National Casualty Corporation  
St. Louis, MO

history — the PGA Tour's Children's Miracle Network Hospitals Classic. Disney has also hosted the LPGA Tour, NCAA golf championships and dozens of celebrity golf tournaments.

Skip Shewmaker, business development representative for St. Louis-based Safety National, a leader in providing specialized workers' compensation solutions for the public sector, plans an annual incentive trip to Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club and Lodge in Orlando in conjunction with the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament.

Shewmaker first started planning the event 22 years ago, bringing a small group of about 40 executives, producers and spouses to Bay Hill. Now he brings in more than 300 attendees for meetings, dinners, entertainment and, of course, golf.



*Photo courtesy of Great Golf Events*

The Liberty Mutual Invitational charity golf event, sponsored by Liberty Mutual Group, was held in June at New York's Nassau Country Club.

While the event is an established part of the Safety National calendar, Shewmaker says company executives did ask themselves at one time whether it made sense to continue holding the event or to cut it back and perhaps even eliminate it altogether.

But Safety National values culture and tradition, says Shewmaker, and the more its executives thought about it, the more they liked the continuity of the event and the way it has been done over time. "It's real easy here because we've done it so many times before, and everybody knows the drill, so it's a pretty easy event to run," he explains.

More important, he says, the company has made a commitment to its brokers "who understand if they give us X amount of business they can continue to come to Bay Hill and enjoy the fruits of those placements. It sure enters into their thinking, and if we cut that off it would certainly impair our ability to influence them."

### Building Relationships

Strengthening relationships with producers or agents should be a key component to any insurance or financial services golf event, says Dern. "An effective meeting planner should work very carefully to ensure that he or she pairs the right people with a company's key executives."

Chuck Lane, strategic consultant at

Humana, Green Bay, WI, says golf remains an important relationship-building tool for the company, particularly during the annual incentive he plans for Humana's top independent producers.

"It gives us the chance to spend important time with these people, and we try to pair them up with our executives and decision-makers so that for five hours the independent brokers can carry out one-on-one conversations with our executives, get to know them better, and vice-versa," says

Lane, who adds that it helps improve the Humana/producer relationship and gives the company a leg up on other companies entertaining the same brokers, "and maybe not doing it quite as well."

Consequently, says Lane, golf is "something our top decision-makers really believe in." Many of those executives are golfers themselves, have participated in these golf events and "understand that they are very important to the relationship end of the business."

"So, it's really something the company isn't going to question from a financial standpoint," he adds.

The Lynette Owens & Associates Insurance Advisory Council gathers annually to discuss insurance and financial industry issues as they relate to incentive programs — and to get updates from the meeting properties in the portfolio of Lynette Owens & Associates, a hotel marketing firm.

This year the council, which comprises senior executives from insurance and financial services companies, met in Cabo San Lucas. During discussions on incentive issues, Owens surveyed council members on the business role golf plays in their incentive programs.

It appears the rationale for holding golf events during incentives hasn't changed, says Owens. Relationship-building and deal-making continue to be the primary objectives in providing golf for attendees. "The most important reason is teambuilding and to get a leg up on the competition," says one council member.

It's important to emphasize that companies "don't provide these incentives just so they can give away trips," says Dern. "It's a chance to do a little networking and give top producers a chance to be with newer top producers so that the older producers can become mentors and the newer producers can become 'mentorees.'

### Getting a Return On Investment

Even though golf continues to occupy a premier place when it comes

***We try to pair them up with our executives and decision-makers so that for five hours the independent brokers can carry out one-on-one conversations with our executives, get to know them better, and vice-versa.***

**Chuck Lane**  
Strategic Consultant  
Humana  
Green Bay, WI

to planning insurance and financial services meetings and incentives, the costs involved in putting on golf events still matter, says Owens. And while it's hard to quantify the financial benefits of golf, planners must be prepared to justify those costs to company executives. "More questions are being asked about golf's value proposition," says one advisory

council member. "But the question to ask would be if you didn't have a golf event, what would you have instead?"

Advisory Council members came up with a number of tactics they've used to try to increase ROI for their events, including:

- Asking vendors to help offset budget cuts.
- Ensuring they are using "efficient and effective" meeting planners.
- Using sponsorships.
- Becoming more selective regarding attendees.

"We do many golf events for our independent producers on incentive programs, and these are primarily relationship-building events where ROI is very difficult to quantify," says Lane. Yet in other cases, such as a recent event he planned for a local charity called "Valley Kids Foundation," which is sponsored by Humana, ROI is more easily quantified. Lane serves on the charity's board of directors and handles the event registration process, and tries to have VIPs strategically paired with executives and decision-makers of local corporations.

"Other donations are made in terms of goods to be auctioned or raffled, and all told our bottom line, after expenses, results in a number about six or seven times what we donate," said Lane. "(Former Secretary of State Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) Colin Powell used to refer to this as a 'force multiplier,' which is measurable, but the good will and relationships with local community leaders we establish are invaluable."

Tom Nicholson says that when DakotaCare went to Pinehurst one thing he was able to do was get the resort to comp his group a foursome with caddies on its world-famous No. 2 course. Nicholson and his CEO were able to get their two top producers — at no cost — onto one of the finest golf courses in the country for some one-on-one time. "That kind of exposure to our top producers is extremely valuable," says Nicholson, "And it worked out so well we got that incorporated into

our next trip (to South Seas Island Resort in Captiva, FL)."

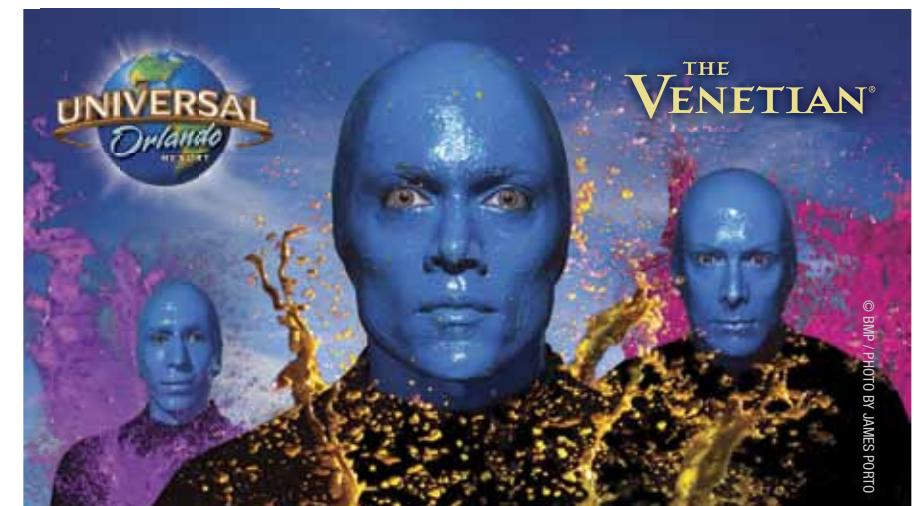
### Perception Problem?

The perception issue — which bedeviled Northern Trust, as well as other companies that included golf in their incentive and meeting programs in the aftermath of 2008's financial meltdown — is one that hasn't gone away entirely. This means that some insurance and financial services firms are still keen to keep their events under the radar.

According to Lane, Humana now makes it a practice to reduce the company's public exposure anytime it's involved in golf-related activities. "We've had a lot less visible presence when we come to a property," says Lane. "For example, instead of calling it the 'Humana Leader's Club,' we call it the 'Leader's Club.' Our postings won't utilize the name Humana, and we try to minimize the exposure we are giving the company in any signage or wearables."

The problem still exists, even for events that go beyond the traditional incentive or corporate meeting, says Roger Caldwell, president of Great Golf Events, a golf tournament services company based in Overland Park, KS. For example, he points out that some companies involved in charitable golf events would "rather just make a donation to the charity rather than have their name recognized on any marketing material or signage at the golf course."

Nicholson agrees that perception issues associated with corporate golf continue to be a concern, but that it needs to be stressed that there are legitimate business reasons for holding these events. "We are there to have meaningful meetings to talk about our new product launches and to get ideas from our producers," he says. "While it's a very valuable opportunity to reward them for the job they've done for us, it's also, at the same time, a chance to set the direction for our next year." **I&FMM**



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# Built FOR Meetings

## How Conference Centers Are Changing With the Times

By Steve Winston

If you're looking for a place that knows how to do meetings for insurance and financial groups, knows how to work with planners and knows how to address last-minute issues, you couldn't do better than a conference center.

The biggest advantage, of course, is that conference centers are purpose-designed and purpose-built for meetings. In addition, they're showing a knack for being on top of the learning curve when it comes to adopting new technologies. Since meetings are their only business, they've seen, heard and done it all in this industry. Another factor is that, for many years, conference centers had a reputation as dull, staid places in which to hold meetings. These

days, however, many of them are attached to luxurious resorts, which means that attendees never have to leave the premises — it's all there.

The standard-setting organization for conference centers is the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC). And that's a good place to start.



**Tom Bolman**, Executive Vice President  
International Association of Conference Centers, St. Louis, MO

***“Conference centers understand the science of staging productive meetings. And we understand the science of staging them for insurance and financial companies — because they’re our second-largest market.”***

### The View From IACC

"IACC-certified centers are generally self-contained facilities that are built for meetings, and that provide the perfect environment for meetings," says Tom Bolman, executive vice president of IACC. "Our members don't just sell space, rates and dates. They partner with planners to accomplish their goals and objectives for their meetings. And, because meetings are their only business, they're uniquely qualified to handle any situation...and to turn potential last-minute crises into resolvable situations."

These centers not only are involved in the newest trends occurring in the meetings industry; in many cases, they're setting the standards. Food and beverage is in the spotlight nowadays in the con-



Destination Hotels & Resorts' Tempe Mission Palms offers 30,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting and event space. Meeting facilities are IACC-certified.

technology, he says, is collaboratively based, so that virtual attendees in Des Moines or Dallas can have access to the same programs and speakers and breakouts as physical attendees in Washington, DC.

In addition, IACC's Bolman says there's a movement toward greater amenities, as well, because quality onsite amenities keep attendees on-site, which increases their opportunities to swap ideas and to network outside of the meetings. In past years, spas and fitness centers tended to be afterthoughts — a keep-up-with-the-Joneses type of thing. Now, however, attendees at many conference centers have access to spas and fitness facilities that are larger and more elaborate. And, because many centers are attached to full-service resorts, there's a whole range of options right outside attendees' doors.

"IACC conference centers are specialists — meetings are all we do," Bolman says. "So we can partner with the planner and the company to create the most effective environment for their meeting. There are no other groups at the facility; no outside noise. And all the technical and AV equipment is right on the premises — along with people to maintain and operate it.

"Conference centers understand the science of staging productive meetings," Bolman says, "while others impede it. We're finding out that, believe it or not, some types of food actually enhance teambuilding, while some inhibit it. Science is taking a leading role in the F&B aspect of our industry."

Bolman says that conference centers have always been at the cutting edge of technological innovation. He's seeing a movement toward "blended" or "hybrid" meetings, where people can attend in person or remotely via computer. The relevant

ference-center world. People are now interested in lighter, more healthful meals. And they're interested in food that is sourced from local farmers. In fact, many centers are undertaking serious studies about how to shape their menus to provide not only the best

value for planners and attendees, but also the best nutritional value.

properties, 10 of which have IACC-certified conference centers. Dolce's had a ringside seat on an industry that is being transformed, and is debunking old perceptions.

