

Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

Grande Dames 2.0

Historical Charm Meets Modern Technology

PAGE 30

Photo courtesy of The Homestead

Founded in 1766, The Homestead sits majestically amid the Allegheny Mountains in Hot Springs, Virginia.

Destinations: Europe
PAGE 36

● **New York & New Jersey**
PAGE 42

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THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

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Photo courtesy of Briggs Inc.

Page 42

Briggs Inc. arranged a New York City experience for Nu Skin attendees, with cocktails on Liberty Island (above), a gala dinner in the Registry Room at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and a fireworks display in front of Lady Liberty.

FEATURES

16 Driving ROI Experts Reveal How to Use Golf As a Business Tool

By Steve Winston



Troon North Golf Club

Page 16

An outdoor banquet at Troon North Golf Club, where Director of Golf Daniel Morn helps planners with 5,000-7,000 corporate-event rounds of golf each year.

24 Pharma Meetings Taking the Pulse, From Economic Recovery to Regulatory Side Effects

By George Seli

30 Grande Dames 2.0 Historical Charm Meets Modern Technology

By Harvey Chipkin

DESTINATIONS

36 Europe A Changing Landscape

By Karen Brost



Page 36

London's new five-star Corinthia Hotel offers 294 luxury guest rooms and six private executive level meeting rooms.

Photo courtesy of Corinthia Hotel London

DEPARTMENTS

4 Publisher's Message

By Harvey Grotzky

6 News Watch

7 Global Destinations

8 Meeting Values

10 Industry Events Calendar

12 Cut the Noise and Cut to the Chase

By Michael Feuer

14 Dealing With Mother Nature

By Brad Goodsell

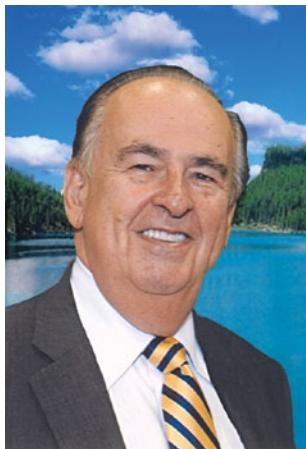
48 People On The Move

50 Reader Services

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Stepping Back in Time

The appeal of historic hotels is manifold. Among the many and various reasons professional meeting planners select luxurious Grande Dame hotels and resorts for meetings, events and incentive programs is the ability to combine the best of both worlds: a charming, historic property that offers a sense of place and sophisticated, up-to-date modern technology.



For example, Lacey Hein, events and marketing specialist for two Honeywell business divisions, who last November selected The Homestead (pictured on our cover this issue), located in Hot Springs, VA, says she'll be back in May because the event was a great success, somewhat because of high-tech and audio-visual touches. And they had record attendance.

"Here we are in an interesting, quaint place, and it was probably the most state-of-the-art meeting we ever had," says Hein. "I like historic properties. You walk into these places and you know where you are. Having a destination like The Homestead really helps to bring people out."

April Mescher, vice president for travel at Dayton, OH-based Excellence in Motivation, a large incentive company that often uses special places such as The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO, agrees: "These older places definitely have appeal. There is also an intimacy that lends itself to teambuilding."

"People want to be part of history," reminds Marie Legault, director of incentives and conferences at Montreal-based Aller Retour. "If you book a historic hotel, it adds to the journey."

Impeccable service and historical architecture loom large when considering a historic property. Richard Eisenman, CAE, CEO of Glen Allen, VA-based Eisenman & Associates Inc., says the staff at The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV, is really helpful and makes the stay enjoyable. "It's still the little things that make the difference. Attendees love coming up the driveway to a grand old resort," he adds. "Also, you don't lose your audience. There is no other place to go, and they stay together as a group. It absolutely adds to the meeting. There's nothing like these historic places; nobody is building them like that anymore."

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher



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The Carnival Breeze Prepares for Sea Trials

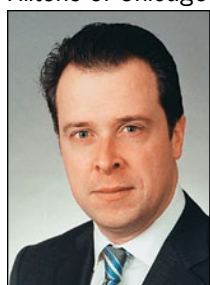


Rendering of the Carnival Breeze.

MIAMI, FL — The Carnival Breeze, set to debut in June 2012, was recently launched at the Fincantieri shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy as the dry dock was flooded. The Breeze, a sister ship to the Carnival Dream and Carnival Magic, will be the cruise line's 24th ship in service. Sea trials in the Adriatic Sea will take place early next year for the 3,600-passenger vessel. Beginning November 24, 2012, the ship will sail from Miami year-round on six- and eight-day Caribbean cruises. The Carnival Breeze will feature the WaterWorks aqua park, SportSquare recreation complex with ropes courses, mini-golf and an outdoor fitness area. www.carnival.com

Christopher Perry Joins Hiltons of Chicago Complex

CHICAGO, IL — Christopher R. Perry, a 27-year hospitality industry veteran, has been named area director of sales and marketing of the Hiltons of Chicago Complex, representing the five owned and managed assets in the downtown area with more than 4,000 rooms and 400,000 sf of meeting space, including the Hilton Chicago and Palmer House Hilton. Perry's most recent assignment was as vice president of hotel marketing and sales of the Mohegan Sun, a position held since 2005. His depth of experience extends to key management positions at city center properties as well as resorts, convention and airport hotels on the East Coast. His previous Hilton experience includes Hilton New York, The Waldorf=Astoria and Hilton Atlanta Airport. Perry was a 2007 recipient of the HSMIA Top 25 Most Extraordinary Sales & Marketing Minds in Hospitality and Tourism, and the 2004 recipient of the HSMIA NYC Chapter Sales & Marketing Executive of the Year award. Perry is a member of HSMIA, ASAE and MPI. www.hiltonfamilychicago.com



PERRY

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HSMIA's Inaugural MEET National Receives Positive Reviews

MCLEAN, VA — The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International's education and marketplace event, HSMIA's MEET: Meetings, Events, Education, Technology, held September 7-8 in Washington, DC, was well received by more than 2,000 meeting, event and industry professionals. More than 500 appointments were prebooked through the One-to-One Meeting Concierge and the new TEEM Up, a two-hour reverse trade-show buyer appointment expo that offered great value to planners and suppliers. Hundreds participated virtually via HSMIA's MEET On. Twelve conference sessions, which were simulcast from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, are available for free at www.hsmaimeet.com.

Virgin America Launches New Flights To Palm Springs

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — Virgin America is bringing low-fare service to Palm Springs International Airport (PSP) effective December 15, 2011. Tickets are available for new nonstop seasonal flights from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to PSP and same-plane through-flights from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) to PSP.

Palm Springs, CA, features world-class resorts and golfing, shopping, special events and modern and mid-century architecture. www.palmspringsusa.com

EIBTM's Technology Village Leads the Way to the Future

LONDON, ENGLAND — This year's EIBTM show in Fira Gran Via, Barcelona November 29–December 1 has attracted leading global suppliers of technological solutions. The Technology Village at EIBTM 2011 is one of the fastest growing areas of the show. The EIBTM Technology Watch, the most high-profile and longest-running technology recognition program for innovation in the meetings and events industry, also received a record-breaking 56 entries. New this year, EIBTM partnered with global meetings architecture consultants SyncPartners Ltd and Newtonstrand to create a Future Events Experience, which will provide insights into how future conferences and meetings will be run and how social media technologies will reshape attendees' experiences. In addition, there will be a number of Technology Education sessions, and EIBTM will launch their first event app for mobile devices. www.eibtm.com

Tokyo DisneySea Marks 10th Year

TOKYO — The Tokyo DisneySea Park, a part of the Disney Resort near Tokyo, celebrates the 10th anniversary of its opening with one-of-a-kind events. The Disney show "Be Magical!" highlights the anniversary year of the park, featuring Mickey Mouse in special costume and Magical Hat. In addition, the park's restaurants add anniversary menus during the celebration that are only available at the Tokyo DisneySea Park through March 19, 2012.

GLOBAL DESTINATIONS

Las Vegas Sands Intends to Expand in the Asia/Pacific Hotel Market

Michael Leven, the president and COO of Las Vegas Sands Corporation, confirmed at a Web presentation that Las Vegas Sands Corp. is moving towards additional expansion in Asia/Pacific, beyond what they have achieved in Macau. Leven said the company wants to help transform the Asia/Pacific region into more of a resort destination, not just a gaming site. The company is considering "invitations" from government officials in South Korea, Japan, Vietnam or Taiwan, and expects to develop in one or more of these countries. "There is so much conversation that something will get done," Leven said. Las Vegas Sands Corporation's holdings in Asia/Pacific include the Sands Macao, the Venetian Macao, the Four Seasons Hotel Macao and the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore. www.lasvegassands.com



The Venetian Macao's Great Hall.

Convention City Berlin Reports Record Numbers. More events, more participants and more room nights are reported in the current visitBerlin congress statistics for the first six months of 2011. In fact, room nights increased to about 3 million, which is 15 percent more compared to the same time period a year ago. From January to June 2011, 53,450 meetings and conventions were staged in Berlin. The number of participants rose by 2 percent to 4.3 million. Berlin is the world market leader for medical conventions, with 11 percent of all events during the first half year of 2011. Results are available at www.convention.visitberlin.de.

Brazil to Host Latin American Meeting & Event Conference. The Unique Hotel, Sao Paulo, Brazil is the host venue for the 2011 Latin American Meeting & Event Conference (LAMEC) on December 12, according to the MPI Brazil Chapter. "During the past three years we have seen the meetings and events industry grow at an unprecedented rate in Latin America, raising performance expectations for meeting professionals and also creating business opportunities for our community. MPI is committed to helping our Brazil chapter deliver upon that need to the industry in the region and beyond," says Bruce MacMillan, MPI president and CEO. More information about LAMEC is available online at <http://www.mpibr.org/>.

Marriott Plans to Open 27 Hotels in Asia. Bethesda, MD-based Marriott International Inc. plans to open 27 hotels in Asia in 2013 because of growing demand in the region. The company doubled its offices in Asia according to Craig Smith, Asia-Pacific chief operations officer, who said they have 110 hotels under development in the region, and most of the new openings will be in China and India, with some in Thailand and Vietnam. Other hotel brands are expanding in Asia. Hilton Worldwide expects 100 hotels in China by 2014, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. expects China to be its largest growth market in the next three to four years, and over the next five years, InterContinental Hotels Group Plc will open one in four of its hotel rooms in China. www.marriott.com

The Queen Mary Joins Historic Hotels of America

LONG BEACH, CA — The Queen Mary, which took its maiden voyage in May 1936 and retired in 1967 as a dockside attraction and hotel in Long Beach, CA, was selected for membership in the Historic Hotels of America. To qualify, a hotel must be at least



The Queen Mary.

50 years old, listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or recognized locally as having historic significance. The Queen Mary has 314 staterooms, 80,000 sf of event space in 17 Art Deco salons and a tri-level, 45,000-sf exhibit hall. Signature restaurants include Sir Winston's and Chelsea Chowder House & Bar. A weekly Champagne Sunday Brunch is served in the Grand Salon. www.queenmary.com

Iconic Pittsburgh Hotel to Be Transformed

PITTSBURGH, PA — RIDA Development Corporation will purchase and renovate the Radisson Hotel located in Green Tree borough. The iconic 465-room hotel will be branded DoubleTree by Hilton Pittsburgh-Green Tree in November 2011. Renovations are slated for completion by fall 2012. The renovation will include guest rooms, a new entryway, an update of the two restaurants, sports bar, marketplace, health club and more than 30,000 sf of meeting facilities encompassing 26 meeting rooms, a grand ballroom and a junior ballroom. The hotel provides complimentary shuttle service to the airport and the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

GBTA Foundation Issues Updated Hotel RFP

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS — The GBTA Foundation, the research and education arm of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), recently rolled out a revamped GBTA Hotel RFP. The new Hotel RFP is global, more efficient and easier to use, quantifies vendor sustainability practices and incorporates Web service functionality for automation of data transfer. "We are thrilled to launch this new Hotel RFP — it achieves everything we were striving for when we set out on this mission: It is a global RFP that is easier to use, it's cost effective and brings in the advances of technology in data transfer," says GBTA Foundation's Executive Director Daphne Bryant. "After an extensive process and culmination of a lot of hard work with stakeholders in every sector of business travel, we've created this truly impressive resource that is unsurpassed." The GBTA Hotel RFP is available free to members worldwide in the GBTA Resource Library, <http://www.gbta.org/resourcelibrary/Pages/Default.aspx>.

Expanded Tinley Park Convention Center Celebrates Grand Opening



TINLEY PARK, IL — The newly expanded Tinley Park (IL) Convention Center, 30 minutes southwest of downtown Chicago, hosted a grand opening celebration last month for meeting planners and local officials. MID-CON Hospitality manages the village-owned Tinley Park Convention Center. Pictured at the ribbon cutting, from left: Tinley Park Trustees Patricia Leoni, Brian Mahar and David Seaman, MID-CON Hospitality President Reva Stillman, Trustee Gregory Hannon (partially obscured), Tinley Park Mayor Edward Zabrocki, Trustees T.J. Grady and Thomas Staunton, and former Trustee Michael Bettenhausen. The Tinley Park Convention Center offers 70,000 sf of meeting and event space with 18 breakout rooms, and 58,000 sf of clear-span exhibit space. www.tinleyparkconventioncenter.net

MEETING VALUES



Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island, SC. Special group rates on accommodations include: December 10, 2011 to March 12, 2012 and November 11, 2012 to December 31, 2012: Sanctuary rates start from \$175 midweek; Villa, from \$99. March 13, 2012 to May 23, 2012: Sanctuary rates start from \$350 midweek; Villa, \$159 midweek. May 24, 2012 to August 25, 2012: Sanctuary rates start from \$375 midweek; Villa, \$249. August 26, 2012 to November 10, 2012: Sanctuary rates start from \$345 midweek; Villa, \$149 midweek. Complimentary value-added enhancements are based on the number of rooms booked. 800-654-2924, www.kiawahresort.com

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

■ **The Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, Acme, MI.** The Winter Meeting offer allows planners booking 10 to 50 guest rooms per night to choose two of the following options; or three options for 51 or more guest rooms per night: 1/35 comp policy; reduced resort fee; \$15 off spa treatments; two comp upgrades; comp general session room rental; 10 percent AV discount; three gallons of complimentary Starbucks coffee with a purchased break service; one-hour comp use of winter activities equipment. Valid November 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012. Call 231-534-6150 or email RFP to sales@gtresort.com.

■ **The Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority, Reno, NV.** Planners receive a \$1,000 master account credit for events actualizing more than 100 room nights, up to a \$5,000 credit for events requiring more than 400 room nights. Meetings must be booked for 2012 by March 31, 2012. For more information, including a list of participating hotel properties, call RSCVA V.P. of Convention & Tourism Sales John Leinen at 775-827-7608.

Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem's Convention Center Ready This Spring

BETHLEHEM, PA — Alvin H. Butz Inc. announced it was

selected to build the core, shell roof and exterior surfaces of the

new 50,000-sf Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem's Convention Center, which has been on hold since due to the economic downturn. Butz will also handle mechanical and electrical systems and public bathrooms for the resort casino, which opened in 2009 and is located in the Lehigh Valley region of eastern Pennsylvania. The event center is expected to be completed in the spring.

