

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

## The Smart Choice

Changing Strategies for Finding Just the Right Destination and Venues

PAGE 40



**Spa Resorts**

PAGE 18

● **How Ethical Are You?**

Test Yourself on PAGE 32



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## Corporate & Incentive Travel

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By Stella Johnson



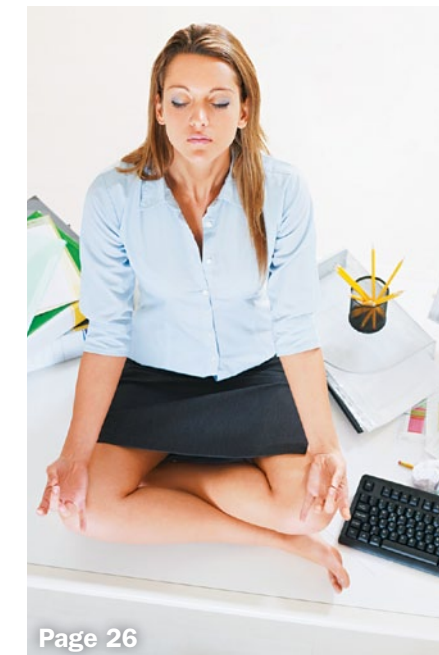
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**Awards of Excellence**  
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The Best of the Best for 2011

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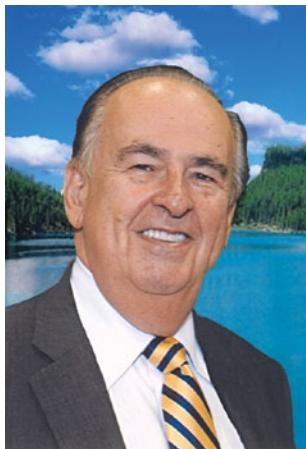
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## Here's Some Good Advice

Life can be difficult. So can meeting planning and site selection. Nevertheless, there's good advice and help all around. Sometimes, simply using the resources available to us can make the difficult seem easy. In our cover story on page 40, "The Smart Choice: Changing Strategies



for Finding Just the Right Destination and Venues," meeting professionals and experts advise how best to navigate the site-selection process for maximum success.

Choices abound. For example, technological advances such as virtual tours are a bonus. Ideally, a planner first tours venues virtually, partners with a DMC and/or CVB and then visits in person to confirm.

Nowadays, meeting content weighs heavily in the overall equation. "Our focus remains on the big-picture meeting goals and objectives, which ultimately define geographic and hotel profile criteria," says

Robyn Mietkiewicz, CMP, director, accounts and global meeting management services for Irvine, CA-based Meeting Sites Resource. "The emphasis on Strategic Meetings Management Programs has had a significant impact on site selection as far as what destinations and hotels are considered, as well as creating more budget parameters, all of which must be factored into the site selection process."

More good advice: Before the stress of the site selection process takes its toll, consider the expert recommendations in "The Myth of Work-Life Balance," on page 16. To find the delicate balance between the corner office and that sanctuary called home, explore the thought-provoking stories in "Three Planners Who Manage It All With Help From Family, Friends and Staff," on page 26. Finally, an in-person site inspection to a spa resort (page 18) might be the best antidote to stress. After all, as SpaFinders Inc. CRO Steve Kane observes, "Companies around the globe recognize that they can achieve corporate goals while they demonstrate their commitment to their employees' well-being by hosting a retreat at a spa that provides a healthy, productive environment, including nutritious meals and snacks, environmentally friendly facilities and diverse events that help attendees actually feel better and accomplish more."

This issue marks our 27th Annual Awards of Excellence. Flip the magazine over to recognize the best of the best — our 2011 award-winners.

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher



A COASTAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION PUBLICATION

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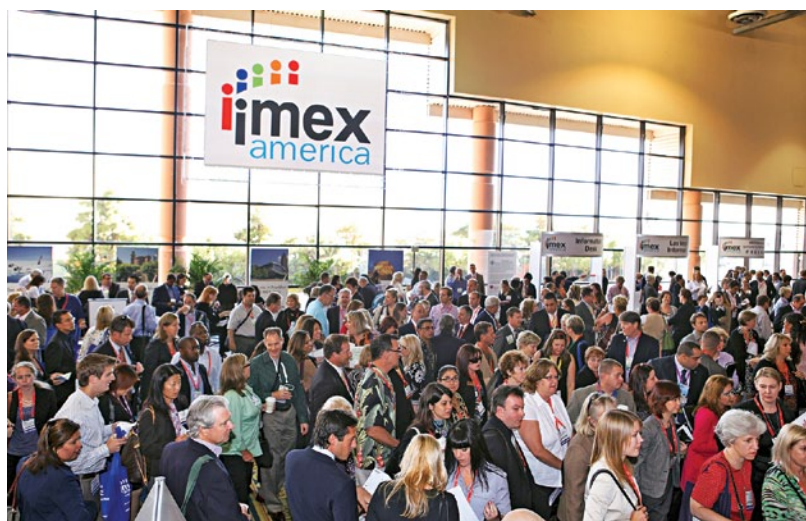




## First-Ever IMEX America Rates Rave Reviews

LAS VEGAS, NV — More than 2,000 hosted buyers, 1,700 attendees and nearly 2,000 exhibitors attended the debut of IMEX America held in Las Vegas, October 11–13. The new trade show for the meetings, incentive travel and events industry delivered high quality business, networking and professional education as promised, according to IMEX Group Chairman Ray Bloom and Bruce MacMillan, CEO and president of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), the show's strategic partner and premier education provider.

Bloom said, "We have successfully delivered a new, collaborative business model, which is not a U.S. trade show in Las Vegas but a truly global marketplace in America plus a tremendous education program. That was always our vision but, of course, over the past four days thousands of industry professionals have been able to see and experience it for themselves. They now completely understand what we set out to do and have appreciated the



The first IMEX America was held in October at the Sands Expo, Las Vegas.

fresh dimension it has brought to the industry here in the U.S."

Key show statistics include: More than 30,000 total appointments were made before and during the show including 23,930 individual appointments; 2,050 people used the IMEX app to enhance and inform their IMEX America experience; and the first-time use of RFID badging technology will provide new and deeper

levels of information. MacMillan said, "Having packed-out sessions at our own education conference is one thing. Having packed-out sessions at a trade show is unheard of. That's the big difference. MPI and IMEX America have changed the value proposition here in Vegas this week." The next IMEX America will take place October 9–11, 2012 at the Sands Expo, Las Vegas. [www.imexamerica.com](http://www.imexamerica.com)

## Oceania Cruises Debuts Themed Cruises for 2012



The 684-guest Nautica.

MIAMI, FL — For the first time, Oceania Cruises will feature themed cruises centered on food and wine, health and wellness, music and more. Beginning in 2012, 10 new "Signature Sailings" will feature seminars, hands-on classes, concerts, wine tastings and more. Culinary-themed sailings include "Tuscan Artistry" beginning on May 12 for

10 days (Barcelona – Rome) hosted by Jacques Pépin, Oceania Cruises' executive culinary director, who will hold court in his first namesake restaurant Jacques and lead Q&A sessions, cooking demonstrations and book signings. An Italian wine immersion cruise and two Bon Appétit Wine & Food Festival sailings are also on the calendar. A spring music fest "Mediterranean Tapestry" featuring a range of jazz styles will be held aboard the Nautica beginning May 14 for 10 days (Athens – Barcelona). A 10-day President's Cruise on the Nautica will be hosted by Oceania Cruises' President Bruce Himelstein and his wife Brigitte, and will voyage through Southern Europe beginning October 26, 2012. Oceania Cruises offers itineraries to more than 330 ports in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Americas aboard the 684-guest Regatta, Insignia and Nautica. The line's 1,250-guest Marina debuted in January 2011 and sister ship Riviera launches in April 2012. [www.oceaniacruises.com](http://www.oceaniacruises.com)

## Carlson Marketing Is Now Aimia

MINNEAPOLIS, MN— Groupe Aeroplan Inc., a global leader in loyalty management with head-



BEAUCHINE

quarters in Montreal, Canada, launched its new name Aimia. The company's business-to-business brands

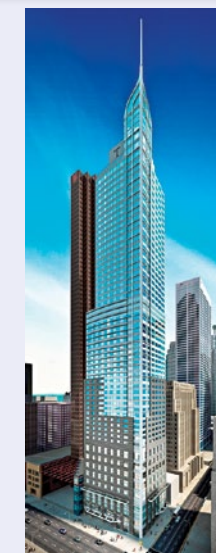
Carlson Marketing and LMG Insight & Communication will operate under the name Aimia. "Our global full suite of loyalty management services provides us with a clear competitive advantage in a rapidly changing marketplace," said Rupert Duchesne, Aimia president and CEO. "As competitors try to position themselves to take advantage of the burgeoning international market for loyalty management services, we are already well positioned as the established experts. A single, explicit global brand clearly reaffirms this privileged position." Fay Beauchine, president, Business Loyalty, Aimia [formerly Carlson Marketing] hosted a press conference at IMEX America last week to introduce the new name and launch Event RSx, Smart Event Measurement, which helps event managers go beyond tracking savings and satisfaction metrics. Beauchine says that measuring improved relationship strength provides a powerful way to monetize predictors of future business outcomes including sales, loyalty, satisfaction and advocacy. [www.aimia.com](http://www.aimia.com)

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## GLOBAL DESTINATIONS

### Trump Hotel Collection Furthers International Expansion

Trump International Hotel & Tower Toronto is set to welcome guests January 31, 2012, marking Trump Hotel Collection's second international hotel and first foray into Canada. Towering more than 900 feet above the city, it will be Canada's tallest residential building with an impressive 65 stories. Located in the heart of the financial and entertainment district, the 261-room hotel is near the new Opera House, the Harbourfront, Rogers Centre (formerly SkyDome) and Air Canada Centre. The hotel's 12,000 sf of function space is set over two floors linked by a dramatic staircase and features striking city skyline views and the most sophisticated technology equipment. [www.trumptorontohotel.com](http://www.trumptorontohotel.com)



**Singapore's Marina Bay Sands Seals Nearly 2,400 Events.** Marina Bay Sands, Asia's leading destination for business, leisure and entertainment, has secured nearly 2,400 events to date. "Eighteen months after we first opened our doors, Marina Bay Sands is experiencing solid momentum in our MICE business. We're at nearly full capacity for the trade show space, and are breaking our own records for the conference floors. With foreign delegates traveling to attend events at Marina Bay Sands, we're seeing growing demand in our hotel as well as spillover benefits for other hotels," said George Tanasijevich, president and CEO of Marina Bay Sands. Also, Marina Bay Sands received the Special Recognition – Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism Award from the Singapore Tourism Board at its annual celebration in October. [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com)

**Hyatt Regency Jinan Opens in China.** Hyatt Hotels Corporation announced the opening of Hyatt Regency Jinan in the East China capital city of Shandong province. Hyatt Regency Jinan occupies a landmark 28-story tower adjacent to the Wanda Plaza retail hub, Wanda Office Tower and Luxury Residences in the center of the city. The hotel is in close proximity to train stations and the airport, as well as attractions. Hyatt Regency Jinan offers 343 guest rooms and two dedicated floors of meeting and event venues, including a more than 13,000-sf pillar-less ballroom, which can accommodate 1,200 people for receptions, and nine additional venues accommodating 15 to 130 people. In addition to four dining venues, facilities include a fitness center, a luxury day spa by Hyatt and an indoor swimming pool. [www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)

**Fairmont to Welcome Historic Pekin Hotel to Portfolio.** Fairmont Hotels & Resorts will add another notable icon — Moscow's Pekin Hotel — to its collection. After a multiyear restoration program, the property will be rebranded Fairmont Pekin Moscow. The hotel will feature 236 spacious guest rooms and suites, including Fairmont Gold, the brand's exclusive room product that offers guests personalized service, a variety of amenities and the relaxed comfort of a residential-style lounge. Guests also will enjoy a selection of dining venues, more than 10,000 sf of meeting and function space as well as a Fairmont-branded spa and fitness facilities. Future Fairmont openings in 2012 include Baku, Azerbaijan; Jaipur, India; Kyiv, Ukraine; Manila, Philippines and The Palm, Dubai, UAE. [www.fairmont.com](http://www.fairmont.com)



## Incentive Survey Maps Rewards and Recognition Patterns

ST. LOUIS, MO — The Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) and Incentive Federation released more results of their comprehensive survey of 170 recognition and rewards administrators that delineates current practices for reward and recognition programs. According to IRF President Melissa Van Dyke, the overall findings of the survey indicate that independent of the industry involved — Finance/Insurance, Manufacturing, Technology, Medical — the respondents generally rely on “classic incentive programs” that are most often aimed at internal employees and people within distribution or sales channels. “Among other things, we found that, while award types were widely dispersed, pre-paid gift cards were used by 65 percent of all firms, with 26 percent using them exclusively,” said Van Dyke. “When we drill down further, gift cards are preferred as an easy way to provide spot award self-selected items to recipients using smaller reward budgets. Conversely, travel is overwhelmingly used for larger budgets (\$500k+) and for behavior tied to overall, annualized goal attainment,” she continued. An executive summary of the survey results, “The Use of Reward and Recognition Awards in Organizations,” is available on the IRF home page at [www.theirf.org](http://www.theirf.org).

