

ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

APRIL/MAY
2011

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT



Attendees reap rewards at the PCMA Annual Meeting: Convening Leaders in Las Vegas, a co-located event with the Virtual Edge Institute.

Better Together

The Art of Co-Locating Events

PAGE 22

Photo © Jacob Slaton Photography



ARE YOU **READY** TO **RUN WILD?**

A M E N I T I E S

- 242 Rooms & Suites
- 12,000 Sq. Ft. of meeting space
- 100,000 Sq. Ft. Vegas-Style Casino
- 8 Restaurants
- 4 Lounges
- 1,400 seat showroom
- Nightclub
- Outdoor pool with cabanas
- Free wireless internet
- Whirlwind Golf Club



WILD HORSE PASS

HOTEL & CASINO

Owned and operated by the Gila River Indian Community

WinGilaRiver.com

5040 Wild Horse Pass Blvd. Chandler, AZ

800-WIN-GILA

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION
ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

April / May 2011

Volume 4 • Number 2

Departments

- 4** Publisher's Page
- 6** News & Notes
- 6** Going Green & Giving Back
- 34** Direct Connect
- 35** Career Track

ViewPoint

- 8** Legal Essentials
Plan Ahead to Avoid ADA Violations
By Nathan Breen, Esq.
- 10** Meeting Trends
Real Change in Washington...
for Government Meetings
By Eric Whitson

Features

- 12** Hot Topics and Virtual Avenues
Draw Attendees to Education Programs
By George Seli
- 16** Green and Giving Back
Good for People *and* Business
By Steve Winston
- 22** Better Together
The Art of Co-Locating Events
By Karen Brost

Destination

- 26** Conventional Wisdom
Las Vegas Is the Smart Choice for Hitting the Attendance Jackpot
By Karen Brost



12



16



26

On the Cover: Attendees get the best of both worlds when events co-locate, especially in a top meeting destination like Las Vegas. PCMA joined with Virtual Edge to introduce attendees to new ideas such as “virtual platforms, hybrid meetings and what’s happening in that space.”

Association Conventions & Facilities is published bi-monthly by Coastal Communications Corporation, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394; 561-989-0600. Single copies \$12.00 U.S.A. only. Yearly subscription price is \$60.00 in the U.S.A. Canada and foreign is \$105.00. Back copies \$13.00 plus shipping and handling. U.S.A. only. Distributed without charge to qualified personnel. Postage Paid at Boca Raton, FL, and additional mailing offices. Application for periodical mailing permit pending at Boca Raton, FL, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579 address changes to Association Conventions & Facilities, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by Coastal Communications Corporation (Association Conventions & Facilities), and the publication disclaims any liability with respect to the use of or reliance on any such information. The information contained in this publication is in no way to be construed as a recommendation by AC&F of any industry standard, or as a recommendation of any kind to be adopted by or to be binding upon any advertiser or subscriber. Reproduction of any portion of this publication by any means is strictly forbidden. Editorial contributions must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited photographs or manuscripts. Subscribers: Send subscription inquiries and address changes to: Circulation Department, Association Conventions & Facilities, 2700 North Military Trail — Suite 120, Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394. Provide old and new addresses including zip code. Enclose address label from most recent issue and please allow five weeks for the change to become effective. Printed in U.S.A. © 2011.

The Dating Game



That classic matchmaking television show from the '60s may have been silly entertainment, but the formula for finding the right match was practical: the bachelorette chose the winning bachelor from among three hopefuls, hidden behind a curtain, only after a question and answer session helped to discern compatibility. I guess you could call that dating due diligence. The basic formula is the same today, but the vetting process is in-depth and online. Whether personal relationships or business relationships, finding the right match is indeed a process, and usually well worth the effort. But sometimes it takes a crisis to move us into making a change that opens up a new world of possibilities.

In the meetings and conventions world, economic necessity has been the prime mover in the trend to co-locate events. In our cover story (page 22) "Better Together," we see how industry associations and others are leading by example, successfully partnering to push the ROI of events from lackluster to blockbuster. Strategic thinking planners realize the benefits of a meetings marriage: reinvigorated interest and higher attendance; ROT (Return On Time) for attendees who can't afford to be away from their office for several different events; maximized exhibitor revenue; new connections, collaborations and idea exchanges; and last but not least, substantial cost savings. "There are a lot of efficiencies of scale when trade shows co-locate," says Anne Halal, CEM, vice president of convention and exposition services for the American Meat Institute (AMI). "You are more likely to get top-tier cities, get lower hotel rates, larger hotel blocks and prime convention center space. Plus there's certainly an efficiency for staffing." AMI will co-locate with the United Fresh Produce Association and the Food Marketing Institute for a 2012 show at the Dallas Convention Center.

Just as in personal relationships, the keys to successful event matchups are much the same: first, don't look for a clone of yourself. Says Ed Several, senior vice president for Reed Exhibitions, "If each event delivers the same benefits, a co-location may not be as valuable as when each can deliver unique benefits that complement each other." Additional successful relationship advice includes the ability to adjust as you go along, compromise and, as PCMA President and CEO Deborah Sexton notes, "You can't over-communicate." Sounding like the Dear Abby of associations, she adds, "It's not necessarily perfect from the get-go and it takes a lot of work, but if it's right and it benefits the attendees or exhibitors, you'll make it work and it does work."

Harvey Grotzky
Publisher

ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT

A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

WEBSITE
www.themeetingmagazines.com

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Harvey Grotzky
cccpublisher@att.net

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Mitch D. Miller
cccarterdirector@att.net

MANAGING EDITORS
Susan W. Fell
ccceditor1@att.net

Susan S. Gregg
ccceditor2@att.net

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Karen Brost
John Buchanan
Stella Johnson
Andrea Montello
Derek Reveron
George Seli
Steve Winston

PRESIDENT & CEO
Harvey Grotzky

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS
David A. Middlebrook
cccoperations@att.net

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES
2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 120
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394
561-989-0600 Fax: 561-989-9509

NEW YORK & MID-ATLANTIC STATES
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net

NEW ENGLAND
Jody Estabrook
774-283-4528 • Fax: 774-283-4527
jodyestabrook@comcast.net

FLORIDA/CARIBBEAN
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net

SOUTHWEST
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net

SOUTHEAST
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net

MIDWEST
Jim Kingwill
847-537-9196 • Fax: 847-537-6519
jim@kingwillco.com

Barry Kingwill
847-537-9196 • Fax: 847-537-6519
barry@kingwillco.com

WEST
Marshall Rubin
818-888-2407 • Fax: 818-888-4907
mrubin@westworld.com

CANADA
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net

HAWAII
561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
cccadvertising@att.net



BEYOND BELIEF



First-class spa



100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space



Executive board rooms



Beautifully appointed guest rooms and suites



Fine cuisine and world-class chefs



BEYOND MEETINGS. If you're looking for a place to hold your next convention, event or conference, look beyond the obvious to the Convention Centers at Kalahari Resorts. Our Convention Centers each feature 100,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, incredible food, service and amenities all in an inspiring environment with authentic African art and artifacts throughout. KalahariResorts.com

Wisconsin Dells / 608-254-3314 / WIGroups@KalahariResorts.com
Sandusky, Ohio / 877-642-6847 / OHGroups@KalahariResorts.com

Put Your Own Footprint On Sustainability



A great place to start reducing your environmental footprint is right under your feet at The Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC). MTCC now claims North America's first large installation of an environmentally friendly new modular carpet system (pictured). "The 12,000 square yards of loop-backed carpet attached to the hook plates on the floor are made from

Antron, the highest performing fiber in the industry," says Marcel Poirier, V.P. commercial business, Beaulieu Canada, the carpet's manufacturer. "They are 70 percent lighter, which significantly reduces the amount of material and transport. The structural strength of the mechanical adhesion will keep the carpet in place for many years to come. And in disposal, the repurposing of the current carpet ensures it will be used on another floor rather than going to landfill". www.mtccc.com

QR-Coded Green Tour. The National Conference Center, located in Leesburg, VA, 12 miles from Dulles International Airport, has introduced a QR-coded green tour of the 917-room conference center, which features 265,000 sf of dedicated meeting space. QR codes (Quick Response) are two-dimensional black and white codes that are readable by camera phones. The encoded information can include text, URLs or other data. The 12-stop multimedia green tour will include green transportation efforts, green history, eco-friendly restrooms, as well as the business center, sustainable initiatives in the kitchen and green meetings. Each stop features a posted QR code that provides relevant information about the property's green initiatives. Code readers can be downloaded from web.scanlife.com/us_en/download-application. www.conferencecenter.com



Try it out: Scan this QR code from the green tour.

IMEX America Partners With MeetGreen. As part of their sustainability partnership, IMEX America and MeetGreen have devised a sustainability plan for the new trade show for the international meetings, incentive travel and events industry, which debuts October 11-13 at the Sands Expo in Las Vegas. Carina Bauer, IMEX Group CEO, noted, "Among the initiatives taking place at IMEX America 2011, we will have specific objectives relating to water usage, energy, emissions, waste reduction and overall event sustainability. By working with MeetGreen on reaching these objectives we hope that IMEX can continue to take a strong lead on sustainable practices and create a solid foundation for future years." www.imexamerica.com/sustainability.html

Hotels Taking the LEED...

- The expansion of the **Caesars Palace Conference Center** was awarded LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The expansion features 110,000 sf of available space including two 52,000-sf ballrooms.
- The Hotels and Residences at L.A. LIVE also have earned the LEED Silver certification. The L.A. LIVE high-rise tower houses **The Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles**, the **JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE** and The Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. LIVE.

CityCenter DC Under Development

WASHINGTON, DC — CityCenter DC, a new mixed-use, low-carbon masterplan on the 10-acre site of the former convention center, recently broke ground. The site, touted to be the largest downtown development currently underway in any U.S. city, is a way to tie the downtown area together with shops, restaurants and pedestrian-friendly space. The masterplan is designed to achieve LEED Neighborhood Development Gold. The landscape, office and apartment buildings are oriented according to the path of the sun and incorporate green roofs to absorb water — the scheme aims to recycle 100 percent of the water used onsite.

Las Vegas Named No. 1 Trade Show Destination

LAS VEGAS, NV — Las Vegas was named the No. 1 trade show destination for the 17th consecutive year, according to the Trade Show News Network's (TSNN) "2010 TSNN 250 U.S. Trade Shows" list.

"We are proud to maintain our standing as the top trade show destination," says Rossi Ralenkotter, president/CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "The No. 1 ranking is a testament to the hardworking people who deliver on the brand promise that Vegas Means Business and to the investment our resort partners have made over the years."

Las Vegas hosted 60 of the 250 largest shows, ranked by net square footage utilized, in 2010 in North America. The two closest competitors hosted 47 shows combined, with Orlando hosting 25 and Chicago hosting 22. The 60 shows in Las Vegas encompassed 20.7 million square feet, or 32 percent of the total space for all 250 shows. The largest show was the International Consumer Electronics Show at 1.4 million net square feet. Las Vegas hosted six of the top 10 shows. To see the complete list, go to www.tsnn.com/datasite.