Butz previously served as construction manager for the casino and parking garage, and most recently for the retail center, which is scheduled to open this fall. www.pasands.com



The Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem.

Events Calendar

NOVEMBER 13-16, 2011

**2011 FINANCIAL & INSURANCE
CONFERENCE PLANNERS (FICP)
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Grand Hyatt San Antonio
San Antonio, TX
Contact: 312-245-1023
www.ficpnet.com

DECEMBER 6-8, 2011

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS (IAEE)
EXPO! EXPO! IAEE'S ANNUAL MEETING &
EXHIBITION**

Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, NV
Contact: 972-458-8002
www.iaee.com

JANUARY 8-11, 2012

**PROFESSIONAL CONVENTION MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION (PCMA) ANNUAL MEETING
CONVENING LEADERS**

San Diego Convention Center
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www.pcma.org

JANUARY 22-24, 2012

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FEBRUARY 27, 2012

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(DMAI) FOUNDATION DINNER**

Walter E. Washington Convention Center
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www.destinationmarketing.org

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

**DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS SHOWCASE**

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www.destinationsshowcase.com

Avatar-Themed Land Coming to Walt Disney Parks and Resorts



Announcing an exclusive agreement to create Avatar-themed lands at Disney parks are (left to right) Tom Staggs, chairman, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts; James Cameron, award-winning director of Avatar; Bob Iger, CEO, The Walt Disney Company; Jon Landau, producer of Avatar; and Jim Gianopulos and Tom Rothman, Fox Filmed Entertainment chairmen.

BURBANK, CA — Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Worldwide, James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment and Fox Filmed Entertainment have entered into an agreement to create the first Avatar-themed land at Orlando's Walt Disney World, within the Animal Kingdom park. Construction is expected to begin by 2013. "James Cameron is a groundbreaking filmmaker and gifted storyteller who shares our passion for creativity, technological innovation and delivering the best experience possible," says Robert A. Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Company. "With this agreement, we have the extraordinary opportunity to combine James' talent and vision with the imagination and expertise of Disney." The Walt Disney Company has exclusive global theme park rights to the Avatar franchise. Cameron, producing partner Jon Landau and their Lightstorm Entertainment group will serve as creative consultants on the projects and will partner with Walt Disney Imagineering in the design and development of the Avatar-themed lands.

The Peabody Orlando Debuts New Recycling Program

The Peabody Orlando is launching the new Organics Recycling Program in the hotel's F&B outlets. The hotel uses six compost containers for the twice-a-week program, which is collected and composted for 60 days and then used as a soil amendment to grow produce or in landscaping projects. The Peabody Orlando's other sustainability efforts include water conservation, initiatives to promote indoor air quality and the hotel's state-of-the-art energy management system. www.peabodymeetings.com

In Memoriam: Bill Hyland



HYLAND

MINNEAPOLIS, MN — Bill Hyland, national account executive in the Washington, DC, office of Meet Minneapolis, died September 21. "Having worked with Bill these past two years, it was clear that he was a caring, dedicated man, who was well liked and respected in the industry. We will miss him profoundly," said Melvin Tennant, president and CEO, Meet Minneapolis.

Mr. Hyland worked for Meet Minneapolis since 2009. With an extensive hospitality background and 16 years experience in the Washington, DC, association market; he previously was vice president of sales for the Hyland Group's Washington, DC, sales office. Just prior to Meet Minneapolis, he was employed for more than three years by John Ascuaga's Casino Nugget Hotel in Reno, NV. Mr. Hyland was a member of the American Association of Association Executives, Society of Government Meeting Planners, Meeting Planners International and Association Meeting Professionals. Funeral arrangements are pending. www.minneapolis.org

New York Marriott Marquis Reveals Renovation Plans

NEW YORK, NY — Marriott Hotels & Resorts and Host Hotels & Resorts Inc. unveiled a multimillion-dollar renovation of the brand's flagship New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square. The makeover encompasses the hotel's lobby, new restaurants, guest rooms and a new 29,000-sf Broadway Ballroom. More than half of the nearly 2,000 guest rooms have been enhanced with HD televisions and desk consoles, pull-out love seats and more. The project will be completed by spring 2012. The new restaurant and lounge, Crossroads – an American Kitchen and Bar, features a mirrored spiral bar and seating area for more than 100 guests, surrounded by perforated panel screens that slide to accommodate private events. The new ballroom, which seats up to 2,400 guests, features a "vanishing ceiling," which can be transformed in myriad ways, such as color-changing LED technology. www.nymarriottmarquis.com

WHEN ASKED IF THEY'RE TRAVELING FOR WORK OR PLEASURE, HAVE THEM ANSWER "YES."

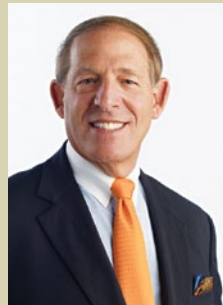
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Michael
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Cut the Noise and Cut to the Chase

Seven Tips for Streamlining Communication at Your Organization

Technology has provided us with an increasing number of ways to share information. But too often the point gets lost in a communication overload. Today, with a few key strokes, it's easy to get in touch and keep others informed. The negative of this fast and simple process is certain types who share every painful detail of the current project and do so just by hitting "send."

I submit, however, that sometimes today's communication innovations can make it difficult to get to the point and cut to the meat of the issue.

It's simply a case of (TMI) too much information. In my new book *The Benevolent Dictator: Empower Your Employees, Build Your Business, and Outwit the Competition* (Wiley, 2011), I explore how in many organizations, the art of cutting to the chase has been lost and is costing money and missed opportunities.

The lessons I've learned in launching OfficeMax and my newest venture Max-Wellness, a unique wellness retail chain, have convinced me that a leader's management style should mirror that of a benevolent dictator, because at the end of the day, the "dictator" side of you calls the shots and makes the difficult decisions, but the "benevolent" side does so while putting the interests of the organization, team and customers ahead of the leader's own interests. And part of being a benevolent dictator is requiring clear, concise communication.

If you've ever asked a basic question and gotten an email that took you 15 minutes to read instead of 15 seconds, then

you know what I mean. Many people seem to have a compulsion to provide minute, detailed responses embellished with "he said, she said" anecdotes.

To make discussions we need the bottom line version and need it now. People tend to provide excessive detail in the hope that you will recognize them as the ultimate experts on various topics. Bad habits can be broken.

If you would like to encourage concise and effective communication in your organization, read on for seven tips that work:

- 1. Be clear about what you need.** Give clear, concise and straightforward instructions of what is to be accomplished, what you want to happen and by when. Don't expect your team to guess. Remember, that one size doesn't fit all, so you may have to infuse your cut-to-the-chase request with humor or compliments to soften the message.
- 2. Overhaul voice mail and email.** Survey your team members' current responses for their business email and telephone messages, and prepare to be shocked by the content and length. Then supervise the shortening process. You may even have your HR or PR department provide brief scripts for employees who have trouble keeping their messages short. Each script should be tailored to the person's job function and provide an alternate contact for emergencies.
- 3. Talk through conversations.** Now

that you've tackled emails and recorded messages, it's time to move on to something a little less predictable: conversations. While you can't control every word that comes out of your team members' mouths, you can establish standards of what is appropriate. Tell them that brevity and clarity are key.

- 4. Get frequent updates from key people.** Somewhere along the line, "micromanage" has become a bad word. It conjures up images of bosses who can't delegate, who don't trust their team members and who don't give employees room to do their best work. No, you shouldn't do your team's work for them, you should get regular (and of course, succinct!) updates.
- 5. Use your negatives sparingly.** Say you're telling your team everything

— Do unto others as you would have them do unto you — definitely applies to leadership and business. It's always a good idea to treat your team as participants and partners in whatever you're doing. If you're not getting the results you want, you might be the problem. Ask yourself how you'd want to be told to do something important. Chances are it wouldn't be to do XYZ, or face dire consequences without any further explanation. When you're open about what's at stake and use a logical, positive tone, you'll probably find that your communications take root and grow.

- 7. Remember that the medium is the message.** The vehicle or venue you

A leader's management style should mirror that of a benevolent dictator.

they need to know, but you still aren't getting the results you want. What gives? Well, the problem might lie in how you're delivering that cut-to-the-chase sound bite. Think about it: How many of your announcements start with a negative, followed by a litany of unpleasant consequences? (For example, "If we don't increase sales next month, we'll have to start letting people go.") If you make too many of these negative announcements, they'll come to see you as a knucklehead, and they'll start to ignore your message altogether.

- 6. Look in the mirror.** The Golden Rule

select to deliver your directive is just as important as the point itself. Good news should be presented in an upbeat setting, and more serious subjects should be broached in a setting that's "strictly business."

Yes, there will always be some people who will require the "ton-of-bricks approach" when it comes to giving and receiving appropriate communication. But if you're open about the level of succinctness that you want and employ those behaviors yourself, you'll find that most of your team will get on board quickly. And chances are they'll also be grateful that you've cut out all the background noise. **C&IT**

Michael Feuer, the cofounder of OfficeMax, is CEO of Max-Ventures, a venture capital and retail consulting firm, and founder and CEO of Max-Wellness, a comprehensive health and wellness retail chain that launched in 2010. He is the author of The Benevolent Dictator: Empower Your Employees, Build Your Business, and Outwit the Competition (Wiley, 2011) www.benevolentdictator.biz



Brad
Goodsell

Dealing With Mother Nature

How to Fine-Tune Your Weather Preparedness Skills Before Disaster Strikes

Prior to moving to Chicago, I lived in Kansas for several years, where we didn't experience many hurricanes but we did have our fair share of weather events — tornadoes, dust storms, wild storms thundering across the prairie. I remember emergency tornado drill exercises, which can be exciting, unless of course your home or your neighbor's home is damaged.

When our company sends travel directors out on the road or to an event, the unpredictable weather holds no excitement or anticipation, only cause for extra precaution or preparation. Because the weather events and hurricanes we've experienced around the country to date have been so numerous, meeting planners are fine-tuning their disaster preparedness skills (or should be if they've been lucky enough to escape a weather-related mishap so far).

As travel and meeting professionals, we always have to set up a back-up plan in case an event is canceled or impacted due to the weather.

Although most of this type of planning involves common sense, it is worth the extra investment of time before a conference kicks off, to ensure that you and your organization are ready, should a weather delay or disaster strike.

Do Your Homework

Weather patterns are easy to track online. Indeed, most of us do check before planning an event in a location during questionable weather such as hurricane season or winter in the snowbelt. A fairly

easy and automatic reminder is to set up a weather alert for your destination on your PC or smart phone and monitor any emerging systems.

Avoiding planning events in specific cities and regions during times of year that can be especially prone to storms, and keep in mind the hurricane season and others when selecting locations for events. If your event is already set in a location where severe weather is predicted, it's important to take precautions before it strikes.

Download in Advance

Both literally and electronically, develop a spreadsheet of critical information so it is available at your fingertips. Remember that often with a power outage, the online access will likely be unavailable, and texting via smart phones may be the only way to reach your attendees, employees or emergency personnel.

Create a workbook or online database (on smart phone) of key contacts, including cell phone numbers. Prior to the event or conference, remember to include a weather disaster plan review with key personnel who are staffing the event, so they are aware of procedures and know where to find the information.

Plan for the Worst

While this is a basic tenet of event management, it bears repeating: Develop a crisis plan should your attendees need to be evacuated quickly (such as in the event of a tornado). Develop a chain of response in assisting them in rebooking flights back

home. And review, review, review — if your staff has heard the disaster plan frequently, there won't be as much confusion when and if it needs to be activated.

Decide in advance a plan for handling power loss, specifically regarding how to provide food and water in an emergency. Investigate options when planning an event, before the crisis occurs. Meet with the venue's industrial engineers to review the quickest evacuation route from each location and also a holding room, should that be necessary.

Keep Good Company

Know how many attendees you have on-

ents and organizations in the past, I know how easy it is to include too much information, making the plan virtually unusable. While it is a healthy exercise to consider all possible disaster scenarios and appropriate responses from your organization, remember the entire manual doesn't need to travel to each event. Today's executive who is traveling to an event has access to online resources and texting capability.

Communication with attendees should be simple and straightforward. Try to combine messages to attendees whenever possible, to avoid inundating them. However, bear in mind the urgen-

The golden rule of crisis management is to stay calm and focused, and activate the advance plan while remaining flexible.

site at a program and where they are staying (room numbers/specific hotels). Keep accurate, updated information such as cell phone numbers at the ready to call or text in case of last-minute plans or evacuations.

Establish a chain of command onsite: If the planner isn't available to make decisions, who is in charge? Consider appointing an executive attending the conference or a lead travel director onsite to serve in this role.

Keep It Simple

Having developed crisis plans for cli-

cy of releasing critical information in a timely manner.

The golden rule of crisis management is to stay calm and focused, and activate the advance plan while remaining flexible.

Unfortunately, the weather is out of our control, and as we've all experienced, a weather-related event can be very costly and cause great inconvenience. Being prepared and taking the time to review with personnel (both onsite and back at the home office) beforehand will go a long way when dealing with the unpredictability and force of Mother Nature. **C&IT**

Brad Goodsell is the president of Executive Travel Directors a Chicago-based company that provides onsite meeting support staff to organizations nationwide. He has a generator and bottled water on hand for the unexpected Midwestern storms that rumble through all year long. www.traveldirectors.com

Driving ROI

Experts Reveal How to Use Golf As a Business Tool

“More business gets done on the golf course than in the boardroom.”

We’ve all heard that saying. A quick search of both Google and Yahoo, however, didn’t reveal the name of the person who first uttered this truism. After the trauma of the past few years — when a number of companies stopped holding golf events — many meetings professionals believe it’s truer than ever. And, when you combine the networking and information-gathering opportunities of a golf program with the insights you learn about a client or a colleague, it’s not hard to see why golf is coming back to meetings.