## New Plans for AIBTM 2012

LONDON, ENGLAND — A combination of new exhibitor sales and a large number of returning 2011 exhibitors has kept the AIBTM sales team busy. AIBTM's show floor is more than 60 percent sold, with eight months to go until the show in June, 2012, in Baltimore, MD. Across the board, hotels, international destinations and U.S. CVBs are signing up. In addition to a larger show floor, Hosted Buyers for 2012 will be offered the opportunity to attend AIBTM for three nights, which will allow all of the Hosted Buyers to participate in the full three-day program. AIBTM opens with AIBTM Education day on June 19 with new dedicated association and corporate programs and is followed by the AIBTM Exhibition on June 20-21 for one-to-one meetings and networking. [www.aibtm.com](http://www.aibtm.com)

## Hyatt Place Waikiki Beach Hotel To Open in December

CHICAGO, IL — Hyatt Hotels & Resorts and Kokua Hospitality LLC announced that the Pali Tower at Hyatt Place Waikiki Beach, the first of two towers being constructed at this property, will open in December 2011. Diamond Tower is slated to complete construction in spring 2012. Hyatt Place Waikiki Beach, the first Hyatt Place introduced to the Hawaii market, features a total of 426 rooms, 191 in the Pali Tower and 235 in the Diamond Tower. All rooms will feature balconies offering views of the Waikiki Beach neighborhood, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi access, a 42-inch HDTV, a Hyatt Grand Bed and a sectional sofa sleeper. The property will offer 4,200 sf of meeting and event space. [www.waikiki.place.hyatt.com](http://www.waikiki.place.hyatt.com)

## MGM Grand Las Vegas Unveils New Guest Room and Suite Designs



LAS VEGAS, NV — MGM Grand revealed designs for its new rooms and suites. The \$160 million remodel includes all 3,570 guest rooms and 642 suites in the hotel's main tower and is expected to conclude by September 2012. The initial set of redesigned rooms will be complete by the end of November 2011. Featuring warm, yet vibrant designs and color palettes with contemporary furnishings, the new room and suite designs create comfortable and functional spaces within a sophisticated setting. In keeping with MGM Grand's commitment to sustainability, the newly remodeled rooms and suites incorporate environmentally responsible elements including LED lighting; improved thermostats and solar shades to better manage temperature and guest comfort; upgraded faucets and showers; and bath amenities that are 100 percent biodegradable. [www.thegrandrenovation.com](http://www.thegrandrenovation.com)

## MEETING VALUES



**Sheraton Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.** Planners whose meetings actualize at the Sheraton Atlanta between now and June 30, 2012 are eligible for a “Secret Santa” gift, based on size and scope of the meeting booked. This gift can benefit the organization, meeting planner or a charity. Some examples include shopping sprees in New York City, private jet charters, new cars, trips to Tahiti and more. “Secret Santa” groups must be contracted by December 31, 2011 to be eligible. 404-614-8240, [www.sheratonatlantahotel.com/secret-santa](http://www.sheratonatlantahotel.com/secret-santa)

■ **The Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD.** Meeting planners who book events that actualize 100 consecutive room nights between December 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 will be entered in a drawing to win the following: eight prizes of 10,000 Marriott Rewards points, in bi-weekly giveaways; two grand prize giveaways of 500,000 Marriott Rewards points. Offer is valid for new bookings that are confirmed by December 30, 2011. [www.easternmarriottoffers.com/millionpoints](http://www.easternmarriottoffers.com/millionpoints)

■ **Turnberry Isle Miami, Miami, FL.** The Perfect Meetings offer allows planners to choose up to four of the following: complimentary one-hour reception; site inspection package; 1/40 comp room; no attrition; one free night for each attendee on a return stay based on availability; 1/50 comp suite upgrade; 10 percent off AV; and complimentary high-speed Internet in meeting space. Valid for new group bookings arriving from June 1 through September 30, 2012. Contact Ben Baez, director of group sales, 305-933-6501, [bbaez@turnberryislemiami.com](mailto:bbaez@turnberryislemiami.com), or visit [www.turnberryislemiami.com](http://www.turnberryislemiami.com).

■ **InterContinental Hotels & Resorts.** The InterContinental Meetings package is offered in more than 20 hotels spanning the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. The offer, valid for new requests booked and fulfilled by February 29, 2012, includes free Internet access for all attendees throughout the hotel and an upgrade of one standard coffee break to a customized “Insider Break.” For details and a list of participating hotels, visit [www.intercontinental.com/meetingeurope-try](http://www.intercontinental.com/meetingeurope-try).

## Hyatt Regency New Orleans Celebrates Grand Re-Opening

NEW ORLEANS, LA — Following a redesign and revitalization, the Hyatt Regency New Orleans reopened October 19 with more than 200,000 sf of flexible meeting and event space. The \$275 million project, designed with the convention guest in mind, combines modern luxury with high function. The 1,193-room hotel will offer the most meeting

space of any hotel in the city, as well as the unique ability to self-contain group events of all sizes. “In planning the hotel's redevelopment, we conducted three economic studies and spoke directly to the industry's top meeting planners for unbiased feedback and recommendations,” said Michael Smith, general manager, Hyatt Regency New Orleans, who says the hotel now has the “ability to house, meet, feed and entertain more than 1,200 guests at one time.” New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said, “The commitment of Hyatt Regency to rebuild a world-class luxury hotel reinforces the optimism we feel today as we continue to create a New Orleans we all deserve. This beautiful new property will not only provide an important anchor for this bustling sports and entertainment district, but the redevelopment will result in a tremendous impact on our local economy, on job opportunity and on our core business of tourism.” [www.neworleans.hyatt.com](http://www.neworleans.hyatt.com)





# Events Calendar

**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  
San Diego, CA  
Contact: 877-827-7262  
www.pcma.org

**JANUARY 22-24, 2012**

**CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION (CHTA) CARIBBEAN MARKETPLACE**

Atlantis Paradise Island  
The Bahamas  
Contact: 305-443-3040  
www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com

**FEBRUARY 27, 2012**

**HOSPITALITY SALES AND MARKETING ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL (HSMIA) ADRIAN AWARDS**

New York Marriott Marquis  
New York, NY  
Contact: 703-506-3274  
www.adrianawards.com

**FEBRUARY 27, 2012**

**DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL (DMAI) FOUNDATION DINNER**

Walter E. Washington Convention Center  
Washington, DC  
Contact: 202-296-7888  
www.destinationmarketing.org

**FEBRUARY 28, 2012**

**DESTINATION MARKETING ASSOCIATION DESTINATIONS SHOWCASE WASHINGTON**

Walter E. Washington Convention Center  
Washington, DC  
Contact: 202-296-7888  
www.destinationsshowcase.com

**MARCH 21-23, 2012**

**IACC-AMERICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

La Torretta Lake Resort & Spa  
Montgomery (Houston), TX  
Contact: 314-993-8575  
www.iacconline.org

## StarCite Launches Solution for the Mid-Sized Meetings Management Market

LAS VEGAS, NV — StarCite Inc., a leading provider of Web-based solutions to strategically manage corporate meetings and events, at IMEX America in October announced StarCite Select, a streamlined version of its meetings management platform, created for meetings management companies (MMCs) and travel management companies (TMCs) that manage a smaller volume of meetings with different functionality requirements than their larger competitors. "The mid-sized MMC/TMC sector has been underserved for too long," says Linda J. McNairy, vice president, strategic partner management, StarCite. "These companies and their clients will now be able to benefit from the same innovative technology that larger companies enjoy, but focused on the features and functionality that matter most for this segment and priced in a way that fits the mid-sized market's specialized needs and business processes." StarCite's Nexus cloud-based technology platform is extremely easy to configure, navigate, update and scale to meet MMC/TMCs' changing needs. Other key features of StarCite Select include unlimited user accounts, 24/7 customer support, and unique website branding for each individual MMC/TMC. [www.starcite.com](http://www.starcite.com)

## Hilton Columbus Downtown Tops Out



COLUMBUS, OH — In October, representatives from Franklin County, City of Columbus, Turner Construction Company, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority, Hilton Worldwide, community leaders and other hotel project supporters (pictured) celebrated the "topping out" of the \$140 million Hilton Columbus Downtown, scheduled to open in fall 2012. The convention headquarters hotel, located on the west side of High Street directly adjacent to the SMG-managed Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena, will boast 532 guest rooms and approximately 22,800 sq ft of meeting space.

Said Bill Jennison, executive director, Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority, "With the addition of the Hilton Columbus Downtown, Columbus can now offer multiple downtown-headquarter hotel opportunities to more than one convention or trade show at a time, as well as meet the needs of our existing annual business that continues to grow each year. The additional rooms and meeting space the Hilton Columbus Downtown brings, significantly strengthens our product offering in the global market allowing us to host larger national conventions and trade shows within the 1.7 million-sq Greater Columbus Convention Center." [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com)

## GBTA Announces New Global Meetings Task Force

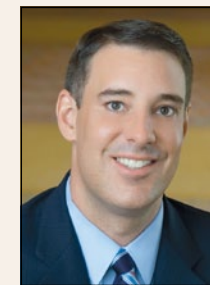
ALEXANDRIA, VA — The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) announced the creation of a new task force with a commitment to enhancing meetings strategy in global education, accelerated thought leadership, industry collaboration and best practices. The task force, led by Linda J. McNairy, vice president, strategic partner management, StarCite, will further bring the discipline of strategic meetings management into the forefront of the business travel industry as an important aspect of progressive travel management and will propel the progress and definition of global strategic meetings management. The task force will be comprised of industry visionaries and practitioners including thought leaders of the former groups and meetings committee. It will build upon the body of work created by GBTA, including the recently launched SMM Maturity Index. The task force will outline a new strategic vision for Global SMM to launch in early 2012. [www.gbta.org](http://www.gbta.org)

## Grande Lakes Orlando Unveils Major Redesign

ORLANDO, FL — Grande Lakes Orlando, comprised of a 582-room Ritz-Carlton and a 1,000-room JW Marriott, has unveiled the resort's most comprehensive redesign project since its opening in July 2003. The refurbished rooms now feature tiled-floor entryways and plasma televisions outfitted with jack packs that allow guests to view input from their MP3 players, laptops and CD/DVD players on the TV display panel. [www.grandelakes.com](http://www.grandelakes.com)

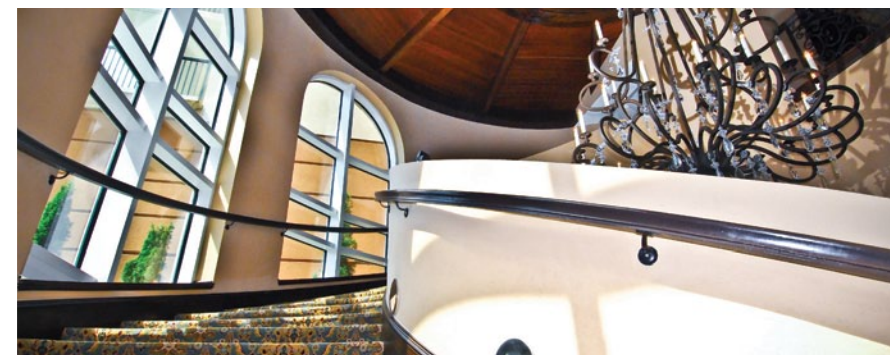
## Caesars Entertainment Announces Reorganization of Meetings Businesses

LAS VEGAS, NV — Caesars Entertainment Corporation announced a country-wide reorganization of its meetings businesses into a single department under one leadership team. The move



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mirrors a successful effort undertaken by the company in 2005 to combine meeting sales and services across eight Las Vegas properties. The new structure impacts 38 Caesars Entertainment properties and will extend benefits originally introduced under the Las Vegas Meetings by Caesars Entertainment brand. These include the Meeting Diamond and Alternative Venues programs, as well as the ability to mix and match properties and venues within a destination with a single contact, contract and minimum. Planners also can benefit from the Total Rewards Meetings & Events program. "This is really about making the process as simple and convenient as possible for our customers," said Senior Vice President Michael Massari. "We are confident these changes — particularly the unification of our sales and services teams across our properties — will lead to increased satisfaction and success for our customers." [www.caesarsmeetings.com](http://www.caesarsmeetings.com)



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Sarah Vining

# How to Be the Planner Who 'Gets It'

## 10 Tips to Make Sure Training Meetings Speak to All Generations

**A**ll 50 attendees are present for your training session, but is every attendee mentally there in the meeting room? It can be difficult to capture the attention of every person. After all, each attendee has different traits with particular learning styles and preferences. Each of them has his or her own issues or questions that they've come to resolve. More specifically, in order to solve this for each individual, you must understand how each generation learns and trains differently.