Shanghai Disney Resort Breaks Ground

SHANGHAI, CHINA — The Walt Disney Company and Shanghai Shendi Group, its joint venture partner in China, recently broke ground on the Shanghai Disney Resort following approval from the Chinese central government in Beijing. "We're excited about the prospects that the Shanghai Disney Resort will offer for meetings, events and incentive programs," says George Aguel, senior vice president for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. "This exciting new resort will offer unsurpassed experiences for groups in this increasingly important destination." Robert A. Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, notes that the resort will combine "...classic Disney characters and storytelling with the uniqueness and beauty of China. Working with our Chinese partners, the Shanghai Disney Resort will be both authentically Disney and distinctly Chinese."

Slated to open in approximately five years, the resort will include Shanghai Disneyland, two themed hotels, a large retail, dining and entertainment venue, recreational facilities, a lake and associated parking and transportation hubs. Shanghai Disneyland will feature several themed lands complete with iconic Disney attractions and experiences. Reinforcing themes of sustainability and nature, the park will also contain other large-scale entertainment venues, indoor and out, that can be used for various purposes throughout the year. www.disneymeetings.com



Nashville Unveils Design for Convention Hotel-Museum Project

NASHVILLE, TN — Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, officials from Omni Hotels & Resorts and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum recently unveiled the design for the



Rendering of the Omni Nashville Hotel.

integrated 800-room Omni Nashville Hotel and 200,000-sf museum expansion. Located on Fifth Avenue South between Demonbreun and Korean Veterans Boulevard, the development will serve as the headquarters hotel for Music City Center, Nashville's new downtown convention center currently under construction and set to open in 2013.

The hotel will be connected to an expansion of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum on four levels, sharing meeting and entertainment space and bring additional restaurants and retail venues to the area. Like the Music City Center, the hotel and expansion project is expected to achieve LEED Silver certification.

"The Omni Nashville Hotel and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum will become an ideal launching point to enjoy all that is Music City, attracting meetings and leisure guests to Nashville's core," says Mike Deitemeyer, president of Omni Hotels & Resorts. "This unique arrangement is further evidence of our belief in Nashville and our enthusiasm for becoming part of such a vibrant community and destination." www.omnihotels.com, www.nashvillemusiccitycenter.com, <http://countrymusicHalloffame.org>

Hoops Named New President & CEO of Indianapolis CVA

INDIANAPOLIS, IN — After a strategic three-month nationwide search, the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Association (ICVA) named Leonard Hoops as its



Hoops

new president & CEO, effective May 31. "With \$3 billion in new tourism-related developments now online, Indianapolis has arrived as a first-tier destination, truly competing in the national arena," says Michael Browning, chairman of the board of the ICVA. "Leonard's proven sales results, extensive marketing expertise and strong convention industry knowledge make him the ideal person to take Indianapolis to the next level and capitalize on the city's new investments." A seasoned executive with 25 years of corporate and destination marketing experience, Hoops most recently served as executive vice president and chief customer officer for the San Francisco Travel Association. Previously, Hoops served as senior vice president & chief marketing officer for the Sacramento CVB and SVP of marketing for the San Jose CVB. Hoops replaces Don Welsh, who was recruited to head the Chicago CTB. www.visitindy.com

new president & CEO, effective May 31. "With \$3 billion in new tourism-related developments now online, Indianapolis has arrived as a first-tier destination, truly competing in the national arena," says Michael Browning, chairman of the board of the ICVA. "Leonard's proven sales results, extensive marketing expertise and strong convention industry knowledge make him the ideal person to take Indianapolis to the next level and capitalize on the city's new investments." A seasoned executive with 25 years of corporate and destination marketing experience, Hoops most recently served as executive vice president and chief customer officer for the San Francisco Travel Association. Previously, Hoops served as senior vice president & chief marketing officer for the Sacramento CVB and SVP of marketing for the San Jose CVB. Hoops replaces Don Welsh, who was recruited to head the Chicago CTB. www.visitindy.com

SEE US ON THE WEB
www.TheMeetingMagazines.com



Nathan Breen, Esq.

Meeting planners should review existing contracts for events taking place after the implementation of the regulations to be sure that they are adequately protected and be proactive to manage risk going forward.

Plan Ahead to Avoid ADA Violations

Big changes are on the horizon in 2012 as additional public accommodations requirements are added to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As of March 15, 2012, new ADA regulations will apply to hotels, restaurants and other public accommodations facilities. Meeting professionals also should be aware of the changes so they can manage any risk resulting from confusion over the new provisions. The revisions apply to all businesses that are open to the public, and they contain specific provisions applicable to hotels.

The new regulations provide additional clarity as to the proper scope of the ADA by confirming that rental or use of space in hotels, convention centers, conference centers and other venues creates an obligation for groups as providers of "places of public accommodation" under the ADA. As a result, the group shares responsibility with the provider of the facility in ensuring that areas used by attendees are accessible.

There are a few features of the new regulations that are likely to create challenges for hotels in particular. Exercise facilities, golf and mini-golf courses, swimming pools, wading pools, spas, play areas, saunas and steam rooms are now covered by the ADA and may need to be modified to adhere to its requirements. In addition, "other power-driven mobility devices" (such as golf carts or Segways) are to be accommodated in the same manner as wheelchairs unless it can be demon-

strated that such use would fundamentally alter the facilities' programs, services or activities, or create a direct threat or safety hazard.

ACCESSIBILITY DISCLOSURES

From a hotel and meeting planner perspective, perhaps the ADA's most thorny new requirement is the obligation that accessible rooms be more closely apportioned and accounted for with respect to the hotel's reservation system. The regulations provide for more thorough disclosures regarding accessible features within the hotel generally and within guest rooms. Any areas of the hotel that are not accessible also should be disclosed. To ensure equal access, hotels must maintain accessible rooms in each room type until no other rooms are available to sell. Upon reservation, accessible rooms must be removed from all reservations systems to eliminate double booking.

These reservation-specific ADA requirements do not apply to CVBs, housing bureaus, other companies or associations that facilitate the reservation process. However, all parties that have a substantial interest in the meeting should be knowledgeable of the new requirements and how the hotel will fulfill its new legal obligations.

With economic factors creating an incentive to cut corners, it is important for those who have no control over the steps required to maintain compliance with the new regulations to obtain

safeguards against ADA claims. This is particularly important in light of the increased exposure brought about by the new regulations. Whereas accessibility complaints directed at the reservation system, golf course or hotel spa used to be mere customer-service issues, now these problems could easily morph into an ADA claim or lawsuit.

Meeting planners should review existing contracts for events taking place after the implementation of the regulations to be sure that they are adequately protected and be proactive to manage risk going forward. If there is any doubt, planners should inquire as to whether the facility is on target to meet the requirements and stay in communication on this issue. Planners should anticipate the potential for compliance issues going forward and ensure that any contracts contain appropriate remedies in the event of any problems.

CRITICAL CONTRACTUAL TOOL

Indemnification is likely the most critical contractual tool for a planner to use for protection against compliance issues on the part of a public accommodation facility. At a minimum, the contract should specify that each party agrees to adhere to all applicable laws with respect to their performance. Most well-drafted hospitality contracts specifically refer to the ADA and address the parties' requirements. To provide for maximum protection against risk, the contract should con-

tain an indemnification provision which specifies, among other things, that any party who fails to adhere to the provisions of the contract ("the indemnifying party") will be responsible for all costs incurred by a party faced with any claim due to such failure ("the indemnified party"). This combination of contract provisions will properly delineate the parties' responsibilities and the consequences resulting from any failure to perform.

The regulations' clarification as to a group's responsibility under the ADA can be expected to bring enhanced enforcement scrutiny and increase the likelihood that actions may be brought against the group as well as the facility in question. This is particularly true in states such as California where plaintiffs can recover damages for ADA violations. The inclusion of a properly drafted indemnification provision can make a substantial difference with respect to the nature and cost of a claim brought against an indemnified party.

Now is the time to assess your exposure under existing contracts, check with any parties responsible for ensuring accessibility, and alter your approach going forward as needed to minimize the possibility of any newly created ADA claims. AC&F

Nathan J. Breen, Esq., a partner with national law firm *Howe & Hutton*, concentrates on association intellectual property and Internet law, commercial litigation, contracts and hospitality law. He can be reached at 312-263-3001 or at njb@howehutton.com.

Meeting Trends

Eric Whitson



In the near future, the number of facilities in this new “conference facilities” category with GSA will grow, creating the opportunity for government meetings to be purchased quickly, easily, and at the best rates and terms available.

Real Change in Washington... for Government Meetings

Several new developments last year indicate that the federal government and, specifically, The General Services Administration (GSA), is recognizing the volume of government meetings occurring in the marketplace and the need to make it easier for federal agencies to buy the right meeting product at the right price.

The first such indication was when GSA announced Fedrooms (www.fedrooms.com) would be offering its services to the group market. Originally called the Federal Premiere Lodging Program, Fedrooms has historically been the resource for individual government travelers to secure hotel rooms for business travel. Prices are based on per diem rates, set by GSA each year, and terms include a variety of special concessions. An estimated 11,000 hotels worldwide participate in the Fedrooms program and are now also eligible to receive and book group programs as well.

Another interesting development at GSA directly related to the conference market is the soon-to-be-created “conference facilities” SIN (Special Item Number) on GSA’s Multiple Award Schedule Contract (GSA Schedule) program. Purchases by the federal government must follow proper procurement procedures. For example, all federal agencies must obtain a minimum of three bids to ensure they are receiving the best possible terms and price.

Since this process can be quite cumbersome and detailed, GSA created the “GSA Schedule” to help make the process easier. If the buyer needs copy paper, computers or office furniture, a federal procurement officer may simply log on to GSA’s e-buy, complete an RFP indicating the appropriate SIN number, and provide all approved vendors the opportunity to bid on the request. This much simpler process helps ensure the buyer is getting a quality product at pricing and terms that are better than the commercial market is offered.

SIMPLIFIED MEETING BUYS

However, there is no SIN category for hotels or conference facilities. Historically, government purchases in this area have been controlled by per diem rates set annually for each county or market area, based on that market’s competitive rate structure. Soon, government meeting planners will be able to submit RFPs for conferences via GSA’s e-buy, making buying meetings much simpler. In November 2009, The National Conference Center was the first facility to be accepted to the GSA Schedule based on strong past performance in hosting government meetings and their offer to ensure competitive pricing to government markets. The number of facilities in this new “conference facilities” category with GSA will grow, creating the opportunity for

government meetings to be purchased quickly, easily, and at the best rates and terms available.

Over the past several years, with the weak economy causing many association meetings to shrink and some corporate meetings to disappear, many hotels, resorts and conference centers have shifted strategy to court the government meetings market. As times get better, some properties will return to re-emerging, higher-rated markets, while others may continue to see the benefits of the very large, yet cost-conscious, federal meetings market.