But, the experts tell us, if you don’t plan your tournament thor-

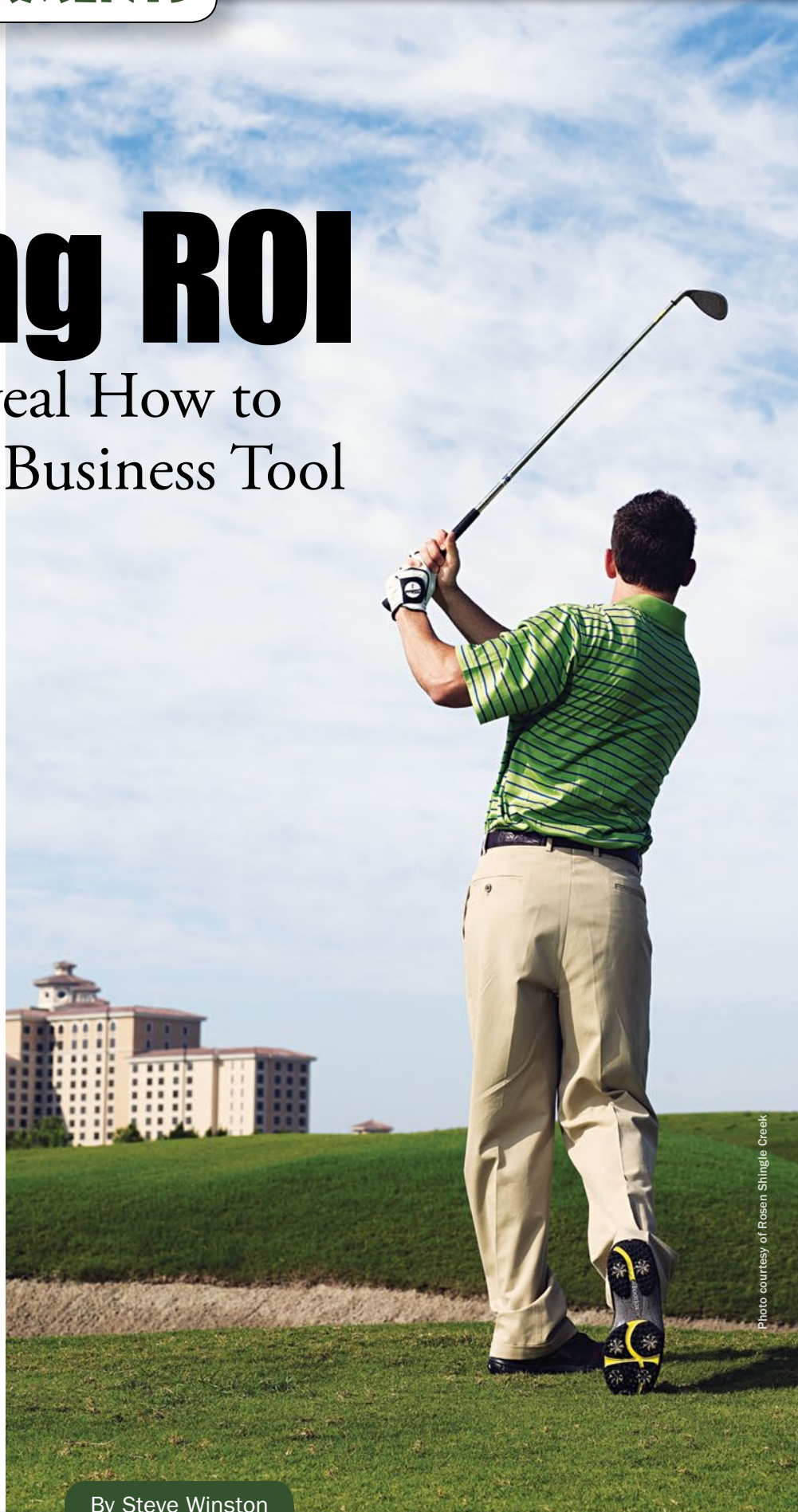


Photo courtesy of Rosen Shingle Creek

By Steve Winston

oughly and to the smallest detail, it can be a bit like the roll of the dice: You never know what you’ll come up with. But planned properly — with a lot of focus, discussion and collaboration — a golf tournament can be the crowning achievement of a meeting or incentive program.

THE GOLF PROFESSIONALS

Phil Immordino:
Golf Tournament
Association of America



Phil Immordino (*above*) is the go-to guy on the subject. He’s president of the Golf Tournament Association of America, an organization with some 20,000 members across the country that helps planners produce more successful tournaments.

“It all boils down to relationships,” Immordino says. “Relationships have always been and will always be the key to increasing your business. And planners who remember that — and who construct their tournaments accordingly — are the ones who bring enhanced ROI to their meetings.”

Immordino says that a bit of down time is just as important as any other element of a meeting, and that a tournament has to offer networking and familiarization opportunities that wouldn’t happen in a more structured atmosphere. A successful tournament, he says, is one in which attendees increase both their knowledge base and their contact file.

In his mind, there are four important elements to creating a successful golf tournament: “A good course; great food; great ‘stuff’ — small gifts such as shirts, hats, or balls; and successful pairing of foursomes.”

Shawn Humphries
Golf Performance



Shawn Humphries Golf Performance is a Dallas-based group specializing in client-relationship management, producing tailored, executive golf programs for numerous Fortune 500 corporations. Owner Shawn Humphries (*above right*) has been ranked among the 100 best teachers in America by *Golf Magazine*. In addition to Shawn Humphries Golf Performance, he’s also director of instruction at the Dallas Cowboys Golf Club. He’s worked with the PGA, the LPGA and the Asian Tour. And he’s helped put together more corporate meetings, incentives, executive-travel programs and client-relationship programs than he can remember.

“With the emphasis on ROI these days, planners really have to be accountable,” Humphries says. “In the old days, the process of planning a tournament was more slap-shot. Now, though, you’ve got to be strategic; you’ve got to qualify and quantify the participants. And there has to be a tangible positive effect that helps promote business goals.”

Toward that end, his company carefully screens participants in clients’ tournaments, to ensure the right skill and personality “alignments.” In addition to screening individuals, however, Humphries says it’s also important to know the company’s goals for the tournament — and the meeting.

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Photo courtesy of Kiawah Island Golf Resort

The Psychology of Golf

"We always see so much business done on the golf course," says Marty Couch, director of sales at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, near historic Charleston, SC, site of the 2012 PGA Championship.

"Countless millions of dollars — or billions of dollars — in business is done by people holding golf clubs in their hands. I think it's a part of the meetings culture. And, of course, it's good for networking and for batting around ideas. And you'd be surprised how many potential deals are initiated by people who are meeting for the first time on the golf course.

"But, in addition," he adds, "so many meeting planners have also told me that you can really learn a lot about someone from watching how they play the game. For example, you can see if a person plays with reckless abandon or precision. You can see if he attacks the course or takes each shot as it comes. You can see if he plays tactically or strategically. And you can see if he's calm and reasoned or emotional and aggressive. There are all types of things you can learn about a person in this situation...whether it's a client or a competitor. You can't spend five hours on the golf course with someone — while you're also trying to beat each other — without learning a bit more about them," he says.

—SW

"Are you trying to entertain potential customers?" he asks. "Are you trying to close contacts? If so, are the participants the people who can actually make the deal? Are they paired in ways that will enable them to make this contact? Do the pairings enhance the goals and objectives of the meeting?"

"And," he adds, "do you have a system in place to gather data? It's all about expectations. And if you miss an opportunity for personalized touch with a client, that opportunity may not arise again."

Scott Purpura: Golf Club at Lansdowne



At the Golf Club at Lansdowne in Leesburg, VA, Scott Purpura (*above*), PGA director of golf, runs 60–80 tournaments every year. The club is part of the 296-room Lansdowne

Resort, which features a 45,000-sf conference center certified by the International Association of Conference Centers.

"If anything," says Purpura, "events of the past few years have proven golf's value as a business tool. But you've got to pay attention to the details. You've got to choose a venue that matches the level of the event and the expectations for the event. You've got to choose the right format, by matching the format to the level of your players. And you've got to make sure your tournament is oriented toward accomplishing specific goals."

Daniel Morn: Troon North Golf Club



At the Troon North Golf Club in Scottsdale, AZ, Daniel Morn (*left*), director of golf, helps planners with some 5,000–7,000 corporate-event rounds a year. Many of those groups stay at the adjacent Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North.

Morn stresses the need for tight organization, and tight communication.

"We recently had a planner book a 32-person retreat in Arizona," he said, "who then found out that the company's clients thought the meeting and tournament were in California — and had made arrangements to go there. We got a very frantic phone call from that planner four days before the tournament."

Morn stresses the importance of visiting the course before you sign a contract to make sure that it offers the type of atmosphere that promotes the goals of the meeting.

Scott Kirkwood: Ocean Reef Club

Scott Kirkwood is a native Scotsman who's director of golf at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL. He hosts nearly 100 corporate golf events every year. And he notes there are literally dozens of formats to make it more interesting.

"Take handicaps, for example," Kirkwood says. "They offer the beginning golfer the chance to compete with an expert. There are formats such as scrambles, mixed-foursomes and best ball...and each one brings a different flavor to the match. That makes it more interesting for participants. And it makes it easier to meet a lot of different people while you're playing."

Kirkwood says he's seeing some interesting trends in tournament play.

"I think it's a myth that good players only want to play with other good players," he says, "and that novices only want to play with other novices. Golf is about business, and about relationship-building. And people are no longer willing to restrict themselves to playing with just one other type of player."



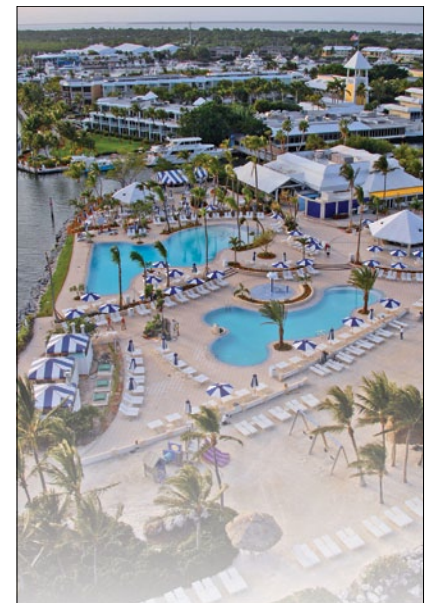
Photo courtesy of Ocean Reef Club

Surrounded on three sides by water, The Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, FL, is a private, self-contained resort with 36 holes of golf, marina, private air strip and shopping village.

Kirkwood says that while format and foursomes are obviously important, planners shouldn't worry too much over who's playing with whom. It's about making new connections, he says, and bringing new business to your company. And that won't happen if people only play with others they know.

"We see it over and over again," Kirkwood says, "pretty much every day. Planners who pay attention to the details produce attendees who seem to bring more enthusiasm and more ideas back into the meetings."

The Ocean Reef Club offers two championship courses amidst the lush beauty of this world-class resort in the Florida Keys. The Hammock Course is short — only 6,000 yards — but it's one of the most challenging courses around, carved out of a mangrove and hardwood hammock. The Dolphin Course is a bit longer, and very popular with corporate groups. The Ocean Reef Club is a self-contained resort — complete with a private air strip. Accommodations include 144 rooms at the Inn, along with adjoining vacation-rental homes and condos.



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Pam Swensen: The Executive Women's Golf Association



Executive Women's Golf Association CEO Pam Swensen (second from right) advocates for businesswomen and golf.

Up the road about 100 miles from Ocean Reef Club is Palm Beach Gardens, FL, home of the Executive Women's Golf Association. CEO Pam Swensen is on a very special mission: to bring more female meeting attendees out of the spa and onto the golf course. The Executive Women's Golf Association is a 20,000-member organization that's celebrating its 20th anniversary.

"Female executives who don't play golf," Swensen says, "are missing out on incredible opportunities to network and to connect with potential clients and with colleagues."

Swensen adds that conference attendees who play golf are looked at in a more positive light than those who don't — and that the golf course is one area where women can level the playing field.



Photo courtesy of Regala Studio, San Diego, California

Visionary Golf Events arranged this corporate fundraiser for the Nutrients for Life Foundation at Grand Cypress Golf Club in Orlando, FL.

She's also a big believer in trying to find suitable sponsors for corporate events that can offset many of the costs. But first of all, she says, is the need to determine exactly what the business purpose of the tournament is and to plan it accordingly.

"Know your objectives," Swensen says. "Know your budget. Know the prices participants are willing to pay. Know about the course: Has it hosted successful tournaments? And know how to ensure that the tournament is helping to achieve the goals and objectives of the meeting."

Garry Phillips: Visionary Golf Events



Garry Phillips (above), owner of Visionary Golf Events, a California company that runs more than 20 corporate

golf tournaments yearly, concurs that no detail is too small.

"I once stood on a New Orleans street corner," he says, "and just watched buses from the various transportation companies go by, so I could pick the one with the most efficient service, the cleanest buses, and the most professional drivers."

Among the necessities for planning a successful tournament, he notes, there's one that isn't talked about much but is every bit as important as the big ones.

"Flexibility," Phillips says. "Without it, even the strictest attention to details might not be enough. We once planned a golf tournament in Dallas which was canceled by a sudden snowstorm. So we moved everyone inside and did a 'Snowball Dinner.'"

"Golf is an investment in a meeting," Phillips says. "Not an expense. And you need to invest the time to learn how to do it right...or to work with people who already know."

THE MEETING PROFESSIONALS

Judi Havill: On-Site Productions

On-Site Productions is an Alexandria, VA, meeting planning and desti-

nation management company, which plans a variety of corporate and incentive golf events. And what could produce a better ROI, asks Judi Havill, president, than an event that brings people together for a common goal, and emphasizes things such as ethics, good decision-making and increased focus? Like Swensen, Havill works with many companies that are making efforts to get more of their female attendees involved.

"Task No. 1 should be a detailed 'to-do' list," Havill says. "Without it, you're already a step behind. I also think it's important to make sure your attendees — especially those who may not play golf — understand golf etiquette. You need to know what to wear, for instance. You need to give the people playing ahead of you some room to finish each hole. And we always encourage our clients to do something to give back to the local community: Raise some money for the environment, for local schools, for the food banks, etc. That way, you're not only accomplishing your corporate goals but also your corporate social responsibility goals."

Havill continues, "After the trauma of the last few years, we're all looking to communicate more. So make sure you structure your tournament in a way that facilitates this. If you want certain attendees to learn more about management, make sure you give them time to talk with managers."

Pat Pagliuco: Consultants in Meeting Management

Pat Pagliuco, owner of Phoenix-area Consultants in Meeting Management, has helped put together special events at two World Cups, several Olympics and Super Bowls, as well as corporate and board meetings that include golf.

"Golf is business on a lawn," she says. "It's a golden opportunity to continue the business started in the meetings. And you have to put it together in a

way that facilitates peoples' ability to do business. I encourage my clients to write down, ahead of time, what they want to accomplish in their tournaments before they present the program to senior management."

Pagliuco says it's vital for planners to clearly document every reason for holding the tournament, and to do the same for the goals and objectives, before going to senior management.

"If you can show a clear link between a golf tournament and business objectives," Pagliuco says, "it's not a hard sell."

Kim Sackett: Strategic Convention Solutions

Kim Sackett, president of Strategic Convention Solutions in Alexandria, VA, says that sponsors bring a lot of value to a tournament. But they won't want to participate unless they see the business rationale for it.

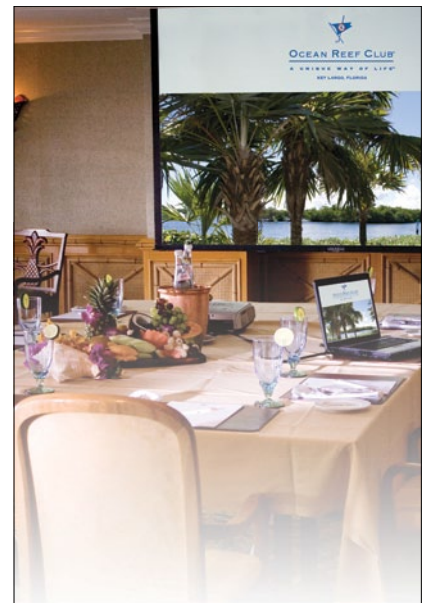
"Sponsorship sales not only make the event more interesting," she says, "but they also make the tournament and the meeting more attractive. And that, of course, enhances ROI for the company, and for everyone attending."