"Our average meeting has between 20 and 40 attendees," Dolce says. "But we can handle as many as 500. The planners with whom we work all tell us essentially the same thing: Conference centers are more conducive to productive meetings because they're designed, built, equipped and staffed for holding productive meetings. Meetings aren't a sideline for these centers — they're the whole business.

"If the economy continues to grow," he says, "we think our industry is in a good position to rebound in 2012."

Dolce adds that the old image of conference centers as being somewhat unaccommodating in pricing negotiations — especially after the past few years — has changed. He notes that the Complete Meeting Package (CMP) in effect at conference centers is not an inflexible document, but a starting point that can easily be customized for each client.

"If planners can be flexible with their dates," he says, "sometimes even by just one night, they'd be surprised at the savings they can achieve." He notes that weekends (when centers are generally not being used) offer better opportunities for savings. Dolce also notes that "green" is not just a



The National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA, boasts 265,000 sf of IACC-approved conference space with 250 meeting rooms.

buzzword at conference centers: It's now an operational philosophy: All IACC members must subscribe to the organization's Code of Sustainability.

**Aramark Conference Centers** manages more than 50 conference centers around the country, 11 of which are formally accredited by IACC. The centers, which offer turnkey, customized services for clients, can host meetings from six to 1,000 attendees (the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA).

"Conference centers are a planner's best friend," says Scott Shontz, vice president of conference centers for Aramark Conference Centers. "And so is the CMP. It allows us to provide everything in one package, as opposed to the à la carte approach, and this saves planners a lot of money. The venues are distraction-free. They're built for meetings. And, because everything's in one location, it makes planning much easier."

Aramark is noticing a trend toward

smaller meetings than before the recession, and toward shorter stays (perhaps one day less), as planners remain extremely budget-conscious.

Shontz says it's possible to trim expenses even further—if you know where to look. And if you're willing to show some flexibility.

"Look at the facility's booking patterns," he says, "and try to remain flexible. For example, here at



***If planners can be flexible with their dates, sometimes even by just one night, they'd be surprised at the savings they can achieve."***

**Paul Dolce**, Vice President, Conference Centers  
Dolce Hotels & Resorts, Potomac, MD

Aramark we post specials. Consider the time of year. Summertime has some softer weeks, which are a good opportunity to save money. And when thinking about the CMP, don't forget to think about the value

ings have a higher ROI than their meetings held elsewhere."

Powell points out that the meeting rooms are ergonomically designed and comfortable, and that state-of-the-art technology is standard.

you're getting for items for which conference centers don't charge, for instance, parking."

**Benchmark Hospitality International** owns and operates 13 Four Diamond, IACC-certified hotels and operates some 30 privately owned centers.

"It's all about productivity," says Hal Powell, regional vice president, sales and marketing. "Meetings in conference centers are more productive. And planners tell us these meet-

Benchmark properties place great importance on teambuilding. As a result, there are ropes courses at some of them, along with canoe races and culinary team-building, among other types of team-building exercises.

"In the insurance/financial area," he says, "we're seeing a number of trends. One of them is more work groups, rather than classroom education. There are more breakouts and more work on innovation. And we're also seeing some movement toward more golf events. During the past few years, of course, many companies stopped having golf events. It's still not the way it was before. But it's coming back."

Powell says the most common meetings for insurance and financial

*Situated on 40 acres of alpine splendor, Dolce Hotels & Resorts' Aspen Meadows Resort in Aspen, CO, offers 22,000 sf of IACC-approved meeting space.*



June for a meeting in June. We can do this, because the CMP makes the process simple. But the longer planning process, in some cases, is certainly a good thing to see. Hopefully it means that things are getting back to normal.

"These days, surprises are a planner's worst nightmare," continues Sackman. "But with the CMP, you know the exact costs ahead of time. There are no overruns. And there are no surprises."



***Conference centers are a planner's best friend. And so is the CMP. It allows us to provide everything in one package, as opposed to the à la carte approach, and this saves planners a lot of money."***

**Scott Shontz**, Vice President Conference Centers  
Aramark Conference Centers, Philadelphia, PA

companies are training, board and committee meetings.

Steve Sackman, vice president of marketing for **Destination Hotels & Resorts**, helps oversee an empire of 35 hotels, seven of which have IACC-certified conference centers.

"Financial and insurance planners have always liked conference centers," he says, "because the centers are perfect for their frequent training meetings. They tell us all the time that they see conference centers not just as a place to hold meetings, but a place where planners can achieve the desired outcome for their meetings. In addition, it helps planners show the validity of their meetings and the ROI."

Sackman, too, has noticed a trend toward top-of-the-line technology to



***In the insurance/financial area we're seeing...more work groups, rather than classroom education. There are more breakouts and more work on innovation. And we're also seeing some movement toward more golf events."***

**Hal Powell**, Regional Vice President, Sales and Marketing  
Benchmark Hospitality International, The Woodlands, TX

example, we're seeing a shortening of the planning process in some cases, and a lengthening in others. It's not uncommon for us to get a call in

Island near Jacksonville is Omni Amelia Island Plantation, one of the most distinctive resorts in the Southeast, on 1,300 acres of live

## New and Renovated IACC Centers

### Benchmark Hospitality International

- Opening in fall 2012 is the Deloitte University Center in Dallas, an 800 guest room conference facility for Deloitte's own employees.



*Photo courtesy of Cheyenne Mountain Resort*  
Benchmark's Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, CO, recently completed a \$20 million resort-wide renovation.

- Recently acquired: The Inn at Virginia Tech/Skelton Conference Center, Blacksburg, VA, and the Villas of Grand Cypress/Conference Center, Orlando, FL.
- Recently completed \$20 million renovation of Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Currently renovating the Turtle Bay Resort/Conference Center, Hawaii.
- Recently finished renovations at The Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN.

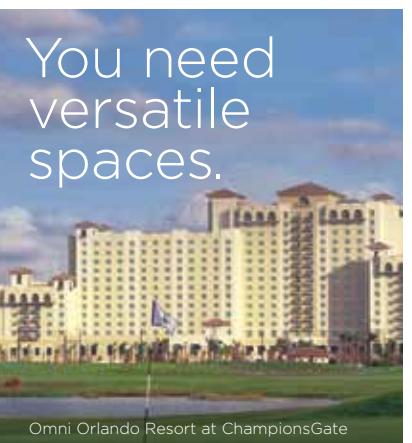
### Dolce Hotels & Resorts

- Now building a new conference center, as yet unnamed, in downtown Indianapolis due to open fall 2012.

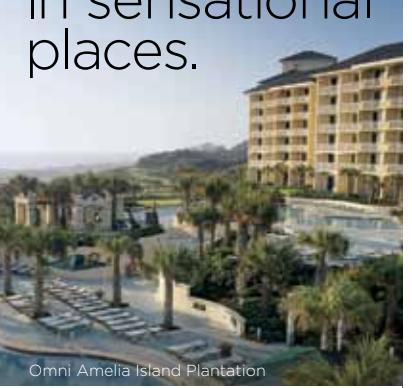
### Destination Hotels & Resorts

- Rizzo Conference Center, Chapel Hill, NC, has recently undergone some improvements.
- Tempe Mission Palms Conference Center, Tempe, AZ, is currently undergoing renovations to meeting spaces and other areas

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*Omni Orlando  
Resort at  
ChampionsGate's  
82,000 sf of  
meeting space  
is as impres-  
sive as its two  
Greg Norman-  
designed golf  
courses.*



Photo courtesy of Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate

oaks, rolling sand dunes, and beaches. Accommodations include the Amelia Inn with 249 oceanview guest rooms, and the Villas of Amelia offering one-, two- and three-bedroom villas with ocean, golf or resort views. Amenities include 54 holes of golf, a spa, shopping village and endless outdoor activities from fishing and sailing to hiking and bike rentals. There is nearly 50,000 sf of flexible meeting space, including two ballrooms, 15 breakout rooms and prefunction space. The expansive grounds provide ample outdoor meeting and reception opportunities — including coffee breaks on one of the patios to steel-drum music. The resort recently announced a \$75 million expansion, which will add 125 guest rooms and a 16,000-sf ballroom. Nearby is the 1890s town of Fernandina Beach, with its authentically restored Victorian buildings and several great seafood restaurants. Here, the sidewalks are red-brick, the street lamps are gaslit, and the preferred mode of transport for visitors is horse and carriage.

A bit to the southwest, the AAA Four Diamond Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate is similarly spread out — over 1,200 acres. Here, in the middle of the biggest attractions in the world, it's hard to tell you're in Orlando: The resort is a self-contained oasis. The 720-room luxury hotel offers 82,000 sf of indoor meeting and banquet space, including two ballrooms of 25,000 and 20,000 sf; and 70,000 sf of tropically land-

scaped outdoor event space. There are two golf courses designed by Greg Norman, and the headquarters of the prestigious David Leadbetter Golf Academy (where Michelle Wie trains). There's also a nine-hole, par-3 course, lighted for night play and great for teambuilding. Other amenities include a Serenity Spa and Salon, lazy river and five restaurants. This Omni, too, has announced exciting new expansion plans. It's breaking ground this fall on 46,000 sf of additional meeting/event space, which will include a new ballroom and eight breakout rooms, scheduled for completion in 2013.