GOVERNMENT MEETING TIPS

- **Know the rules.** Understand what can and cannot be paid for. Most agencies and departments will not pay for alcohol or food at receptions, and many can’t pay for refreshment breaks. Conference centers, which offer a complete meetings package, often have an advantage on the latter. NOTE: Not all agencies have the same rules, so be sure to ask.
- **Understand the per diem and how it works.** The General Services Administration (GSA) sets competitive rates for federal travel including hotel room rates and meal allowances. Go online to confirm what is allowed in your area and in the areas where you compete (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>).
- **Study the procurement process.** Often you

will be working with program staff that directs the meeting or conference, but eventually, the final decision rests in the hands of a procurement officer. Just as in other markets, you need to know who you are talking to and where they fit in the decision-making process. In the federal government, you must be careful to respect the position of the procurement officer.

- **Use your resources.** Carrolls Publishing is a valuable (although somewhat expensive) online directory of the federal government. If used consistently and correctly, it can be a critical resource. In addition, websites such as Federal Business Opportunities (<https://www.fbo.gov/>) are extremely helpful in finding new programs on which to bid.
- **Know and use ranks.** In the military especially, personnel work hard for their rank, so show them proper respect. Are you dealing with a general or a lieutenant? It’s useful information to recognize and honor. AC&F

Eric Whitson is Director of Sales and Marketing at The National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA, the nation’s largest marketing conference center and the first to be awarded a GSA Schedule Contract from the General Services Administration. He serves on the Board of Directors of the America’s Chapter of the International Association of Conference Centers and is Co-Chair of the Marketing Committee. He is a 20-year veteran of the resort and conference center industry and resides in Purcellville, VA.

In Tune With the Times

Hot Topics and Virtual Avenues

By George Seli

The foundation of professional association meetings is education, affirms Christine Murphy Peck, SmithBucklin's senior director, education and learning services. The annual meeting in particular is a chance to learn about new developments in the field and the work of one's colleagues. But what's built on that foundation — what distinguishes education at a meeting from reading the latest issue of a journal — is the chance to “gather, network and reenergize,” says Peck. It's also an educational escape from the daily rigors of members' professional lives.

“There is an element to the live meeting that is very attractive to some people. It gives someone time to really focus on the education without a lot of competing demands at the office,” observes Barbara Licht, director of educational meetings and conferences for the Philadelphia-based American College of Physicians (ACP).

Despite its allure, the big annual meeting has become just one avenue for associations to deliver educational content, such as the kind that delivers certification credit. The ACP, for example, offers many programs apart from the annual meeting that confer CME credit.

“The education required for certification comes in many forms,” remarks Teri Elliott Jarvie, CMP, vice president of member programs for Association Forum of Chicagoland and former director of meeting services for the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP). “Some of it might be attendance at the annual meeting, some of it through standalone meetings or distance learning. I call it the ‘amazon.com’ model: giving people what they want, how and when they want it,” she says.

Draw Attendees to Education Programs

GLOBALIZATION

Jarvie points to another trend in certification education: globalization. “Many associations are seeing enhanced demand for certification from members and their customers outside the U.S. Certification has a real value outside the U.S., and I think it's an area where people are looking to grow and expand. In the British countries, for example, certification is perceived as very valuable and very necessary since people want to move up in the work force. So I think everyone's trying hard to learn how you launch certification programs in a new market, a new country.”

The special interest groups at the Association Forum grapple with such issues and exchange best practices, Jarvie adds.

HOT TOPICS

Successful educational initiatives for members are thus expanding in geographic reach, diversifying in format and, as always, staying in tune with hot topics in the field. “I think it's very important that we offer a large and diverse topic array,” says Eileen Larsson, director, education products and programs with the American Thoracic Society (ATS), “particularly because the ATS covers both pulmonary critical care and sleep medicine.” Toward that end, it's vital to have systems in place to cull members' most current educational interests. Typically the organization's committees will gather feedback from the membership on a regular basis. “The ATS is very heavily member-driven in terms of what content we identify for the annual program,” notes Larsson. “We actually have a very grassroots, ground-up approach.” The organization's 13 assemblies essentially act like focus groups on different interests, such as clinical

problems, critical care, nursing assembly, pulmonary rehabilitation and so on. Each elects a program chair that reviews and selects from proposals for topics and courses at next year's conference, submitted by both members and nonmembers when the call goes out every April.

“In some cases, groups do mini-polls throughout the year to assess if they're addressing all segments of the membership,” says Peck. “And if they're looking to beef up programming toward a certain segment they might reach out with a quick survey on a series of topics. The idea is to be continually in touch with the membership.”

Social media is also a route to gleaning members' educational interests as they evolve. Association Forum, for instance, has its own internal social media platform (as do many associations now) where association leaders can network with members, “participate in their conversations and let them tell us what's happening in their world,” explains Jarvie. “So there's an even greater free flow and exchange of ideas than just via the formalized committee structure.”

SITE SELECTION

Whatever the educational focus, a meeting site conducive to concentration is key. For Donna Young, CMP, meetings manager with the ACP, the ideal situation is a noise-free hotel meeting room, such as one an ACP group recently used at the Renaissance Schaumburg. “Their Nirvana Ballroom doesn't have any adjoining rooms for sessions next door to us. Any loud clapping, for example, would interfere with learning.” The smaller programs throughout the year don't generally have a guest-rooms-to-meeting space ratio that favors hotels, as oftentimes attendees drive in. “But right now we're an attractive piece of business due to the economy,” Young remarks. To increase negotiating leverage for comps applied to these meetings, the ACP started working with HelmsBriscoe last year. And numbers are strong for its upcoming annual meeting, Internal Medicine 2011, in San Diego “because many of our doctors are going to sit and recertify,” says Young. “Based on our pickup the last time we were in San Diego in 2007, we are a few hundred over on the early registration.”

“We really have not seen any significant change in attendance figures (during the recession). Things have been very stable,” Licht says. “The annual meet-

ing here at the ACP is the premier meeting for inter-nists, so that really creates quite the draw.”

While Young focuses on the logistical side, Licht's responsibility is working with the planning committees to design the educational program. The ACP takes the approach of creating a special committee devoted to each annual meeting. “I think the fact that there is a committee focused on one year's meeting contributes to an outstanding program,” she maintains. “They're very focused on the program and don't have many overlapping responsibilities.”

While the program committee selects the topics to be covered and identifies the faculty, Licht and her staff design the schedule. “There are about 270 sessions over three days, so it's our challenge to figure out a good mix of topics and formats in each time period for the master schedule. There are sessions designed for specific career stages, a number of sessions in advocacy, a number in medical informatics and so on. Years ago when I started, I thought there would be some kind of computer program that populated all the courses into the schedule, and what I learned is that it is an art done by hand. You can use the computer tools to make the schedule, but when

it comes to deciding what is in each time period, that is done by an individual with the skillset to know what topic should be run against another topic.”

Avoiding overlapping content during a time period is a major guideline. “For example, we try to avoid offering competing sessions in cardiology. Rather, we'll have all the different specialties represented in a time period,” Licht explains. The ACP is analyzing the current

blueprint used to plan the program to determine the ideal number of sessions and combination of topics for a meeting, which draws about 10,000 physicians, guests and pharmaceutical representatives. “Our annual meeting just gets larger and larger each year,” Young notes. “So we're looking into the feasibility of using larger rooms and decreasing the number of simultaneous offerings. We currently have five or six time slots a day and 20–24 meeting rooms going on at the same time. And inevitably you'll have a room that's not that large, and it'll be a hot topic at that moment, and people will get upset that they can't get in.”

The ATS planning team similarly tries to achieve



Teri Elliott Jarvie, CMP
Vice President of Member Programs
Association Forum of Chicagoland
Chicago, IL

“It's a brave new world in terms of the mobile technologies. With the advent of the Kindle, the iPad and other devices, members are getting our content in whatever format or device they need.”

a “well-distributed topic selection” for each of the four days of its annual meeting, which includes more than 500 sessions and draws around 13,000 attendees. “We also have a mix of formats to ensure that each learning style is accommodated as best we can,” says Larsson. “So before the conference we have a series of day-long intensive post-graduate courses, then ‘Meet the Professor’ sessions, Sunrise Seminars, workshops and more during the conference. We really do our best to ensure that everybody who’s looking for a certain educational format on a topic can find something that suits them.”

VIRTUAL LEARNING

One format that has grown in recent years is the virtual medium. Members find online learning a convenient option due to their tight schedules, and the medical profession is no exception. “What we hear from many of our clinician members, of which we have a substantial number, is that time away (to attend the meeting) is time away from their practice, and oftentimes if they go, their partner has to remain behind or vice versa,” Larsson observes. “So for those that are actually running a business along with practicing medicine, it’s a challenge for them to leave their business for five or six days.” Virtual capture of sessions at the annual meeting “enables us to give those members the opportunity to see what they missed.” For the ATS, the practice of creating on-demand educational content based on the live meeting has evolved from audio-cassette recordings of presentations to webcasts. “As of 2009 we expanded from capturing selected sessions to capturing every session for which we receive permission,” she notes. (Presenters or program chairs sometimes do not wish to have their data available after the conference, for various reasons.)

There is a definite advantage to capturing sessions for on-demand consumption as opposed to live broadcasts for remote participants. Physicians, for example, are busy “so if they’re not at the meeting there’s much more of a benefit to be able to get the content on-demand instead of trying to schedule your patients around the time of the broadcast,” says Licht.

Nearly all of the presentations at the ACP’s annual meeting are captured, either as videostream, audio and slides, audio only and so on. “The only sessions that aren’t captured are those with a highly visual component, such as when they’re teaching a

very finely coordinated motor skill, which is difficult to transmit electronically. Or if it’s a session where people have broken into several groups for discussion; then an electronic format is not useful. But by and large almost all the topics lend themselves to some sort of capture.”

Mobile apps and the mobile Web are also conduits for education content, such as journal articles or archived journals. “Both of those tools are being used by associations in many different ways,” says Jarvie. “It’s a brave new world in terms of the mobile technologies. With the advent of the Kindle, the iPad and other devices, members are getting our content in whatever format or device they need. But the big challenge is that the two major formats in the smartphone and tablet technology are Droid and Apple, and they don’t talk to each other. So you need to know what percentage of your attendees has either, neither or other technologies.”

FACE-TO-FACE

While robust virtual offerings do not obviate face-to-face learning, Jarvie feels they do make it incumbent on planners to create an especially compelling in-person experience. “It’s helping us to understand as association, meetings and education professionals, that we have to design face-to-face experiences so they are the best they can possibly be,” she says. “There’s an acknowledgement and appreciation of the virtual audience that is really important, but we need to design the experience so that we’re sure that the people who are there face-to-face want to always continue to have that experience.”

With that goal in mind it’s vital to collect members’ feedback on face-to-face programs, and an easier evaluation process tends to increase participation. It’s advisable to avoid administering lengthy forms or reaching out too often with questionnaires. The ATS makes providing onsite feedback convenient with CME accreditation kiosks. “When people are at the conference, they’re encouraged to go to those kiosks and log their time, give us feedback on the quality and the caliber of the conference itself and the individual sessions,” says Larsson. “Last year we had approximately 2,300 people fill them out.” While the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) requires speaker evaluation in order to get CME credit, “we still do any and everything we can to get as much feedback as possible so we can continually improve our confer-

ence,” says Larsson. “The kiosks are very important to obtaining all of that feedback. We also do targeted surveys to those who attended our Center for Fellows and Junior Professionals, which is a lounge at the conference for them to hear some informal lectures and have a gathering place. We also have a Clinician’s Center, and anyone who attends those respective rooms we try and get their feedback as well. So we have a targeted follow-up.”