Sackett also advises planners to think carefully about the distance between the meeting site and the golf club.

"You don't want the course to be more than a half-hour from the meeting," she says, "because that introduces something of a frustration factor to an event that's supposed to be fun. Likewise, we try never to have a course that's too challenging for anyone but the best golfers. We don't want attendees to go back to the meeting frustrated. We want them to go back energized."

Sackett also advises planners — very strongly — not to release their list of foursomes until the day of the tournament.

Why? "Because if you announce it ahead of time," she says, "it's nothing



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Golf Event Checklist

Dave Scott, director of golf at Shingle Creek Golf Club in Orlando, FL, uses a golf event checklist to help planners. The modified version below gives event planners an idea of the detail that goes into staging a successful event. Fortunately, planners can turn to the director of golf and his staff who are well-schooled in the art of arranging a winning golf program for groups of all sizes and skill levels. From a clinic for novices to a competitive, teambuilding exercise, the first stop is the PGA golf professional and his capable team.

- ✓ Name of event
- ✓ Date of event
- ✓ Starting time
- ✓ Number of players
- ✓ Format of event
- ✓ Which tees?

Pre-event Activities

- ✓ Transportation
 - Pick up location
 - Pick up time
- ✓ Trick shot show? Time for activity?
- ✓ Golf clinic? Time and length?
- ✓ Food and beverage before event?
 - Location?
- ✓ Registration tables
- ✓ Additional tables
- ✓ Tee gifts
- ✓ Merchandise for prizes
- ✓ Gift certificates
- ✓ Sponsor signage
 - How many?
 - Resort to supply
 - If client supplied, when delivered?
 - Will they need to be returned?
- ✓ Customized flags
 - Delivered by?

C&IT



Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, FL, is home to the Shingle Creek Golf Club, which features a David Harman-designed, 18-hole championship golf course and the Brad Brewer Golf Academy. The hotel offers 1,500 guest rooms and 445,000 sf of meeting space, including 50,000 sf of outdoor event space and a 40,000-sf outdoor event lot.

Photo courtesy of Rosen Shingle Creek

but trouble. You'll get calls from people who want to switch. You'll get calls from people who threaten to cancel if they don't like their foursome.

"Give out as much information ahead of time as possible," says Sackett. "But not the foursomes!"

Some Do's...

- Do sweat the small stuff, because, when it comes to successfully planning a tournament that enhances your ROI for the meeting, there is no small stuff!
- Do go into detail when promoting the event to your attendees: the course, the food, the gifts, etc.
- Do pair up people with either similar interests, similar positions or similar golf skills.
- Do form a capable group of people to produce the event. And don't be afraid to delegate responsibility — and to hold them accountable.
- Do communicate well in advance — and often — with the golf director and staff at the course where you'll be playing.
- Do mix male and female players.

Some Don't's

- Don't go cheap...on the course, on the merchandise/gifts, on the food. You're better off not giving attendees anything, for instance, than giving them cheap gifts.
- Don't be overly promotional with your logo on gift items; it should be discrete and tasteful.
- Don't wait until the last minute to decide pairings, contests, formats, etc.
- Don't worry about the weather — that's the one thing you can't control!
- Don't schedule your tournament on a course that has been recently worked on; you won't get true rolls. **C&IT**

K.P.I.

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Pharma Meetings

Taking the Pulse, From Economic Recovery to Regulatory Side Effects

Pharmaceutical meetings this year have certainly regained their health, in terms of meetings volume and attendance figures. But then, they weren't exactly infirm during the last few years, continuing to bring steady business to third-party planners who specialize in the industry.

Janet Traphagen, for one, reports great resiliency in this segment. As senior vice president, sales, with Appleton, WI-based Creative Group, she saw no significant pullback in pharmaceutical meetings prior

to 2009 and "as a matter of fact our number of meetings from '09 to '10 increased," she observes. "Budgets stayed flat or were reduced, by either reducing the budget itself or bringing fewer attendees. But definitely for '12 and beyond, it looks like the attendance numbers are back."

And at Plano, TX-based Rx Worldwide Meetings Inc., "we were averaging last year about 90 meetings and this year 140-150," remarked President and CEO Judy Benaroche Johnson, CMP.

Expense Contraindications

Like corporations in most any industry, the resurgence of pharma meetings has come with a stronger focus on ROI and cost control. "I still see a lot of caution going forward," Traphagen says, "and I don't see the lift from the scrutiny around the dollars."

But apparently the answer to cost-relief hasn't been virtual or even hybrid meetings for many pharma companies. "The topic is popular, but I'm not seeing

the execution," she says. "It continues to be discussed, it continues to be one of the tracks when you go to a biotech conference. Originally the idea sounded like it would save a lot of dollars, but there's a pretty heavy-duty technology element to it." Virtual meeting technologies have been more of a vehicle for speakers who could not attend in person, such as a company president addressing regional meetings through video stream, or a physician who could not get away from the office presenting his research or practices through a webcast.

Pharmaceutical companies are thus by no means eschewing face-to-face in the cost-control initiative, though many had scaled back somewhat in the recent past. For example, Sanofi Pasteur "went from 400 meetings annually to 250" during the height of the recession, notes Will Anderson, deputy director, strategic meetings management.

When it comes to incentive travel, some pharma companies are exercising restraint on the international front. Like insurance firms, they remain sensitive to "perception," and domestic incentives don't have the same aura of extravagance. Pharma sales reps may also be less adventurous in destination choice than their insurance counterparts, believes Traphagen, who works with meeting groups in both industries. Ironically, the reason may be that pharma reps tend to be younger, she notes, which means they're not as well-traveled and can still be incentivized by destinations that senior reps consider trodden ground. "We don't see on the pharma side as many international destinations as we do on the insurance side, which tends to be a little more of a tenured audience," Traphagen says. "For pharma sales reps, I do see a lot of Hawaii and the Caribbean programs, but I compare that to some of our insurance clients who are going into Vietnam and China."

International Shot-in-the-Arm

Non-incentive international travel, however, is another story. Along with

When Admins Become 'Meeting Masters'

Pharmaceutical companies are reflecting the general upswing in corporate meetings these days, but the cost-consciousness bred over the last few years has not wavered. Fortunately, pharma companies, especially the larger ones, are no strangers to controlling "rogue spend" on meetings via centralized processes. It's part of strategic meetings management (SMM), and the first such programs (SMMPs) were in fact implemented by big pharma companies. "There is definitely more accountability around the dollars spent, and much more pressure around measurement tools to look at the effectiveness of the spend. I think that goes hand in hand with the growth of SMM," says Janet Traphagen, senior vice president sales with Appleton, WI-based Creative Group. Pharma companies "lead the pack" in SMM in Traphagen's view, and now many smaller and mid-size companies are on board with the approach.

SMMP Support

The SMMP at Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi-Aventis, started about two years ago and was refined at the company's Swiftwater, PA site. "We were identified as best practice and center of excellence, so we have now become a shared service supporting all affiliates at Sanofi Pasteur with their meetings, whether sales training, investigator meetings, incentives and so on," says Will Anderson, deputy director, strategic meetings management. "We're very excited about our new responsibility and being able to support the company."

Part of that support is a new "Local Meetings Tool" that will be in place by the end of the year. "It's designed for the administrator who wants to run their own meeting locally to the affiliate site," Anderson explains. While that person isn't a professional planner, the site selection is simplified: "We pick three or four properties in the immediate area of each site — Toronto, Swiftwater, Bridgewater, NJ, or Cambridge, MA — and pre-negotiate the rates and terms." Well before site selection, the administrators complete a pre-meeting approval process. "It helps them think through the meeting and builds in a good night's sleep for them," says Anderson. As a result, "we don't have 'maverick spend' where people are spending money before purchase orders are approved."

Empowerment

While the administrators always have recourse to Anderson's department of bona-fide planners, the Local Meetings Tool essentially empowers them to stage their own events while regulating the process. "We're all about efficiency today, and the freestyle meeting planner is becoming passé," says Anderson. At the same time, his department "doesn't have the resources to plan every meeting," so the SMMP can't be about divorcing all planning from the administrators. "Some of them are very good. But they can get themselves in trouble by signing contracts and thinking they negotiated a good price when it really isn't," he explains. "So the contracts are pre-negotiated by our purchasing department in concert with our SMM experts. That way, everybody isn't running to legal with a contract every two minutes on the same hotel and reinventing the wheel."

With Sanofi-Aventis' recent acquisition of new companies Genzyme, Anderson's department is adding staff and training more administrators on the centralized practices. "After we train the administrators we 'knight' them as Meeting Masters. It's a little tongue-in-cheek humor, but they love it," he reports. More important, "it becomes a benchmark group that we can have lunch with, and they can tell us what improvements, what tweaks they need in the system. Ultimately, it's their meeting management program."

— GS

By George Seli

many U.S. industries, pharmaceutical continues to globalize, and with that comes more international meetings. “Especially in places like India and Latin America, you’ve got more physicians doing the clinical trials and recruiting patients and so forth,” says Johnson, who has seen her pharma clients’ international programs increase “dramatically. It went from being maybe 10 percent of our business to 40 or 50 percent.”

This trend is also corroborated on the supplier side. Bonnie Weiss, director, pharmaceutical industry sales for Hyatt Hotels Corporation, notes that “more and more of the pharma companies are becoming global, and the planners in the U.S. are now more involved in booking international properties, whereas before perhaps they had other people from the international site do it.”

Domestic Protocol

Domestically, Weiss has seen cost-conscious pharma companies often adopting a couple of distinct strategies for their meetings in recent years: first, holding more regional events that save on air travel, and

second, selecting airport hotels to save on ground travel. But the regional, drive-in events are particular cost- and time-savers. The advantage of meeting face-to-face is retained, yet “they can have the agents in the field for a longer period of time, rather than out traveling to meetings. They want their salespeople in the field as much as possible,”

Weiss explains. As a result of this trend, she notes, some Hyatt properties in second-tier cities have been seeing more regional pharma business.

However, national sales meetings and HCP (health-care professional) attended conferences still rely primarily on first-tier cities, such as Las Vegas and Orlando, due to the easy access for a national attendee base and busy physicians.

That’s not to say some second-tier cities aren’t medically prominent or well positioned to host pharma groups: Cleveland, for example, is home to the renowned Cleveland Clinic, which recently opened a new Family Health and Surgery Center in Twinsburg, while Nashville is



“Definitely for ’12 and beyond, it looks like the attendance numbers are back.”

Janet Traphagen
Senior Vice President Sales
Creative Group Inc.
Buffalo Grove, IL

developing a 1.5-million-sf Medical Trade Center (see box below). But it often “boils down to the accessibility,” says Johnson. “St. Louis would be a good alternative, for example, but once TWA went away (TWA was bought out in 2001 by American Airlines, eliminating the St. Louis hub) it’s not so easy.”

And then there’s the short lead-time factor. Second-tier cities can work, but they tend to require more research during the planning stage to ensure suitable lodging and transportation arrangements for

a large group. And if a pharma company has been working on FDA approval for a drug, “once they receive it the trigger is pulled” for executing the meeting, says Traphagen. In that scenario, a Las Vegas or an Orlando is simply the most straightforward choice from a planning perspective. Granted, “if we have the luxury of time to place the meeting, definitely we’ll source cities such as Baltimore and Charlotte and make recommendations,” she adds.

Fast-Acting Remedies

Among the advantages of working with dedicated pharma sales reps is that they are used to “the short-term nature of the business and responding quickly,” says Weiss. “Hyatt is very fortunate in that we have the type of computer system that allows me to go into every sales diary and function book so I am able to do a very quick look to see where my potential holes are, and then I email those hotels the group’s information.”

Having powerful in-house sourcing tools is also a great help in a short-term situation. Sanofi Pasteur planners, for instance, use StarCite. “Meeting plan-

ners always need at least three weeks to plan, but that doesn’t always happen, it’s across the board,” says Anderson. So it’s important to have a tool like StarCite “that can help you work efficiently, searching up to 93,000 properties and getting your pricing back in 48 to 72 hours.”

Hotels can be booked while the company is still waiting on the FDA approval that will determine if the meeting gets the go-ahead, which eases short-term pressures. This tends to be less risky for large pharma companies that have standard contracts in place with national hoteliers that include rebooking clauses. “The contracts are written to allow a little bit more leverage along those lines,” says Johnson. “The company can say, ‘OK, we canceled the Hyatt Philadelphia but we’ll use it for our sales meeting coming right up.’ They have that in their back pocket, but for a lot of the smaller companies, if the FDA didn’t approve or is not moving forward, they’re going to lose that money. That’s why they have no rush to sign.”



“We were averaging last year about 90 meetings and this year 140–150.”

Judy Benaroch Johnson, CMP
President and CEO
Rx Worldwide Meetings Inc.
Plano, TX

Another part of the budget is less manageable, however: airfares. “That’s the real variable, because whatever we might have proposed six weeks ago, let’s say an average airfare of \$400,” can greatly change once the meeting is confirmed, she adds.

The FDA Factor

Last year, Creative Group resorted to a rebooking clause when planning an event for a major biotech company, but ultimately another short-term scenario developed for the next meeting. “The cli-

Medical Meetings Meccas

Success is contagious: More and more destinations are marketing and/or building infrastructure to attract the lucrative medical and pharmaceutical meetings market. Some of the established and up-and-coming medical meetings destinations:

Cleveland, OH: According to Positively Cleveland, the destination marketing organization, the new Cleveland

Medical Mart & Convention Center, which broke ground in January, “is the world’s only facility targeted specifically to the medical and health-care industries, and the new attached convention center will make hosting medical meetings especially efficient.” The facility will open in 2013.

Jacksonville, FL: is traditionally known as a hub for medical meetings with its extensive medical/biotech complex of nationally renowned hospitals, bioscience labs and

other medical institutions such as the University of Florida Proton Therapy Institute.

Nashville, TN: The Nashville Medical Trade Center in downtown Nashville is scheduled to open in 2013. The 1.5-million-sf international trade center and medical marketplace will utilize the existing convention center with new construction

of multiple stories on top. The venue will include 600 permanent showrooms and 140,000 sf of medical conference facilities and exhibition space where health-care providers and innovators will showcase new technology, equipment and services.

Miami, FL: Credit Miami’s strong international magnetism for record-setting attendance at three major medical conferences last year. The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau has taken notice and is marketing its international attendance-boosting muscle.

Orlando, FL: According to Visit Orlando, the city has been on average the top destination for health-care meetings for the past 13 years, hosting an average of one new health-care meeting every five days. Providing even more momentum in the Orlando medical meetings market is Medical City, a new \$2 billion 650-acre complex, comprised of the Burnham Institute for Medical Research,



The Nashville Medical Trade Center and medical marketplace, opening in 2013, will include permanent showrooms such as the operating suite shown above.

the University of Central Florida Medical School and UCF’s Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences. The Orlando VA Medical Center and Nemours Children’s Hospital are both opening in 2012.

San Diego, CA: According to the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, the medical/pharmaceutical segment is the largest industry sector for group business, bringing an estimated 450,000 room nights in 2010.