Ann Fishman, a generational marketing strategist, explains, "A big part of training consists of generational differences. If trainers don't understand the added value of all four generations and their lifestyles, they'll limit the company from getting the most from their work force and risk losing good people." By understanding generational differences, you can support each generation's training style and help them to become not only an engaged attendee, but a participant.

**1 Embrace technology.** Think beyond projectors and slide presentations. To engage younger Gen Xers and all of Gen Yers, planners must support the use of cellphones and other technology. The ultimate goal of this generation is to learn by sharing it with their network through mobile technology and social media. Well-known for multitasking, these individuals are listening while tweeting your great insight, so accept the use of technological devices as a great learning tool, and also as flattering.

**2 Any style but today's classroom.** Imagine the typical classroom with row seating facing the front of the room. The goal of every meeting planner should be to break

this standard in order to have attendees engage and interact. The average attention span of any individual, no matter the generation, is 10 minutes. According to Jeff Hurt, a director of education and engagement for a consulting agency, presentations should be broken into 10-minute segments with two to three minutes for discussion among attendees in order to relate the material to past experiences and retain the most.

**3 The right to practice the First Amendment.** Individuals are proven more likely to engage in a session if they're able to state their personal beliefs. Better training formats for engagement consist of small group interaction with facilitators and a hands-on audience, which results in higher learning and retention for every generation.

**4 Training begins before arriving on-site.** For Generation Yers and some Gen Xers, learning begins before the first session and continues year-round. To engage this group, education must occur year-round through blogs, Facebook and Twitter. Content is no longer king only at conferences. This generation knows content can be found online; they travel to conferences to network and continue their online relationships face-to-face.

**5 Why attendees travel to attend.** Technology offers the ability for individuals to learn something they might have previously traveled to a conference to understand. Social communication allows us to build online communities and connect to others in our industry. However, conferences provide something that social networks don't: the ability to interact face-to-face, which is the reason people are traveling to conferences. Today, every generation is paying for a face-



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to-face experience, so provide ample networking opportunities and informal interaction between sessions through hallway chats.

**6 Provide a variety of settings.** To appeal to every generation, choosing a venue with an abundance of space is imperative. The future of conferences is based on space and design that foster collaboration and networking. A meeting room for your general session should be anamorphic so your attendees can transition into different training styles, such as group teambuilding exercises, which appeal to Gen Yers, or a fishbowl concept where Gen Xers can voice their beliefs.

**7 Peer-knowledge sharing.** Pair up Gen Yers and baby boomers — two very diverse

to be rewarded differently, too. For instance, Gen Yers want to be rewarded along the way with pats on the back and encouragement, while Gen Xers prefer a day off as a job well done. Most baby boomers enjoy a rewards ceremony to celebrate an accomplishment.

**9 One size doesn't fit all.** Trainers and meeting planners who apply unbiased generational practices in their training and development will be most successful. Never assume a traditional instruction will fit all, while long presentations don't fit any of the generations. Baby boomers are the only generation who can concentrate the longest in that type of setting. Work with individuals from each generation to develop and imple-

*To engage (Gen Yers and Gen Xers), education must occur year-round through blogs, Facebook and Twitter.*

generations who enjoy each other's company. Gen Yers appreciate the opportunity to spend time with baby boomers who are veterans with a vast amount of knowledge. Baby boomers also enjoy acting as coaches to guide Gen Yers. In this peer-knowledge sharing experience, baby boomers also value the technology insight Gen Yers can offer them. The pairing of these two generations is very well-received by audiences.

**8 Reward each differently.** Historical events that occur during the formative years of each generation shape its characteristics, which is why each generation has its similarities and differences. Each generation wants

ment the different learning styles into your training development plan.

**10 Educate upper level management.** For C-level executives, trainers and human resources personnel, recognizing and understanding generational differences can assist in employee engagement and loyalty. People want to work in a place where their employers "get them," and they can build trust.

Understanding the characteristics of each of your attendees proves that each generation is different. In meetings, appealing to each generation leads to happy participants, higher retention rates and essentially, a more efficient work force.

C&IT

*Sarah Vining is the marketing manager for The National Conference Center and is the voice behind the conference center's social media. She writes daily blog posts for meeting planners and tweets with guests who need to remove wine stains. Sarah also composes quarterly white papers for The National Conference Center. If you think you have the next best white paper topic, feel free to introduce yourself to Sarah at [svining@conferencecenter.com](mailto:svining@conferencecenter.com).*

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Jon Gordon

# The Myth of Work-Life Balance

## Seven Ways to Rethink Your Approach to the Daily Grind

If you've been killing yourself trying to achieve daily work-life balance, it may be a pipe dream. In a perfect world, work and home would balance out neatly. We'd work from 8 to 5 each day, take an hour-long lunch, and then come home and spend uninterrupted time with our families. But for those of us mired in the wake of the Great Recession, firmly entrenched in an "always on" society, this notion seems hopelessly outdated. Most of us are working longer, more stressful hours, and work is spilling over into evenings and weekends. No wonder a recent survey of North American employees found that 87 percent of respondents say their work-life balance (or lack thereof) is negatively affecting their health.

Work-life balance, at least in the sense that most of us think about it, is a myth. It does not exist. For many people, it never has. Personally, I have never been able to balance the scales of work and life on a day-to-day basis. Rather, I've come to realize that the dance between work and life is more about rhythm than balance. I compare the rhythms of work and life to the rhythms of nature: There's a time and a season for everything.

Here are seven ways you can rethink the concept of work-life balance and find passion and purpose in both arenas:

**1 Let go of the work-life balance notion.** Instead, think purpose and passion. It's true that work-life balance is a topic that seems to be on many minds, But in many ways a perfectly balanced life is a perfectly tepid life. How much balance do you think Bono has when

U2 is on tour? What about an Olympic athlete preparing for a competition? Or the leadership team at Facebook? Probably not much, but their passion and purpose fuel them to work harder and longer with more joy and satisfaction in both work and life. When your goal is to achieve work-life balance, you'll be constantly disappointed and so will your loved ones. Rather, approach every day with passion and purpose to find joy and happiness.

**2 Look at your work-life blend over the past year and consider it as a whole.** Rather than thinking of your work and life day-to-day, think of it as a whole. You might find that, when viewed that way, you did have a balanced life. Or you might realize you need to make a change in the way you do things during the upcoming year. Recognize that it is going to be virtually impossible to achieve complete balance every day of your life. Schedule times to work hard, recharge, renew, play and engage with your family and friends.

**3 Identify the "seasons" in your company's work flow.** Most organizations work this way. They have busy seasons (when they're getting ready for major industry events or peak sales times, for instance) and not-so-busy seasons. It might be easy for you to plan your work/home life flow around these times. Not just in terms of when you plan vacations, but also in terms of daily work hours. During the slow time, it's OK to leave a little earlier each day

if you know you're going to be working long hours once busy season arrives. Everyone's rhythm is a little different, but when you find the right one for you and your life, you'll be able to achieve a lot more at work and at home.

**4 Keep in mind your family's "seasons" too.** Of course, you can't base everything on work schedules. There are times your family needs you more than others: birth of a new baby, when a child starts school, or when an older parent is having a crisis and needs you to care for him/her. You have to be ready to adjust to the season. You have to go where you are needed. If you are

### 6 When you're at work, really engage.

Fully commit to whatever you're doing at work. Don't complain — positivity goes a long way. And don't feel guilty that you are not at home. Feeling guilty is a recipe for misery and poor performance on the job and unhappiness at home. Commit fully to your season of hard work while planning for your season of rest and recharging. When you commit to your season of work, you won't be tempted to watch the clock, dreading each hour before you finally get to leave work for the day. You'll be more successful at work and feel more fulfilled.

*...the dance between work and life is more about rhythm than balance.*

worried about work at those times, you can take comfort in knowing that there will be a period when you can apply more of yourself to the job.

**5 Build up a "hard work" bank account.** When the company or your client needs you to really push hard, do it cheerfully. This way, when you need to slow down the pace, they'll be willing to work with you. Think of it as making deposits into a bank account. By willingly and happily accepting the challenge of a difficult project or client or by working long hours to meet an important deadline, you make deposits in the hard-work bank account. When you need to make a withdrawal, you'll have plenty of goodwill.

### 7 When you're at home, really BE at home.

Throw yourself into those precious family relationships. It's not about the amount of time we spend with our families — it's about how engaged we are during the time we do have with them. When you live your non-work season to the fullest, you'll be all the more motivated to give 110 percent when you're at work.

Understanding your rhythms, and planning and committing to the seasons of your life may not help you achieve perfect work-life balance. But you will create a life that is more passionate, more productive and happier in every way.

*Find out how three meeting planners manage it all on page 26.* **C&IT**

Jon Gordon is a consultant, keynote speaker and author. His most recent book is *The Seed: Finding Purpose and Happiness in Life and Work* (Wiley, 2011). Gordon has worked with such clients as the Atlanta Falcons, the PGA Tour, Northwestern Mutual, JPMorgan Chase and Publix Supermarkets. [www.jongordon.com](http://www.jongordon.com)



# Meetings at Spa Resorts

## Ready for Prime Time



The T Spa at the Tulalip Resort Casino offers tranquil packages for women, groups and unique programs just for men.

Photo courtesy of Tulalip Resort Casino

Oh, for a luxurious deep tissue massage in the late afternoon — especially after an agenda of early morning workshops and an exciting cattle drive on the ranch. Sounds like a strange combination of events, but corporate groups that meet at the Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch in Saratoga, WY, can do just that.

One such four-day event at Brush Creek was a recent executive retreat for a corporate chairman and 20 of his direct

reports. The group consisted of high-level executives of the company who used the ranch to “get away from it all,” as well as promote camaraderie among the participants. And, adds Kasey McNabney, director of sales, “Everyone in the all-male group used the spa.”

Stacey Kerns is spa director of The Trailhead Spa at The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch, a popular venue that combines traditions of the American

West with indigenous ingredients to create a truly sensory experience. Kern says, “We try to incorporate the spa as a part of the corporate meeting’s ‘on your own’ activities. Attendees can indulge in the late afternoon as our ‘rest, refresh, relax’ time that comes just before that final night banquet or awards dinner.”

Kerns notices that many companies either extend one complimentary spa treatment to attendees, or at least offer

the time for them to use the spa treatments on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Kerns adds that men are spending more time in the spa, and “definitely not passing up that deep tissue massage,” she says.

### The Latest Trends

According to *SpaFinder.com*, which *The New York Times* touts as “immensely responsible for the overall growth of

the worldwide spa industry,” spa-going is burgeoning among individuals and groups alike. For instance, recent statistics indicate that U.S. spa industry revenues grew 800 percent in roughly the last 15 years, skyrocketing from \$2.1 billion in 1997 to \$15.9 billion in 2010, and the number of spas has grown from 1,500 to 22,500 within that same time-frame. *SpaFinder*’s 8th Annual Spa Trend Report for 2011 lists the Top 10 Trends growing out of this growing industry as:

- Anti-aging treatments
- Asian emphasis
- Salt rooms and salt caves
- Branded products
- The science of spa
- Hyperlocal
- Extreme beauty
- On-the-run or a “New York Minute”
- Event-related
- Affordable

The last of these, of course, is great news to planners. And, while most planners already know how powerful a sales tool an incentive trip to a leading spa resort can be, a number of experts cite these trends as well:

**Generational shift.** An increasing number of men, mostly younger executives, are taking to spa treatments and services than ever before

**Integration.** A number of spa-related activities and refreshments are being presented intermittently throughout the corporate meeting itself

**Adjunct activity.** Pairing spa treatments with outdoor recreational activities, like a massage after 18 holes on the golf course.

**Spa as backdrop.** Soothing colors, beautiful surroundings, a calming atmosphere, and a sense of security and privacy make spa resorts ideal settings for serious conferences.