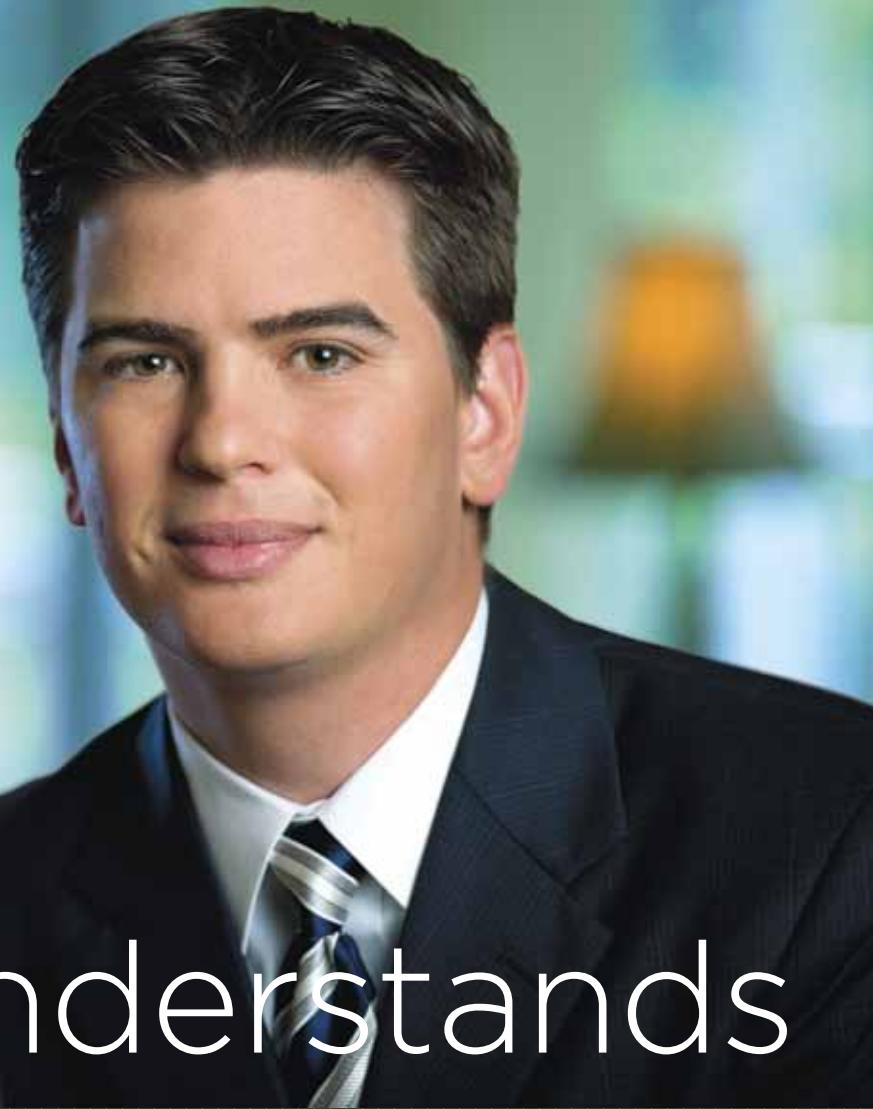
### The Last Word

"We've all faced some real challenges over the past few years," says IACC's Tom Bolman. "But I'm seeing positive trends right now. In this day and age, when planners are more budget conscious than ever before — and when they have to definitively prove the ROI of their meetings — conference centers are well-positioned. We're the only meeting facilities built specifically for meetings. Yours will generally be the only meeting going on. And we have the expertise to stage productive meetings, to partner with planners, and to make planners look good. There's not a lot of new construction going on now. But there's some pent-up demand building. And as the economy continues to improve, I think we'll see a bunch of new ones in a few years."

**I&FMM**

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check availability.  
I build relationships."*

**Ryan Parr**  
National Sales Manager  
Omni San Diego Hotel



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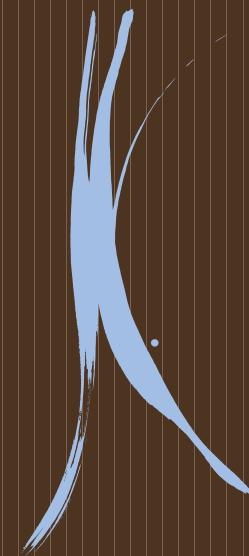
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Omni Dallas Hotel  
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# 2011 World Class Award Winners



## CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS



Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Boston, MA



Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Miami, FL

**Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
Long Beach, CA

**New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
New Orleans, LA

**VISIT DENVER**  
Denver, CO

**Visit Jacksonville**  
Jacksonville, FL

**Visit Orlando**  
Orlando, FL

We honor the deserving winners of the 2011 World Class Awards with this special section devoted to the hard-working, extraordinary management and staff of the best of the best — the convention and visitors bureaus, and hotels, resorts and conference centers that exceed the high standards of excellence according to these criteria:

### Convention & Visitors Bureaus

- Superior service and support
- Promotional assistance
- High level of supplier, facility and venue information, coordination and liaison with local attractions and transportation
- Comprehensive assistance with accommodations and site inspections

### Hotels, Resorts & Conference Centers

- Superior staff service
- Excellence in accommodations and meeting facilities
- Trouble-free food and beverage functions
- Smooth setups and arrangements for social functions
- Exceptional ambience
- Convenient and accessible location



ARIA Resort & Casino

Many of these fine winners of the 2011 World Class Award are profiled on the following pages.

I&FMM

## HOTELS, RESORTS & CONFERENCE CENTERS



Hammock Beach Resort

**ARIA Resort & Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa**  
Atlantic City, NJ

**The Broadmoor**  
Colorado Springs, CO

**Caesars Palace Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Hammock Beach Resort**  
Palm Coast, FL

**Hilton New York**  
New York, NY

**Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando**  
Orlando, FL

**M Resort Spa and Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**MGM Grand Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Mohegan Sun**  
Uncasville, CT

**Ocean Reef Club**  
Key Largo, FL

**Ponte Vedra Inn & Club**  
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

**Reunion Resort & Club**  
Reunion, FL

**Rosen Shingle Creek**  
Orlando, FL

**The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino**  
Las Vegas, NV

**Walt Disney World Resort**  
Lake Buena Vista, FL

**Wynn Las Vegas**  
Las Vegas, NV



Reunion Resort & Club



The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino



**TONY YOUSFI, CMP**  
Director of Sales

3730 Las Vegas Boulevard South  
Las Vegas, NV 89158  
Phone: 866-718-2489  
Fax: 702-669-4568  
meetings@arialasvegas.com  
www.arialasvegas.com



#### Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:**  
3,562/442

**Meeting Space:** 300,000 sf

**Special Services & Amenities:**  
The AAA Five Diamond ARIA provides 300,000 sf of technologically advanced meeting space with four ballrooms and 38 meeting rooms. An attentive staff ensures every program is executed flawlessly.

## ARIA Resort & Casino

**L**ocated in the heart of CityCenter, the AAA Five Diamond ARIA Resort & Casino is an awe-inspiring combination of striking architecture, impeccable hospitality and sustainable design. ARIA's 4,004 accommodations incorporate integrated technologies allowing guests to customize their stay to meet their personal preferences.

ARIA's rooms and suites showcase impeccable décor with dramatic color tones, expressive artwork, and a balance of textures and materials that convey calm and elegance along with an unparalleled array of amenities. ARIA's suites offer spaces to satisfy a variety of needs such as large parlors for entertaining and separate conference rooms in Executive Hospitality Suites.

#### The Meeting Experience

ARIA provides Las Vegas' premier meeting experience featuring 300,000 sf of technologically advanced meeting and prefunction space. A spectacular glass curtain wall spanning the entire north façade of the facility brings in the outside and enhances the meeting

experience. Three levels of flexible space feature four ballrooms ranging in size from 20,000 to 51,000 sf, three with fully functioning theatrical stages. Each level offers additional breakout meeting rooms from 800 to 3,400 sf to host smaller programs. Two executive boardrooms are designed for intimate meetings with intricate presentation requirements such as videoconferencing and incredible technology taking production and execution to a new level.

#### Sustainability Commitment

Setting the standard for responsible growth in Las Vegas, ARIA is one of the largest buildings in the United States to receive LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The property utilizes recycled wood from responsibly managed forests and advanced technology to attain a 30 percent improvement of energy efficiency. ARIA has received a five key rating from the Green Key Eco-rating Program for its ongoing operational commitment to sustainability.

#### Dining and Entertainment

The resort features a variety of dining experiences from world-renowned restaurateurs including Masa Takayama, Michael Mina, Julian Serrano, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Sirio Maccioni and Shawn McClain. Private dining rooms and buyouts for groups and events are available at all of the impressive venues. Guests will also enjoy ARIA's dynamic collection of lounges, bars and nightclubs available for large or small private events. The well-designed Spa & Salon at ARIA offers a complete treatment menu, deluxe fitness room and spa suites designed to accommodate couples' treatments or small group events.

At the entertainment centerpiece of ARIA, the visionary creative team at Cirque du Soleil presents Viva ELVIS, a rockin' blend of dance, live music and acrobatics that pays tribute to the life and musical legacy of Elvis Presley.

Crystals, CityCenter's shopping, dining and nightlife district, houses some of the world's most elite luxury brands and high-end couture and dynamic dining concepts. Specialty events can be held in many of the truly unique spaces inside Crystals.

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## THE NEW GOLD STANDARD IN VEGAS MEETINGS.



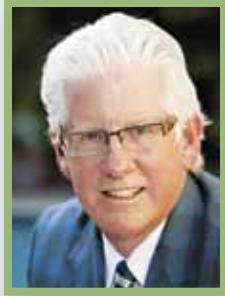
Book a meeting at ARIA Resort & Casino and experience innovation upon arrival. As a resort with LEED® Gold certification, your group will enjoy clean air and beautiful natural lighting throughout three levels of flexible convention space. In addition, an enticing array of acclaimed dining, shopping and entertainment options is trumped only by an unrivaled commitment to individually tailored service and the utmost personal attention. Ensure your meeting is an absolute success at this AAA Five Diamond destination.



Contact us at 866.718.2489 or  
meetings@arialasvegas.com

**Aria**  
RESORT & CASINO  
CITYCENTER, LAS VEGAS

AriaLasVegas.com



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#### **Citywide Facts and Features**

**Guest Rooms:** 46,365

**Miami Beach Convention Center**  
**Meeting Space:** 500,000 sf

**New Amenities:** Adrienne Arsht Performing Arts Center Concert Hall and Broadway Theater, Miami Marlin's new baseball stadium, Frank Ghery-designed New World Symphony, Miami Children's Museum, brand new business and boutique hotels.

## Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

They say location, location, location are the three most important words to make your meeting a success. And Miami will surpass your expectations in all three categories because our location has everything your attendees are looking for.

Imagine planning your next event at the location everyone wants to visit. That's what will happen when you choose to meet in Miami, the location with beautiful beaches, world-class shopping, the hippest clubs and the latest restaurants. Places to see and be seen, and hidden places to sit quietly and catch your breath.

When it's time for sports, there's more to do in Miami than anywhere. All major league sports, an international Motor Speedway, tennis tournaments, and golf championships. Plus, more golf, tennis and swimming than anywhere else.

Waterskiing, kayaking, windsurfing, diving, kite surfing and jet skiing are available most anywhere along the Atlantic Ocean or Biscayne Bay. And along with the glamour, Miami-Dade features two national parks — the Biscayne National Preserve and

Everglades National Park — as well as acres of unspoiled tropical green space, which offer fascinating new venues for your offsites.

#### **Accommodations**

Our location has all the accommodations you need, including 46,365 guest rooms to be exact. Our grand dames have been face-lifted with billions of dollars of renovations and joined by scores of brand-new hotels with famous

flags. And, of course, South Beach is the home of the world's largest collection of restored Art Deco, Art Nouveau and cutting-edge boutique hotels.

In the last year, newly arrived standout restaurants have opened next door to our international superstars and Miami's own world-renowned home-grown classics, increasing our total to 5,000 plus. Almost every corner hosts another ethnic favorite, trendy late scene spot or neighborhood haunt. And if you need help getting up the next morning to do it again, recharge yourself with sweet caffeinated rocket fuel called Cuban coffee.

When it comes to coming and going, no destination has invested more on transportation. Miami International Airport boasts new terminals and a recently installed high-speed train to whisk travelers from plane to baggage claim. Miami's new intermodal center presents rental cars, taxis and limos, and public transportation in one convenient place.

Miami's cruise port, the world's busiest, is also undergoing transformational upgrades, digging a tunnel to keep trucks out of traffic, re-establishing its national rail connection and dredging its waterways to allow for bigger ships.

#### **Miami Beach Convention Center**

Miami Beach's 650,000+ sf Convention Center is blocks from beach, hotels and Lincoln Road, and adjacent to Frank Gehry's New World Symphony and the Miami Beach Soundscape outdoor stage.

Miami is the tropical American city that's constantly reinventing itself. And if you bring your event to Miami between May and December you'll enjoy great values too.