C&IT



Cleveland Medical Mart & Convention Center will include a 100,000-sf medical mart and an adjoining convention center with a 230,000-sf exhibit hall, and a ballroom overlooking Lake Erie.

“We work very closely with them because they have regulations and limits that they need to follow, based on their own interpretation of the code.”



Bonnie Weiss
Director, Pharmaceutical Industry Sales
Hyatt Hotels Corp.
White Plains, NY

ent hired in advance 200 sales reps with the anticipation that by the end of the year they would get FDA approval, but they did not,” Traphagen relates. “Clearly they had booked the hotel, but thankfully due to our long-term relationship with that particular hotelier, they were pretty flexible with the terms, and we were able to take advantage of the rebooking clause.

“However, because they had had 200 extra salespeople now on payroll with health-care benefits and so on, it dragged on for another six months before they actually got approval. That put additional stress on us, because the V.P. of sales said, ‘When we get approval you will have 11 days.’ Knowing that, we did our extreme best to plan as much in advance as we could, and continued to reach out to the hotelier and let them know exactly what the game plan was. We really included them as partners in the process.”

Regulatory Side Effects

Ideally, hotels also become partners in a company’s efforts to adhere to the PhRMA code. “We work very closely with them because they have regulations and limits that they need to follow, based on their own interpretation of the code,” Weiss comments. One key collaboration is on menu pricing for physician-attended conferences. “The larger companies like Merck and Novartis observe the guidelines to the nth degree,” says Johnson, “so you really have to have a menu that fits in

with that.” Room rates are also constrained under PhRMA, a factor that may make it more challenging to place HCP-attended meetings in the growing seller’s market.

Pharma planners’ familiarity with regulatory compliance should prepare them for the

Physician Payments Sunshine Act, which takes effect in January: Pharmaceutical and biotech companies will be required to track all physician payments worth more than \$10 in 2012 and report them by the end of March 2013, including, of course, those that result from HCP-attended meetings and events.

Anderson notes that Sanofi Pasteur is ready for the additional transparency with meetings360, developed by StarCite and American Express to help companies track their meeting spend. With the new regulations fast approaching, Cvent, a major online event management company, just rolled out its own Strategic Meetings Management tool for HCP spend compliance.

“We’ll have to report what we spend on a more granular level than the PhRMA code,” he says. That includes gifts, food, trips, samples, rebates, speaking and consulting fees, entertainment, honoraria and more. Physicians who accept these

goods and payments will have their names and the dollar amounts disclosed online, under federal law. Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Herb Kohl (D-WI) introduced the original bill to protect patients: They held that a company making such payments to physicians effectively persuades him or her to prescribe more expensive health-care products from that company.

The motivation for the Sunshine Act is similar to the basis for the PhRMA code. “It originated around the concern for the consumer who wonders, ‘Is my doctor really looking at my best interest, or are

they pushing a particular drug from XYZ company because they get a kickback?” Traphagen explains.

In response to this problem, the Sunshine Act works like “a tracking mechanism for ‘Dr. Jones’ who participates in an investigator meeting with Amgen, and then Genentech, Abbott and Baxter,” she says. “There is currently no central tracking of ‘Dr. Jones’ and all of his activity. But the Sunshine Act will be a federal database, if you will, of the activities, payments and gifts that ‘Dr. Jones’ has received on behalf of all of these companies.” The host companies — often with the aid of third parties like Creative Group — are responsible for reporting the HCP spend. And until later this fall when the government will provide more specific reporting criteria, “it’s wildly confusing because Amgen can say, ‘Here are the top three things after every meeting we want from your reporting system.’ And Genentech can say, ‘Here are the five things we want, and we want it broken down differently,’” Traphagen notes. “So far, they recognize the respon-



“We’ll have to report what we spend on a more granular level than the PhRMA code.”

Will Anderson
Deputy Director, Strategic Meetings Management
Sanofi Pasteur, Swiftwater, PA

sibility, but there is no consistency around how it’s being tracked.”

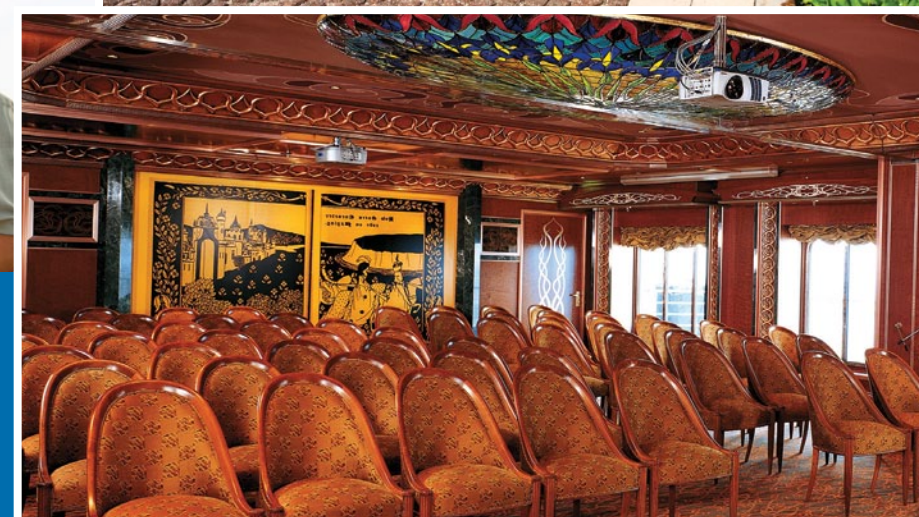
That responsibility has now become more serious, however: “As I understand it, the first time it’s not reported there will be a warning, then a fine and then real jail time,” Johnson says. That’s a far cry from voluntary compliance with the PhRMA code. **C&IT**

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Historical Charm Meets Modern Technology

When Lacey Hein, events and marketing specialist for two Honeywell business divisions, had a meeting disrupted by flooding in Tennessee last year, she switched to the venerable Homestead in Hot Springs, VA. The event was a success, partly because of high-tech touches such as an LED Color Web, which can project an image onto a wall or do countless effects in color.

Says Hein, "Here we are in an interesting, quaint place, and it was probably the most state-of-the-art meeting we ever had."

Hein says there were 300 delegates at the November conference. While her site visit showed a resort that was "just so pretty," she adds, "The AV guy was fantastic. He walked the site visit with us and talked about what we could do on our welcome night and general sessions."

In fact, says Hein, "We had record attendance. Not being near a city worked out fine. There was some initial grumbling by those who arrived at night, but once they saw the property in the daytime, they changed their minds."

As a result of the successful meeting, Hein has already booked another meeting at the Homestead for another Honeywell division for May.

In general, she says, "I like historic properties. We will be doing a meeting at the Olympic Fairmont in Seattle, which is also historic. You walk into these places and you know where you are. Having a destination like The Homestead really helps to bring people out."



Photos courtesy of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts

The Fairmont San Francisco, which opened in 1907, recently introduced Intersect: A Fairmont Media Lounge (above), offering guests what it calls "the ultimate in connectivity." The 2,400-sf space can be reserved for group meetings and events. "People like their classic architecture but want their technology and meeting experience to be cutting-edge," says Fairmont Regional Director of Sales and Marketing Michelle Gilman.

Classic Choices

What should a planner look for when considering a grande dame property for a meeting or incentive? Will it be up-to-date in technology? Will there be maximal meeting flow? Will cuisine follow trends such as organic and locally sourced? Will rooms be up to the standards today's travelers have become accustomed to — flat-screen TVs, Wi-Fi, easy-to-reach electrical outlets, etc.?

Interviews with a number of planners found that classic properties can add a great deal to the success of the meeting — though they may not be right for every event and every group.

April Mescher, vice president for travel at Dayton, OH-based Excellence in Motivation, a large incentive company, regularly uses properties such as The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO, and says, "We approach everything by asking, 'What is the message? What is the brand of your meeting? Do you need something intimate? Do you need tons of space?'"

"Often," says Mescher, "these older properties work beautifully although you won't be able to put anybody in there who needs massive space (The Broadmoor being one exception with 185,000 sf of meeting space). We would use these places for higher level board meetings or getting certain teams together. Some of these places are like grand mansions, and some delegates might not like that. Others might like to be near things to which they can walk or run because they are active. We take all that into consideration."

"These older places definitely have appeal," says Mescher. "We tell potential delegates that we are taking them to a special place, but it's up to the property to live up to that message. There is also an intimacy that lends itself to teambuilding."

Marie Legault, director of incentives and conferences at Montreal-based Aller Retour, which specializes in corporate incentives, says she chose The Fairmont

San Francisco for a recent group in large part because of the architecture and the "magnificent lobby." While she noted that the rooms might be a bit smaller, "they do have wireless, flat-screen TVs and all of that. They also have the best location."

"People want to be a part of history," says Legault. "We did a program to the Grande Bretagne in Greece last year; if you book a historic hotel, it adds to the journey."

As soon as guests arrive at The Homestead, says Mike Aylmer, director of sales and marketing, "they see two classic horse carriers and immediately get the sense of stepping back in time. That's a big part of our appeal."

And Craig Smith, director of sales and marketing at The Peabody Memphis, which has been in its current building since 1925, says, "We provide a sense of place for people; we are not a hotel that you could put anywhere. It's got soul, uniqueness; it's not just another chain."

"A lot of this," says Smith, "is an emotional buy. A lot of these places are destinations in themselves."

Sarah Fitzgerald, special events manager for Golbon, a food services company in Boise, ID, sent 150 people to The Fairmont San Francisco last fall for an incentive. After inspecting a half dozen other hotels in the city, she picked The Fairmont because, "It has that history, and you just don't see hotels like that anymore. It adds a lot of character as a background to our meeting."

Fitzgerald is even taking a group to a historic hotel abroad — an incentive group headed to the InterContinental Le Grand in Paris later this year. "Personally," she says, "I appreciate and admire that kind of property. They usually don't have huge meeting space or exhibit halls, so they're not right for everything. But people do get excited about places like The Fairmont, especially if it's kept up, has good service and has all the fundamentals."

Fitzgerald looked at 10 hotels in Paris, including some new ones, and settled on



The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO, opened in 1918. The five-star, five-diamond hotel offers 744 accommodations and 185,000 sf of state-of-the-art meeting space, including the Broadmoor Hall Observation Room (above) and Colorado Hall, which features movable platform stages and rear projection screens.

Photos courtesy of The Broadmoor

By Harvey Chipkin

Le Grand because “it will give people more of a sense of the place and a sense of history. Also, places like that have staffs that have been there for many years and love to talk about the changes they have seen. They have a real pride in the property.”



“Here we are in an interesting, quaint place and it was probably the most state-of-the-art meeting we ever had. ...Having a destination like The Homestead really helps to bring people out.”

Lacey Hein, Events and Marketing Specialist
Honeywell Automation & Control Solutions, Redmond, WA

Keeping Up With Tech and Trends

While some properties might have problems with technology because their solid construction makes rewiring difficult, says Mescher, “Some places have simply taken it down to the studs and redone it to meet their needs. When you go into a room at an older property, you do want to see a flat screen and an iPod docking station if those properties want to maintain their rates.”



Established in 1766, The Homestead in Hot Springs, VA, offers 483 guest rooms and 72,000 sf of upgraded meeting space, including the Monroe Meeting Room (above).

On the other hand, says Mescher, “I don’t want to go to an older property and have curtains open electronically. I want them to keep their integrity. So they have to walk a line with staying contemporary but not going so overboard they ruin the reason that people are coming.”

The Fairmont San Francisco, which opened in 1907, recently introduced Intersect: A Fairmont Media Lounge, offering guests what it calls “the ultimate in connectivity.” Spanning 2,400 sf, Intersect provides an environment where guests can play interactive games, listen to music, download photos or browse the Internet. Plush couches, armchairs and chaise lounges are available, creating a club-like setting; and hotel personnel are available to assist guests with the electronic equipment.

Intersect is available for a daily fee for guests — or can be rented in its entirety by groups.

Michelle Gilman, regional director of sales and marketing for Fairmont, says, “Hotels like ours are wonderful at keeping up with the latest and most innovative. We had a major restoration in 2001 and have redone a lot since then. We want to be cutting-edge. We pride ourselves on being classic by design, contemporary in spirit. People like their classic architecture but want their technology and meeting experience to be cutting-edge.”

When groups take over Intersect, says Gilman, “They can play Guitar Hero as a group, or have a musician or artist use the space to take advantage of the sound system or screen a film.”

Groups, says Gilman, have used the

space for board meetings: It’s possible to reserve only a part of the space. “It’s meant for groups that may have been coming here for a while but want to find something they haven’t done yet, something that’s new and innovative,” she says.

The Fairmont San Francisco also recently opened a room called Event Showcase, where planners can inspect linens, table settings, floor plans on a big screen and more. A bar is set up with available wines. A large table is set up where planners can do tastings with the chef.

And classic hotels can have advantages unavailable in newer hotels, says Gilman. For instance, she says, “There are no air walls. Each space is entirely dedicated to the group, and they never hear another meeting next door.” The construction is “phenomenal,” she says, with vaulted ceilings and crown moldings that, she says, “add a lot to the environment.”

Many attendees, says Gilman, “love the history that our buildings tell. Every president since Truman has stayed with us; the UN charter was drafted here, and you can have a meeting in the room in which it was drafted.”

The Peabody Memphis offers 80,000 sf of meeting space — a sizable amount for a 464-room property, especially an older one — that is the result of two additions (1990s and 2000s). The hotel recently completed a \$300,000 audio-visual upgrade and now claims the most technically advanced production infrastructure in the mid-South, and the only fully high-definition system at a hotel in Tennessee.

Perhaps the most high-profile reinvention of a grande dame hotel is at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV, where billionaire Jim Justice has spent many millions rejuvenating the venerable property, including the addition of a 103,000-sf casino. The resort boasts more than 100,000 sf of meeting space and a 16,500-sf exhibit hall. A wide range of state-of-the-art technology and amenities encompass enclosed projection rooms, online computer hookups and sophisticated multimedia equipment.

Todd Gillespie, director of sales, says the changes have resulted in record revenues last year — expected to grow explosively this year. The goal, he says, is to have a balance of 60 percent groups and 40 percent leisure.

Since Justice took over, says Gillespie, the resort has revised its pricing strategy. “We had previously priced ourselves at the upper tier of the market, but it didn’t make economic sense. Now we are the rate leader but by only \$50–\$75 a night, rather than \$350. We are now more affordable and all those groups who wanted to come in the past but were priced out can now come.”

The resort also has increased access with much more air and train service. This coming fall, a steam locomotive with restored box cars will run to Union Station in Washington, DC.

Also, a new Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course will soon break ground — joining The Greenbrier’s other courses.

Says Gillespie, “It used to be that after dinner there was nothing to do except go bowling. Now the casino and entertainment provide a fantastic nightlife. We just signed Tim McGraw and Keith Urban, and there are big stars appearing regularly.”

Gillespie’s message to planners: “We want your business. Tell us what we need to do. Your people have always wanted

The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV, has been welcoming guests since 1778. The 710-room resort offers more than 100,000 sf of meeting space, including the Colonial Ballroom shown below, with sophisticated multimedia equipment.

to come here, and now you have the opportunity to have impactful meetings in an environment that will have attendees talking for years.”