### The Best Things in Life

According to Rebecca Morgan, director of sales support at Sugar Grove, IL-based *Votre Vu*, a distributor of beauty

and skin-care products with a French twist, keeps its sales reps motivated, inspired and upbeat about the company and its multitude of skin-care products by pampering its best producers. Morgan, who plans corporate events, meetings and incentive trips for the company, orchestrated a sales incentive program in July to Spa Terra at The Meritage Resort and Spa, located in Napa, CA, which is North America’s first full-service spa in an underground wine cave. The Meritage, which boasts roughly 50,000 sf of meeting and event space, is ideal for a corporate group meeting or incentive program. “This was a five-day, incentive trip for our qualifying Brand Ambassadors that included 31 sales reps, all women, as well as spouses (15),” says Morgan.

The Meritage was chosen because *Votre Vu* wanted its leading sales reps to experience a spa resort and the beautiful Napa Valley area. “After all, we are a French skin-care company that believes in the best things in life, and The Meritage Resort and Spa was fantastic from top to bottom.”

Morgan, who says she melts at the thought of a hot stone massage herself, allotted one day solely to spa treatments and relaxation for the members of their group, with the rest of the days spent at meetings and other corporate events.

That package of joy consisted of massage, body scrub, facial and body wrap for each individual, and lasted for nearly three hours. The men in the group also were included.

For planners who are adverse to the high cost so often associated with such luxurious treatments, Morgan stresses that the best idea is to plan everything far in advance and book everything as a package. “That way, planners will get the best rates. Plus, since it is so rare these days for a company to say ‘thank you’ to their employees in this manner, a little kindness and pampering like this goes a very long way in terms of corporate bonding, morale boosting, relationship-building and more.

By Stella Johnson



Everyone gets so much more from the overall meeting experience."

### When in Rome

As an executive business coach, Joyce K. Reynolds always keeps an eye out for meeting venues with environments that foster focus and productivity. As she states, "These days, and with greater frequency, the ultimate business/personal combination events that we're witnessing in the meeting industry are being held at spa resorts and other health and wellness centers."

As owner and meeting management facilitator of her Fort Lauderdale, FL-based company, Reynolds' clients have included such corporate giants as DHL, Lucent Technologies, McGraw Hill and Office Depot, among others. Rather uniquely, one of Reynolds' services is to design meetings that "specifically encourage the use of healing treatments in partnership with the meeting itself, particularly when companies are going through stressful times like downsizing, rebranding, repositioning, mergers and acquisitions, and so on," she states.

Ideally, Reynolds likes to plan meetings and executive coaching agendas with "scheduled interruptions" for spa treatments or yoga classes built right into the

business program. She suggests that planners take the 'when in Rome' approach, with their group and make suggestions about which types of spa treatments might be the most fun or beneficial



*"Very few men would think of having a facial until it is explained how relaxed, youthful and invigorated they will look and feel afterwards."*

Joyce K. Reynolds, Business Coach, Meeting Management Facilitator  
Fort Lauderdale, FL

for them. "Very few men would think of having a facial until it is explained how relaxed, youthful and invigorated they will look and feel afterwards," notes Reynolds.

Reynolds believes that those who have never tried yoga or have never even had a pedicure should break out of that rut immediately and try spa treatments, especially at meetings, which she views as very fertile ground for trying new things and making life-changing choices. "It not only reduces the tension of processing difficult information at meetings, but awakens creativity, encourages flexibility in more ways than one, and makes it far more difficult for any rigidity of opinion to be held in place when re-commencing work sessions," she observes.

Reynolds recently used a spa resort while coaching an international yacht sales and charter company. "This was a very disparate group of 80 attendees from various departments with conflicting needs and desires, and was a trio of management, independent sales and charter reps. The purpose was to negotiate new working arrangements and subsequent contracts that were cooperative with one another rather than competitive, as was the practice. The spa environment was the ideal backdrop for my coaching them through new corporate policies," she says.

"Furthermore, I never work in an enclosed room. If there are no windows, no

soothing outdoor view, I skip it. I also use scented air, exotic flowers, cucumber-and-mint water in glass pitchers on conference tables, etc. These are things the planner can easily access at a spa that are not part of the typical meeting, all of

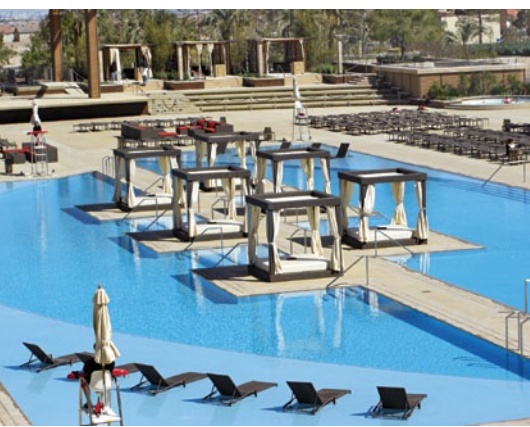
which produce a totally different result — and aren't expensive to do."

For individuals who remain skeptical about the overall benefits of indulging in spa services during, after or before an important meeting, Reynolds actually takes the attendee's pulse before and after any given spa treatment. "This demonstrates, on the spot, the practical and positive aspects of self-care to the greater purpose of the offsite corporate event," offers Reynolds.

### Traditional Spouse Programs

Dianne Davis, president of Arrow, OK-based TulNet, an independent meeting and event planning company with corporate clients including BG Products Inc., Kenworth Truck Company and Baker Hughes Inc. Davis has 25 years of travel, meeting, and event experience, and has on many occasions utilized spa resorts for her clients, especially when spouses and guests are part of the mix.

"Selecting spas is another matter," she says, preferring a spa resort that is known for something unique such as its massages on the beach or morning exercises on the side of a mountain. Or, if the spa resort is known for a particular item that is indigenous to the area in the way of clay, herbs, water and so on. "My quest is to book a spa resort so that the group can try something we can't get anywhere else," she says.

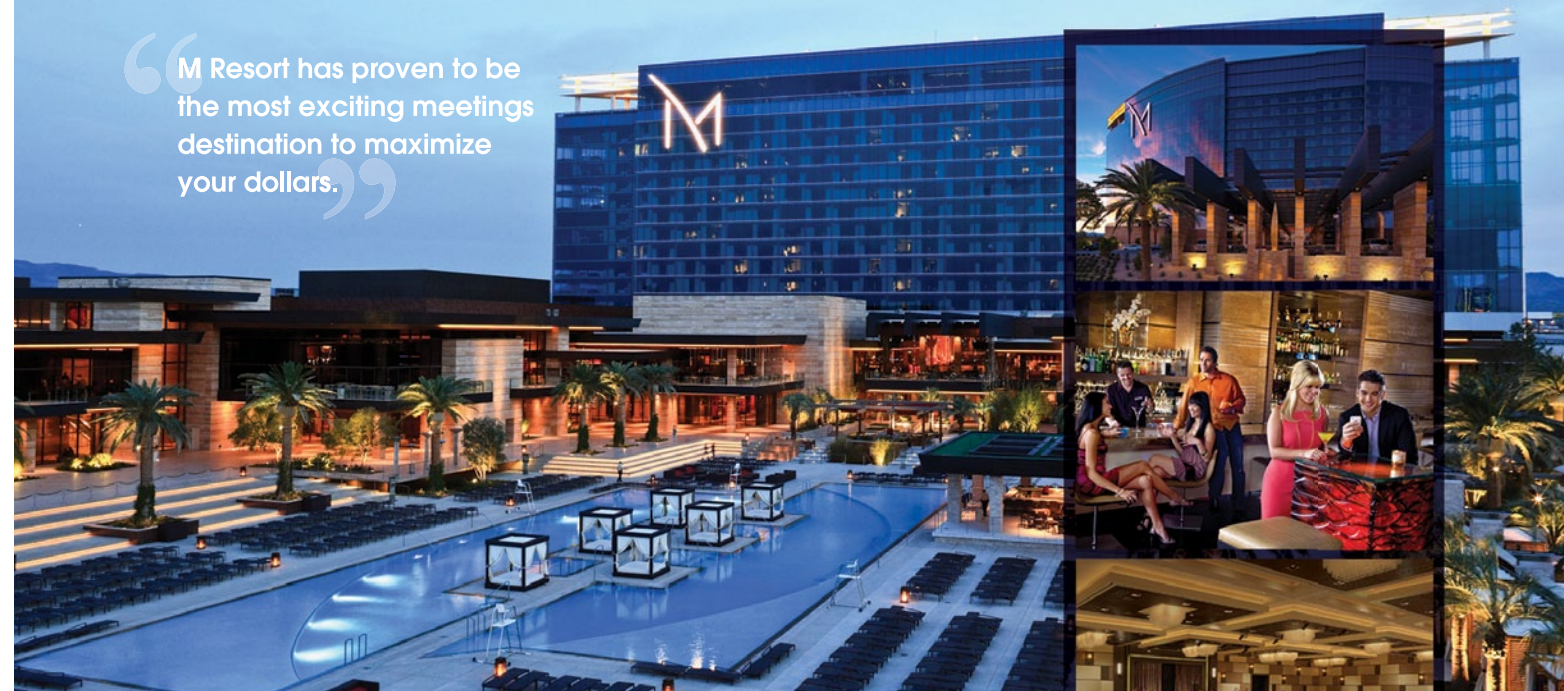


The Villaggio del Sole Pool at M Resort Spa and Casino boasts infinity-edge pools and cabanas outfitted with VIP comforts.

Photo courtesy of M Resort Spa and Casino

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Davis observes that an increasing number of hotels are adding spa venues to their properties, and that planners should take advantage of them.

"Huge caution, though. With the growing popularity of spas, I find some hotels are rushing into it, adding them as fast as they can in order to compete in the marketplace even if they are only mediocre and have a limited staff. That's not the spa experience most meeting attendees expect these days.

"Most important, be certain the spa is

licensed by the health department and that all masseuses, aestheticians, manicurists and so on, have up-to-date licenses to practice their art. The last thing you want is an issue where one of your attendees

has a negative experience. If that occurs, I can promise that it will burn through the meeting group like wildfire."

Recent assignments have included an oral surgical supply company that booked the Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne,



**Dianne Davis**, President  
TulNet, Arrow, OK

***"Most important, be certain the spa is licensed by the health department and that all masseuses, aestheticians, manicurists and so on, have up-to-date licenses to practice their art."***

## Kick-Start a Healthful Lifestyle at a Spa Resort Meeting

Steve Kane is the chief revenue officer for SpaFinder Inc., the world's largest spa and wellness marketing and media company, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Formerly a vice president at LeSportsac and national sales manager at Liz Claiborne, Kane marked his five-year anniversary with SpaFinder Inc. *Corporate & Incentive Travel* invited Kane to discuss the overall health of the spa resort industry, particularly as it relates to corporate meetings.

**C&IT** How relevant are spa resorts to corporate meetings?

**SpaFinder** We live in a time of unusually high levels of stress and a time when people are seeking to take more responsibility for their own well-being, whether it is for weight loss and nutrition, stress reduction, fitness, emotional health or learning how to improve one's quality of sleep. Companies around the globe recognize that they can achieve corporate goals while they demonstrate their commitment to their employees' well-being by hosting a retreat at a spa that provides a healthy, productive environment, including nutritious meals and snacks, environmentally friendly facilities and diverse events that help attendees actually feel better and accomplish more.

**C&IT** Are spa resorts making a welcome comeback to the meetings community?

**SpaFinder** Spas for corporate events have seen steady growth for three primary reasons:

1. Corporations are looking to hold events in an environment that is healthy for business and for its employees.
2. Today, spas are complete meeting environments. Golf, tennis, skiing, hiking, and other sports and experiences are the new norm at destination and resort spas, and many offer a variety of fine dining experi-

ences, too, including award-winning wine lists. As the demand for corporate spa retreats continues to accelerate, most spas also provide private meeting rooms with sophisticated AV/Internet services, meeting planners and customized teambuilding activities, and so on.

3. Employees are also getting into the mix and driving the demand for scheduling company meetings or retreats at spa locations that offer something for all attendees.

**C&IT** How can planners better incorporate spa treatments and services into the meeting program?

**SpaFinder** As far as incorporating "spa" into the meeting program, it's important to remember that treatments, such as a massage, take up just an hour or two of a typical spa day. The rest of the time can be devoted to exercise, wellness and nutrition classes, fitness activities like water sports or yoga, etc. If you're planning a meeting at a spa, think about topping off a strenuous meeting day with time for a rejuvenating spa treatment.