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Measuring ROI for participants has reached a deeper level since 2006, when the ACCME adopted its “Updated Accreditation Criteria.” These required education providers to assess if and how their performance improved as a result. Program design was also affected by this new focus on outcomes-based education, the kind that ultimately delivers better patient outcomes. CME topics became more targeted on the professional practice gaps of physicians, and evaluations following such programs naturally reflect improved performance. Outcomes-based education has certainly influenced the ACP’s ap-

proach to post-meeting evaluation. “We’ll ask, ‘Did you learn something that will change your clinical practice?’ Then we do post-analysis to measure actual change of practice; we measure not only competence but performance,” Licht explains. “We’ll ask shortly after the meeting, in the next week or so, ‘What did you learn?’ We’re measuring competence at that point. And then about three months later there’s a follow-up survey: ‘Now that some time has passed, are you actually doing these things in practice? Do you feel that the new skills have improved patient outcome?’” Licht says they offer survey respondents an incentive — a drawing for a free registration to next year’s meeting.

ROI data showing evidence of improved performance and patient outcomes also can be used as a potent marketing tool for the certification program. It shows the program delivers the kind of learning that makes an on-the-job difference to participants. And with the considerable investment that associations make in such programs — from R&D to legal to operational costs — they can’t afford to bypass that “selling point.”

AC&F

Smart Events 2010 PLATINUM CHOICE AWARDS WINNER Four Diamond Award

APPROACH YOUR MEETING FROM A TSR PERSPECTIVE.

With 100,000+ square feet of meeting space, state-of-the-art A/V capabilities and the flexibility to accommodate groups from 12 to 2000, Talking Stick Resort is all business. But with five outstanding dining venues and a host of entertainment options—including a thrilling casino, world-class spa, and two championship golf courses—we’re a lot of fun, as well.

Proudly owned and operated by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.
©2011 Talking Stick Resort

TALKING STICK RESORT

SCOTTSDALE | 866.877.9897 | TALKINGSTICKRESORT.COM

Green AND Giving Back

Good for People and Business

By Steve Winston



Amy Ledoux
S.V.P., Meetings and Expositions
ASAE, The Center for Association
Leadership
Washington, DC

“Most organizations understand the benefits in recruiting, in reputation, to the membership of green meetings and socially responsible activities in the host community.”

Last fall, to enhance its commitment to environmental sustainability, ASAE, The Center for Association Leadership, purchased Convene Green Alliance (CGA). CGA was founded by IMN Solutions in 2008 to advance green meetings, develop best practices and share good ideas. In a few years, CGA membership exploded from the 16 original founding associations to more than 1,000 individual members representing hundreds of associations as well as more than 40 corporate partner members.

The rapid growth of CGA is but one example of how far green and giving back initiatives have progressed. Associations have discovered that efforts toward sustainability and social responsibility reach far beyond the trendy. They bring measurable benefits to associations; they're good for your reputation; and they help you grow. Simply put, they're good for business.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

“In our RFPs for meetings, we

always ask if the destination is really green,” says Amy Ledoux, senior vice president, meetings and expositions at ASAE. “And we always require that local vendors with whom we'll be dealing practice sustainability.”

For example, ASAE works with a company that develops biodegradable badge-holders because, Ledoux explains, when badges are collected, they still get thrown out.

ASAE will use recyclable tote bags made from banana leaves, grass clippings, and tobacco leaves for its 2011 Springtime Expo in Washington, DC.

In addition, the organization puts most of its handouts online and, at meetings, distributes flash drives with event information and documents that attendees can load onto their PDAs. It sends out virtual brochures ahead of meetings, rather than paper ones. And it uses the same signage whenever practical.

“At our evening events, we use biodegradable silverware and plates, and recycling bins,” Ledoux says. “And we always donate unused food to local charities.”

ASAE is expecting more than 5,500 attendees in



St. Louis at its Annual Meeting & Exposition, August 6–9. At the annual meeting — and at most of its 45 additional meetings each year — many attendees contribute to local charities. As of early February, more than \$10,000 was donated by attendees to local charities in host destinations. ASAE leads the way for its member associations. Still, Ledoux notes, despite the fine example set by ASAE, some associations are slow to come onboard.

“Most organizations understand the benefits in recruiting, in reputation, to the membership of green meetings and socially responsible activities in the host community,” she says. “But I still sometimes hear, ‘What if my boss doesn't buy in? When that happens, I just tell them to start small because if they don't, they're going to be left behind.’”

Chris Wood is ASAE's director

of social responsibility and manages the newly acquired Convene Green Alliance. He's delighted by the progress made by member associations.

“We recently did a social responsibility survey with our members,” Wood explains, “to see how we were doing. By the end of this year, more than 70 percent of our associations will be engaged in eco-friendly practices.”

According to Wood, an increasing number of

Attendees of the 2010 Sustainable Meetings Conference in Denver fashioned recycled banners from events such as the Snow Sports Industries America Snow Show into bags (left) to help women in recovery at Mission Wear, a local shelter.





David Clemmons
Founder
VolunTourism.org
Chula Vista, CA

“These activities generally help to improve attendance, often resulting in lower room-block rates. Attendees, having received an emotionally fulfilling experience, are more likely to attend future meetings.”

associations are also leveraging their relationships with vendors to make sure they're onboard as well.

“Our annual meetings can have anywhere from 5,000 to 7,000 attendees,” Wood says. “With that kind of power, we should be able to do something to leave a legacy with our host communities.”

At last year's Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, ASAE worked with Midnight Mission, a local center for the homeless. Forty attendees worked in the kitchen and served lunch to more than 400 people. And the next morning, 150 attendees participated in a Fun Run to raise money for a local charity. But

it didn't stop there.

“We had a Build-A-Bike event,” says Wood, “and we built 150 bikes for needy kids. We also made 350 school backpacks and stuffed them with all sorts of hygienic items, such as shampoos and hand sanitizers. And we had five tours of the city for our attendees, and every cent went to the Midnight Mission. In total, we raised \$13,000.”

Wood notes that the whole idea of social responsibility and sustainability is a continuing process of performance-improvement for associations. As a result, you're improving the way your organization operates.

“But the greatest feeling of all,” Wood says, “is when you see these kids' faces when you give them their bikes. There's hardly a dry eye in the house.”

HOW TO CONNECT AND FIND HELP

At VolunTourism.org, you can connect with CVBs that actively assist visiting associations with environmentally and socially responsible initiatives as well as local hotels and vendors that give back to the community and local agencies that can use your help.

“There are a lot of good reasons why associations should get involved with their host destinations,” says David Clemmons, founder of VolunTourism.org. “For one thing, these activities generally help to improve attendance, often resulting in lower room-block rates. For another, it means that your attendees, having received an emotionally fulfilling experience, are more likely to attend future meetings. In addition, if you can capture these experiences on

video or CDs for internal consumption, it perpetuates that good feeling for the rest of the year. And, certainly, it's just good business. Part of good business is acting purposefully with your host destination, and that can often result in increased business opportunities for your members.”

Clemmons notes there's still a lot of work to be done.

“What we're seeing,” he says, “is that associations are starting to offer pre- and post-meeting activities. But many are still reluctant to actually incorporate these activities into the meeting itself. We're still not seeing a great deal from an integrated, holistic standpoint.”

“But what we are also seeing,” he adds, “is that those associations who are incorporating these activities into the meetings are getting a great ROI.”

Play With A Purpose is an Orlando, FL company that works with associations nationwide in assisting them with community service programs in their host communities, as well as teambuilding and networking events. The company works with the Southeastern region of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), offering meeting attendees a chance to practice what their organizations preach.

Sharon Fisher, CEO/Idea-Sparker of Play With A Purpose, says associations are starting to realize they need to give something back to the communities in which they're leaving a carbon footprint. And she says MPI has been one of the leading drivers of this process.

“MPI's annual Southeast Educational Conference (SEC) generally draws 500–600 attendees,” she says, “as well as about 80 exhibitors. In the 2010 meeting in Tampa, we partnered with an organization called Southeastern Guide Dog, which trains dogs for service programs with visually impaired people and police agencies. Prior to the meeting, we asked our people to bring things for dogs: blankets, beds, food, bones and toys. And about 35 percent of them did bring things. We met the dogs, who were adorable puppies then. And we were actually able to ‘adopt’ one, whom we called Essie — for SEC.”

The 2009 meeting in Miami attracted 500 attendees; they partnered with Clean the World, an organization that provides personal hygiene products to disadvantaged people.

“Most of our attendees brought used bars of soap down from their rooms every day,” Fisher says. “They helped recycle and clean them. And we



Photos courtesy of ASAE

worked with Clean the World in carving them into interesting shapes.”

Fisher notes that an association can't just rush headlong into a social responsibility program for its meetings. It has to be done purposefully, with a recognition that there has to be emotional buy-in from attendees for the program to succeed. Otherwise you're just going through the motions.

“You can't just do something for the sake of doing something,” she says. “There has to be an emotional connection that will make your attendees feel good about what they're doing. For example, when we met the puppies, there was an immediate connection. And everyone left with a very warm feeling about what we had done.”

PLANNERS LEADING THE WAY

Tonya Horsley, CMP, is director of meetings at the Washington, DC-based American Institute of Architects (AIA). Horsley is a highly regarded speaker on going green, and on how associations can enhance their profiles and their business by participating in community-focused “Legacy” programs in host cities. And she's one of the reasons AIA won the “Green Planner” Award from Professional Convention Management Association's Capital Chapter in 2008, and the “Green Planner Leader Award” in 2010.

“Social responsibility is not a new concept for AIA,” Horsley says. “We've had donations of toiletry and hygiene items for homeless shelters. We donated a painting to an arts high school. In our 2009 Annual Meeting in Miami, we participated in a composting event to beautify a neighborhood.



At last March's board meeting, the board members did sketches to be auctioned off for charity. We've had staff that cleaned up the U.S. Congressional Cemetery. Our board of directors has even done a garden-beautification program in Philadelphia.”

The list, however, doesn't stop there. AIA also helps rebuild homes in its host cities. And they'll be working with three local charities in their Annual National Convention & Design Expo in New Orleans in May.

AIA's annual meetings are big ones — they average 20,000 attendees and more than 500 exhibitors. So the positive footprint they leave on the local community is a substantial one.

Another early adopter of sustainability and community service programs was the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE).

“For us, it's a no-brainer,” says Bridget Chisholm, conference manager. “When we bring 1,000 people to a community for our annual conference, it just wouldn't seem right not to use all that people power for good works. So, before we go to a city, we always ask what we can do to help.”

At its October 2010 Conference in Buffalo, NY, NAAEE attendees planted trees to offset the carbon footprint of their meeting. The year before, in Portland, OR, they planted trees and helped paint a youth center. And before that, in St. Paul, MN, they helped move furniture at a youth center.