Richard Eisenman, CAE, CEO of Eisenman & Associates Inc., a meeting planning firm in Glen Allen, VA, has recently held meetings at The Greenbrier and says, “They have added some glitz like at the casino, but it’s still the little things that make the difference. The staff is really helpful and seem sincere on making your stay enjoyable.

“Is it more challenging to run a 100-year-old property?” asks Eisenman. “Probably so. Can it be overcome? Absolutely. They do a great job, including having wireless throughout and whatever AV you might need.”

Attendees, says Eisenman, “love coming up the driveway to a grand



“When you go into a room at an older property, you do want to see a flat screen and an iPod docking station if those properties want to maintain their rates.”

April Mescher, Vice President, Travel Excellence in Motivation, Dayton, OH

old resort. Also, in a place like The Greenbrier, you don’t lose your audience. There is no other place to go, and they stay together as a group. It absolutely adds to the meeting. There’s nothing like these historic places; nobody is building them like that anymore. There are beautiful new five-star resorts, but they’re not the same.

“The Greenbrier used to be a stuffy place,” says Eisenman, “but the new amenities, especially the casino and new restaurants, give people fun things to do at night.”



Photos courtesy of The Greenbrier

At The Homestead, ballrooms have been upgraded with new lighting and décor, but in keeping with its traditions. And at The Peabody Memphis, says Smith, “Everything has been up-

graded and updated over the past four years. Rooms were restored with the original décor.”

Even Limitations Can Be Charming

Hein says that there were certain aspects of the rooms at The Homestead that seemed a little out of date. But she stresses, “In the grand scheme of things, this was so not a concern. People expect a little of that. After all, it’s not a brand new hotel in downtown Chicago.”

Aylmer agrees, saying, “Some of the



The Peabody Memphis, in its current building since 1925, has 464 guest rooms and more than 80,000 sf of meeting space, including the Grand Ballroom (below). An in-house audiovisual company provides state-of-the-art production and support.

And sometimes planners can get the best of both worlds. As Fitzgerald says of The Fairmont, "We stayed in the new tower, which is very modern while we were able to have events in the older public areas. All the rooms in the tower are large with large bathrooms, and they have great views." Still, says Fitzgerald, "We would have chosen The Fairmont even if they didn't have that tower."

Going With the Flow

Of course, the toughest thing to change in an old building is the physical structure, and with many meetings now preferring meeting space on one floor or on adjoining floors, that can be challenging.

At The Homestead, says Hein, "the flow worked perfectly. We got all our function space right next to each other. We had a fun poker night in the ballroom and didn't have to tear anything down. There are so many unique spaces, and it allowed me to deliver an unbe-

charm is in those cracks and creaks in the staircases. Older historic properties can show their age naturally."

And Homestead's out-of-the-way location, says Aylmer, offers a getaway from a typical city or suburban atmosphere — "a true getaway."

To enhance the historic elements, the resort offers two daily walking tours — both available for groups. Says Aylmer, "We make the history come alive to the attendee. When you walk into the Presidents Lounge you're surrounded by portraits of 22 presidents who have stayed at or visited The Homestead. George Washington founded the land, Thomas Jefferson designed the hotel."

And there are still dances in the dining rooms, just as there were in 1930, according to Aylmer. Planners can choose the old Homestead china for banquets.



"Is it more challenging to run a 100-year-old property? Probably so. Can it be overcome? Absolutely. (The Greenbrier does) a great job, including having wireless throughout and whatever AV you might need."

Richard Eisenman, CAE, President & CEO
Eisenman & Associates Inc.

lievable experience to attendees." The biggest challenge at The Peabody Memphis, says Smith, "is that the room service kitchen is located separately from the three-meal restaurant, creating some operational and technical issues. However, the main kitchen — from which all banquet meals emerge — is ideally located for group meals."

Keeping Food Fresh

"Hotels have to be contemporary in their cuisine," says Legault. "They have to follow the trends. You cannot serve classical or heavy food."

"F&B is a huge part of the meeting," says Mescher. "You have to create an experience. Your scrambled eggs have to be an experience."

"The big piece for us," says Gilman, "is not only keeping up but exceeding. The baseline is a given. That goes for F&B as well. Our chef keeps 80,000 bees on our roof garden, and we use the honey from that. Sometimes we give a little jar of honey to meeting attendees."

The Fairmont's restaurant is being redone to offer a farm-to-table approach. Everything is being brought in straight from the farm. The restaurant, Laurel Court, will have a new menu. In addition, says Gilman, "We are offering foods to meetings that we would offer in a restaurant setting. We just completed another kitchen on the lobby level that makes it easier to serve banquets."

The food at The Homestead, says Hein, "was phenomenal. Every meal was amazing, and I never had so many comments on the food. Also, the chef was super-willing to work with me."

And, as Fitzgerald says, "You can't count on food being great in a new property. It totally depends on the chef and F&B operation."

That's true of classic hotels in general. They can provide a wonderful atmosphere, but they still have to meet your meeting needs. And as these planners can testify, they often do. **C&IT**

Customer-centric; *adj.*, placing the customer at the center of an organization's marketing effort



Anaheim/OC CTAs (starting at the back row left to right)

Max Keylor
Sr. VIP Coordinator-Disneyland® Resort Hotels

Bill Gunderson
General Manager-Anaheim Marriott

Tom Wood
City Manager-City of Anaheim

Tom Tait
Mayor-City of Anaheim

Charles Ahlers
President-Anaheim Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau

David Meek
Convention Center Manager
Anaheim Convention Center

Sylvano Ibay
General Manager-Anaheim White House

Shaun Robinson
General Manager-Hilton Anaheim

Chris Peña
Sergeant-Anaheim Police Department

Kevin Johnstone
Customer
Director of Trade Shows
National Association of Music Merchants

Rochanda Chamois
Front Office Supervisor-Peacock Suites

Lisa Paton
Marketing Administrative Assistant
Simon Property Group (The Block at Orange)

Erin Rhodes
Marketing Manager-Discovery Science Center

Christina Dawson
VP, Partnership & CTA Program Administrator
Anaheim Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau

Miguel Pasillas
Bellman-Embassy Suites Anaheim South

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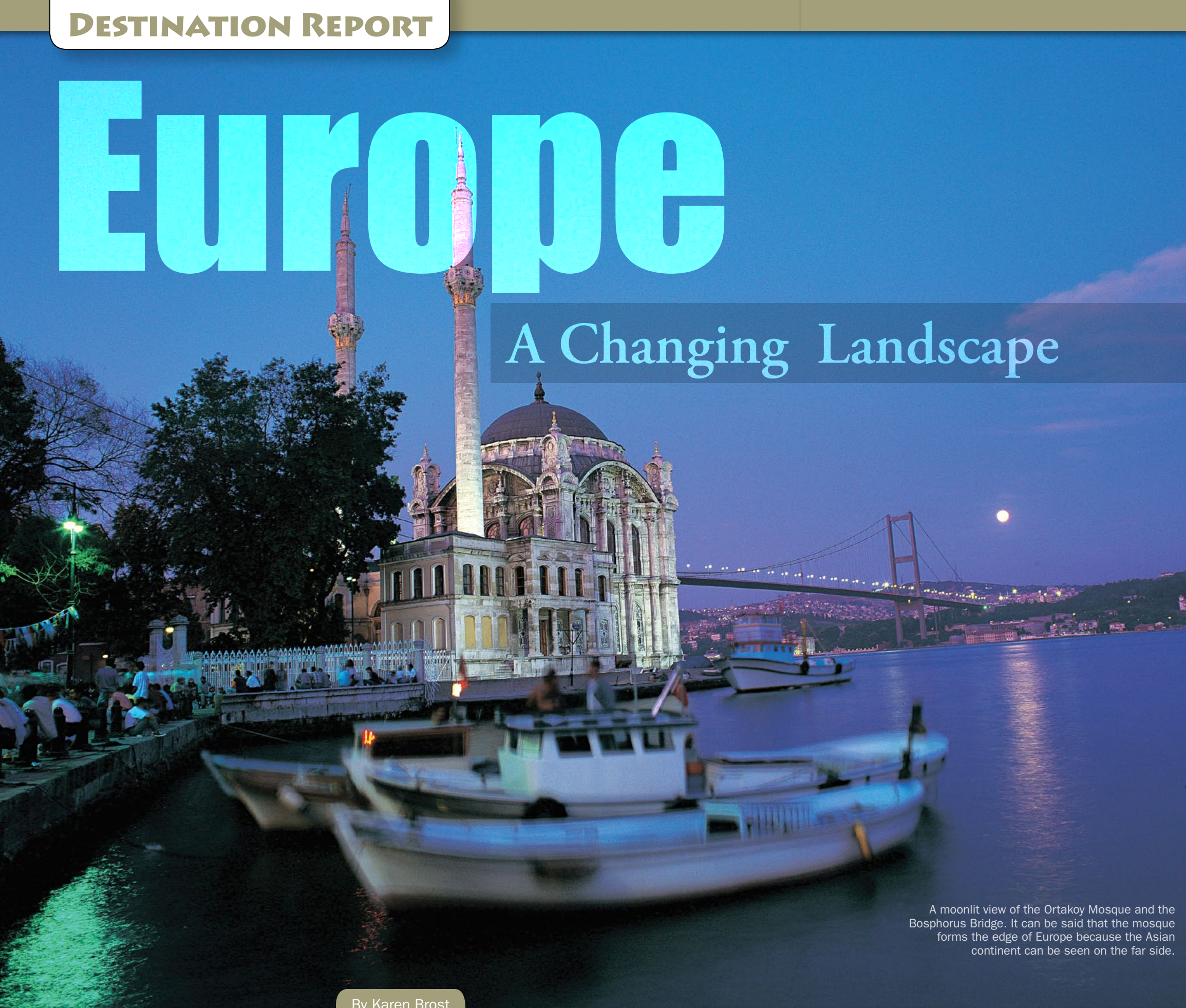
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The Certified Tourism Ambassador™ (CTA) Program is a nationwide customer service certification program designed to mobilize a destination's frontline toward the goal of turning every visitor encounter into a positive experience.

Europe

A Changing Landscape



A moonlit view of the Ortakoy Mosque and the Bosphorus Bridge. It can be said that the mosque forms the edge of Europe because the Asian continent can be seen on the far side.

By Karen Brost

It's a situation that sounds all too familiar. "Generally speaking, Europe as a whole is still in the bottom of a recessionary dip, with venues of all types fighting to keep up bedroom occupancy levels," explains Gill Smillie, chief executive of Conference Venues CountryWide (CVC) based in London. CVC specializes in site selection services and helps blue chip clients find venues of all kinds throughout the UK and Europe.

"Additionally," she continues, "clients who are running meetings are pushing for low rates, so where venues may have occupancy, the achieved rates are pretty cutthroat. There are exceptions to this with major city center hotels holding up well. This is particularly true in London, where even the luxury hotels are able to hold their bedroom rates pretty solid. The weakness of the pound against the euro and the dollar will be contributing to this, with both personal and business tourism taking advantage of the value of other currencies against the pound, pushing up occupancy rates."

ENGLAND Debra Henry, manager, investor relations and conference services for the Washington, DC-based Edison Electric Institute (EEI) plans an international utilities conference that has been held in London for the past 12 years. For the past seven years, the site for the meeting has been the 453-room London Hilton on Park Lane, which offers 13 meeting rooms and can accommodate events with up to 1,200 attendees. This year, the EEI event drew 350 attendees from around the world.

London was originally chosen as the site of the conference based on a survey of attendees. "It was easy for everybody to get there," Henry notes. "It just makes sense from an economic standpoint for us."

"I like the property because of its location in central London and Hyde Park," she continues, "so for people coming from the city, it's easy to get to the hotel. If you have people who are just coming to London for the first time, the location of the hotel makes it easy for them to go and see some of the historical things there. You can actually walk almost to all of the great points in the city of London from the London Hilton. And because of the way it's located, even if people don't have a good sense of direction, it's a good focal point because you can always find your way back to the hotel."

EEI hosts an upscale reception as part of the event, and Henry has found plenty of venues to choose from. "We've had this reception at Buckingham Palace and the Wallace Collection. We've had one at the Tower of London where they got to see the Crown Jewels. We've had it at the Portrait Gallery, and we've had it at the British Museum. We've had it at the O2 (a special event venue) when they had the King Tut exhibit. We had a private tour with heavy hors d'oeuvres, so they got to see the exhibits privately. We have had our events at some very nice venues in London."

Henry has been very pleased with the service levels at the

Photo courtesy of Turkish Tourism

Closed for many years, the five-star St Pancras Renaissance Hotel London is now open after years of meticulous restoration.

Photo courtesy of St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel London



hotel, even when there has been a “changing of the guard” in terms of convention services managers. “It’s good to go to a venue where, even though there’s been a change in the management staff, when you get there you know these people have looked at your program and they’re familiar with it. For each new change (in personnel) they’ve offered some changes to us that make our program better. I don’t know what more we could ask for.”

The London Hilton on Park Lane recently unveiled its newly revamped Penthouse Suite, which features two master bedrooms, a dining room that seats eight and spectacular views of Hyde Park. The suite also includes a state-of-the-art bathroom with a whirlpool tub, steam shower and television in the mirror. Optional butler service is available for guests staying in the suite.

Smillie noted the impact that the upcoming summer Olympics has had on London’s hotel inventory. “The London Olympics in 2012 is responsible for the construction of new hotels in and around London with a surprising number in the four- and five-star bracket.” One example she gave is “The five-star super-luxury Corinthia Hotel just off Trafalgar Square.” The hotel, which opened in May, offers 294 spacious guest rooms, a luxury spa and six private executive level meeting rooms. Five of these rooms are equipped with a high-definition turnkey system that provides connectivity for media broadcasting, recording, editing and mixing.

Smillie also noted the reopening of the St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel London. “It’s part of the St. Pancras Station (terminus for the Eurostar trains) redevelopment. The original 19th century Victorian hotel was closed for many years and in danger of being lost, but a huge investment has recreated a great railway hotel with 211 bedrooms, incorporating many of the original features.” This new (yet old) Marriott property

Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort in County Limerick is one of Ireland’s five-star castle properties.

offers nine meeting rooms and a unique dining venue called The Booking Office, which offers al fresco dining overlooking the Eurostar platforms.

Hilton Hotels & Resorts recently opened the 350-room Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. Set on 13 landscaped acres just over a mile from the airport’s Terminal 5 building, the new hotel offers nearly 10,000 sf of conference space, three restaurants, a fitness center and indoor pool.

The 137-room Waldorf Astoria, Syon Park, also recently opened at the edge of the 200-acre Syon House estate. Located seven miles from London’s city center, the new luxury property is the first Waldorf Astoria in the UK. The hotel offers five dining outlets and lounges, a spa, and meeting space that includes the Grand Syon ballroom, which can accommodate up to 450 guests.

The new 258-room InterContinental London Westminster is expected to make its debut in the spring of 2012. It is being built in a former Treasury building within walking distance of Buckingham Palace.

IRELAND The award-winning five-star Aghadoe Heights Hotel & Spa offers a spectacular setting for executive retreats and incentive programs. The 74-room property is located in Ireland’s County Kerry and offers stunning views of the Lakes of Killarney and the nearby mountains. The property also offers a spacious penthouse, an executive boardroom and the 2,045-sf Garden Room for meetings and events.