**C&IT** How do spa venues address executive stress issues?

**SpaFinder** Spas are all about stress reduction. In fact, research shows that the top reason people choose



Miraval Resort & Spa, located in Tucson, AZ, is touted as the perfect environment for inspired corporate group retreats.

Miami for five days last year. The group of 500 attendees met to discuss latest trends in the oral surgery field. The group of spouses and guests utilized the services at The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne spa, which was named one of the best spas in North America by *Condé Nast Traveler*. The spa features 21 treatment rooms, a Wellness Center, state-of-the-art fitness center and full-service salon, and offers everything from massages and facials to Key Biscayne spa packages.

Davis' approach was a traditional one. "With the number of spouses and guests who were going to be in atten-

dance, we knew we needed to occupy their time while the attendees were at meetings. Additionally, the demographics of this segment were that of an educated, well-traveled and high-income group," Davis says. "For them, staying at resorts and enjoying the spa facilities is an expectation."

Davis worked with The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne spa director well in advance and arranged three key items:

- Distribute spa gift cards to encourage use of the spa facility while meetings were in session. "We needed spouses and guests to stay occupied so they wouldn't be distracting their

husbands or significant others at the meeting," she explains.

- Arrange for spa discounts for added value. Thus, spouses and guests would receive more for their money.
- Arrange for additional spa staff so that there would be plenty of availability for the guests.

### Noteworthy

Opened in 2009, the M Resort Spa and Casino in Las Vegas, known for its award-winning, four-star customer service and wide array of amenities, offers 390 guest rooms and suites as well as the popular Spa and Salon Mio, a 23,000-sf

to visit a spa is to relieve stress (Coyle Hospitality Research 2011). Virtually, every aspect of a spa meeting or retreat can address this important and timely issue, starting with the realization that the company chose to hold its meeting in a relaxing spa environment. Planners can choose from a wide range of stress-reducing activities such as meditation and yoga classes, healthy sleep programs, classes with stress-reduction specialists — and the list goes on.

***"Companies...recognize that they can achieve corporate goals while they demonstrate their commitment to their employees' well-being by hosting a retreat at a spa."***



**Steve Kane**, Chief Revenue Officer  
SpaFinders Inc., New York, New York

**C&IT** Do real men get pedicures?

**SpaFinder** There is absolutely a generational shift of an increasing number of men booking spa appointments while at a meeting. Spas have become mainstream and now attract all groups from all demographics, fueling an explosive growth of facilities and revenues. But, let's not think of spa resorts as a place for "mani-pedis." Instead, I'd like to suggest, "Real men — and women — want to be healthy," and a spa is the best place to kick-start that lifestyle, especially at a corporate meeting.

**C&IT** Can you provide any statistics regarding the popularity of spa resorts with corporate groups?

**SpaFinder** There hasn't been enough research to de-

termine the exact growth in the spa/corporate meeting business but, over the last 15 years, growth has been very significant — bracketing, of course, the more challenging years of 2008 and 2009.

Individual reports published from resort/destination spas testify to the fact that that crucial segment of their business is coming back, post-recession. For example, Miraval Resort & Spa (Tucson, AZ), which recently added a new executive program, focused on corporate energy-building in '09, in addition to their traditional meetings offerings, and reported in late 2010 that half of all of their available executive courses were booked for the remainder of the year.

Likewise, Stowe Mountain's (The Spa at Stowe Mountain Lodge) creative corporate spa programs have been so successful that they recently spurred the hotel to open an additional 179 rooms. Their corporate business was up 34 percent in 2010 over 2009, with about 30 percent of their bookings now from business groups.

**C&IT** How does SpaFinder reach out to corporate groups?

**SpaFinder** Our mission is "bringing wellness to all," and that includes companies looking to help their employees be healthier and happier. In addition to presenting a diverse selection of spas for corporate meetings and retreats, along with website content that helps people make sensible lifestyle choices, SpaFinder is launching a "Wellness Voucher" program that will allow companies to reward and motivate employees with programs and services at our entire network of spas. Again, spas used to mean "pampering" but now they mean "wellness." That plays heavily into today's corporate lifestyle.

— SJ





Photo courtesy of The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch

Attendees are invited to rest, refresh and relax at Wyoming's Trailhead Spa at The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch.

world-class spa that offers relaxing and revitalizing experiences. The spa offers 16 treatment rooms, sauna, steam and Jacuzzi wet areas, full-service salon and barbershop, luxury locker rooms and a state-of-the-art fitness center.

The spa offers relaxation from head to toe with a new Tease Package that includes three 25-minute "pick-me-up" services for only \$100: a 25-minute scrub, which increases circulation, detoxifies impurities and strengthen cells; a 25-minute head-and-foot massage; and a 25-minute manicure.

For planners booking spa meetings and conferences in the Pacific Northwest, the Tulalip Resort Casino, located in Marysville, WA, near Seattle, is an ideal destination. Featuring 370 guest rooms and 30,000 sf of meeting facilities, Tulalip Resort Casino also features tranquil packages at its T Spa, a full-service luxury spa with 16 treatment rooms and 24-hour fitness center. In addition, the Oasis Pool area with relaxing hot tub doubles as a unique function space adjacent to meeting areas.

T Spa packages are designed to soothe attendees so that they emerge rejuvenated, refreshed and renewed. Programs just for men include Gentlemen's Cascade Purifying Facial, Techno-De-Stress Massage, Royal King's Bath Ritual and more.

## From the Field

**Spa buyout.** According to David Semanoff, a spokesperson for Grand Wailea, a Waldorf Astoria Resort, located in Maui, there is at least one corporate group that buys out the entire spa every year for its annual event. "The cost of which comes to about 400 spa treatments," he says. Alternative options are plentiful, says Semanoff. For example, "A software company of 400 attendees hosts an annual event at Grand Wailea but, because of a more limited budget, buying out Spa Grande wasn't an option," he says. "Instead, Spa Grande created a mini-spa adjacent to the meeting room where they offered hand, foot and chair massages, as well as henna tattoos and hair braiding. Then, attendees can purchase a spa card for a nominal fee where they can punch the card for three of the services. This demonstrates a compromise for a company wanting to infuse the relaxing spa experience directly into the event, while keeping the costs down for the company."

**Spa breaks instead of coffee breaks.** The Breakers Palm Beach, the iconic oceanfront resort in Palm Beach, FL, finds 15-minute spa breaks at meetings make more sense than coffee breaks and offers these options:

- Massage therapy for shoulder, back, neck and hands.
- Low-impact cardiovascular or stretching exercises.
- Spa-appropriate beverages such as fruit smoothies, bottled waters and freshly squeezed juices.



Photo courtesy of Grand Wailea  
Grande Wailea's Spa Grande features the Terme Hydrotherapy Circuit — five aromatic baths to soothe body and soul.

- Low-fat baked items including bran muffins and a variety of crustless quiches, too.

More than that, the legendary resort also offers complimentary wellness classes including yoga, Pilates, power walks, water aerobics and tai chi. Private lectures on healthful eating and exercise are also available, as are spa gift cards and personalized gift baskets.

Michele Wilde, the director of conference services at The Breakers, recommends that planners look for resorts that have an onsite spa manager, someone specifically designated and qualified to work with groups in-house. "Last year, a women's popular fashion magazine hosted pedicures by the pool as part of their afternoon at leisure," she says. "Also, petit berry skewers and refreshing specialty beverages provided sustenance while our technicians massaged and beautified the extremities."

**Spa amenities as teambuilding prizes.** Last September, the Surf & Sand Resort, located in Laguna Beach, CA, hosted a pharmaceutical group. The 14-person group participated in a Surf & Sand Bootcamp. Held on the beach, a professional trainer coached the group through a series of stretches and exercises after the business of the day was concluded.

The group's meeting planner says that it was the first time at the resort. "Surf & Sand was chosen because of its beautiful, relaxing location and the fact that the corporate teambuilding bootcamp event would be on the beach and the location of the meeting rooms, which were not all clumped together but dispersed throughout the property. Most important," she adds, "Full spa amenities were great prizes for our sales staff."

As the spa event drew to a close, the planner echoed what many corporate meeting professionals have discovered: "I know that the group as a whole felt rewarded, re-energized and...ready to tackle the next sales quarter!" **C&IT**



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By Stella Johnson

# Three Planners Who Manage It All

WITH HELP FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS AND STAFF

Last year *The Lost Girls: Three Friends, Four Continents, One Unconventional Detour Around the World* appeared on bookshelves across the country. Published by HarperCollins, the memoir chronicled the travels of three aspiring young women who, in 2006, left their professional careers in media and communications, placed love interests on hold and departed from Gotham City to experience life at its fullest as they backpacked across the globe.

As reported in *USA Today*, the then 20-something trio of Jennifer Baggett, Holly Corbett and Amanda Pressner traveled 60,000 miles, trekking through four continents and 12 countries — a 12-month journey of self discovery from Peru to Vietnam.

And, it wasn't just some self-serving lark, either. They not only floated down the Amazon, endured a 17-hour Indian train trip and bungee jumped in New Zealand, but they gave back to the communities they visited by volunteering for a variety of projects. In fact, Corbett is setting up a nonprofit group to raise money for programs such as a nursing school in Kenya.

Once safely back home, however, the three women found new careers but admitted that they were now less consumed by them, having expanded their insight of the world around them and, also, were more positive about life in America.

"We live in unique times where women in developed nations like our own have an abundance of choice — a luxury, to be sure — but given the freedom to blaze this path, which way do we turn: Marriage? Motherhood? Career? Or all three? Or, something else entirely?" says Pressner.

While most of us would consider abandoning established careers and the creature comforts of home as extreme measures in a quest to find bliss, these "lost girls" were in the right place and time in their lives to test the waters and tempt the fates in their search for balance.

And that's something that most meeting planners can relate to. Every day on the job is a juggling act. Moreover, most planners have extraordinary opportunities to interact with the world around them and help change it for the better. We talked to three meeting planners who shared their work-life balance experiences.

Carol Kuc, CMP, for one, notes:

"Maintaining a good balance of work, family, friends and community has been a topic of discussion for quite some time now for all those who work, but especially for women. When you really enjoy your work, you sometimes let the balance aspect take a back seat.

"Many friendships are created in a working environment, and there's frequently little division between your work time and your friendship time in those relationships," Kuc continues. "For me, work will fill as much time as I will allow it and, since I am really passionate about my work, I frequently give it more time than someone else might. So, personally, it's something I have struggled with for many years now."

Kuc and these fellow planners have been quite successful in their own personal quest to find the delicate balance between the corner office and that sanctuary called home.



## Nicole Marsh: Master Juggler



Nicole's "family tree" — with husband, Brad, triplets (left to right) Dalton, Payton and Gavin, and big brother, Owen.

*"I love my work and I love my kids. It is a good balance, and I wouldn't trade any part of it for more or less of the other."*

If the old cliché "a woman's work is never done" is true, then Nicole Marsh, CMP, DMCP, is a prime example. Marsh describes herself as a professional woman who juggles lots of balls in the air. In addition to her duties as president and owner of The Arrangers DMC, she is a dynamic member of the professional community. She served as the 2009–2010 president of ADME (Association of Destination Management Executives); is a past chair of ADME's Certification and Accreditation Board, which was instrumental in launching the company accreditation programs for DMCs; and is a past president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). Currently, she is chair at the Meetings Industry Council of Colorado and partner at DMC Network LLC.

"I've mastered the fine art of multitasking all right," she muses, "especially since I'm raising a family and running

a successful destination management company at the same time." Marsh worked at the Denver-based company for two years before purchasing it in 2000. Her long list of clientele includes fortune 100 companies, major third-party and incentive companies as well as numerous associations.

Here's the real clincher: Not only is Marsh doing all of the above, she recently added triplets to her family of three — husband, Brad, and six-year-old son, Owen — and served as the editor of the new book *Best Practices in Destination Management*, which was published by ADME earlier this year.

"My current mantra is divide and conquer. I initially thought this was for home use only, as my husband likes to say he divides and I conquer," explains Marsh. "But to truly keep stress-free and maintain as much balance in life as possible, I also believe that the divide and conquer concept also applies to

work, where I divide and the employees conquer! As at home, it's all about working together and getting the job done."

As a growing family that is on the go, Marsh adds that when they first heard she was having triplets they thought they'd become homebodies and couldn't imagine taking everyone out all the time. "Yes, we've slowed down a bit but we love taking all the kids with us to sporting events (she named the Colorado Rockies baseball games and the Nuggets basketball games) — at least we do while the triplets are still free to get in. My husband and I also make it a point to schedule date nights and have managed to get away for some mini-vacations, alone, as well," Marsh says.