**I&FMM**

# LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION



Miami has revised, refreshed, and restored nearly every part of its user experience. Including a new performing arts center and New World Symphony campus directly across the street from our convention center. It all adds up to Miami's record-breaking attendance for meetings, small and large. After all, Miami has every amenity your attendees are looking for — in all of our locations.

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau meetings team can help manage your event. To learn more, call 800.933.8448 x3071 or visit [MiamiMeetings.com](http://MiamiMeetings.com)

**MIAMI**



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#### Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Villas:** 386

**Meeting Space:** 15,000 sf indoor.

#### Special Services & Amenities:

Eight restaurants/dining options on property; eight lighted "Hydro-Grid" clay tennis courts; boutique spa and fitness center with aerobics studio; private water park.

## Hammock Beach<sup>SM</sup> Resort

Through years of experience in event planning, Hammock Beach Resort's unpretentious, island-inspired philosophy is highly conducive for productive conferences and meetings that your group will look forward to attending year after year. Hammock Beach Resort is here to help make your corporate meeting, training session or group retreat unforgettable. And with space that ranges from breathtaking ballrooms to a 117-foot yacht, Hammock Beach Resort gives you the event canvas of your dreams.

#### Meeting Facilities

Hammock Beach Resort offers more than 15,000 sf of indoor event space, additional outdoor space including numerous event lawns, and private dining facilities ideal for both large and intimate gatherings. With state-of-the-art, audio-visual capabilities and an onsite Conference Services Team, you can rest assured your event will run smoothly.

Hammock Beach lodging options also create a private feel for your group. There are no "standard" hotel-style rooms at the resort. Instead, the resort offers fully furnished Tower Suites with ocean and resort views; one, three- and four-bedroom suites with fully equipped kitchens offering plenty of room; villas with all the comforts of home; and oceanfront guest accommodations.

#### Experience Golf

Hammock Beach Resort provides the perfect location for the ultimate golf experience. Our two immaculate golf courses have been host to PGA Tour

events and tout some of the highest rankings in the state by *Golf Magazine*, *Golf Week* and *Golf Digest*. Designed by legends of the game, each course is surrounded by spectacular views of the natural landscape.

The Hammock Beach Resort experience is built upon a unique private club-style blueprint, ensuring guests a personalized experience with unparalleled hospitality. Only resort guests and property owners have access to Hammock Beach's golf courses and beach amenities. The resort is cashless and tipless, making your group's stay even more convenient.

In addition to the Atlantic Ocean just steps away, conference attendees and their families will want to check out Hammock Beach's Water Pavilion where you can float down the lazy river, ride the twisting water slide and grab some rays. There's something fun for all ages.

#### Relax and Unwind

After a long day of meetings, unwind with live music and good times at Loggerheads or savor the finest single malts, ports and cognacs and a fully stocked walk-in humidor at the Cigar Bar. Meeting participants can sit ocean-side and dine on contemporary world cuisine at the Atlantic Grille or meet fellow attendees and clients for Italian cuisine at Delfinos.

Located between historic St. Augustine and Daytona Beach, Hammock Beach Resort is a short drive to theme parks in nearby Central Florida and close to Marineland.

Hammock Beach Resort is Northeast Florida's premier location for meetings, conferences and events, offering a rare combination of an oceanfront setting, two signature golf courses, ultra-modern conference facilities, luxury amenities and unrivaled service.

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Your time. Your place. Your meeting.



With spacious suites, flexible meeting space and a personal Conference Services Department catering to your every need, Hammock Beach<sup>SM</sup> Resort is more than just a meeting site. It's your place to share ideas, reward successes and inspire your team.

- More than 80,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space and event lawns
- Themed outdoor meeting and banquet facilities
- State-of-the-art audio/visual capabilities
- On-site professional Conference Services department
- 386 spacious 1 to 4 bedroom, fully serviced suites and villas
- Two Signature restaurants plus casual dining
- Unique meeting rooms, packages and breaks
- 36 Holes of Signature golf designed by Watson and Nicklaus
- The Sundancer, a 117' luxury motor yacht
- Multi-level Water Park
- World-class Spa
- Complete Tennis Center with lighted courts



**HAMMOCK BEACH  
RESORT**  
PALM COAST, FLORIDA

**877-889-5096**

[groupsales@hammockbeach.com](mailto:groupsales@hammockbeach.com)  
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#### **Citywide Facts and Features**

**Guest Rooms:** 4,528

**Hotels/Resorts:** 21

**Meeting Space:**

Hotels: 219,000+ sf  
Offsite: 500,000+ sf

**Convention Center:** The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center features more than 300,000 sf of flexible exhibit and meeting space, two theaters, an arena and 34 meeting rooms.

## Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

Over the past decade Long Beach has continued to expand its appeal as a premier convention destination, with more than \$1 billion invested in new downtown development. Located in the center of Southern California, Long Beach blends the urban excitement of a big city alongside the welcoming charm of a beach community.

#### **Meeting Facilities**

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center offers more than 300,000 sf of modern, flexible exhibition and meeting space, including two newly renovated 3,000- and 800-seat theaters and a 12,000-seat arena. The convention center offers spectacular

views of the Pacific Ocean, miles of beachfront and the downtown harbor. The convention center received an \$8 million renovation with oceanview-inspired interior design of the venues, with more upgrades in the future. Special event venues include the Aquarium of the Pacific, The Queen Mary, nightclubs, rooftop banquet rooms, harbor cruises and oceanside parks.

#### **Accommodations**

Long Beach has 5,000 hotel rooms citywide, with more than 2,000 rooms within an easy walk to the convention center.

Many downtown hotels offer panoramic ocean views, and there are accommodation choices for every preference and pocketbook ranging from a historic ocean liner, singular boutiques, first-class business hotels and quality economy properties to family-oriented and long-term-stay properties.

Newly opened hotels include Hotel AVIA featuring a rooftop pool and bar with a 360-degree view of the downtown waterfront; all of the Residence Inn's guest rooms feature spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean and downtown skyline; and Hotel Maya boasts newly refurbished guest rooms, reimagined meeting space and a full-sized lap pool with tranquil floating cabanas.

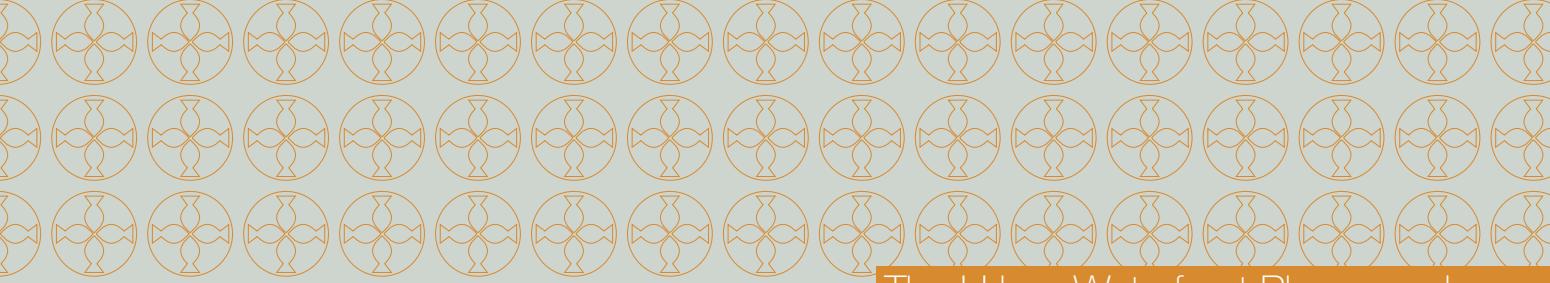
With its central location between Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Long Beach is minutes away from Southern California's major attractions. Long Beach has world-class attractions of its own: The Queen Mary, once the largest, fastest and most luxurious ocean liner on the Atlantic, is now a first-class hotel and features restaurants, shopping, spacious meeting and banquet rooms, plus historical tours of the ship. The Aquarium of the Pacific features more than 11,000 fish, mammals and birds that live in and around the Pacific Ocean. The Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA) is the only museum of its kind on the West Coast.

Long Beach is jeweled with mouthwatering eateries from romantic hideaways, sidewalk cafés and neighborhood favorites to those serving up elegance, spectacular city and harbor views and seaside charm. Visitors will find more than 100 quality restaurants within an eight-block radius in the downtown.

Three airports provide easy access including LAX, John Wayne/Orange County Airport and the Long Beach Airport, which is just 10 minutes from downtown Long Beach.

The CVB provides many innovative tools to help planners, including free access to their own "micro-site," providing customized information for conventions or meetings.

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The Urban Waterfront Playground

# Experience Unconventional

Meet the City that doesn't do Ordinary. Chic. Casual. Modern. Retro. Hot, sunny days. Bright, electric nights. It's the unmistakable contrasts and sweet contradictions that make Long Beach a city apart from the rest. So when hosting your next event, go where a world of possibilities await – because in Long Beach, whatever you do, you're in for the unconventional. [visitlongbeach.com](http://visitlongbeach.com)

**LONG BEACH** |   
CALIFORNIA™





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#### Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 400

**Meeting Space:** 25,000 sf indoor and outdoor.

**Special Services & Amenities:**  
ANNIKA Academy — only boutique golf academy by Annika Sorenstam; six lighted "Hydro-Grid" clay tennis courts; six restaurants on property; boutique spa; private water park.

## Reunion® Resort & Club

**W**ho says work can't be fun? When your group gathers at Reunion Resort, you'll be amazed with the resort's unmatched ability for bringing people together. Reunion Resort is here to help your corporate meeting, training session or group retreat be unlike any other. You and your colleagues will return to the office refreshed and ready to conquer. And with space that ranges from breathtaking ballrooms and spacious conference rooms, your gathering will be as unique as it is flawless.

#### Meeting Facilities

Reunion offers 25,000 sf of indoor/outdoor flexible meeting space including numerous event lawns and private dining facilities ideal for both large and intimate gatherings. With state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities and an onsite Conference Services Team, you can rest assured your event will run smoothly.

#### Relax and Unwind

After a long day of meetings, unwind at Eleven, a unique rooftop lounge overlooking Central Florida, and watch evening fireworks while catching up with fellow conference attendees. Need to host clients for dinner? Located on the main floor of the Reunion Grande, Forte serves traditional American cuisine in a warm and rustic atmosphere.

Reunion's lodging options also create a private feel for you and your group. There are no "standard" hotel-style rooms at the resort. Instead, the resort offers fully furnished tower suites, villas and private homes for guest accommodations.

#### Unparalleled Golf Experiences

Reunion Resort is the only destination in the world to boast three Signature golf courses designed by legends Palmer, Nicklaus and Watson. Combining the beauty of their natural landscaping with unique and challenging layouts, these courses have won numerous awards and followers over the years.

**I&FMM**

In addition to private neighborhood pools, conference attendees and their families will want to check out Reunion's Water Park where you can float down the lazy river, ride the twisting water slides and take a stroll on the wooden boardwalk. Pair that with poolside food and beverage service, colorful tropical landscaping, sunny or shaded lounge areas, and you have something to please kids and adults of all ages.

The Reunion Resort experience is built upon a unique private club-style blueprint, ensuring guests a personalized experience with unparalleled hospitality. Only resort guests and property owners have access to Reunion's three golf courses. In addition, the resort is cashless and tipless — everything is covered on one tab — making your group's stay even more convenient.