The Crowne Plaza Dublin-Blanchardstown and the Crowne Plaza Dublin-Northwood Hotels recently received the Mark of Best Practice award as part of the Fáilte Ireland Optimus Programme. Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority, was established in 2003 to guide and promote Irish tourism. According to Fáilte Ireland, the Mark of Best Practice focuses on every aspect of the operation and enables tourism businesses to set appropriate standards and monitor performance levels throughout.

The 188-room Crowne Plaza Dublin-Blanchardstown is a four-star luxury hotel, which offers a convenient central location, along with 14 meeting rooms. The 204-room Crowne Plaza Dublin-Northwood Hotel is located near Dublin Airport and features one of the largest conference centers in Ireland.



Photo courtesy of Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort

The hotel’s Conference & Event Center can accommodate functions for up to 1,000 attendees.

SCOTLAND Located near Edinburgh, Our Dynamic Earth is a nature-inspired venue that can host conferences or corporate events in one of four unique settings. Up to 600 guests can be accommodated in the Earthscape Galleries, which offer opportunities for guests to sip champagne beside a real iceberg in the Polar Regions gallery or enjoy their cocktails in a Tropical Rainforest. Earthscape also includes an Oceans gallery and a Prehistoric Casualties and Survivors gallery.

Other options at Our Dynamic Earth include the Biosphere, which offers state-of-the-art technology in a flexible space with retractable walls. The Ozone can be used for breakouts by day and for receptions at night. The most dramatic setting is the Stratosphere, which can host up to 1,200 guests for a reception in a tent-like glass-walled building. Our Dynamic Earth offers a full list of in-house catering services, including organic menus.

SWITZERLAND Switzerland ranked among the top 10 congress and convention countries by the 2010 International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), which shows that Switzerland continues to be a popular destination for meetings and conventions. The Switzerland Convention and Incentive Bureau reports the latest expansion has made the

“The London Olympics in 2012 is responsible for the construction of new hotels in and around London with a surprising number in the four- and five-star bracket.”



Gill Smillie, Chief Executive
Conference Venues CountryWide, London, England

Davos Congress Centre one of the Alps’ most modern venues. The facility can accommodate up to 5,000 attendees in this ideal infrastructure of 34 high-tech rooms.

The new 300-room Renaissance Zurich Tower Hotel recently opened its doors in Zurich West, one of the city’s most fashionable neighborhoods. Housed in a 24-story tower that offers panoramic city views, the hotel features a contemporary design that includes graffiti-inspired artwork that honors the area’s industrial roots. More than 10,000 sf of meeting space is available.

The new Courtyard by Marriott Basel hotel is an ideal location for any business event, located only 17 minutes by car from EuroAirport Basel. The 175-room hotel offers six meeting rooms, a business lounge, spacious Lobby Great Room, an interactive infotainment board with touch screen and The Market, a 24/7 Grab’n Go.

SWEDEN Earlier this year, the 414-room Radisson Blu

Berne, the capital of Switzerland and a World Heritage Site, is an impressive example of European medieval town architecture.



Photo courtesy of Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau

Waterfront Hotel opened in Stockholm. It connects to the Stockholm Waterfront Congress Center, which contains more than 150,000 sf of meeting space, making it one of Scandinavia’s largest facilities for meetings and events. The new hotel is within walking distance of central railway station as well as the Arlanda Express rail, which links to the airport, a 20-minute ride away.

GERMANY Planners who really want their meetings or incentive programs to go out with a bang may want to contact the Dusseldorf Marketing & Tourism office. One of the most unique programs the city offers is a fireworks seminar.

Participants get a lesson in basic fireworks from a professional pyro technician, and then they create their own fireworks display and set it off. They can even set it to music. As tourism office representative Isabelle Jaeger says, “The fireworks seminar is one of our bestsellers, and it’s more popular all the time for teambuilding programs.”

The Dusseldorf Marketing & Tourism office also offers a choice of other “fun modules,” including city tours in vintage cars, championship barbecuing lessons and a casino night on a salon boat.

SPAIN The Porta Fira Hotel in Barcelona was recently chosen as the best skyscraper in the world out of a field of 300 entrants in the Emporis Skyscraper Award competition. The 320-room luxury hotel is housed in a dramatic bright red “twisted” tower structure that commands attention in the city’s skyline. The hotel, which has 10 meeting rooms and a 24-hour business center, offers easy access to Barcelona’s El Prat airport and city center.

FRANCE Located just one metro stop and seven minutes from the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the Hilton Paris La Defense offers a convenient meeting location in the heart of the largest business center in Europe. The 148-room property, which is located within the Center of New Industries and Technologies Convention Centre, offers nine conference rooms and a 24-hour business center.

MONACO Incentive trips are all about creating memorable experiences, and the principality of Monaco offers many ways to treat attendees like royalty. One prime example is the wine cellar that serves the Hotel de Paris and the Hotel Hermitage,

two luxury properties that are both members of The Leading Hotels of The World. Established in 1874 and boasting a storied past, the cellar houses 450,000 bottles of wine and served as the site of the 20th wedding anniversary celebration of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier in 1976. The cellar is available for hosting a private dinner for up to 50 guests.

TURKEY In August, Starwood Hotels & Resorts announced plans for the new 237-room Sheraton Adana Hotel, which will be built on the banks of the River Seyhan in southern Turkey. Slated to open in 2013, the new hotel will offer more than

“Europe is far and away ahead of the United States when it comes to providing sustainable environments. It’s much more a function of the attendee, also. In Europe, people are tuned into that.”



Neil Pompan, CMP, President
Pompan Hospitality Global, Easton, PA

32,000 sf of meeting space. Starwood currently operates six hotels in Turkey, three of which are located in Istanbul, the country’s largest city.

Golf in Turkey is booming. The country’s golf courses range from some of the most venerable in Europe to some of the newest, many created by celebrity designers. Most of the newer golf resorts and courses are located along the Mediterranean coast in Antalya, also known as the “Turkish Riviera,” in part because of the 300 days of sunshine it enjoys during the year. Also the region’s Belek resort area features numerous championship courses. Many courses are designed by such illustrious names as Colin Montgomerie, Nick Faldo, Pete Dye, David Feherty, and last year, Jack Nicklaus added his signature with a new championship course at the Mardan Palace resort.

This summer, Turkey’s largest aquarium opened in Istanbul. It features 15,000 species of marine life from 16 regions of the world, including the Black Sea and the Pacific Ocean, an interactive rainforest exhibit and an exploration trail.

The Divan Istanbul is now open after a complete \$50 million renovation. One of the capital’s landmark buildings, the hotel originally was opened in 1956. The Divan Istanbul is ideally situated in Taksim, the city’s business and cultural district. There are 228 rooms, two restaurants, a Divan patisserie, spa, swimming pool and large, spacious meeting and conference rooms.

Conference Center News

The International Association of Conference Centers (IAAC) has more than 100 member conference centers located through-

out Europe. “The biggest news from IAAC’s perspective is that at the end of last year, we finalized, after 18 months of work, the consolidation of all of Europe into a single chapter,” explains Neil Pompan, president of Pompan Hospitality Global and global president of IAAC.

“Much like we have in the Americas, we now have organization behind a large group of like-minded facilities,” he continues. The newly formed European chapter is headed by Jeu Bressers, co-owner of the Conference Hotel Kapellerput in the Netherlands, which offers 19 meeting rooms, 97 guest rooms and convenient access to Amsterdam, Brussels and Dusseldorf.

IAAC members agree to meet universal criteria that include requirements for dedicated conference space, ergonomic chairs, specific lighting and acoustical ratings, and other details designed to create a total meeting environment. IAAC conference centers offer complete meeting packages that include conference rooms, guest rooms (where available), three meals per day, continuous refreshment services, conference services and conference technology.

IAAC member Munich Unterschleissheim is located 15 minutes from Munich International Airport and 20 minutes from the city’s center. Operated by Dolce Hotels and Resorts, the hotel and conference center offers 23 meeting rooms, 230 guest rooms, two restaurants and a bar and beer garden. Parking and Wi-Fi are complimentary.

Another Dolce conference center Frégate Provence located in the south of France, offers 13 meeting rooms and 133 guest rooms and suites with seaview terraces. Recreational amenities include an 18-hole championship golf course, a golf school, three tennis courts, indoor and outdoor pools, water activities teambuilding and wine tasting.

“The European market from an IAAC perspective is, I think, pure,” Pompan notes. “They are very much into the meeting experience.”

Pompan notes another important distinction regarding European properties: “Europe is far and away ahead of the United States when it comes to providing sustainable environments. It’s about how you conduct business and the systems and practices you use in your day-to-day operation to promote sustainability. They’re much more tuned in. It’s much more a function of the attendee, also. In Europe, people are tuned into that.”

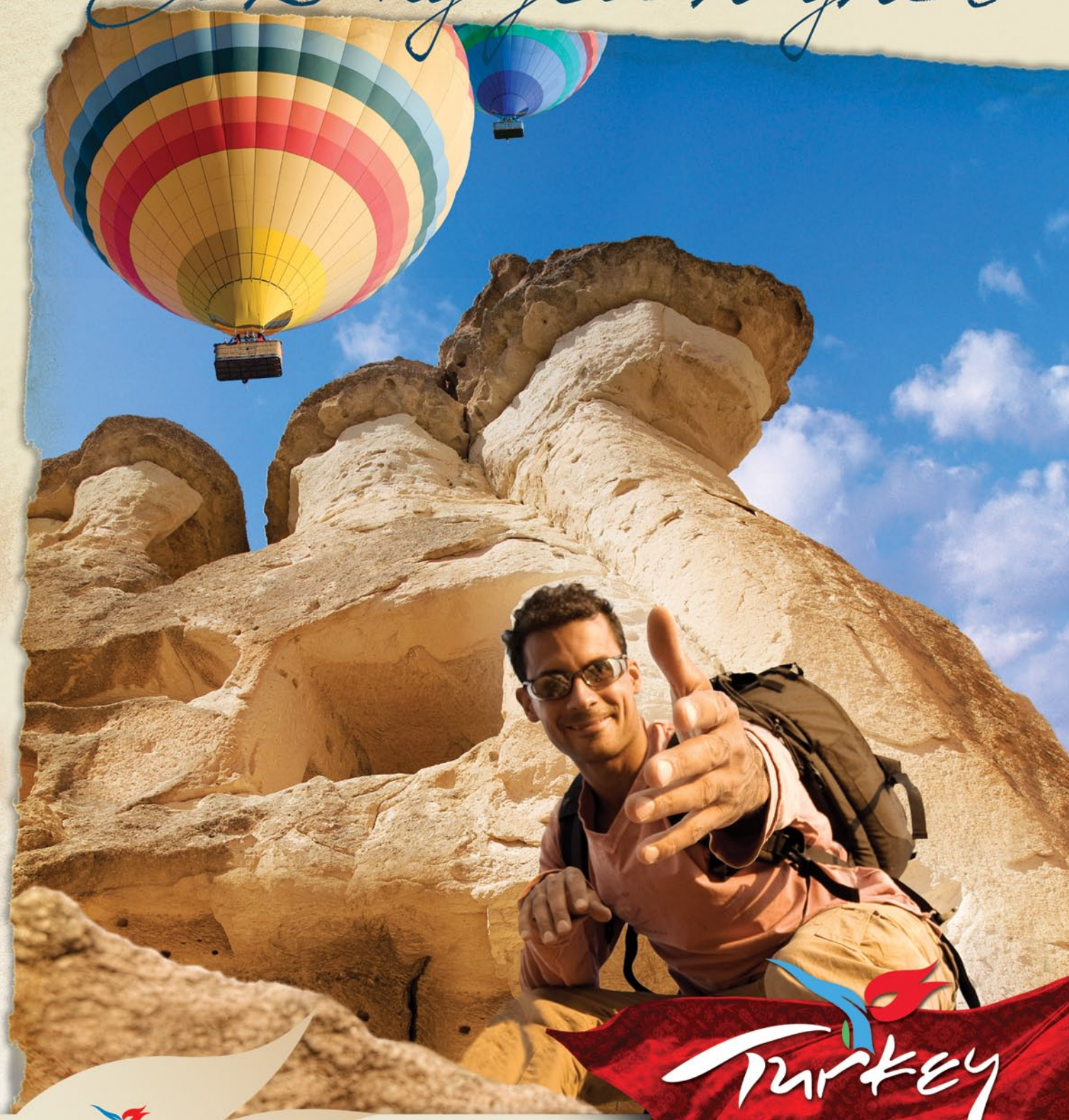
Successful Outcomes

As Henry has discovered, the key to a successful European meeting experience lies in finding the right property, just like it does in the U.S. For her, the right choice was the London Hilton on Park Lane. “It has just been a wonderful experience and I don’t see leaving there anytime soon. As long as they want me, I’ll be there.”

C&IT

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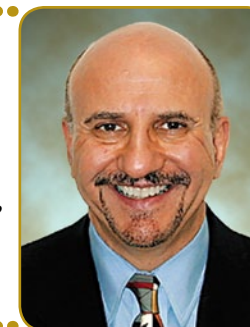
While incentive travel is regaining traction in corporate America, one might think that New York City is not among the first domestic destinations a cost-conscious planner would consider. The Big Apple does offer world-renowned attractions and hotels, but its high room rates and current low negotiability may effectively push incentive groups south to Orlando or west to Las Vegas. New York retains one important selling point, however: As the business capital of the world, it's a strong choice for companies wanting to avoid perception issues lingering around their incentives. In spite of its vibrant nightlife, the city isn't perceived overall as any sort of "playground," but rather a hub of finance and industry. And that image "can assuage the board of directors or whoever a planner needs to report to," observes Anthony Napoli, CMP, DMCP, president of Briggs Inc., a prominent destination management company in Manhattan.

A seller's market is taking hold among Manhattan's hotels, but the city is still very planner-friendly, notes one Briggs client: Jodi Durrant, vice president, global events and recognition for Provo, UT-based Nu Skin Enterprises, found herself with the rather daunting task of staging the company's first foray into New York City for its "Team Elite" annual incentive program. "From a meeting planner's perspective, going on site visits to New York, everybody I met with — the DMC, the CVB, hotels, museums, caterers, transportation companies — was so excited to have me there looking at their product. I was terribly impressed," she says. "And they had the right people on hand, so when I started asking detailed questions about meeting space, room setup, décor and so on, they had the answers. You don't always get that."

About 650 Nu Skin attendees stayed over six nights in the Central Park area, at the iconic Plaza hotel and the nearby 259-

"Instead of taking transportation, guests walked from The Plaza hotel to the zoo, which is very event-friendly."