While some might think this is more of a challenging life than a charmed one, the mother of four proudly suggests that it's all about having a great support team at work as well as at home. "For instance," Marsh says, "at The Arrangers, we have multiple CMPs and DMCPs (Destination Management Certified Professionals) on our staff. Everyone is involved in the industry and believes in giving back in time and talent."

In terms of surviving at home, Marsh adds, "I thought I could multitask well at work, but you should see me at home, especially since the triplets are at the age that one of them is always getting into something. Weekends are a little more relaxed. Owen is in baseball, and we load everyone up and enjoy his baseball games on Saturdays. We've been able to go to the pool on Sunday afternoons, although that's not really relaxing since the babies all think they can swim!"

Still, it's all been worthwhile for Marsh who firmly believes that it is easy to do something you feel passionate about. "I love my work and I love my kids. It is a good balance, and I wouldn't trade any part of it for more or less of the other," continues Marsh, who occasionally sneaks in time for a pedicure. "Time for me is important, too."

## Carol E. Kuc: Covering All the Bases



For Carol (second from left) family — including her adult children and grandchildren — comes first.

*"Surround yourself with people you trust, build great relationships with suppliers and vendors, and remember to stay ahead of the game."*

A cool management style is fertile ground for developing any kind of a balanced lifestyle, and Carol E. Kuc, CMP, has it. As president and CEO of Naperville, IL-based Complete Conference Coordinators Inc., she has artfully mastered a technique for taking the stress out of the word stressful.

"You have to have complete advance preparation. That means cover all the bases, surround yourself with people you trust, build great relationships with suppliers and vendors, and remember to stay ahead of the game at all times," she advises.

It also helps to have great clients to begin with, and Kuc notes that most of hers, which have mostly come from referrals, include an admirable list of nonprofits and corporations and phys-

ics groups. "We have wonderful relationships with all sorts of diverse clientele. And, we still have most of the same clients we started with 28 years ago," Kuc adds.

Kuc was named by *The Business Ledger*, a business magazine for suburban Chicago, as one of the most influential women in business. Very active in her community, Kuc is involved in several professional organizations such as Meeting Professionals International (MPI) since 1991, and is a past national president of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO). She has served as liaison between NAWBO and the U.S. Department of Energy. Two years ago, the MPI Chicago Area Chapter honored Kuc with the 2008-2009 Kathy Osterman Award, which recognizes a seasoned professional who has brought a heartfelt passion to the meetings industry and contributed to the public's awareness of the meetings industry and/or chapter. (The late Kathy Osterman was a dynamic public servant and executive director of the Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events who brought diverse groups together and raised awareness of community issues.)

In order to maintain her comprehensive schedule, Kuc says that she discovered "a few things that really work...in maintaining the 'work-family-friends-community' balance," which she outlined thusly:

**On family:** "Family must come first or at least as close to first as possible. Family emergencies take precedence over everything for me. It has taken me many years to reach this conclusion. For instance, two of my three adult, married children are still in the Chicago area, and one lives in California. We keep in touch constantly. For instance, my daughter, her husband and I spend a lot of time together, and my son-in-law is a real treasure. He helps keep everything in my home in tip-top shape — besides being such good company. My

youngest son and his wife are proud parents of a son who is now 2 years old, and I use every opportunity to spend time with them.

**On friends:** "Friends are extraordinarily important in keeping my balance," Kuc continues. "I've been having breakfast every Saturday that I am in town with friends of mine for the past 30 years. Another group has dinner together every Friday evening, and I am able to join in most Fridays if work permits. And there's another group of friends that I've been vacationing with for the past 20 years."

**On community:** "It's imperative that we give back," Kuc says. "Much of my community time goes to assist other women in becoming successful in business. Having served as the national president of the NAWBO, and now serving as a North American Regional Commissioner for FCEM (an acronym for 'Les Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales,' which in English translates to: World Association of Women Entrepreneurs), has been a wonderful experience."

Kuc is also active on several other boards, one seeking to place women and minorities on corporate boards, and one closely watching public policy.

**On work:** Currently, Kuc and her staff are "spinning lots of plates," she says. "Some days will be long, some weekends nearly non-existent, but the thrill of seeing it all come together makes it all worthwhile."

To help balance the scale, Kuc recommends having a person that you can depend on. For Kuc, that is Gail Olmsted, the chief operating officer of Complete Conference Coordinators. "Sometimes you just need to have a sounding board for your thoughts and make sure you keep on the right track," Kuc adds. "As long as everyone thinks everything is perfect, you have done your job well, even though no one suspects that there have been a lot of behind-the-scenes meetings to make it all happen."



## Jodi Wolf: It's All in the Family



Photo by Sheri Whitko Photography

Jodi (left) with her mother, Paulette, who is CEO of Paulette Wolf Events & Entertainment Inc. Jodi's husband, Adam, also works for the company.

*"I have an incredible team of people that know how to support me and lighten the workload. ... We find if we use the divide-and-conquer method, we get a better product, and everyone can go home with a satisfied mind."*

Wherever I was, everyone always said I had great style and taste, and was the party girl of the group. And, after growing up with a mom who plans events for a living, why wouldn't I be? I was always the one who made all the party arrangements whenever such occasions came up," explains Jodi Wolf, who has served as president of Chicago-based Paulette Wolf Events & Entertainment Inc. since 2002. PWEE is a cutting-edge national event and entertainment firm founded by Jodi's Mother, Paulette Wolf, in 1978.

The two share authorship of the book *Event Planning Made Easy: 7 Secrets of Successful Planning for Every Occasion and on Any Budget* (McGraw-Hill 2005), a set of guidelines drawn from their years of corporate event planning.

PWEE clients have included such corporate icons as Disney, IBM, Avon and the Ford Motor Company. Among many other projects, the company produced the Fort Lauderdale Air & Sea Show, one of the largest spectator events in the world.

Wolf and her husband, Adam Lombardo, both work alongside Paulette

Wolf, who is a hard act to follow — and to balance.

In the office, Wolf says, job responsibilities include "anything and everything." She handles the day-to-day business operations, acts as a client liaison, and tries to answer questions for all of the team members involved in any given assignment. She's also learned she can't do it all and has honed the fine art of delegation, something she says she is getting better at with age. Both she and her mother are agreeable on most business matters but, should anything arise when they do not, they have dinner out and logically discuss the situation.

At home is where Wolf's juggling act comes into play. "Coming from a family business environment, I learned early on that I needed to be paired with someone who understood the business and all that it entails," said Wolf. "It has been a blessing to have a husband who not only works with me, but is my business partner, too, one that helps me work through some of the issues that come into play when trying to put together a last-minute proposal or pulling an all-nighter for a special event."

The couple is involved in teamwork — at the office and on the sports field. They play on a flag football team during the fall and sometimes on a softball team in the spring. In addition, household duties are mostly taken care of by a cleaning service once a week. "More than that, I do laundry and he does trash, and it all works out in the end."

Sometimes the couple comes home from a long day or a long week promising to talk about nothing work-related. "And then, sometimes, we come home and do nothing but vent," she adds. Wolf notes that working out with her personal trainer makes her feel a whole lot better, saying, "A lot of times, though, I like to go for a run to clear my head completely. I have an incredible team of people that know how to support me and lighten the workload so I can do things like that. We find if we use the divide-and-conquer method, we get a better product, and everyone can go home with a satisfied mind."

Corporate social responsibility also ranks high for the couple's game plan — so much so that Wolf and her husband either donate their services (or reduce fees) for at least one charity event a year. In addition, she retains memberships in several industry-related organizations such as MPI, the International Special Events Society and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council in addition to the Economic Club of Chicago. Even though our high-tech lifestyles can sometimes add to the stress of life, Wolf looks on the bright side, and considers her iPhone a biological part of her body: "Being connected to my world at work and at home, as well as being able to listen to music and look at photos keeps me going strong, wherever I go."

At the end of the day when it's time to get away from it all, Wolf enjoys taking Boomer, her Tibetan terrier, for long walks to smooth the rough edges of a grueling schedule. (Boomer also often accompanies the couple to work.) "The reality is that sometimes you need to steal away, as the saying goes. Walking Boomer is a nice quiet time for me."

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# Angel or Devil?

## Planners Walk the Thin Line Between Right and Wrong

Sandy Biback, CMP, CMM, is not a happy camper. A Toronto-based meeting planner with sterling professional credentials, numerous professional awards such as MPI Toronto Meeting Planner of the Year and vast experience — 30 years in the business — Biback believes that ethical behavior is in seriously short supply today, in life and in business.

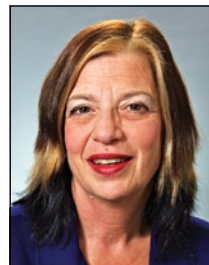
“I think the world in which we live, that is to say, North America, has become extremely unethical and immoral,” says Biback. “Just look at Enron. We had our own sponsorship scandal with our government right here in Canada (misap-

propriation of sponsorship dollars when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was in office). All that happened was some government officials got their hands slapped.”

What does Biback, the president of her own respected meeting planning firm, Toronto-based Imagination+Meeting Planners Inc., have to say about the meetings business, per se, or the people in it? “Some people in this industry simply are not trustworthy,” says Biback. “I was able to win my biggest client because the unethical actions of a competitor became known, and she consequently lost the business.

What goes around comes around.”

When it comes to ethics, Biback does not merely talk the talk; she walks the walk. Once, Biback quit her job at a meeting planning company because of its dishonest dealings with others. “I left because they asked me to do something unethical. It wasn’t their reputation at stake, it was mine,” said Biback.



BIBACK

Biback teaches a course at Centennial College in Toronto on the meetings indus-

try that includes four hours of instruction on ethics. She believes there are many temptations for meeting planners to cut ethical corners, or to be downright dishonest.

“Numerous opportunities exist for planners to operate unethically,” says Biback. “These include going on FAM trips when you know you will never do business in the destination; getting commissions you haven’t disclosed to your client; and recommending a venue to your client because you personally but surreptitiously get something out of it.”

### Underhanded Dealings to Check Prices

Donna Valentine, CMP, president of Excel Meetings and Events, San Francisco, thinks that one of the biggest business-cum-ethical issues confronting the meetings industry concerns the absence of any agreed-upon compensation standards. The manner in which planners get paid varies widely — flat management fees, commissions on rooms, mark-ups on vendor services and so on. Plus, it is difficult to know the true market value for meeting services because planners never know whom they compete against. “Pricing seems to drive everyone crazy,” Valentine says.

The market is completely fragmented. At one end are small mom-and-pop shops that can operate on a dime. At the other are large meeting planning firms with heavy overheads. As a result of all this apples-oranges disparity, it becomes difficult for many planners to know how to price a piece of meetings business competitively. Some planners will cut ethical corners to do so.

Valentine describes the time that her company was asked by another area third-party company to submit a very extensive RFP for 2,000 attendees so that the competing company could get a look at their pricing. “This individual completely fabricated an event. The planner portrayed herself as an employee of another organization. She

## A Q&A With Ethicist Christopher Bauer



BAUER

To develop some perspective on the topic of ethics vis-à-vis meeting planners in the 21st century, *Corporate & Incentive Travel* interviewed psychologist Christopher Bauer, Ph.D., a noted expert on business ethics with more than 25 years of experience as a speaker, trainer, author and consultant. The author of *Better Ethics Now: How to Avoid the Ethics Disaster You Never Saw Coming* (Aab-Hill Business Books, 2005), Bauer advises businesses regarding ethical issues.

**C&IT:** Where should planners begin when they think about ethics?

**Bauer:** For starters, you need to know what’s in your (organization’s) ethics code, whether you belong to MPI, PCMA, ADME or any other organization. Without that information, you’re not even in the game because you don’t know the baseline expectations for ethical behavior in your profession.

**C&IT:** Do any standard warning signs exist that can let planners know that an action under consideration may be unethical?

**Bauer:** By far the best red flag for possible ethics problems is the use of rationalizations. If you have to defend your behavior to yourself — especially if you need to do so before you’ve even engaged in whatever you’re trying to rationalize — what are the chances that it’s something good? They are pretty low. Of course red flags are simply a warning and not a sign of certain guilt, but you have to respond to them. Ignoring them, whether in yourself or someone else, is like saying, “An ethics problem? So what’s the big deal?”

**C&IT:** What other red flags should planners watch out for?

**Bauer:** Pay attention to your gut. We usually have a pretty good idea of what is OK and what isn’t. If your gut tells you that something isn’t OK, pay close attention because there’s an awfully good chance that your gut is right.