## Where Unforgettable Meetings Happen



At Reunion® Resort, we replaced hotel rooms with spacious villas and designed over 25,000 square feet of flexible meeting space that can accommodate anything you imagine...and maybe some things you never dreamed of.

- More than 25,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space and event lawns
- Themed outdoor meeting and banquet facilities
- State-of-the-art audio/visual capabilities
- On-site professional Conference Services department
- 450 spacious suites, villas and private residences with balconies and fully equipped kitchens
- Two Signature restaurants plus casual dining
- 54 holes of Signature golf designed by Watson, Palmer and Nicklaus
- The only resort home to The ANNIKA Academy™, where golfing legend Annika Sorenstam shares her passion for golf & fitness
- Five acre Water Park for Unique Events
- World-class boutique spa
- Award-winning Tennis Centre with 6 clay Hydro-Grid courts equipped for night play



**REUNION RESORT™**  
WYNDHAM GRAND RESORT

ORLANDO FLORIDA

Find yourself together.



**CHANDRA ALLISON**  
Vice President of Sales

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#### Facts and Features

**Guest Rooms/Suites:** 7,093

**Meeting Space:** 2.25 million sf

#### Special Services & Amenities:

Three venues (The Venetian, The Palazzo, Sands Expo and Convention Center) form the ultimate destination for business and pleasure — Venetian | Palazzo Meetings. It's the perfect choice for meetings of any size with a vast array of astounding facilities.

**W**ith more than 7,000 all-suite accommodations, unrivaled amenities and five-diamond, four-star service, guests know why The Venetian and The Palazzo are the most exquisite resort destinations in Las Vegas the moment they arrive.

#### Meeting Facilities

From our standard luxury suites, designed specifically for the business traveler, to our many formal meeting spaces, you will find that our facilities and services can easily accommodate your group. If you need a business-ready venue with ample space in an intimate setting that can accommodate up

to 80 people comfortably, our Hospitality Parlors are just the thing. If you need an open floor with room for multiple booths, The Venetian Ballroom, at 85,000 sf, fits the bill. Large or small, we have the perfect venue to meet all of your needs.

The Sands Expo and Convention Center is acclaimed as one of the world's great business event destinations, offering the most modern convention, meeting and exhibit space. Combined with

The Venetian | The Palazzo Congress Center, the two have more than 2.25 gross million sf of space and have become the destination of choice for hundreds of thousands of convention planners and attendees each year.

#### Commitment to Sustainability

Our Las Vegas master-planned development, which combines The Venetian, The Palazzo and Sands Expo and Convention Center, is the largest "green" building on the planet. We have taken

a leadership role with the Sands Eco 360° Global Sustainable Development program. From our integrated resort properties around the globe, each of our more than 27,000 Team Members is committed to reducing our impact on the environment. These positive efforts affect our families, our friends and our communities. Our legacy is to leave a cleaner and safer world for future generations.

#### Accommodations and Entertainment

We boast breathtaking accommodations at The Venetian and The Palazzo, which offer a degree of five-diamond luxury unlike anywhere else in Las Vegas. Our suites average 700 sf — roughly twice the size of most Las Vegas hotel rooms.

The Venetian is home to 20 critically acclaimed Las Vegas restaurants, with menus to suit any taste, including world-class cuisine from celebrity chefs such as Emeril Lagasse's Delmonico Steak House and Thomas Keller's Bouchon. We also offer Broadway-caliber shows such as "Jersey Boys," two incredible casinos, shops featuring the latest from top designers and the hottest nightlife on The Strip.

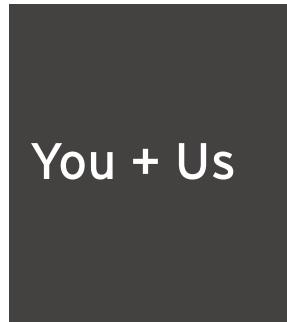
The Venetian boasts the world-famous Canyon Ranch SpaClub, renowned as the ideal place to relax, renew and re-energize.

Located in the heart of The Las Vegas Strip, just minutes from McCarran International Airport, The Venetian and The Palazzo offer the finest in meeting space, accommodations and amenities all set in a luxurious resort.

These are just a few of the infinite number of reasons to bring your meetings and conventions to The Venetian and The Palazzo. This is where business gets done

**I&FMM**

## The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino



The Venetian®  
Las Vegas, NV



The Palazzo®  
Las Vegas, NV



#### MAKE IT EXCEPTIONAL AT VENETIAN | PALAZZO MEETINGS®

The Venetian®, The Palazzo® and Sands® Expo and Convention Center - three renowned venues together form the ultimate destination for business and pleasure.

Venetian | Palazzo Meetings has hosted everything from the biggest trade shows to the most private boardroom meetings, and earned Meetings & Conventions magazine's Gold Key Elite and Gold Platter Elite awards year after year. The Venetian and Sands Expo are LEED Gold Existing Buildings and The Palazzo is LEED Silver New Construction. Our Las Vegas master-planned development holds the distinction of being the largest 'green' building on the planet.

With 2.25 million square feet of flexible exhibition and meeting space, 7,000 suites and the world's most celebrated restaurants, shows, shops, casinos, and nightlife, you'll instantly realize why your event belongs with Venetian | Palazzo Meetings.

Venetian | Palazzo Meetings - Business done right.

**THE VENETIAN® | THE PALAZZO®**

M E E T I N G S

888.283.6384 | [venetianpalazzomeetings.com](http://venetianpalazzomeetings.com)



**Make it Happen.**

# Florida Stories



Photo courtesy of Ocean Reef Club

## From Confidential Keys Summit to Panhandle Family Incentive

By Karen Brost

**I**magine this scenario. Your company is bringing the CEOs and CFOs of 42 Latin American companies together for an investment summit. Besides needing to find and book an upscale property to house them, you need to arrange for 42 separate rooms to accommodate private one-on-one meetings with investors.

That's the challenge faced by Skip Stano, CMP, who was vice president, conference, roadshow and event management for HSBC Securities at the time of the most recent summit. When planning this summit in the past, he would book 42 additional sleeping rooms in the host hotel and have the property remove the beds and replace them with conference tables. This time, however, he found a better solution.

### Hideaway in Key Largo

HSBC held its April 2011 investment summit at the Ocean Reef Club, a private, member-owned oceanfront community set on 2,500 acres in Key Largo, FL. Ocean Reef Club

includes a 144-room inn as well as townhouses and private residences along with more than 30,000 sf of flexible meeting space. The property's list of recreational amenities is extensive and includes 36 holes of golf, boating, fishing, tennis and a variety of water sports.

Surrounded on three sides by water, Ocean Reef Club offers the kind of exclusivity and privacy executives appreciate. In fact, it has been described by the United States Secret Service as one of the most secure communities in the country. It is not open to the public and there are no reader boards or signs to indicate what groups are meeting there. Security staff monitors the premises 24/7 and the property's 4,456-foot lighted runway is equipped to handle private aircraft.

The HSBC executive who hosted the summit had been to the property before and fell in love with it. "He said '(The summit) has to be at the Ocean Reef Club,'" Stano explains. "Being in Key Largo and at the Ocean Reef, it was a very

captured audience. It was great in the aspect that if you do something in South Beach, there's always the potential of somebody, after lunch, deciding 'I'm not going to go back' because right out the door is a playground. So this was really great."

Since most of the presenting companies from Latin America would have two representatives in attendance, Stano booked 42 two-bedroom condos for the meetings. "Each person representing the company had their own individual bedroom and bathroom," he notes, "but the meetings took place in the common living room area of the condos."

Each investor attending the summit was given a personalized schedule of meetings they would have with the Latin American companies throughout the day. Fifteen minutes travel time was allotted between meetings, and the investors were encouraged to rent golf carts and drive themselves to each one. They could also take advantage of the shuttle vans that HSBC made available. The condos where the meetings were held were located in four different "villages" throughout the property.

Stano admits that he lost some sleep over the logistics of the meeting, wondering if people would get lost or end up on the wrong side of the resort. But in the end, he says the April event all worked out beautifully. "We had 85-degree weather with no humidity, and it got people out and about. You're passing everybody on the road and everybody was waving and laughing. Everybody was really, really happy."

HSBC also used the resort's Town Hall event space for general meetings and its Great Heron Hall for meal functions. "Ocean Reef Club did a phenomenal job," he adds. "The property is absolutely gorgeous. They really love to have the corporate world come in and do what we did. They get it. It was a really great experience."

"When we came back we had a little post meeting with all of the executives from each of the divisions," he continues. "Unanimously, everyone said we're doing this again next year, and we have to do it there. I think I signed the contract for next year before I even got the final bill," says Stano.

### Meeting in Miami

Last fall marked the introduction of three new options for meetings in Miami. The 313-room, 41-floor JW Marriott Marquis Miami opened last fall. It offers 80,000 sf of meeting space allocated among 32 rooms, including the 20,000-sf column-free Grand Ballroom. Other amenities include a Telepresence Conference Room, three concierge levels and four dining outlets and a 50,000-sf sports and entertainment complex.

Late last year, the former Wyndham hotel owned by Thayer Lodging Group was rebranded as the Sheraton Miami Airport Hotel & Executive Meeting Center. The 405-room property, located just a quarter mile

from Miami International Airport and 15 minutes from Miami Beach, features the first full-service executive meeting center in South Florida. The hotel's 17,000-sf Executive Meeting Center is certified by the International Association

***Ocean Reef Club did a phenomenal job. The property is absolutely gorgeous. They really love to have the corporate world come in and do what we did. They get it.***

**Skip A. Stano, CMP**, (former) Vice President, Conference, Roadshow and Event Management  
HSBC Securities (USA) Inc., New York, NY

of Conference Centers (IACC) and offers a choice of meeting packages. The center also uses PURE Technology to provide conference rooms that are free of allergens. Fifty of the hotel's guest rooms also offer the PURE Air system.

The Shelborne South Beach, located near the Miami Convention Center, reopened late last year after a multimillion-dollar renovation. The art deco-style property offers 200 guest rooms and 10,000 sf of meeting space, including the historic Starlight Ballroom.

### New in Naples

Earlier this year, the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention and Visitors Bureau launched a new service designed to help meeting planners boost attendance at events. Called GAP, which stands for Group Attendance Push, the service offers free online tools such as a customizable email template, banner ad and digital visitor guide. Planners also can order complimentary printed visitor guides and maps as well as a supply of the Preferred Pass, which offers savings on shopping, dining and entertainment.

The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club has been certified by Florida's Green Lodging pro-



The new JW Marriott Marquis in downtown Miami is close to the financial district and a short drive from South Beach.  
Photo courtesy of JW Marriott Marquis Miami



gram. The resort, which includes 319 guest rooms and suites, championship golf onsite and 34,000 sf of event space, has recently increased its use of energy-efficient lighting and recycling as part of its "Good Earthkeeping" initiative. In 2010, the golf course and all guest rooms were renovated, and a new \$5 million beachfront pool complex was added. A new enhancement project is currently underway at the resort and will be completed in October 2011. The original pool and Sunset Beach Bar overlooking the Gulf of Mexico are being closed so that a larger Sunset Beach Bar and Grill can be constructed with an expanded entertainment deck.