At ASAE's 2010 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, 40 attendees volunteered to serve lunch to 400 people at the Midnight Mission, a local center for homeless — one of several community-service projects.



Tonya Horsley, CMP
Director, Meetings
American Institute of Architects
Washington, DC

“Social responsibility is not a new concept for AIA. We've had donations of toiletry and hygiene items for homeless shelters. In our 2009 Annual Meeting in Miami, we participated in a composting event to beautify a neighborhood.”



Photo courtesy of AAPM.

At AAPM's 2010 meeting in Philadelphia, attendees volunteered to spend four hours at the Philabundance Food Bank, a priceless benefit, says Karen MacFarland, CMP, AAPM's meetings manager.

The association ensures, before it picks a facility, that there are compost facilities on the premises; that the food will be local whenever possible; that vendors will be using alternative fuels whenever possible; that there will be no bottled water; and that they don't end up filling local landfills with carpeting.

"The meetings industry is the second most-wasteful industry — after construction — in America," Chisholm says. "We need to change the way we operate, so we don't fill local landfills with one-use carpeting. And so we understand that community

service and green meetings are not only good for the host community. They're good for us, as well — as both individuals and organizations."

According to Karen MacFarland, CMP, meetings manager at the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), the association sends out meeting-related communications by email or online so there's almost never a need for printed materials. And nearly all takeaways are online or on CDs. The association ensures that the facilities use biodegradable silverware and dishware. It also performs service projects at its meetings.

AAPM's 2010 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia attracted 4,100 attendees and 117 exhibitors. And meetings weren't the only thing on the agenda.

"We had a group of volunteers helping out at a neighborhood food bank," says MacFarland. "The year before, in Anaheim, we gave blood at a Red Cross center, and we helped on a beach cleanup project. And later this year in Vancouver, we'll be working with the Vancouver Food Bank."

MacFarland says there's still some resistance in associations — and some local vendors — to green and community service activities. The way to get buy-in is simple, she notes — explain that it's good business.

"It saves us a tremendous amount of money," she says. "Just think of all the paper and printing and mailing costs we eliminate by communicating with attendees online before, during and after the meeting. Think of what we save by using biodegradable materials instead of expensive dishware and silverware. Think of what we save by using recycled carpeting and platforms, instead of purchasing new items."

And there's one benefit, MacFarland says, that you can't put a price on: "It gives everyone the feeling that they're contributing, and that they're doing something important. As a result, it enhances productivity."

FIND A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CITY

It helps, many planners say, if you meet in a city that already has an established program of environmental consciousness and social responsibility such as Denver — situated at the foot of the magnificent Front Range of the Rockies.

"We come by our green consciousness naturally, because all of us here want to preserve the beauty

of this region," says Tiffany Hoambrecker, associate director of convention services at Visit Denver and president-elect of the Colorado Chapter of the Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC). The GMIC, based in Beaverton, OR, works with meeting planners to educate them on sustainable practices at meetings.

"For example," says Hoambrecker, "we do dine-arounds with visiting associations, where Denver restaurants will create sustainable, farm-to-table, three-course meals. And we've also made presentations about environmental and community service issues at association meetings here."

In February, when the GMIC met in Denver for the 2010 Sustainable Meetings Conference, Visit Denver arranged for them to work with Mission Wear, a local women's shelter. Attendees used recycled conference materials to fashion new bags suitable for job hunting and daily life.

Hoambrecker says the GMIC's involvement with Mission Wear was an emotional catharsis for many of its attendees.

"Four of the women in recovery told their stories

of where they came from, and how Mission Wear was helping them," she says. "The attendees realized they were playing a part in helping these women get their lives back. And it was a very emotional moment for many of them."

Tamara Kennedy-Hill, CMP, executive director of GMIC, agrees that linking corporate social responsibility and sustainability with meetings is good business, because it positions the association as a progressive organization.

"Denver was an early pioneer in this field," she notes, "with magnificent natural surroundings and an environmentally conscious population. So it was a natural for us to meet there."

And, she adds, planners should educate themselves about the business benefits from social responsibility efforts at their meetings.

"We're looking at strategic efforts here," says Kennedy-Hill. "We're working on measurable metrics, so we can tie in sustainability with our business goals. And so that more people realize eventually that community service and sustainability are good business."

AC&F

Going green and performing community service "gives everyone the feeling that they're contributing and that they're doing something important. As a result, it enhances productivity."

Karen MacFarland, CMP
Meetings Manager
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
College Park, MD

OUR IMPRESSIVE, STATE-OF-THE-ART CONVENTION CENTER TAKES MEETINGS TO NEW HEIGHTS. LITERALLY.

ENTER TO WIN A FREE IPAD.
Submit an RFP request to SFCVB at SantaFe.org/meetings.

A ROCKY MOUNTAIN DESTINATION CELEBRATED FOR CULTURE, ART AND ORIGINALITY.
With 40,000 feet of event space, gatherings ranging from 1,000-person conventions to 20-person brainstorming sessions fit right in. The stunning main ballroom is ideal for banquets and exhibitions, while breakout rooms are perfectly suited for professional classes and workshops. Beautiful adobe architecture, Gold LEED certified "green" design, and state-of-the-art technology ensure an authentic experience that makes business feel a lot like pleasure. And for a limited time, we're offering FREE space with 500 room nights—offer valid January–February 2012 and 2013.
CALL 800.984.9984 OR VISIT SANTAFE.ORG/MEETINGS

LOCATED STEPS FROM HISTORIC PLAZA, GALLERIES AND WORLD-FAMOUS DINING

FULL-SERVICE STAFF ENSURES YOUR NEXT MEETING IS A WORK OF ART

#1 CULTURAL GETAWAY TRAVEL + LEISURE MAGAZINE

Santa Fe
TRAVEL TO THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUM

Better Together

The Art of Co-Locating Events

By Karen Brost

When the first-ever Americas Meeting and Events Exhibition (AIBTM) kicks off in Baltimore June 21–23, attendees will have a chance to not only connect with more than 700 top-level U.S. and international exhibitors, but to connect and learn from high-profile networking functions and educational sessions presented by PCMA, CIC, ICCA, Site and MPI — all of whom are joining forces with AIBTM during what is dubbed “America Meetings Week.”

When IMEX America debuts in Las Vegas October 11–13, several key industry partners will be in play: PCMA will hold its International Summit immediately following IMEX; MPI is the show’s Premier Education Provider; the Site Annual Conference will be held around IMEX; ASAE is bringing hosted buyers; and ICCA, IAEE and IAPCO are all contributing to the education program.

As these industry associations are discovering, the strategy of co-locating events can push the ROI of events from lackluster to blockbuster.

Associations of every stripe can follow these leaders down the same road to success. As the saying goes, “Two heads are better than one,” so when like-minded organizations join forces to co-locate their events, they can reap many benefits. These benefits include increased satisfaction and productivity on the part of attendees and exhibitors, greater economies of scale and more bargaining power. But, just like other facets of meeting planning, it takes a lot of skill, diplomacy, determination and dedication to pull it off.

A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) has successfully partnered with several organizations, including the Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM) and ASAE, The Center for Association Leadership to co-locate events. Most recently, PCMA co-located its Annual Meeting: Convening Leaders in Las Vegas with the Virtual Edge Institute.

“If a co-location will benefit the respective mem-

bers of the organizations and/or attendees, then I think it makes tremendous sense,” states Deborah Sexton, PCMA president and CEO. “People are really taking a look at every time someone is attempting to get them out of their office. They’re really looking at what the value proposition is, so they maximize the time away. The reason we co-located with Virtual Edge is because we really believe that our members need to know more about virtual platforms, hybrid meetings and what’s happening in that space. So we opted to co-locate, and there was a great deal of interest.”

Sexton explained that co-locating can offer a great opportunity to expose attendees to new ideas. “We had very senior people that had been in the meeting area for years and years and supervised large departments. (Virtual and hybrid meetings) is a whole new area and many went in saying, ‘We’re really not interested, but we’ve got to see what this is all about.’ Across the board, they left saying, ‘Now we need to know more. This is intriguing. We’ve got to incorporate some of this into what we’re doing.’ I was excited to see that, and of course, they’ll be quick studies.”

With some creative planning, there’s virtually no limit to the number of organizations that can co-locate at a single event. The European Incentive, Business Travel & Meetings Exposition (EIBTM) is a good example. Organizations that participated in the fall 2010 event included MPI, PCMA, the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC), Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMJC) and the Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC). Final attendance figures reflect its success: Visitor attendance including hosted buyers recorded a 2.5 percent increase over 2009.

“EIBTM, located in Barcelona and at the cusp between the close of one business year and the start of another, provides a growing number of organizations with an ideal opportunity to bring people together for a wide range of activities,” explains Graeme Barnett, EIBTM’s exhibition director.

“The benefits of meeting face-to-face at a time when many industry professionals will be attending EIBTM makes absolute sense,” he continues. “It’s a case of maximizing return on investment and return on time in terms of the time and money spent on attending EIBTM, and means that organizations can ensure they maximize the opportunity to meet with their employees, members, customers or col-

leagues. For organizers of these increasing number of meetings, many of whom are our customers, event supporters, partners or international associations, they know that their specific communities or industry colleagues are most likely to be in one location at the same time for EIBTM — where the world meets — so it makes sense to combine one trip with many other business meetings.”

HOW TO CO-LOCATE

“The process really begins with insight, and it begins by first ensuring that both organizations, whether they be one big and one small, both big or both small, share a common vision for the objectives that they want to achieve with their individual events,” says Ed Several, senior vice president for Reed Exhibitions, producer of the National Hardware Show (NHS).

“Once each group understands that they have common objectives, then it’s important to determine the strengths that each party brings to the event and then to line those strengths up to ensure that any weaknesses are covered up,” he adds. “The third piece, once you have common goals and you identify the opportunities each group has, is to understand both the financial, and, more importantly, member benefits that each will deliver. If each event delivers the same benefits, a co-location may not be as valuable as when each can deliver unique benefits that complement each other.

“The key to any type of co-location is to do it on a stair-step process versus an ‘all at once,’” he continues. “We are going to be co-locating with the American Retail Hardware Association for the first time in 2011, having worked with them over the past two years to support their members who attend the NHS. “A good co-location begins when at least one of the events attracts members to both.”

MAKING THE FIRST MOVE

Co-location partnerships aren’t just formed when a larger organization invites a smaller one to participate. In the case of ASAE’s Toronto meeting two years ago, PCMA made the first move. “I don’t know if it’s big to small as much as it is strategic thinking,” Sexton says. “It’s asking ‘Would this make sense and, if so, how do you package this together?’



Deborah Sexton
President and CEO
PCMA
Chicago, IL

“If a co-location will benefit the respective members of the organizations and/or attendees, then I think it makes tremendous sense.”

“There are a lot of efficiencies of scale when trade shows can co-locate. You are more likely to get top-tier cities, get lower hotel rates, larger hotel blocks and prime convention center space.”