**C&IT:** What do you do if there are no warning signs, or existing ones are murky?

**Bauer:** If you aren’t sure whether your behavior, or someone else’s, is appropriate, seek credible consultation on the professional standards. There’s nothing wrong with not being sure about what’s right, but there can be big problems ethically if you aren’t sure but then don’t try to find out. I would say it’s not an overstatement to call that professional negligence.

**C&IT:** What is the planner’s responsibility who, though not personally doing anything unethical, is aware of such behavior by his or her company or a colleague?

**Bauer:** If you become aware of a colleague’s or coworker’s behavior that might even possibly be unethical, you can’t turn a blind eye. Otherwise, like it or not, you’re really colluding with that other person. As we all know, if you’re not a part of the solution...

**C&IT:** What if the ethical infraction is relatively tame?

**Bauer:** If you become aware of a minor ethics issue that you are not mandated to report by either policy or a legal requirement, start by having an informal conversation. If that takes care of the problem, you have discharged your ethical duty. If not, though, you need to report it to whoever has the authority to investigate and enforce the ethics code, policy or law in question. Not seeing your concerns through means that you automatically hold a portion of the ethical culpability.

*Continued on next page*

By Mickey Murphy



Continued from previous page

**C&IT:** Trying to work things out informally at first seems to be a sensible approach.

**Bauer:** It is. Another reason to start with an informal conversation is that you really might have misunderstood the other person's actions and, of course, might also find that it's you who have misunderstood the way things can or should be done. We're unlikely to figure any of that out without having a blunt, though hopefully tactful, conversation. Plus, we all have to remember that careers and companies can be damaged as easily by rumor and innuendo as by fact — sometimes even more easily. We owe it to one another to work out ethics concerns directly and discreetly whenever possible. Think about it: If someone had a concern — rightly or wrongly — about your behavior, would you rather they came to you to discuss it or went directly to a supervisor or, as so often happens, simply made comments about you around the water cooler?

**C&IT:** Here's a scenario: A planner does something that clearly is unethical, but then has regrets about it. What is his or her best course of action at that point?

**Bauer:** It's always easier and, frankly, cheaper, to prevent ethics problems than to pay the legal, financial and public relations costs of cleaning up after them. However, if you've stepped over the line, it's never too late to stop whatever you're doing wrong. The longer the problem goes on, perhaps the tougher it might be to admit to the wrongdoing — or the more habitual it may have become. But, again, there is never, ever a time when it's too late to turn things around. When you do, it will not only be better for you but, really, better for the entire industry because the reputation of the industry depends on everyone's behavior.

**C&IT:** Any other thoughts?

**Bauer:** The bottom line is that ethics start with each one of us as individuals. If we do something unethical, it's not the ethics code's fault, or the company's fault, or the fault of the industry or the economy. We are all fully responsible for our own behavior and the impact of our choices on others. Doing nothing more than reminding ourselves, and each other, over and over, of that simple truth can be a pretty significant first step towards reducing our risk for drifting over the ethical line. — MM

made up a comprehensive history for the conference. She even made up vendors that had provided services for the supposed previous conference. It was a complex RFP request that looked very real at first glance.

"After spending several hours, we figured out that it was a completely bogus request," says Valentine. "We were able to establish this through numerous conference calls to question things she said, and to follow up on statements that she made.

After all of this digging, it became clear that the supposed group never really existed."



VALENTINE

The unmasked planner ultimately apologized to Excel Meetings for her deception. Was she aware that her actions were unethical? "I can't speak to her frame of mind," Valentine says. "She may have been naïve. She may have been put under pressure from her management. I don't know. But it is the most egregious ethics lapse our firm has ever experienced."

The unethical planner wanted Valentine's firm to do all the heavy lifting, scoping out and pricing the numerous meeting-planning services.

"The level of information you must gather to respond to an RFP is very time

consuming," says Jon Wollenhaupt, partner and director of marketing programs, Excel Meetings and Events. "Developing the full RFP as requested would have cost us 30–35 hours of hard work." Is such conniving behavior common in the meetings industry? "I've never heard of it before," Valentine says. "I think it was just a desperate attempt to get some sense of what other companies are doing and how they price their services."

Wollenhaupt agrees with Valentine that pricing is all over the board for meetings and events. This situation could lead to dishonest dealings on the part of ethically challenged meeting planners. "There have been instances where we price projects in which other competitors were \$20,000–\$30,000 higher than we were," says Wollenhaupt. "At the same time, we have submitted pricing on events where the winning bid was 30–40 percent less than what we submitted. You often feel like you don't know what is fair pricing in terms of the market."

Eli Gorin, CMP, vice president of global client relations at Miami-based ABTS Convention Services, agrees that pricing meeting planning services is a crapshoot for planners. "We are part of a service industry where pricing models and pay scales aren't so steadfast. They can fluctuate based on so many more factors than if we were selling a product," says Gorin. "Anyone in a situation where they can manipulate prices will clearly be more tempted because it would be more difficult for the person paying to prove the difference."

Does a rocky economic climate prompt meeting planners to be less ethical than in a normal period? "I think we are at a time when planners need to prove their worth beyond how much they can save a client," says Gorin. "A good planner is one that can help cut costs without having to cut corners. It's all a matter of proper and ethical negotiation with vendors.

"Ethics is something that is tested

more often than not during tough times," Gorin continues. "It's the tough times that allow people to show their true colors. There is no reason for a person's ethics to change because of the economy or any other factor. While there may be people that have a tough time getting by, their ethics will be steadfast. If for any reason they somehow find that it is suddenly OK to cut corners, play things looser, or whatever else, then they were never that ethical to begin with."

### Could You Be a Whistleblower?

Most people, including the majority of meeting planners, are honest. The idea of doing something unethical would never occur to them. But what is the responsibility of the meeting planner who witnesses an unethical act by someone else? That is to say, does a meeting planner who is strictly ethical in his or her own personal and professional dealings remain so if his or her client or company does something unethical of which the planner has knowledge but does not report for fear

of losing his or her job? Can someone be partially ethical?

"This is probably one of the most difficult scenarios that anyone would have to deal with, and it has multiple layers," says Gorin. "I would have to say that this is a question that will require someone to balance and prioritize their ethical beliefs with that of self-preservation. The person would have to determine if they are in the position to object without fear of losing their job, and in turn the money that they need to live. Is the person held in such high esteem that their opinion counts? Or if they were to be fired, would there be a number of companies ready to hire them?"

"I feel that much of who we are as professionals is based on personal respect that we garner from our peers and our colleagues/bosses," Gorin says. "If you are unwavering in your ethical beliefs, then stand up for what you believe. In the end, if you get fired for speaking up and refusing to do what



GORIN



WOLLENHAUPT

was asked of you due to ethical issues, then you most likely shouldn't be working for that company or client anyway.

"Word gets out and people know who is and is not good to work with," Gorin says. "This may be a large industry but word gets around about who is shady and who is not. If you have a stellar reputation, people will be more interested in working with or for you."

"The meetings industry is a very tightly knit community of professionals," said Wollenhaupt. "A planner who does something unethical will torch his own reputation pretty quickly. I am sure this fact also guides a lot of ethical behavior."

On the whole, Valentine and Wollenhaupt rate the meeting industry's ethical bearings quite highly. "I think the industry strives very hard to instill and encourage professional values in its members. I don't think ethical lapses are that pervasive in the meetings industry," says Valentine. What overall ethics grade would she assign the meetings business? "I'd give it a B+," says Valentine. "A-," says Wollenhaupt. **C&IT**

## Ready to Test Your Own Ethics?

Sandy Biback, CMP, CMM, president of Toronto-based Imagination+Meeting Planners Inc., teaches a course on the meetings industry at Toronto's Centennial College that includes four hours of instruction on ethics. Following are hypothetical scenarios Biback uses in the classroom to illustrate ethical dilemmas facing meeting planners, which Biback developed with the help of fellow planners. Included are Biback's responses and those of business ethics expert Christopher Bauer, Ph.D., and Donna Valentine, CMP, president of Excel Meetings and Events, San Francisco. Measure your own responses against theirs.

**1** Your client has not licensed music for the event, even though you told them it was necessary. The client approaches your audio-visual technician, gives that person his iPod and tells the tech to download the music that he or she wants. The technician plays the music. What do you do?

**Valentine:** In this era of iPods and downloading music, most people aren't aware of licensing regulations. The planner should have brought this to the attention of her client earlier during the planning process so that thoughtful decisions could be made about obtaining licenses or using unlicensed music. When this situation comes up onsite, the planner should explain the regulations surrounding the use of music in public venues. If the client insists on playing the music, the planner needs to make sure that the client is aware of the stiff financial penalties that can be charged if an ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) representative discovers the unlicensed use of music and have the client accept responsibility for this.

**Bauer:** In this case, it sounds like the damage has already been done. However, the client and the audio-visual person both need to hear why this was inappropriate, and the opportunity for licensing after the fact can and should still be addressed. It makes sense to me to put the need for licensing right into the contract and then follow up to be



sure that the licensing portion of the contract was followed as specified.

**Biback:** I'd have the audio-visual company add the fee to the overall bill and present it to the client. I'd also make sure I had told the client about the need in writing and sent that along with the new fee.

**2** Hotel sales people have social functions on the books for the week of August 15th. A better piece of business comes along, a five-day conference. Hotel A calls the client and cancels their contract to take the five-day conference. Hotel B calls the client and asks if they can move the date. They say no. Hotel B upholds the function contract, keeping the lesser piece of business. If you worked at the hotel, what would you do?

**Valentine:** Most hotel contracts have mutual cancellation clauses and give the hotel the right to move a group. Obviously, no one wants to be in a cancellation situation. Clients most typically are the parties that cancel contracts, with various levels of financial responsibility. Occasionally, and fairly rarely, it works the other way and a hotel needs to cancel or move a group.

Hotels are under intense pressure to their owner groups to achieve revenue goals. If a

hotel finds itself in a situation where it has the opportunity to book a significantly higher revenue

piece of business, it may be

within its legal rights to do so. However, this is an emotional and difficult situation. It needs to be handled sensitively and compassionately. The hotel management needs to be prepared to offer rebooking assistance as well as financial considerations to the original client. It makes a big difference how far out this happens. If the invitations have been sent out and planning is well underway, this should not be broached to the client.

**Bauer:** Hotel A's contract may have legally allowed them to cancel. However that doesn't make it the right thing to do. And, of course, if their contract didn't allow it, that would make their decision unquestionably inappropriate. It's tough turning down business, even in a better economy than what we face today. However, once you start playing

loose with your obligations, how are you going to keep from straying further and further down that road? Plus, your business depends on your reputation. Do you want that reputation to be one of breaking contracts? Certainly not.

**Biback:** I say kudos to the hotel that upheld the original function contract and I'd really want to know more about the ethics of Hotel A, from the manager on down! If I was the client, I'd want it in writing as to why they cancelled my date.

**3** Your meeting planning company asks account managers to request letterhead from the hotel where the group just stayed. Your company then "recreates" the final billing, with elevated pricing and sends this to the client for them to pay direct to your firm. What do you do?

**Valentine:** This is something that is quite pervasive in the meetings industry. I believe it is highly unethical to create mockup bills when a client requests backup documentation. At our company, we firmly believe in total transparency with our clients. We believe that the best approach is to discuss compensation methods with clients at the earliest stages of working together so everyone is on the same page. Meeting management is very time consuming, and obviously, meeting management professionals deserve to be compensated fairly for their time, experience, creativity and professionalism. The normal sources of compensation are commissions, management fees and revenue derived from markups or a combination of several of these. There is no standard for the industry, or even for types of meetings within the industry. There is no one right approach. Different types of meetings require different approaches. It can be very appropriate to add a markup on a particular line item, or on fees for another service provider, particularly if a substantial amount of time and expertise has been spent managing that vendor. But, if markups are included, it is important to explain the rationale for doing this, so there are no surprises. The planner should always discuss compensation with the client upfront and explain the approach that is best suited to their meeting or conference.

**Bauer:** This is fraud, plain and simple. Not addressing this both promptly and directly is being an accessory to the fraud. Among other things, it makes you wonder what other unacceptable or illegal behavior they've been involved with.

**Biback:** If I worked for that company, I'd get out. My professional credibility and reputation are worth much more. I would refuse to do this, even if it cost me my job.

**4** Onsite, you discover that your best client has been making inappropriate remarks to one of your staff members that crosses into sexual harassment. What do you do? What are the risks?

**Bauer:** Client status doesn't exempt anyone from legal or ethical obligations. They need to be promptly taken aside and told that, while their business remains appreciated, their actions are unacceptable and need to stop immediately. Not doing so — or doing so and not documenting it — leaves you open to accusations by your employee of your tolerating or condoning harassment on the job. You need to be aware of the legal mandates for dealing with allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination and hostile work environments. In most countries, including the United States and Canada, not knowing the rules won't cover you as an excuse if there is a harassment complaint and you haven't dealt with it both thoroughly and appropriately.