### **PGA Experience in Palm Beach County**

The Palm Beach County area, which is served by more than 200 flights each day at Palm Beach International Airport, offers 47 miles of beaches and more than 16,000 guest rooms. The area also provides plenty of opportunities for outdoor recreation, including 180 golf courses, 1,000 tennis courts, sport fishing, diving and snorkeling.

Speaking of golf, the upper management team of Assured Guaranty has been so pleased with its experiences at PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, just north of West Palm Beach, that it returns to the resort twice a year to conduct planning meetings. The 379-room, AAA Four Diamond hotel features 39,000 sf of meeting space, nine restaurants and lounges, 19 tennis courts, and 90 holes of golf



*Photo courtesy of Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club*  
Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club on the Gulf of Mexico boasts new event areas and a newly enhanced golf course.

on five championship courses. The Spa at PGA National, a 40,000-sf European spa, is also located onsite.

"The idea is to get our upper management out of the office into a totally different environment, go over plans for the upcoming year and have a little fun at the same time," explains Francine Tormey, executive assistant to the company's COO. The meetings typically have 24 attendees.

Assured Guaranty is going on its sixth year of meet-

***"They (PGA National Resort) know us so well, they anticipate our needs. There's never a want that isn't taken care of."***

**Francine Tormey, Executive Assistant to the COO  
Assured Guaranty, New York, NY**

ing at PGA National. "Our upper management loves it because the people are just so wonderful to work with there," Tormey notes. "They know us so well, they anticipate our needs. There's never a want that isn't taken care of. It's so nice for us to be able to return to a spot where we don't have to start from scratch as to what we need and what we want. They know."

"The meeting space is great," she continues. "We've gotten it down to the rooms that we like, and PGA is usually very good about accommodating us if we give them enough notice. Even if we don't, because we are returning customers, they're able to work things out."

"I just can't say enough about them," Tormey adds. "I just think they're terrific, right from the people behind the counter when we come in to register to people that are bringing us coffee. Everybody seems to go out of their way."

In Palm Beach County news, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners approved a \$27 million subsidy to help construct a 400-room Hilton Hotel, which will connect to the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Plans call for the new hotel to be constructed on the north end of the center. An opening date has not yet been announced.

### **Easy Access in Tampa**

Insurance and financial groups that need a quick in-and-out solution for meetings will find two premier properties near Tampa International Airport (TIA). The 293-room Renaissance Tampa Hotel International Plaza, a mile east of the airport, recently completed a \$500,000 renovation project that included updates to the property's ballroom, guest rooms, fitness center and meeting space. Located within the International Plaza shopping mall complex, the Renaissance has 15 meeting rooms containing a total of 12,500 sf of function space. The hotel includes two restaurants, a fitness center and outdoor pool.

Also conveniently located just minutes from TIA, the InterContinental Tampa offers 323 guest rooms and suites and 17,000 sf of meeting space. The property is offering Priority Club bonus points for qualifying meetings. Planners can earn up to 500,000 bonus points for every meeting held in 2011, and up to 1,000,000 bonus points for meetings held from January 1–March 31, 2012. Certain restrictions apply. Contact the hotel for details.

### **Only in Orlando**

Combining resort-style amenities with convention hotel facilities, the new Hilton Orlando debuted in 2009 as the first



*Photo courtesy of Ponte Vedra Inn & Club*  
The oceanfront Ponte Vedra Inn & Club in Ponte Vedra Beach offers 250 luxury accommodations and seaside links-style golf.

hotel with a covered, open-air walkway connecting to the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC). The 1,400-room Hilton Orlando offers 175,000 sf of meeting space, including 21 meeting rooms, nine boardrooms and two ballrooms. The meeting space was designed to be discreetly separated from the recreational activities, including a full-service spa and fitness center; two resort pools, lazy river and water slide; a nine-hole executive putting course; a quarter-mile jogging track; basketball/tennis/volleyball/bocce ball courts; and more. The hotel was designed so that meeting attendees can get to and from their rooms quickly for breaks, and to foster post-meeting networking with the centralized Lobby Lounge located along the corridor back from the meeting rooms and ballrooms.

Late last year, the 1,641-room Peabody Orlando put the finishing touches on a \$450 million expansion project that nearly doubled the hotel's capacity. The project also included the addition of a covered walkway to the OCCC, a 22,000-sf spa and fitness center, a new Northern California-inspired restaurant named Napa, and Rocks, a 6,000-sf lounge. The Peabody Orlando offers 300,000 sf of flexible meeting space, half of which is located on one level. The property can host as many as 105 breakout sessions under one roof.

Located within one mile of the OCCC, Rosen Shingle Creek occupies 230 acres along Shingle Creek, the headwaters of the Florida Everglades. The property offers 1,500 guest rooms and suites, and 445,000 sf of dedicated meeting and event space. It also includes one of the largest column-free ballrooms in the nation. It spans 95,000 sf. Rosen Shingle Creek also offers 18

holes of championship golf and a 13,000-sf spa. The dining choices at Rosen Shingle Creek are extensive. The recent addition of two new restaurants, Tobias Flats & Watering Hole and Banrai Sushi, bring the count of the property's dining venues to 14. Two of the restaurants, A Land Remembered steak house and Cala Bella Italian Bistro, have been awarded the AAA Four Diamond rating.

Reunion Resort and Club, located in the heart of Orlando just six miles from Walt Disney World Resort and 25 minutes from Orlando International Airport, has received the AAA Four Diamond Award for the second year in a row. The resort offers 25,000 sf of indoor/outdoor meeting space and a combination of condominiums, private villas and vacation homes set on 2,300 acres. Recreational amenities include three signature golf courses by Nicklaus, Watson and Palmer, a full-service spa, multiple pools and water features, and a 1,000 foot lazy river. Reunion Resort is also home to Annika Academy, the golf school operated by LGPA star Annika Sorenstam, that is available to host corporate events.

### **Delights in Daytona**

As Daytona's only AAA Four Diamond property, The Shores Resort & Spa offers 212 guest rooms and suites, and more than 20,000 sf of flexible meeting space, including two oceanfront boardrooms. Located in Daytona Shores, five miles south of Daytona Beach, the resort's "Cloud Level" meeting rooms feature floor-to-ceiling windows, which showcase spectacular ocean views.

Ocean Walk Village in the heart of Daytona Beach incorporates The Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, the Wyndham Ocean Walk and six blocks of shops, restaurants, retail and places of entertainment. In total the village offers 300,000 sf of meeting space and 1,200 guest rooms.

Thirty miles north of Daytona in Palm Coast is AAA Four Diamond, Forbes Four Star Hammock Beach Resort. Accommodations at the oceanfront resort include 330 condo and villa units, and 20 traditional guest rooms. There is 18,000 sf of indoor meeting space and 30,000 sf of outdoor function space. Amenities include two 18-hole championship golf courses by



*Photo courtesy of Hilton Orlando*  
The Hilton Orlando features two resort pools, lazy river and water slide.

Nicklaus and Watson, and a 6.5-acre water park.

### **In and Around Jacksonville**

Ponte Vedra Beach, located 20 miles southeast of Jacksonville, is the site of two meeting and incentive properties. The 250-suite, AAA Five Diamond Ponte Vedra

Inn & Club has been a Florida landmark since 1928. It offers more than 25,000 sf of flexible meeting space, a full-service spa, 36 holes of golf, 15 tennis courts and four heated pools in a beachfront setting. Groups seeking a more intimate experience may want to check out the Lodge & Club at Ponte Vedra Beach, just 1½ miles away. It offers 66 oceanfront rooms and 13,000 sf of meeting space along with customized group events such as a Corporate Beach Olympics and oceanfront cookouts.

Located 30 miles south of Jacksonville, the AAA Four Diamond Renaissance World Golf Village Resort and Convention Center in St. Augustine offers 101,000 sf of function space, making it the largest convention facility between Atlanta and Orlando. The property features 301 guest rooms and suites along with two championship golf courses. One of them, King & Bear, is the only course ever designed by both Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. The Renaissance is within an easy walk of The World Golf Hall of Fame and offers a complimentary shuttle to and from historic St. Augustine. The resort just debuted a new boardroom and a newly expanded outdoor event space.

#### Family-Friendly in Destin

David Smart, director of Destinations Inc., the in-house event management firm for ALFA Insurance, has booked the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa — in Northwest Florida on the Gulf of Mexico — many times for family-oriented incentive programs. "The Panhandle area of Florida is a great family destination," he says. "The Gulf waters there are very clear and beautiful. The bays available around Destin provide great fishing and sailing options, deep-sea fishing and a lot of activities for kids like water parks, river trips, canoeing and tubing."

"One thing that's unique about the Sandestin Hilton is they have a room design that is quite different from most hotels," he notes. "You have a room that is larger than a typical hotel room and it has two double beds. As you enter the room, there is sort of an alcove there with a set of bunk beds, and that allows up to six people in a family to be in one room. There's a flat-screen TV on the wall by the bunk beds, and that's a real nice addition for the children." These larger rooms are all located in one tower, while the resort's other tower contains traditional hotel rooms.

"The staff is professional," he continues. "There is a longevity of staff in the areas of support for events from setup to group reservations to event services, and it pro-



The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa offers 32,000 sf of meeting space and oceanfront event areas.

vides a level of execution for your event that gives you the assurance that things would be carried out as your event plan outlines."

Smart has developed such a close working relationship with the Hilton that they notify him when a good buying opportunity is available. "We have quite a meeting menu, and we might have something we could slot into an occupancy hole that would be good for us and good for the property," he explains.

He also notes that the Sandestin resort area provides complimentary shuttle transportation. "The Hilton is on the beach, and the Baytown resort is on the bay side of the resort, so in a few minutes you can be in an entirely different environment with specialty shops and restaurants," he says.

Smart describes a few other features he likes about the Hilton Sandestin. "In terms of (dining) outlets, it's very well-designed with a very upscale steak house called Seagar's. It's comparable to anything you could find in Chicago or Atlanta, so you could have a VIP dinner. It has excellent service and excellent cuisine. There's also an

***The Hilton Sandestin "...provides a level of execution for your event that gives you the assurance that things would be carried out as your event plan outlines."***

**David Smart, Director  
Destinations Inc., Montgomery, AL**

outlet for families called Picnix, a coffee shop and a great beachside bar/grill arrangement. It's sort of 'Margaritaville casual.' There are also two pools and a wonderful white sand beach that looks like sugar right out of the bag."

The 600-room Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa recently completed a \$6.5 million renovation project, which included the addition of approximately 17,000 sf of outdoor deck areas featuring unobstructed beach and ocean views. The property offers more than 32,000 sf of meeting space, a spa, fitness center and five dining venues.

From the Panhandle to the Keys, the peninsula of Florida has a multifaceted personality with a different tale to tell for every type of meeting and incentive — best of all, leaving planners and attendees with a happy and successful ending.

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**Hilton  Orlando**

No meetings destination in America suffered from the recession as much as Las Vegas. The perception of this city as a place where companies went to blow millions on 'boondoggles' for senior executives laid an unfair burden on the city. A crippling burden, actually, affecting everything from an unemployment rate that soared to a housing market that crashed.

Now, though, Las Vegas is making slow but steady strides in turning the page on the recent trauma, thanks to aggressive tourism marketing, hotel guest room rates that remained below the 25 largest U.S. markets, and its perennially unmatched meetings infrastructure, which boasts 169,000 hotel guest rooms. Even during the downturn, the city didn't sleep, ushering in major new developments designed to reinvent The Strip — such as the enormous CityCenter project completed in 2009, filled with beautiful hotels and world-class restaurants and shopping; and the newest project on the drawing board, Caesars Entertainment's The Linq, the \$550 million retail and entertainment district slated for completion in 2013.