**Anthony Napoli, CMP, DMCP, President
Briggs Inc., New York, NY**



tion, guests walked from The Plaza hotel to the zoo, which is very event-friendly," Napoli related. And the city's museums are also becoming event-friendlier, he observes. "They're willing to negotiate on the donations, whereas in the past they were 'take it or leave it.' So the museums are in a place (in terms of negotiability) where hotels were two years ago. There are much more opportunities to do events at cultural institutions, and that's a good thing for corporations because there is usually a tax deduction involved in part of those fees."

room Ritz-Carlton Central Park. "We felt it was a prize location for the high-level, international group we were bringing," says Durrant. "We have folks from many of our Asian countries, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, as well as Australia and New Zealand. It's a global city, one that many people want to go to, even though they may have been there before." Attendees who were part of Team Elite Platinum stayed in suites and enjoyed a private party at Time Warner Center at the residence of a Nu Skin executive, traveling there via carriages through Central Park. The opening reception and all meetings were held at the 282-room, Fairmont-managed Plaza, offering 20,000 sf of meeting space. Representatives from various Nu Skin regions also dined out at different Times Square restaurants. For example, the Japan group went to Sardi's, the Americas group went to Bond 45 and the Southeast Asia/Greater China group experienced Blue Fin.

Memorable Experiences

Of course, attendees can do all these things during a personal visit to New York City, so "we also try to show them things they can't do on their own or make it special for them," Durrant explained. That special experience was an awards gala at Ellis Island and Liberty Island, staged with the help of Briggs. The DMC arranged a boat transfer to the Statue of Liberty, where the group had cocktails and photo-ops, and then to Ellis Island, where they had an awards dinner in the Registry Room of the museum. For the finale they witnessed fireworks from the harbor in front of Lady Liberty, featuring the Nu Skin logo burning in "a very elaborate display, making it more personal," Durrant remarked, adding that Napoli of Briggs is "a great resource."

With the unfortunate closing of Tavern on the Green in Central Park, Napoli notes that the Boathouse restaurant has "come back into play for group dining just because it's the only restaurant left in the park." Another venue in the area is the Central Park Zoo, where Briggs recently held a private party for a food-services corporate group that had just seen a production of "South Pacific" on Broadway. The South Pacific theme was carried into the party, and attendees enjoyed cocktails around the sea lion pool. "We also were 'green.' Instead of taking transporta-

One highlight of the Nu Skin "Team Elite" annual incentive program in New York City was the fireworks show staged from the harbor in front of Lady Liberty.

New Openings

In Napoli's assessment, New York's tighter hotel market has come about not only due to the resurgence of corporate group travel, but also because of the influx of foreign and individual travelers. Planners on a budget do well to book during off-season — January/February and July/August — if possible. And while many hotels are opening this year and beyond, "whether they're group-appropriate is another story," he points out. It's mostly boutique hotels or smaller, mid-tier properties by large chains that will account for the expected increase from 86,230 rooms to almost 90,000 by year's end. NYC & Company also reports that occupancy in April rose to an estimated 88 percent with ADR at \$263. (Visit www.nycgo.com/meetingplanners for details on the assistance the CVB offers planners.) One significant new opening for corporate groups is the Conrad brand's first property in the city. The Conrad New York is set to debut on the current site of



Photo courtesy of NYC & Company

By George Seli

the Embassy Suites New York late this year, featuring 463 guest rooms and more than 17,000 sf of meeting space.

A property that may be viable for groups looking for an affordable Times Square hotel is the 669-room YOTEL New York, which opened in June with 18,000 sf of “flexible work and entertainment space.” Minneapolis, MN-based Medtronic stages small educational meetings with physicians in the city every quarter, and is considering the YOTEL for future programs, according to Sharon Marsh, CMP, CMM, meetings group manager. The medical device company conducts training at local hospitals and further meetings at the host hotel for attendees who fly in from all over the U.S., and sometimes Europe and Australia. “We typically use smaller hotels, though the quality is important since we’re housing our customers. But like all medical groups we are limited in terms of how much we can spend on a physician, so rate becomes more important than we wish it had to be,” Marsh explains.



The Nu Skin gala awards dinner in the Registry Room at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, arranged by Briggs Inc., was very well received.

In the past she has used the 509-room W New York – Times Square and held offsite events at 10 On The Park at Time Warner Center, located on the 10th floor of the Time Warner Center, overlooking the skyline and Central Park. It offers 19,000 sf of prefunction and meeting space, including the 3,950-sf Columbus Room, named after the popular Shops at Columbus Circle, located below in the same building. The venue has audio-visual and lighting capabilities such as digital signage, high-definition digital projection, plasma screens, videoconferencing and high-speed wireless Internet.

New and Noteworthy

While New York will not see any major upscale hotels debut in the near future (apart from the Conrad), it has several such properties that have undergone renovations, making them even more attractive to groups. The following are among the most noteworthy projects:

- In December 2009, the 1,980-room **Hilton New York** completed a \$1 million soft goods refurbishment of its 10,000-sf Trianon Ballroom triplex and 5,800-sf Mercury Ballroom. These complement the hotel’s 25,000-sf Grand Ballroom, billed as the largest hotel ballroom in the city.
- The 1,949-room **New York Marriott Marquis** unveiled a multimillion-dollar renovation plan that encompasses the hotel’s lobby, new restaurants, nearly 2,000 guest rooms and a new high-tech 29,000-sf Broadway Ballroom featuring a “vanishing ceiling.” More than 1,000 guest rooms have been totally redesigned, with the remainder to be completed by spring 2012.

• **The Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers** is in the midst of its own \$150 million renovation. The first stage, which included 1,080 guest rooms and the 44th-floor Sheraton Club Lounge, was completed in May, and the remaining 600-plus guest rooms will begin renovation in December and be completed in April 2012. All rooms will offer more space as a result. The hotel offers a total of 55,000 sf of meeting space.

• **The Roosevelt Hotel’s** multimillion-dollar upgrade and redesign program, covering its 1,015 guest rooms and Madison Club Lounge, is slated for completion in February. The hotel offers a total of 30,000 sf of meeting space.

• **The Grand Hyatt New York** is in the final phase of its \$130 million renovation covering all of its 1,311 rooms, lobby and mezzanine level, and 18,000-sf Empire Ballroom. The 6,000-sf New York

Central, a new bar and restaurant, will open in mid-November. The Grand Hyatt offers more than 50 meeting rooms totaling 55,000 sf of meeting space.

- The downtown area also features its share of remarkable (albeit smaller) hotels, such as the 391-room **Trump SoHo**, 298-room **Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park** and the new 217-room W New York Downtown Hotel.

Napoli has seen Lower Manhattan becoming more popular for groups over the years. “In the past we would never think of sending groups down there, but Lower Manhattan is now a

“(New Jersey) is a good location because it’s close to the Newark Airport, and it also works for our global meeting.”

Sara Gunderman, CMP, Manager of Meeting Operations, Sanofi Pasteur, Swiftwater, PA



more attractive place to send clients,” he says. “It doesn’t ‘close down’ anymore after 6 p.m. or on weekends since many people live down there now, giving it more vitality. And the room rates are much more reasonable and negotiable.” Particularly with the 10th anniversary of 9/11, many attendees will surely want to visit the site to pay their respects. “Our philosophy is not to sell it as a tour,” Napoli stressed. “It’s a visit to the memorial that groups can include if they wish in a downtown tour.”

New Jersey

Another more affordable “home base” for groups that want access to Midtown Manhattan is northern New Jersey. The location is also convenient for a private cruise around Manhattan, which a group representing Swiftwater, PA-based Sanofi Pasteur recently enjoyed.

New Brunswick

The Heldrich Hotel & Conference Center in New Brunswick is often the hotel of choice for the company’s sales training meetings in the area, and Sara Gunderman, CMP, manager of meeting operations, notes that “it’s a good location because it’s close to the Newark Airport, and it also works for our global meeting, where people fly in from France and Canada.”

Granted, New Brunswick is no New York, but it offers a downtown with plenty of highly rated restaurants and the State Theatre. The 235-room Heldrich Hotel is suitable for small groups such as Gunderman’s, especially those that are break-out-intensive. The hotel’s 25,000 sf of meeting space includes a 7,360-sf grand ballroom, 21 conference rooms, 11 breakout rooms and more. “We have many small breakouts and some of

our meetings include one-on-one training that doesn’t require a whole meeting room. So the hotel has an agreement with a Rutgers University learning center that offers the perfect size rooms for that training,” Gunderman explains. The service at the Benchmark-managed hotel “is phenomenal, they treat you like family,” she adds. “We have some people that might like, say, diet Mountain Dew, and the staff will literally go out and buy six packs of the beverage to make that person happy. The conference concierge makes signs and badges, copies for me, helps me with Excel spreadsheets and is very hands-on.”

Princeton

About 40 miles south of Newark Liberty International Airport, roughly equidistant from New York and Philadelphia, is Princeton. While it is one of the most famed college towns in the world, attendees won’t be sleeping in dorms here. Several top-brand, meetings-friendly hotels are on hand, including the 364-room Wyndham Princeton Forrestal Hotel & Conference Center (47,000 sf of meeting space); the 347-room Hyatt Regency Princeton (20,000 sf); and

the 300-room Princeton Marriott Hotel & Conference Center at Forrestal (35,000 sf). And nearby on 370 acres of woodlands is The Chauncey Hotel & Conference Center, offering 9,500 sf of meeting space, 22 IACC-approved meeting rooms and 100 guest rooms.

Among Princeton’s major cultural resources are the McCarter Theatre, Princeton Symphony Orchestra, Opera New Jersey and Princeton University Art Museum. Founded in 1882, the latter features more than 68,000 works and is particularly strong in Chinese painting and calligraphy, art of the ancient Americas and pictorial photography. For a sense of local history, groups can visit The Morven Museum & Garden. Located in the former New Jersey Governor’s Mansion, the museum exhibits fine, folk and decorative arts that represent the cultural heritage of the Garden State. Groups can also convene at the Hopewell Valley



The Heldrich Hotel in New Brunswick, NJ, is easily accessible from NYC-area airports and offers 25,000 sf of meeting space.

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Vineyards, LLC in nearby Pennington, and visit The Alchemist & Barrister Restaurant & Pub, a classic Princeton gathering spot located in a historic building on Witherspoon Street.

Atlantic City

Seemingly a world away from Princeton's quaint environs is Atlantic City, where the big news on the meetings scene is the \$2.4 billion Revel, set to open next May. Fronting the Atlantic City beach and Boardwalk, architects designed Revel to reflect views of the ocean, and the curve of the glass structure flows with the waves. Pools and lounges will have indoor and outdoor sections, and views of the ocean and Revel Beach are abundant throughout the resort casino.

The price tag is among the resort's many impressive numbers: 1,100 oceanview guest rooms (800 more will be phased in at a later date), 46 retail shops, 12 restaurants, a 22,000-sf spa, a 150,000-sf casino and a 5,500-seat theater. The meeting space is on a similarly grand scale: 160,000 sf, including a 70,000-sf event center featuring unobstructed views with general session area for up to 5,500 attendees including a 30,000-sf columnless ballroom and a 15,000-sf amphitheater; a 30,000-sf meeting center with 20 meeting rooms and boardrooms featuring a conference registration facility and a complete integrated business center; 60,000 sf of indoor hospitality space including high-rise suites, VIP salons, prefunction areas, private recep-



Slated to open next May, Revel fronts the expansive beach and Atlantic City Boardwalk. The 1,100-room casino hotel's glass structure reflects views of the ocean.

Also featuring an impressive collection of eateries is the 2,100-room Tropicana Hotel and Casino, with 122,000 sf of function space. Among its 21 restaurants is Carmine's, a New York City institution of Italian cuisine, and Cuba Libre in The Quarter at Tropicana, with authentic Cuban fare and a capacity for themed private events. The Quarter comprises three floors of shopping, dining, theater and spa services, as well as 500 guest rooms. Attendees also can stop by The Comedy Stop, and the 1,700-seat Tropicana Showroom is available for special events.

In recent years, the 1,144-room Caesars Atlantic City has invested \$75 million in renovating its Temple and Centurion Towers, as well as its Circus Maximus Theatre. The hotel's more than 28,000 sf of meeting space includes the 17,135 sf Palladium Ballroom. In June, Caesars opened the Atlantic Grill, featuring a daily selection of fresh seafood. During their free time, attendees also can explore more than 80 retailers and restaurants at The Pier Shops, or the recently expanded and newly branded Tanger Outlets The Walk, an open-air mall steps from the Atlantic City Convention Center. By the end of this year Tanger Outlets and the convention center will be served by the new 1,200-spot Christopher Columbus Garage.

Atlantic City is indeed about much more than gaming: Just like Las Vegas, it is diversifying its image and seriously pursuing convention and meeting business. Also, there is always built-in entertainment, and attendees will delight in the city's high-profile culinary events, such as the Borgata Food and Wine Experience and Food Network Atlantic City Food and Wine Festival, as well as its growing restaurant portfolio with more than 15 openings in the past year.

Another good sign is the commitment of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie who took over the Atlantic City casino and gaming district to revitalize the destination that he calls "Las Vegas East."

But the imminent opening of Revel in Atlantic City — with very significant meeting facilities — is undoubtedly the best sign that the city's meetings business is vital. And in view of the ongoing renovations to major hotels in New York City, it's clear that the New York/New Jersey area is gearing up to do much more of serious, face-to-face business in 2012.

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tion areas, dining venues; and 90,000 sf of outdoor hospitality space including a private beach, outdoor lobby garden (six levels above the beach) and cabana area.

Not to be outdone as Atlantic City's trendiest destination for groups is Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, which is investing \$50 million to renovate its 2,000-room main hotel by next June, just after Revel's debut. (Last year, Borgata redesigned more than 300 Fiore suites in the same tower.) Borgata offers 70,000 sf of meeting space, including a 30,000-sf column-free ballroom, as well as a theater with seating for 1,000 attendees. Private dining also can be arranged in celebrity chef restaurants such as Bobby Flay Steak and Wolfgang Puck American Grille.

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Bryan Churchill was named vice president of hotel sales at LA INC. The Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau. He was formerly with Marriott International where he was area sales leader.

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

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

Wade Thompson was named director of sales and marketing for the new Embassy Suites St. Louis Downtown, St. Louis, MO. He was director of sales and marketing for The Westin St. Louis.

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

The Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau has named **Robin O'Connor** as assistant director of sales. She most recently served as manager of global accounts with HelmsBriscoe.

Gene T. Hare was named director of sales, event sales center for the Hiltons of Chicago Complex. His most recent assignment was as director of sales and marketing of Oak Brook Hotels & Resorts.

Paul Pelican was named director of sales for The Westin Westminster, Westminster, CO. He was previously director of sales at the Sheraton Denver Downtown, Denver, CO.

Noble House Hotels & Resorts has promoted **Sean Mullen** to chief sales and

marketing officer. He previously served as corporate vice president of sales for Noble House Hotels & Resorts.

Benchmark Hospitality International has named **Warren Breaux** as corporate director of sales. He was previously director of sales and marketing for Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA.

Zak Kimble was named director of sales and marketing for the JW Marriott Denver Cherry Creek, Denver, CO. He most recently served as director of sales and marketing at the Denver Marriott City Center.

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

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

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Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau	35
Carnival Cruise Lines	29
Hilton Orlando	COV III
The Homestead	COV IV
Jack Fiala's Corporate Sidekicks	47
Ocean Reef Club	17, 19, 21
Ritz-Carlton	5
Royal Caribbean International	49
San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau	23
Sony Premium Incentive Sales Program	COV II
Turkish Culture and Tourist Office in New York	41
U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism	11

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