Anne Halal, CEM
V.P. Convention & Exposition Services
American Meat Institute
Washington, DC



Graeme Barnett
Exhibition Director
EIBTM
Richmond, Surrey, UK

“It’s a case of maximizing return on investment and return on time... and means that organizations can ensure they maximize the opportunity to meet with their employees, members, customers or colleagues.”

“We called ASAE and said, ‘You’re going to be in Toronto. We have an international summit, and we want to host it in Toronto. What we’d like to do is host it on Friday and Saturday. Your show opens up on Saturday. If these international meeting professionals can attend your opening reception and trade show, we can get them to stay another day.’”

ASAE agreed and provided special badging so PCMA’s summit attendees could attend the opening reception, general session and trade show. Sexton commented that officials from the city of Toronto were also excited that 100 international meeting planners were able to attend the lavish opening reception that they hosted. “These are people that wouldn’t be at ASAE, although they’re qualified meeting professionals that book meetings all over the world. It was a win-win for everybody.”

The American Meat Institute (AMI) has successfully co-located with the International Dairy Foods Association for 12 years. In 2012, AMI will work with the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the United Fresh Produce Association to co-locate all three shows at the Dallas Convention Center.

Anne Halal, CEM, vice president of convention and exposition services for AMI, explains, “The first time we talked about doing our co-location in 2012 with FMI, we had space in the convention center. They were looking at the same dates in the same city, so we thought this made sense. Their attendees are the customers of our attendees, so we’re going to see a bump in attendance and in our exhibitors. In some cases, exhibitors will see an ease in their calendar because they (normally) exhibit at both shows.

“There is definitely a variety of co-location formulas,” Halal adds. “Sometimes the associations can merge their marketing plans. They can merge exhibit salesforces and form an LLC so that all sales for either show are handled by one party and all of the finances are split evenly. Financially, you can become very, very intertwined. There are cases where some parts of the show are combined. We’ve done versions of co-locations where you have two show directories. Each show will have its own directory so that we can sell advertising to

our exhibitors.” But, she adds, “Every attendee will get the entire list of exhibitors.”

Another decision to be made involves timing. “Virtual Edge started as our meeting ended, so it wasn’t the true co-location where you have an overlap,” Sexton explains. “Next year, we’re going to have an overlap so that our members will have an opportunity to take advantage of the education that Virtual Edge offers in addition to the education that PCMA offers.”

MORE FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Halal says, “One of the factors you have to consider when you co-locate is ‘What is their price structure? How much do they charge to go to their event?’ You really do need to match. You need to have very similar exhibit space rates and registration rates. Otherwise, it becomes sort of competitive. You don’t want the other organization saying, ‘Buy our badge...it’s much, much cheaper.’ We’ve learned over the years that you need to be willing to make it a level playing field so that it’s fair for all associations, and everyone’s at an advantage to do this together.”

Halal explained that another factor to consider is the overlap between the organizations’ exhibitor bases. “You don’t want too much overlap, because then you’re just disintegrating your own exhibitor revenue and you’re not helping either show,” she says.

MAINTAINING DISTINCT IDENTITIES

“One of the important things with many co-locations is that each association maintains its own identity,” Halal states. “In our co-location, we still have our own show name. We’ll refer to it as the AMI show co-located with FMI and United Fresh.”

Sexton adds, “The biggest problem with co-locating trade shows is the individual cultures of the various groups. To meld them together can be a difficult thing. It takes a year or so for the cultures to settle down so that two different organizations with different cultures can work together. It’s not necessarily perfect from the get-go and it takes a lot of work, but if it’s right and it benefits the attendees or exhibitors, you’ll make it work and it does work.”

PUTTING A PROCESS IN PLACE

Not surprisingly, co-locating requires a considerable amount of teamwork between the sponsoring organizations. “It begins with identifying mem-

bers of each team who are both decision-makers and also those with expertise to execute with excellence,” Several says, “and then it continues with site visits, and it goes down to every element that’s part of an event to ensure that they complement and enhance the process.

“With registration,” he continues, “the idea is to figure out how to streamline it so you don’t have any kind of inconsistencies. Secondly, you want to meet with your hotels to make sure you can support the additional room nights, meeting space requirements and certainly evening events, both functions and dining requirements. A co-location will tax the number of hotel and dining opportunities, and so you need to make sure that every aspect is reviewed.”

Halal explained that the lion’s share of the work is done in advance when the key players, the leadership at the associations, determine how they will work together. “Now that we are in the planning stages, the operational and sales, we have a monthly meeting set up. In addition to that, we’ve broken down portions of the show into segments, and we have subcommittees for registration and housing, marketing and press, operations and convention center. All three organizations have used different vendors, different processes and have different refund policies. All of these things need to be hammered out. Often, a meeting is the best way to do that, but there’s not a need for the entire staff from all three organizations to do that,” she says.

EFFICIENCIES OF SCALE

“There are a lot of efficiencies of scale when trade shows can co-locate,” Halal explains. “You are more likely to get top-tier cities, get lower hotel rates, larger hotel blocks and prime convention center space. Plus, there’s certainly an efficiency for staffing. For example, we only need one person from one organization to manage logistics regarding security or the international business center. There are certainly parts of a trade show that can be shared no matter what the show is. A press center would be another example. We’ll have one media center for the AMI, United Fresh and FMI show instead of three of us spending the money to organize them and provide the staff time.”

PUTTING IT IN WRITING

Given the countless details involved in co-locating events, it’s important to put everything in

writing so both sides are clear on the decisions and agreements that have been made.

“The memorandum of understanding is definitely critical,” Halal explains. “It’s coming up with rules, from the beginning, that everyone can live with. There’s a lot of compromise involved, and everyone buys into the spirit of it. It may not be a perfect document from the start. We can add addendums, we can adjust as we go forward with every co-location.”

This documentation will also become invaluable as staff changes occur. As Halal says, “One of the challenges is staff turnover with the systems that you’ve put together. Sometimes you find yourself catching up the other associations so that they’re doing the right thing, keeping up with their share of the responsibility. Sometimes, you feel a little bit like you might work for two associations at the same time, but that’s just part of the fun,” she laughs.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Successful co-locations also require a constant exchange of information. “Keeping the communications open is definitely a big part,” Halal states. “For example, if we don’t set out a standard operating procedure for a press release, in some associations it can take a little bit longer for a press release to be approved if there are three association names or three CEOs who have quotes. We have to lay out the expectations of how long it should take (for approval). We have to say, ‘This is the window of opportunity. If you want to participate you only have four days to respond. Otherwise, we’re just moving on without you.’” As Sexton put it, “You can’t over-communicate.”

THE FUTURE OF CO-LOCATION

Sexton states, “I really think you’re going to see more and more of this going forward. I think it’s all about time deprivation. It’s all about maximizing your time when you’re out of the office. If somebody goes to a trade show, and they see the five or six booths that they specifically must see, and then they’re exposed to something else on top of that, that gives them that extra reason to be out of the office, and they come back to the office with that much more.”

“If each event delivers the same benefits, a co-location may not be as valuable as when each can deliver unique benefits that complement each other.”

Ed Sevalal
Senior Vice President
Reed Exhibitions
Norwalk, CT

Conventional Wisdom

Las Vegas Is the Smart Choice for Hitting the Attendance Jackpot

By Karen Brost

For Amy L. Phillips, vice president, meetings and corporate relations for the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), choosing to meet in Las Vegas is a smart business decision. “We’ve met in Las Vegas three times, and every year we have increased attendance. I’d say it increases as much as 15 to 20 percent. We typically have around 7,000 paid (attendance) and the last time we were in Las Vegas, we had over 8,800 paid.”

This impact on attendance isn’t unique to AAPA. A survey by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) found that attendance increases an average of 13 percent when shows rotate into Las Vegas. Conversely, attendance decreases an average of seven percent when shows rotate out of the city.

AAPA’s next annual conference will be held in late May/early June at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The headquarters hotel will be the 2,941-room Las Vegas Hilton.

The group has additional room blocks reserved at the Hilton Grand Vacations Suites; the 826-room Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa; and the 2,496-room Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. “We typically contract fewer rooms when we go to Las Vegas because people have their favorites, and they know where they like to stay,” Phillips adds. “But, because we’re not on The Strip, we typically sell out the Hilton.” AAPA runs shuttles between its designated hotels.

“We make the decision to select a city anywhere from six to eight years out and sometimes even 10 years out,” she says. “Sometimes when we’re booking Las Vegas, we don’t actually request proposals from other cities. We just have the convention centers within Las Vegas compete against each other.”

The three largest convention facilities in Las Vegas are the 3.2-million-sf Las Vegas Convention Center, which is operated by the LVCVA; the Sands Expo Center and Venetian Congress, which together offer 1.8 million sf of event space; and the 1.7-million-sf Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

“When we booked (our upcoming meeting), the economy was very good and life in Las Vegas was very good, so we looked at Mandalay Bay, we looked at the Sands complex, and then we looked at the convention center and the Hilton,” says Phillips. “When we considered the costs and wants and needs and preferences of physician assistants (PAs), we chose the Hilton and the convention center because it met their needs and our particular budget needs.”

Phillips listed other advantages of meeting in Las Vegas. “Certainly the lift into the city makes a differ-

ence. It’s very easy to get flights and very, very easy to get accommodations. The airport is really close to The Strip, and the weather is fantastic. Although it’s certainly very dry and hot when we’re there, it’s actually more pleasant than traveling to a southern city where the humidity is so overwhelming. Also, for us, PAs love to experience the city and there are so many dining opportunities there.”

AAPA also sees an increase in exhibitor participation when it meets in Las Vegas. “The nice thing for us is that the exhibitors realize the impact of Las Vegas attendance,” Phillips says. “They tend to bring their large booths and more staff. They must have noticed that sales are better when we meet in Las Vegas.”

MAKING A MOVE

Imagine this scenario: The countdown is on to your annual meeting, when a breakdown in labor relations in your host city requires your association’s council to make a difficult decision: It’s time to move the meeting. So, with only nine months to go, your team has to find a new city and venue that can host 5,000 attendees and about 600 sessions.

That’s the situation the American Sociological Association (ASA) found itself in. The labor contracts between Chicago hotels and Unite Here Local 1 (Chicago’s hospitality union) expired on August 31, 2009 and no resolution had been reached 18 months later.

“We and our membership are very strongly supportive of collective bargaining as a way of handling labor relations,” explains Sally T. Hillsman, ASA’s executive director, “but we have a policy that we just don’t meet in locations where collective bargaining is ongoing and has passed the deadline for solution. That’s partly a matter of principle, and it also is a matter of potential disruption to our meeting. We waited, frankly, until what we considered to be the absolute last moment before attempting to move a major meeting like this.”

Knowing that they wanted to stay in the midsection of the country, they looked at a number of cities. They decided on Las

Vegas as the destination, and Caesars Palace, which offers more than 3,300 guest rooms and 240,000 sf of meeting space, as the host hotel.