Tourism statistics bear out the re-

# Las Vegas

## A Win-Win Again for Meetings

By Steve Winston

newed optimism: During the first half of 2011, the number of visitors rose by 5.1 percent and occupancy rose by 3.8 percent to 87.5 percent. Hotels in turn are enjoying a 10 percent increase in average daily room rates to \$105.53.

The good news for planners is that there are hotels and meeting facilities for every budget, so a healthy meetings ROI is a sure bet. Many local industry veterans say they've never seen hotel rates as low as they are now.

One of those veterans is Jaki Baskow, CMP, CEO/owner of well-known Las Vegas DMC Baskow & Associates: "Companies are finally realizing that you can't put meetings off forever," she says. "People still need to meet face-to-

face, sooner or later. So meetings are coming back. And planners are discovering — or remembering — that Las Vegas still offers tremendous value, tremendous variety and a tremendous selection of great meeting places."

Baskow, who has been in business in Las Vegas for more than 35 years, has seen the city suffer from hard times and recessions before, and she's seen it bounce back again each time.

"Las Vegas is actually more relevant than ever as a meeting destination right now," she says, "because every planner is looking for value — the biggest bang for the smallest buck. And that's where Las Vegas really shines."

Some things are different, for sure, she says, about this bounce-back as opposed to previous ones. Like others in Las Vegas, she notes there's a lot of last-

minute business right now, with some planners calling only a few weeks in advance of their desired dates.

"Attendees will no longer come to a place just because of the 'glitz' factor," Baskow says. "They won't leave their offices to fly across the country for several days if there won't be compelling content and serious business done. But — now more than ever, after the trauma of the past few years — they also want to go to a place where they can have some fun after the meeting. They want to go to a place with a wow factor. And the wow factor in Las Vegas won't cost them an arm and a leg."

As a cheerleader for everything Las Vegas, including meetings, even Mayor Oscar Goodman gets into the act, says Baskow: He occasionally serves as a speaker at some of her events, she says.

### Hotels for Mega to Mini Meetings

"No doubt about it, we all in Las Vegas, got slapped pretty hard the past few years," says Maureen Robinson, director of sales at South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa, located on the South Strip. "And, truth be told, maybe we had lived a little high on the hog for years. As a result, we did have perception problems for awhile. But we're seeing a lot less of that now. The fact is that we have the most meeting space in America. We have the most variety in accommodations and meeting facilities. We can offer the most value. And we can offer an infrastructure that can handle meetings from the smallest to the largest — and that can handle many of them at the same time."

South Point, which can host meetings with as few as 10 to as many as 4,500 attendees, has 2,163 guest rooms and 170,000 sf of space for meetings, including an 80,000-sf exhibit hall, 22 breakout rooms and a 22,000-sf ballroom with permanent stage. A new 400-seat showroom features headliner entertainment. Planners will find great value on weekends, in particular, when groups can reserve every room in the hotel. South Point is family owned, not corporate, and prides itself on a per-

sonal touch for planners and attendees.

The hotel's under-one-roof perks include a 64-lane bowling center, fitness center, 16 movie theaters and the Spa Costa del Sur. Among the eight dining options is the Four Diamond Michael's Restaurant, consistently named one of the top five restaurants in the city.

Ideally set up for small to mid-sized meetings is The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa, located a

few blocks off The Strip. "Everyone in our city has learned from the events of the past few years," says Sandra Horvath, The Westin Casuarina's director of sales and marketing. "Our customers' budgets have changed. And our city has learned to be more creative in our approaches, more aggressive in our marketing and more focused in getting our message out: that we're a destination where serious business gets done. Every day."

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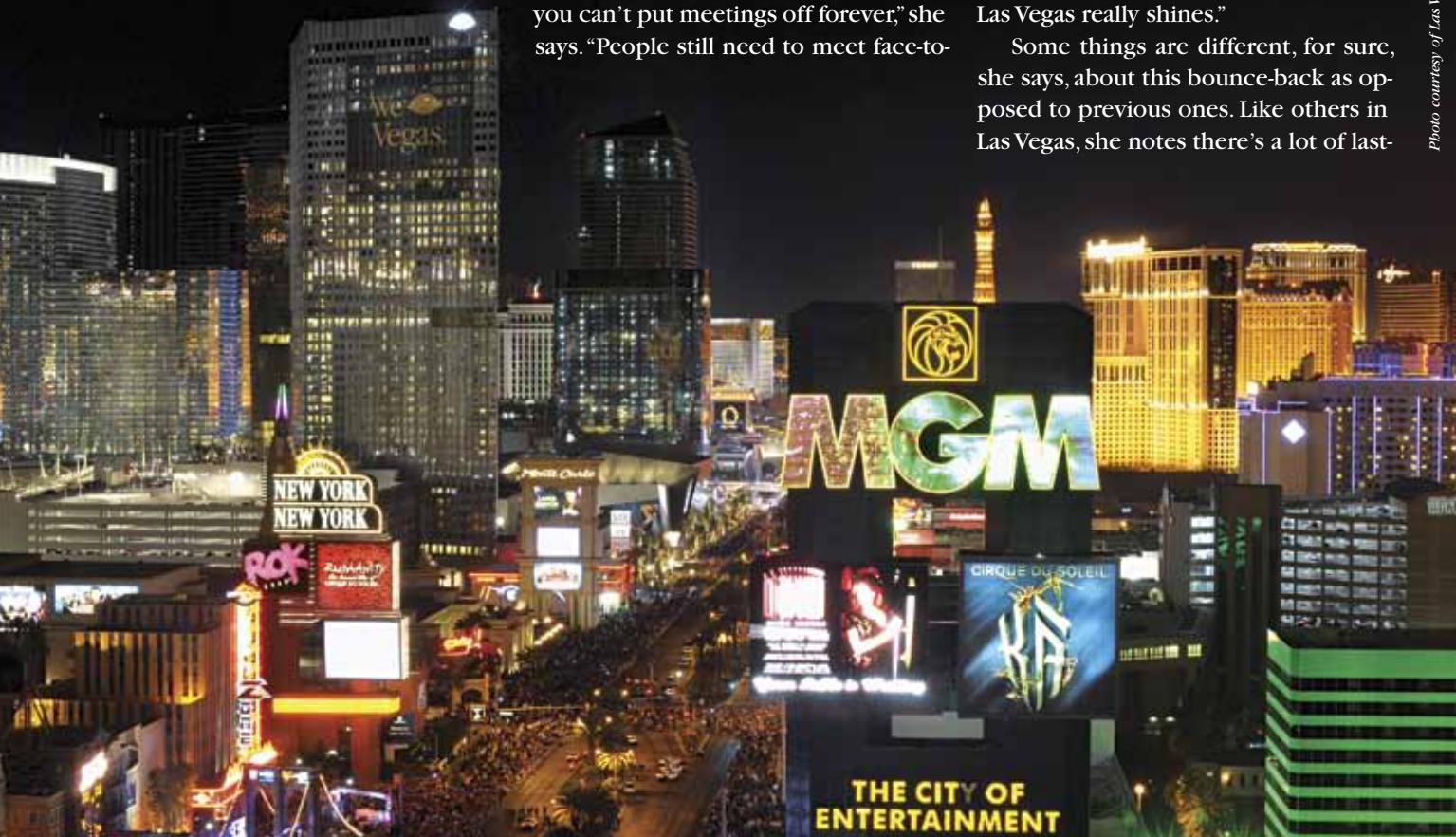
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THE CITY OF  
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Toward that end, The Westin Casuarina is offering more value-adds. And it's also devoting one salesperson almost exclusively to the insurance and financial meetings market.

The Westin Casuarina is a smaller property but only by Las Vegas standards, with 826 guest rooms and 25,000 sf of meeting space. Planners like the fact that attendees don't get lost in the shuffle among larger groups and don't have to walk through the casino to get to the meeting spaces. The Hibiscus Spa is currently undergoing a top-to-bottom facelift, and the pool area also was



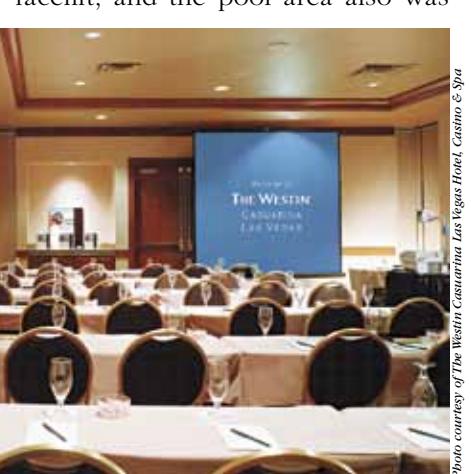
*"Las Vegas is actually more relevant than ever as a meeting destination right now because every planner is looking for value — the biggest bang for the smallest buck. And that's where Las Vegas really shines."*

Jaki Baskow, CMP, Owner and CEO  
Baskow & Associates, Las Vegas, NV

M Resort was built at a higher elevation than other hotels, so it offers great views of The Strip from all six of the resort's restaurants — and planners can buy out the spaces for events.

Surrounded by mountain vistas 10 miles west of The Strip, Red Rock Casino, Resort & Spa offers a different perspective on Las Vegas, away from downtown. The resort has 800 guest rooms, 94,000 sf of meeting space, and a variety of outdoor spaces where groups can be hosted overlooking stunning Red Rock Canyon. A new outdoor concert amphitheater debuted in summer 2011.

Green Valley Ranch Resort in Henderson, NV, sounds Western. In actuality, though, its motif and ambience are Mediterranean. And its amenities for insurance and financial planners are considerable: 495 guest rooms, 79,000 sf for meetings, eight full-service restaurants and numerous quick-service outlets; and a variety of entertainment venues including the 500-seat Ovation and "The Backyard," an outdoor concert area.



*Photo courtesy of The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa*

*The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa has 826 guest rooms and 25,000 sf of meeting space.*

redone. There's an onsite Starbucks and an onsite Enterprise Rent-A-Car as well as excellent American cuisine in the Suede Restaurant.

#### More Off-The-Strip Gems

The four-star M Resort Spa Casino, which opened only a couple of years ago just off The Strip, also has been garnering a reputation for great meetings among insurance and financial planners. Its 390 guest rooms each have floor-to-ceiling views of one of the world's most whimsical skylines — and there's also 60,000 sf of flexible, modern meeting space including a 17,400-sf ballroom, four meeting rooms and a boardroom. The Villaggio Del Sole outdoor events plaza has a built-in stage and 100,000 sf of event space for up to 4,000 attendees. The

Vegas, located 17 miles from The Strip on the site of the former Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas. The hotel offers 39,000 sf of meeting space. Meanwhile, Aston Hotels & Resorts has taken over the 347-room, all-suite Montelago Village at Lake Las Vegas, with 10,000 sf of meeting space. The third major meeting resort in the tony community is the 493-room Loews Lake Las Vegas, with 47,000 sf of meeting space.

#### What's Happening On The Strip

Las Vegas Sands Corp. properties, the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino and The Palazzo, together offer 7,093 accommodations; and combined with the Sands Expo and Convention Center, offer a total of 2,250,000 sf of meeting and exhibit space. The company recently launched its custom Sands Eco 360° Meetings program, which extends the Las Vegas Sands' sustainability efforts to its large meeting and convention customers, giving them the opportunity to host gatherings in the largest LEED building in the world (Venetian, Palazzo and Sands Expo) in a more environmentally friendly way.



*Photo courtesy of South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa*

*South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa has 170,000 sf of space for meetings, including an 80,000-sf exhibit hall, 22 breakout rooms and a 22,000-sf ballroom with stage.*

# South Point

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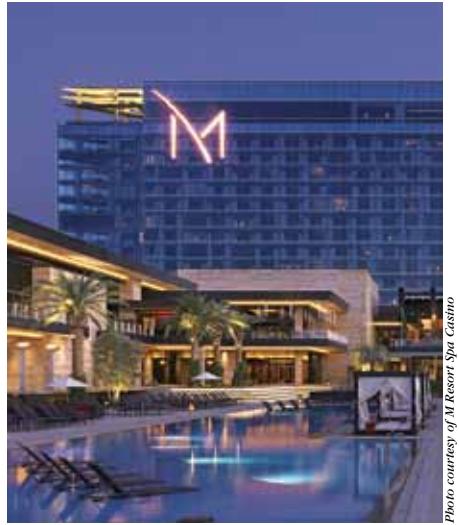


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Steve Wynn has long been one of Las Vegas' best-known hoteliers, and his two adjoining properties make for higher capacity and larger space for meeting planners. The Wynn Las Vegas boasts 2,716 guest rooms, all of which will be renovated by the end of the year; 200,000 sf of meeting space; a Tom Fazio-designed golf course; and an on-premises Ferrari and Maserati dealership. Encore at Wynn Las Vegas adds another 2,034 suites and 60,000 sf of meeting space into the mix.

MGM Resorts International's 11 Las Vegas properties include the centerpiece of CityCenter: the state-of-the-art, AAA Five Diamond Aria Resort & Casino, with 4,004 guest rooms and suites. Aria's 300,000 sf of meeting space is situated on three levels, with a total of four ballrooms — the largest at 51,000 sf — and 38 meeting rooms. Three of the ballrooms feature fully functioning theatrical stages. Aria has distinguished itself both environmentally and technologically: It is one of the largest buildings in the U.S. to receive LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council; and all meeting rooms feature built-in audio-visual systems with high-definition video projectors.



*A poolside view of the M Resort Spa Casino, which features more than 60,000 sf of conference space, including a 17,400-sf ballroom.*

Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino will debut Cirque du Soleil's "Michael Jackson The Immortal World Tour" in the spring of 2013. Mandalay Bay boasts a whopping 1.7 million gross sf of meeting and exhibition space.

Bellagio, which began a \$70 million remodel in June, recently unveiled a collection of newly redesigned rooms. The hotel anticipates that all 2,568 resort rooms in the main tower will be complete by mid-December.

The Mirage has 2,900 recently renovated guest rooms and 90,000 flexible sf of dedicated meeting space.

Monte Carlo offers nearly 3,000 luxurious guest rooms, 30,000 sf for meetings and the 1,200-seat Monte Carlo Theater, which will become home to the popular Blue Man Group show beginning in fall 2012.

New York-New York's fanciful facades recreate the New York City skyline and landmarks. The 2,024-room hotel offers 21,000 sf for meetings, and uniquely New York event spaces such as the 300-foot Brooklyn Bridge, which accommodates up to 800 attendees.

#### More News

As noted above, the latest project that promises to shake up The Strip is Caesars Entertainment's The Linq, a \$550 million retail, dining, entertainment and hospitality district is being created to revitalize and re-define the center-resort corridor. The Linq will span more than 200,000 sf directly facing Caesars Palace. The focal point will be a giant Ferris wheel — The Las Vegas High Roller — which will be the tallest in the world, at 550 feet, with 28 cabins accommodating up to 40 people each. Groundbreaking will take place at the end of the year. Dining, retail and entertainment venues are projected to open in 2013. Also at Caesars, Celine Dion returned in March to reprise her earlier acclaimed engagement at the Colosseum, and Elton John's show also has resumed.



***"Content is what draws them here. But it sure doesn't hurt that there's so much to do here after the meetings. ...The hotels here know how to do meetings. They know how to anticipate the needs of planners."***

**Jim Sharpton, Vice President of Meetings and Conventions, Primerica, Duluth, GA**

Steps away is great dining and shopping at Crystals, which showcases luxury-brand retailers.

CityCenter's non-gaming properties include Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas, with 392 guest rooms and 12,000 sf of meeting space; and MGM Resorts International's Vdara Hotel & Spa, which provides 1,495 rooms and 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

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***"It's really hard to beat Las Vegas. The location, the airlift, the value, the great meeting spaces, the large hotels...if this isn't a serious meetings destination, I don't know what is."***

**Gary Pearson**, Director of Meetings and Events  
Aon Corporation, Chicago, IL

Nobu, the super-upscale sushi restaurant brand created by Nobu Matsuhisa and Robert De Niro, is developing the world's first Nobu boutique hotel in a tower at Caesars Palace, just as Four Seasons pioneered the hotel-within-a-hotel concept with four floors of Mandalay Bay. The new Nobu Hotel, Restaurant and Lounge will make its debut next summer.

Following a year-long, \$35 million renovation, The Plaza Hotel & Casino, in the heart of downtown Las Vegas at the west end of the Fremont Street Experience, reopened in September 2011. The refurbished hotel, which originally opened in 1971, features 1,000 all new guest rooms housed in two towers, 25,000 sf of meeting space, an 80,000-sf casino, bar and restaurants, and entertainment venues. Much of the fixtures and furniture were purchased from the Fontainebleau, which ceased construction in 2009.

Paris Las Vegas (3,211; 130,000) with its mini-Eiffel Tower marking the spot, opened Chateau Nightclub & Gardens in March, a two-story, 40,000-sf complex featuring six bars, a rooftop dance floor and Parisian gardens.

#### **Planner Testimonials**

Jim Sharpton is vice president of meetings and conventions at Primerica. And he brings meetings here (generally to Caesars Palace) several times a year, with up to 3,500 attendees.

"There aren't many cities with hotels big enough to handle our meetings," Sharpton says. "This helps us keep a tighter rein on meeting costs, because we can get all the necessary people together at one place and time. And we

can do it in a place that's easy to get to, that offers good value and that offers unmatched options for attendees after the meetings are over for the day."

Sharpton said attendees want to come to Las Vegas. But it's not for the reasons you might think (the glamour and the glitz). Instead, they see it as a serious business destination.

"Content is what draws them here," says Sharpton. "But it sure doesn't hurt that there's so much to do here after

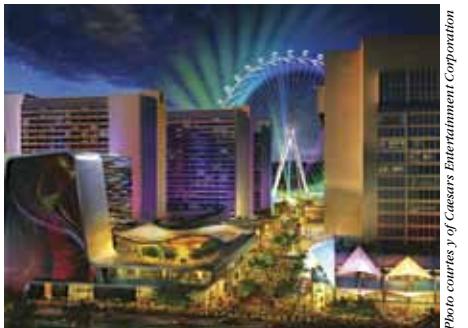


Photo courtesy of Caesars Entertainment Corporation

A rendering of Caesars Entertainment's The Linq, a new retail, dining, entertainment and hospitality district located on The Strip and slated to open in 2013.

the meetings." He adds that post-meeting surveys on Las Vegas are always extremely positive, and that people always want to go back.

"Vegas stands out in the meetings market because it's a unique place," says Sharpton. "The hotels here know how to do meetings. They know how to anticipate the needs of planners. And they know great service."

Sharpton adds that Las Vegas is the kind of place where just a few minutes out of town you can be deep in the mountains on a jeep tour. And, in contrast to the outdated perceptions of meeting attendees dashing straight

for the casinos after the sessions end, many of Sharpton's attendees prefer such outdoor recreational activities.

Gary Pearson is director of meetings and events at Aon Corporation, a Chicago company that deals in investments, business-to-business insurance, human capital consulting and outsourcing. He stages meetings regularly in Las Vegas, ranging from 20 to 130 attendees, the most recent one at Wynn Las Vegas. And he keeps returning to Las Vegas precisely because of its value as a business destination.

"It's really hard to beat Las Vegas," Pearson says. "The location, the airlift, the value, the great meeting spaces, the large hotels...if this isn't a serious meetings destination, I don't know what is. And the built-in entertainment options mean that you don't have to re-invent the wheel to give your people interesting things to do after the meetings are over for the day."

Pearson, a member of Financial and Insurance Conference Planners, says meetings in Las Vegas generate higher attendance.

"There are hotels and meeting facilities for every budget," he says. "There are entertainment and dining options for every budget. And the mystique of Las Vegas is still there. We find that the meetings we hold there are extremely productive, because our attendees are excited about being there."

Pearson notes that many of the newer hotels in the city have been built not with an eye for the gaming crowd, but with a focus on the meetings market, with state-of-the art meeting facilities and advanced technology. And he agrees that some of the responsibility for the misperceptions of Las Vegas may not have been the city's fault.

"It's our responsibility as planners to ensure that our meetings — wherever they are — have impactful content that attracts people, content from which they can learn and that will help them do their jobs better. And if we can stage content-rich meetings in a place where people really want to go, it's a win-win situation." **I&FMM**

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Pelican Hill, Newport Beach, CA, has named **Frank Ashmore** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing for The Wigwam, Phoenix, AZ.

Buena Vista Palace Resort & Spa, Lake Buena Vista, FL, has named **Doris O'Neill** and **Bernard Grossman** as national sales manager and sales manager respectively. O'Neill, who will focus on the Southeast U.S. and Latin American markets, most recently served as senior sales manager for the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate. Grossman, who is responsible for the mid-sized group market, formerly served as front office supervisor for the Boca Raton Resort & Club, Boca Raton, FL.

Riviera Palm Springs, Palm Springs, CA, has named **Michael Islava** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing for Lakeway Resort & Spa, Austin, TX.

Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Jacksonville, FL, has named **Pat Trammell** as senior director of sales and marketing. With more than 25 years of hotel and meetings industry experience, she most recently served as senior director of sales and marketing at Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.

**Michael Snapkoski** was named di-

rector of sales and marketing for Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA. He was vice president of sales and marketing for Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, MD.

**Tony DiCataldo** was named director of sales and marketing for Portofino Hotel & Yacht Club, Redondo Beach, CA. He formerly served as director of sales for Island Hotel in Newport Beach, CA.

**Michael Smith** was named regional director of sales and marketing for Dolce Hotels and Resorts to support the company's properties in California and Nevada. He formerly served as vice president, sales and marketing for Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

**Joan Esneault** was named director of sales and marketing for the New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, LA. She most recently served as vice president of resort sales at Foxwoods Resort Casino and MGM Grand Foxwoods in Mashantucket, CT.

**Shannon Gilbert** was named director of sales for The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel in Orange County, CA. She was director of sales and marketing at The Ritz-Carlton, Denver.

**David Townshend** was promoted to

senior vice president, global sales for Marriott International. He most recently served as senior vice president, corporate and international sales where he was responsible for Marriott's top global corporate and national association accounts, as well as the international sales offices.

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