“Caesars Palace enabled us to be under one roof,” Hillsman noted. “In other places we have to have at least two hotels. Our negotiations with the hotel were very cordial. They were very good about

SET FOR SUCCESS

It’s the little things that add up to a great meeting. From inspiring spaces and healthful menus to thoughtful attention to details, we’ll set you up for clear-thinking productivity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A RESERVATION, PLEASE VISIT WESTIN.COM/LASVEGAS OR CALL 702-836-5900

THE WESTIN CASUARINA HOTEL, CASINO & SPA LAS VEGAS



spg* Starwood Preferred Guest

©2011 Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. All Rights Reserved. SPG, Preferred Guest, Westin and their logos are the trademarks of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., or its affiliates.

The famed Las Vegas Strip is an attendance magnet for association meetings and conventions.



Photo courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau



Amy L. Phillips
V.P., Meetings & Corporate Relations
American Academy of Physician Assistants
Alexandria, VA

“The nice thing for us is that the exhibitors realize the impact of Las Vegas attendance. They tend to bring their large booths and more staff. They must have noticed that sales are better when we meet in Las Vegas.”

helping us secure the kinds of services, room rates, food and beverage and contributions from the hotel that we needed.

“Our council made the decision (to move the meeting) in the early part of December, and we had the contract signed by the last day of the month,” Hillsman says. “It couldn’t have been done without the cooperation and enthusiasm of the hotel and convention folks, but Kareem Jenkins, my director of meeting services, is pretty much of a whiz.”

Jenkins says, “We are fortunate to have an engaged ASA Council that carefully weighed the issues involved with moving our annual meeting. Once Council decided that we could not hold the meeting in Chicago, it empowered ASA staff to quickly secure a new location. While finding a new location in such a short amount of time was certainly challenging, ASA has developed many great relationships with folks in the meeting and convention industry over the years, which proved exceedingly helpful in this process.”

Hillsman describes another factor that makes Las Vegas a good fit for her group. “Las Vegas is a very interesting city from the standpoint of sociologists. Las

Vegas has a lot of community, social and economic issues that are of interest to our members. We are anticipating a very strong meeting attendance.”

Caesars Palace is part of Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment (LVMCE), which also owns Bally’s Las Vegas, Flamingo Las Vegas, Harrah’s Las Vegas, Imperial Palace Las Vegas, Paris Las Vegas, Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino and Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. LVMCE employs what it calls “the eight-stop strategy.” Planners booking an event at one of the properties can use their food and beverage minimums at any of the others as though they were all one hotel. LVMCE does not charge a resort fee at its eight properties.

WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

Thomas B. Anderson, CMP, is director of conferences and events for Technology Services Industry Association (TSIA). His organization’s fall show, Tech Services World, is anchored in Las Vegas and draws approximately 1,000 attendees each year.

“Las Vegas is one of the top draws of any convention city in the world,” he says. “We tend to get the most representation from the most countries. I think we had 22 countries represented last year. It provides a great meeting venue for the business part of the meeting and a great social venue for the networking part of the experience, and there’s something different every year. There’s something new to see, something new to go to, new restaurants, new nightlife, new shopping. Typically, the weather is perfect.” The group meets in mid-October each year.

TSIA is currently in the third year of a four-year agreement to hold the show at The Mirage, which is one of 11 Las Vegas properties owned by MGM Resorts International. The Mirage offers 3,044 guest rooms, including 281 suites, and more than 170,000 sf of meeting and convention space.

“Quite honestly, The Mirage is probably one of the best functional hotels for conventions in Las Vegas,” Anderson notes, “It’s 21 years young. I did my first show there 21 years ago, and some of the people I worked with 21 years ago are still working there. The nice thing about The Mirage is that your meeting space is self contained in one area. Basically, I tell people I own my space. There’s no confusion about which floor to go to or which tower to go to like some of the other hotels.

“Operationally The Mirage basically has it down pat. Their AV team has been there forever, they have

SERVICE SO GOOD, EVEN YOU CAN RELAX.



Las Vegas by the Numbers

- Number of hotel rooms 148,000+
- Room tax 12 percent
- Convention & exhibit space 10.5 million sf
- Meetings & conventions held each year 19,000+
- Average days of sunshine each year 320
- Flights per day at McCarran International Airport 900+
- U.S. cities offering non-stop service 130+
- Distance, in minutes, from the airport to The Strip 15

Statistics provided by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

You don’t have to wait until after the meeting to relax. At MGM Grand, we have more Certified Meeting Professionals than anywhere else in Las Vegas, ready to assist with your event. Add that to our impeccable meeting facilities, luxurious accommodations, and wide variety of entertainment and dining options, and you have the best of Las Vegas under one roof. Now that’s peace of mind. **maximumVegas. MGM GRAND.**



For more reasons to choose MGM Grand, call **1-800-929-1112** or visit **mgmgrand.com/meetings**



Sally T. Hillsman
Executive Director
American Sociological Association
Washington, DC

“Las Vegas is a very interesting city from the standpoint of sociologists. Las Vegas has a lot of community, social and economic issues that are of interest to our members. We are anticipating a very strong meeting attendance.”

high quality food and beverage, and it's a good layout. That's why we're there, and we can stay there for another three years. The question is whether our members will want to change.”

In the event they do want to make a change, one hotel Anderson is considering using is the 4,004 room Aria Resort & Casino. Aria is located in the CityCenter complex and offers 300,000 sf of meeting and prefunction space.

“The Aria is part of MGM Resorts International, so it has certain things in it that are more or less standard features of the MGM group,” Anderson notes. “The hotel layout is very well suited as far as convention space goes. They have four ballrooms, two on each floor, so they have two floors of meeting space and then around those ballrooms they have multiple breakout rooms. Once again, we can control one floor.” He particularly liked the fact that at Aria, as at The Mirage, attendees don't have to walk through the casino to get to the meeting space. “I know that's an issue with some organizations,” he noted.

The Mirage and Aria have a wide variety of room types, and great public space, casinos, restaurants and bars, he says, adding, “The one feature that I liked at Aria is that (to get to the sleeping rooms) you have to go by a bar that is strategically located near the elevator banks. From a group standpoint, when

you go to a convention, you like to be able to network and see people. Typically in most of the large casino hotels, once you're in there you hardly ever see them because there are so many places they can go.

“Aria is very high tech,” Anderson adds. “They've put the most modern, up-to-date technology in their rooms. Everything is pretty much controlled by a remote control as far as your lights, temperature control, television and radio. I think that's a huge feature because people like to experience high tech, especially in our business.”

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Las Vegas resorts and restaurants received 15 AAA Five Diamond Awards for 2011, more than any other city in the U.S. Aria Resort & Casino and Mandarin Oriental Las Vegas both achieved Five Diamond status in their first year. Repeat hotel winners were Bellagio, Encore, Four Seasons Las Vegas, Skylofts at MGM Grand, The Palazzo, Wynn Las Vegas, The Venetian and the former Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas, which was recently newly branded as Ravella at Lake Las Vegas, a Dolce Hotel & Resort.

Five Diamond award-winning restaurants include Alex at Wynn Las Vegas, Guy Savoy at Caesars Palace, Joel Robuchon at MGM Grand and Picasso and Le Cirque at Bellagio. Also at Wynn, the hot new restaurant La Cave was launched by restaurateur Michael Morton and features chef Bill DeMarco's innovative small-plates menu, expertly paired with wines for a unique dining experience.

On the high-tech side, Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, The Mirage, New York-New York and Luxor recently unveiled smartphone property apps, which offer an all-new passcode-protected way for event managers to send news, special offers, meeting schedules and presentations to their attendees.

Last fall, MGM Grand was named North America's leading conference hotel by the World Travel Awards for the fifth consecutive year. The 5,044-room resort boasts 16 Certified Meeting Planners on staff, and 602,000 sf of meeting space that includes 57 meeting rooms, a 380,000-sf, state-of-the-art MGM Grand Conference Center, the standalone 92,000-sf Marquee Ballroom and the 16,800-seat Grand Garden Arena. Nearly 52,000 sf of prefunction space offers views of The Strip and the Grand Pool Complex.

Two other notable MGM Resorts International meetings properties are New York-New York Hotel



The Technology Services Industry Association's fall show, Tech Services World, is anchored in Las Vegas and draws approximately 1,000 attendees each year.

Photo courtesy of TSA

SOUTH POINT

Means Business...It Means Fun Too

It's all about knowing the importance of great customer service, the finest food at affordable pricing and a clean, pleasant environment. Our goal is to supply all “the tools” to help make your planned event a complete success.



- ◆ 500 sq. ft. Standard Deluxe Guest Rooms Loaded with Amenities
- ◆ 75,000 sq. ft. Conference Meeting Space
- ◆ 80,000 sq. ft. Column Free Exhibit Hall
- ◆ 4,500 Seat Arena
- ◆ 9 Restaurants & 7 Bar/Lounges
- ◆ Spa Costa Del Sur & Fitness Center
- ◆ Beautifully Landscaped Pool
- ◆ 64-Lane Bowling Center
- ◆ 16 Movie Theaters

You'll Find That “Extra Mile” Type of Service Here at the South Point

Visit www.SouthPointMeetings.com • Email Sales@SouthPointCasino.com • Call (702) 797-8050



Thomas B. Anderson, CMP
Director, Conferences & Events
Technology Services Industry Association
San Diego, CA

“Las Vegas is one of the top draws of any convention city in the world. We tend to get the most representation from the most countries. I think we had 22 countries represented last year.”

& Casino and Monte Carlo. New York-New York's new Sporting House Bar & Grill offers more than 130 video monitors and a second-story All-Star Arcade with 10,000 sf of interactive and competitive sports-themed attractions. Monte Carlo offers nearly 3,000 luxurious guest rooms, four pools, a 400-foot-long Lazy River and the 1,200-seat Monte Carlo Theater, which will become home to the popular Blue Man Group show beginning in fall 2012.

Wynn Las Vegas — cited by many as the gold standard of Las Vegas hotel product, along with its newer sister property, Encore — is in the final stages of a \$99 million renovation. The property is scheduled to renovate all 2,716 rooms by the end of 2011. Rooms will feature new carpet, wallpaper, furniture and finishes. Together, the two hotels provide 4,750 rooms and 260,000 sf of meeting space, with Wynn claiming the lion's share at 200,000 sf. Wynn also offers an 18-hole golf course, an onsite Ferrari and Maserati dealership, and two nightclubs and lounges.

Minutes from The Strip is the 2,163-room South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa. The hotel has expanded its casino to 55,000 sf and now offers one of the largest gaming floors in the nation. There is 170,000 sf of flexible indoor meeting space, which includes an 80,000-sf exhibit hall; a 22,000-sf ballroom with permanent stage; and 22 breakout rooms. A new 400-seat showroom features headliner entertainment and dancing to live bands on weekends.

Another off-Strip gem suited for mid-sized meetings is the Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa, offering a tranquil retreat from The Strip's non-stop action a block away. Relaxation comes at The Hibiscus Spa, the outdoor heated pool and the WestinWorkout gym. The hotel has 20,000 sf of meeting space and a 2,000-sf theater with stage that offers seating for 175.

Also on the South Las Vegas Strip is the four-star M Resort Spa Casino, which is ideal for small or medium-sized meetings. The resort offers 60,000 sf of meeting space and a 100,000-sf outdoor events piazza with built-in stage and views of The Strip.

Not new, but certainly very noteworthy is the sustainability program of the Las Vegas Sands Corp. Sands Eco 360° is based on three pillars — People, Planet, Profit. According to Las Vegas Sands Corp. President and COO Michael A. Leven, sustainability is a cornerstone of Las Vegas Sands' business philosophy: The company is committed to being the preeminent sustainable development corporation in the world. The program covers four key areas of sustainability, including the company's construction; ongoing operations and environmental policies; purchasing policies; and education about its best practices and innovations to help others become more eco-friendly. These pillars include such areas as energy and water conservation; refuse sorting and recycling; working with vendors to innovate new, more sustainable products and technologies; and educating employees, guests and communities on ways they can contribute in their own lives.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

Celine Dion's new three-year residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace debuted in March. In January, award-winning comedian Rita Rudner began bringing her offbeat brand of humor to audiences at The Venetian Showroom three times a week. The comedy-magic duo Penn & Teller have announced that they will continue their show through 2013 at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino where they have appeared since 2001. The Broadway hit "Defending the Caveman" is now housed at The Improv at Harrah's Las Vegas. Also, as part of its current renovation project, the Tropicana Las Vegas is getting ready to introduce "Yesterday," a tribute to The Beatles in 2011.

"About 10 years ago, the economy was 90 percent based on people coming here to gamble," Kim notes. "Now, the LVCVA has done an amazing job growing Las Vegas into a convention city. We have the most amazing Cirque du Soleil shows. ...'Jersey Boys' at the Venetian is probably the best show in the world. Plus, there are about 50 other shows. Each hotel also has just amazing restaurants. I think the world's most famous chefs are now in Vegas. If you can't afford to go around the world, then you might as well just come to Vegas," she sums up. "It's got everything." AC&F



**YOUR EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGH.
OUR STANDARDS ARE HIGHER.**

Discover a resort experience that is uniquely Wynn and distinctly Encore.

For more information visit us at wynnmeetings.com or call 866.770.7201.



An up-to-date listing of important contact information for leading hotels, resorts, conference centers and CVBs.

ADVERTISER	PH #	WEB ADDRESS	CONTACT	E-MAIL ADDRESS
ARIA Resort & Casino	866-718-2489	www.ariaslasvegas.com	Stephanie Windham	swindham@ariaslasvegas.com
Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa	321-939-4031	www.disneymeetings.com/hawaii	Anne Hamilton	meetings@disneyworld.com
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-933-8448	www.miamimeetings.com	Ita Moriarity	meetingsinfo@miamimeetings.com
Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino	800-545-6040	www.innofthemountaingods.com	Jo Kazhe	jokazhe@innofthemountaingods.com
Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, OH	419-433-7759	www.kalahariresorts.com	Maris Brenner	ohgroups@kalahariresorts.com
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI	608-254-3314	www.kalahariresorts.com	Kevin Shanley	wigroups@kalahariResorts.com
Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-452-7829	www.visitlongbeach.com	Iris Himert	irish@longbeachcvb.org
MGM Grand Las Vegas	800-929-1112	www.mgmgrand.com	Ruth Leis	hotelsalesleads@lv.mgmgrand.com
Mohegan Sun	877-204-7100	www.mohegansun.com/meetings	Group Sales	hotelsales@mohegansun.com
The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club	800-866-1946	www.naplesbeachhotel.com	Group Sales	groupsales@naplesbeachhotel.com
Ocean Center	386-254-4500	www.oceancenter.com	Lori Hunter	lhunter@oceancenter.com
Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau	405-297-8912	www.visitokc.com	Elizabeth Richardson	erichardson@okccvb.org
Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate	407-238-6526	www.omnihotels.com/findahotel/orlando-championsgate/meetingfacilities.aspx	Group Sales	mcocha.lead@omnihotels.com
Palm Beach County Convention & Visitors Bureau	561-329-3753	www.palmbeachfl.com	Donna Del Gallo	ddelgallo@palmbeachfl.com
Ponte Vedra Inn & Club	800-234-7842	www.pontevedra.com	Tony Fitzjohn	sales@pvresorts.com
Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel	770-953-4500	www.renaissancewaverly.com	Group Sales	atlr.lead@renaissancehotels.com
Reunion Resort	888-418-9614	www.reunionresort.com	Mary Hutchcraft	mhutchcraft@reunionresort.com
Rosen Centre Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosencentre.com	Todd Frappier	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Plaza Hotel	407-996-9939	www.rosenplaza.com	Victoria Hall	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Rosen Shingle Creek	407-996-9939	www.rosenshinglecreek.com	Leslie Menichini	sales@rosenhoteles.com
Royal Caribbean International	800 762-0458	www.royalcaribbeanincentives.com	Lori Cassidy	royalmeetingsandincentives@rccl.com
Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau	505-955-6210	www.santafe.org	Mary Pat Kloenne	mpkloenne@santafenm.gov
The Scottsdale Plaza Resort	480-922-3300	www.meetatplaza.com	Kelly Moenter-Nofal	meet@scottsdaleplaza.com
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	954-797-5502	www.seminolehardrock.com	Mark P. Tascione	mark.tascione@seminolehardrock.com
Sheraton Boston Hotel	617-236-6033	www.sheratonbostonhotel.com	Frank Guzzi	frank.guzzi@sheraton.com
The Shores Resort & Spa	386-322-7262	www.shoresresort.com	Group Sales	salesadmin@shoresresort.com
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-797-8050	www.southpointmeetings.com	Maureen Robinson	sales@southpointcasino.com
Station Casinos	702-495-4247	www.stationcasinos.com	Michael Toney	michael.toney@stationcasinos.com
Talking Stick Resort	480-850-7777	www.talkingstickresort.com	Group Sales	sales@talkingstickresort.com
Universal Orlando Resort	888-322-5531	www.uomeetingsandevents.com	Group Sales	meetings@universalorlando.com
The Venetian Resort Hotel Casino	702-414-4202	www.venetianpalazzomeetings.com	Chandra Allison	chandra.allison@venetianpalazzo.com
Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau	800-700-7702	www.vbmeetings.com	Al Hutchinson	ahutchin@vb.gov.com
Walt Disney World Resort	321-939-7112	www.disneymeetings.com	Anne Hamilton	meetings@disneyworld.com
Washington Hilton	202-328-2080	www.hiltonsofcdc.com	Group Sales	dcawh-salesadm@hilton.com
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	702-836-5934	www.westin.com/lasvegas	Sandra Horvath	shorvath@westinlv.com
The Westin La Cantera Resort	210-558-2229	www.westinlacantera.com	Patty Pedraza	patty.pedraza@westin.com
Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino	520-796-4923	www.wingilariver.com	Denise Heintz	denise.heintz@wingilariver.com
Wynn/Encore	888-320-7117	www.wynnmeetings.com	Steve Blanner	hotelsales@wynnlasvegas.com



WASHINGTON



MOSS



SNAPKOSKI



HIPP



BENSON

The Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau has named **Keva Washington** as executive meetings manager. She was operations assistant for the Grady Cole Center/Memorial Stadium, Charlotte, NC.

Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage, CA, has named **Ty Brassie** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing for Riviera Palm Springs, Palm Springs, CA.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Orlando, FL, has named **Jared McLachlan** as director of sales. He was director of operations for Riverwalk Jacksonville (FL) Development.

James Moss was named director of sales and marketing for the Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek, which is under construction in Lake Buena Vista, FL, scheduled to open October 2011. He was director of sales and marketing at the Conrad Miami.

The Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, National Harbor, MD, has named **Michael Snapkoski** as vice president of sales and **Jim Hipp** as director of sales. Snapkoski was the hotel's director of sales. Hipp was director of sales for the Canyons Resort, Park City, UT.

Thomas Albrecht was named director of sales for Cabo Center, Detroit, MI. He most recently was global account director at ConferenceDirect, New York, NY.

William Buckley was named director of sales and marketing for The Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles and the JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE, Los Angeles, CA. He was executive vice president of convention sales and services at LA INC.

Mark Benson was named vice president of group sales for Kerzner International. Most recently, he led the international sales efforts for the Hotelera Posadas company, which includes the brands Live Aqua, Fiesta Americana and Caesar Park Hotels & Resorts.

Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment has announced the following promotions and new hires: **Bally's Las Vegas and Paris Las Vegas: Debby Kase** was promoted from regional to national sales manager. **Kelly Stone** was promoted to regional sales manager. She was sales manager for Caesars Palace. **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino: Destinee Walker** was promoted to sales manager. She was sales manager for Harrah's Las Vegas and Imperial Palace Las Vegas. **Donna Que** was named sales manager responsible

for the Eastern region. She was sales assistant for Caesars Entertainment.

Flamingo Las Vegas: Matthew Waltersdorf was promoted to national sales manager. He was regional sales manager for Bally's Las Vegas and Paris Las Vegas. **Ashley Riemer** was named as sales manager for the Midwest region. She was sales manager at Alexis Park Resort in Las Vegas. **Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino: Wendy Roller** was named as Midwest region sales manager. She was meeting manager for Association Headquarters Inc.

Caesars Palace: William Biene was promoted from express sales manager to sales manager.

ASSOCIATION CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES	
ADVERTISER	Page
Kalahari Resort, Sandusky, OH	5
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI	5
MGM Grand Las Vegas	29
Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate	COV IV
Santa Fe Convention & Visitors Bureau	21
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa	31
Talking Stick Resort	15
Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino	COV II
The Westin Casuarina Las Vegas Hotel, Casino & Spa	27
Wynn/Encore	33

Visit www.themeetingmagazines.com for more information on our advertisers.

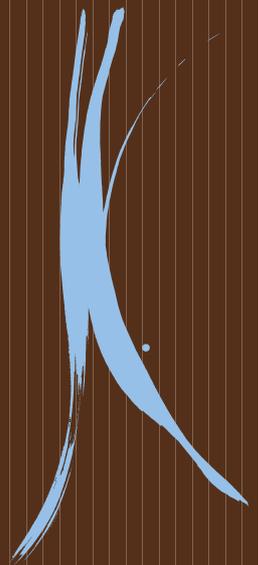
Ranked "Highest in Guest Satisfaction Among Upscale Hotel Chains" by J.D. Power and Associates

business or pleasure? *yes.*

Omni understands

At Omni, we understand that you need a resort property that has it all. And that's exactly what Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate delivers. We offer 70,000 square feet of event space. Wi-Fi throughout the resort. Plus two golf courses, a full-service spa and a 15-acre playground with pools, private cabanas and a lazy river. It's the ultimate group destination, just minutes from all the action in Orlando. Call today to learn more.

407-238-6526 omniunderstands.com/orlando



OMNI  HOTELS & RESORTS
championsgate | orlando

Omni Hotels received the highest numerical score among upscale hotels in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2010 North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index StudySM. Study based on responses from 53,174 guests measuring 15 upscale hotels and measures opinions of guests who stayed in a hotel May 2009-June 2010. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed June 2009-June 2010. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com. ©2011 Omni Hotels & Resorts