**Biback:** The risk obviously is of losing the client. And it is against the law. I'd go to the highest executive within the client's company and — making sure I had all the backup — inform that person of the harassment. The offending individual should be fired or at the very least, be required to take some courses in (avoidance of) sexual harassment. His or her actions were illegal and reprehensible.

**5** You need telephone/Internet hookups in a country that accepts bribes as standard operating procedure. Do you use bribes or do you try to get what you need without them? What questions do you need to ask? Is such bribery legal, ethical or illegal? In some companies, bribes are a way of doing business. Do you put your own value system on hold when you are in a foreign country? Do you not hold your event in that country?

**Bauer:** Not only do you need to let your conscience be your guide here, but you had better also be guided by an attorney who knows the business laws of the country in which you're thinking of working. There are lots of places — as well as plenty of industries — where bribes and kickbacks are "accepted practice." That doesn't necessarily mean that they are legal! You can't begin to decide what kinds of legal and ethical risks you're willing to take until you fully understand what the risks actually are.

**Biback:** In some countries, bribes are a way of doing business. You need to look closely to ensure that the country truly meets your meeting objectives, and how much it will cost for the bribes. The decision to pay or not to pay should not be your own.

**6** You have taken your client on a site inspection to a hotel. The hotel sales manager contacts the client directly. The client contacts you and tells you what happened. What do you do? What if the client doesn't let you know?

**Valentine:** In setting up the site inspection, the planner

should let the hotel sales manager know that all communications should be directed to him or her. The hotel sales manager is out of line to contact the client directly without permission from the planner.

**Bauer:** I'd confront the sales manager and let him or her know that what was done is unacceptable and that any future business with the hotel depends on the manager seeing that. If he or she "gets it," I might still proceed with caution in the future until I knew that the hotel was operating differently, not just with my group, but with the industry in general. Most planners eventually know through the grapevine who is operating aboveboard and who isn't. And, of course, that means that most folks will figure out if you are operating aboveboard as well.

**Biback:** It is about your relationship with the client and the sales manager.

A reputable sales manager will not do something like this. I would firstly thank my client and suggest not going to that hotel. I've actually had the opposite happen: A client contacted the hotel to go direct and the sales manager called me! Again, this is about the corporate culture of the hotel. I'd go to the DOS after talking to the sales manager. If the client doesn't let me know and I lose the business, well, I always contact potential clients to see why I didn't win their business. Of course, I might never know the real reason.

**7** As an independent planner, you have subcontracted with a junior independent planner. At the end of the project, the junior hands her card to the client and says she can do it for less next year. What do you do? Legal implications? Ethical implications?

**Valentine:** I don't know if there are legal implications for this, but it is short-sighted, unethical and simply a bad practice for a contractor or subcontractor of any level to directly contact a client to solicit business. It is common for a project team to include independent contractors, either as onsite staff or as providers of specialized services. Protocol dictates that a contrac-



tor should not solicit business directly from the client. The planner may have to do some damage control with the client, explaining that the junior planner simply doesn't have the experience to handle the project on his or her own. Obviously, the planner would never hire the contractor again. Reputations are critical in this industry, and buzz about these situations tend to get out. The junior planner could find that his or her contracting options will become very limited in the future.

**Bauer:** This could hopefully be prevented via a more thorough and explicit contract. Of course one shouldn't need to be told that client-poaching is inappropriate but, if it's in the contract, you might have more "teeth" for doing something about it when it happens. That said, contract or not, this isn't someone with whom I'd want to work again. At best, her judgment is lousy and, as likely, she is simply comfortable working in an entirely unethical manner.

**Biback:** This actually happened to a fellow independent. The trick here was that there was no confidentiality or poaching clause in the agreement with the junior planner. I'd certainly never work with this person again. Fortunately, the client went to the independent and told them about what took place. Many of us know about this person and now will never hire her. This planner has lost her credibility. Clearly, much of this is preventable with the right conversations and agreements in writing ahead of time.

**8** As an independent planner, you are offered commissions from the hotel on hotel bedrooms and from your audio-visual services company. Does your client know? Should you be transparent? Do the commissions impact your overall pricing to the client?

**Valentine:** Hotel commissions are standard practice within the industry. They should be disclosed to the client and become part of the overall compensation package negotiated with the client for management services.

**Bauer:** Ethical practices require complete transparency in these kinds of matters. If you don't feel comfortable with disclosing the commissions, take a close look at whether you really believe that what you're doing with them is right. If the commissions are fine, why wouldn't you want to disclose them? Client trust — and, therefore, their future business — depends on a mutually

trusting relationship that can only be achieved through completely honest and open accounting.

**Biback:** As independents, we must always be transparent. What if your client finds out after the fact? Do you think they will continue to be your client? My overall pricing is impacted by any commissions I get from hotel bedrooms and so on. My clients know this. It is in our contracts and the clients sign off on all hotel contracts.

**9** As the planner for a large company, you have issued an RFP for vendor services. In advance, you know which vendor you want to use. Of course, you want the best price. You need three bids, and you also need new ideas. How upfront are you with the bidders? Do you "borrow" ideas? Do you ask each bidder to beat the price?

**Valentine:** This is a tough situation. We have often been asked to prepare complex and time-consuming proposals, only to find out later that the client was doing "due diligence" to test the market and see if their current planner's pricing is competitive. In sending out the RFP, the client should make it clear that they have an established relationship with their existing planner, but are interested in exploring other options or are required to get other proposals, if that is the case. That way, the planners receiving the RFP can make an educated decision about whether or not they want to invest the time in writing the proposal and sharing their intellectual property and creativity. Creative concepts submitted in proposals that are not accepted should not be used, but it very hard for a planner to know if something was used or not used.

**Bauer:** I hear about this problem in all kinds of industries, and I don't know of a great answer beyond doing your best to only work with folks you trust. With experience, I think you can get better at figuring out who's just fishing, but you will never be able to be correct all the time on that. Ultimately, lame as it probably sounds, I think you just need to use your best judgment and hope for the best.

**Biback:** This happens all the time. I don't have an answer for this situation. I've seen my ideas borrowed when I've lost out and you know very well they were just fishing and were going to the incumbent. I've learned to avoid these situations. I think it just comes with years in the business.

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# The Smart Choice

## Changing Strategies for Finding Just the Right Destination and Venues

Site selection, a crucial step in any meeting, has become ever more challenging as a result of tightened budgets, heightened scrutiny and technological tools that make research easier — though possibly more confusing. Talks with a number of planners revealed that while certain fundamentals remain solid, such as the importance of a personal site visit, others — such as an increased focus on safety and security — are shifting.

While the hotel industry still had not been able to move rate upwards except in certain cities, planners do sense an overall shift in the direction of the seller. “Cities like New York, Washington and San Francisco,” says Alan Kleinfeld, MTA, CMP, CMM, chief advisor of CMM Advisors in Charleston, SC, “have pretty good demand, making it tougher to go to those first-tier cities. Having said that, attendance seems to be higher at those locations, so the increase in registration revenue may offset the higher expense.”

“Companies are once again conducting face-to-face meetings,” says Maureen

Santoro, manager of group operations for Atlas Travel in Milford, MA. “First-tier destinations are still a priority but some business sectors are booking in second- and third-tier locations.”

“As we shift toward more of a seller’s market,” says Robyn Mietkiewicz, CMP, director, accounts and global meeting management services for Meeting Sites Resource in Irvine, CA, “we are seeing more planners considering second-tier destinations. Domestically, that includes Seattle,



*“Planners are still thinking they can get a value in a first-tier city. That time has passed by because demand is so strong.”*

**Cheryl Rivas, CMP**  
Director, Accounts and Global Meeting Management Services  
Meeting Sites Resource, Irvine, CA

St. Louis, Austin, Nashville, Indianapolis. Internationally, it’s Lisbon, Vienna, Milan, Brussels and others. We are trying to find value that is more aligned with our budgets, while still achieving stakeholder objectives.

“We are still looking at traditional hotel venues for the majority of our meetings,” says Mietkiewicz, “however, we are now considering second-tier destinations that may have been overlooked in the past. Selecting a second tier,” says Mietkiewicz, “can often save 15 percent to 30 percent on hotel room rates.”

“The shift in the economy has happened so quickly,” says Cheryl Rivas, director, accounts and global meeting management services for Meeting Sites Resource, “that planners are still thinking they can get a value in a first-tier city. That time has passed by because demand is so strong.”

### Pressure on Site Inspection Trips

With the economy still a challenge and virtual tools increasingly more effective, most planners continue to embrace the concept of the site selection tour — if at all possible. But they have adapted to the new realities of budgeting, technology and ever-increasing demands for proving the value of their meetings when deciding on the ideal venue.

“Site inspections are still an important part of the site research process,” says



By Harvey Chipkin



Mietkiewicz. “While planners are still conducting site inspections, they are more selective in which meetings they conduct sites for. Typically, larger meetings will warrant a site visit while smaller meetings are being more scrutinized for the need for a visit. Fortunately, technology has enabled many meeting professionals to utilize virtual technology for sites to help limit travel when possible.”

Rivas says that her clients do site inspections “nine times out of 10.” However, she added, “They count on us to provide good options so that when they arrive they don’t have too many choices. And we provide them with a comprehensive plan for their visits.”

In fact, says Rivas, “We wish that clients would spend more time using the available virtual tours so they are prepared for their inspection visits.”

A recent development, says Rivas, is that hotels now regularly provide planners with iPads on their arrival, which

jobs as planners is to reduce the chance of the unexpected as much as we can.”

“Site selection trips have decreased significantly,” says Santoro. “Increasingly, clients will go on a site visit without representation from our company. This is a bad idea for multiple reasons, but sometimes it comes down to a cost issue: Paying for the airfare and other expenses of a meeting planner can be an expense they are unwilling to incur.”

Sherry Parks, CEO of Corporate Planners Unlimited in Dana Point, CA, agrees that site selection trips have been reduced by a tremendous amount. But she believes in personal visits so much that she will do trips at her own expense. She recently visited a Florida hotel for one night and found many changes not specified on the website.

Also, Parks flew to St. Lucia last summer to observe storm damage. She arrived at midnight, drove two hours to the property, inspected it and went home

tracts stating that if flow or measurements are not as described in virtual or online collateral, the hotel will be held responsible for it.

Interestingly, improvements in the hotel business have crimped plans for site inspection trips. According to Rivas, “Hotels are frequently full in major destinations so it can be difficult to find open space for site inspections.”

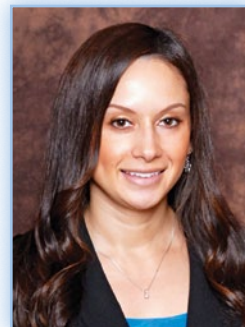
### Logistical Logic

Just as location, location, location remains the mantra of all hotel business, logistics, logistics, logistics might serve the same purpose for meetings. That includes distances delegates have to travel and how easy it is to get around at the destination.

“Distance and attendee logistics are definitely a factor,” says Mietkiewicz. “Is the location easy for attendees to get to? For some groups that have international attendees, this is an important part of the decision process. What does the airlift look like? How accessible is the hotel? Selecting unique destinations that require significant planning and logistics often require an extra night’s stay on the front or back end, which can impact the meeting budget.”

“Budget and distance have always been priorities, but nowadays we pay attention to every penny being spent,” says Santoro. “Instead of relying on DMCs to book event space and entertainers, we usually go direct to cut out the middle man’s fee. We still use DMCs but I look for ones that own their own vehicles, which cuts out another layer of cost. Savings are then passed on to our client.”

Karel Ford, CMP, director of program operations for Hughes Meetings and Incentives in Norman, OK, says that Mexico has been very popular for her meetings and incentives because of its ease of access and affordability. With headlines about safety issues in Mexico,



**Robyn Mietkiewicz, CMP**  
Director, Accounts and Global Meeting Management Services  
Meeting Sites Resource, Irvine, CA

have been programmed to demonstrate how a meeting will flow and with photos of meeting rooms. Kleinfeld says his site selection trip patterns have not changed much, noting, “It still comes down to some online research and emailing RFPs. Once destinations are narrowed down, it’s still a worthwhile cost to do a site visit in person. For every meeting I do, I do a site visit. The risk of showing up and finding a surprise is too high. I’ve done meetings without completing an in-person inspection, but I advise against it. One of our

the next day. She had to inform the client about the poor condition of the roads and other problems.

A personal visit has become more important than ever, says Parks, because, “those longstanding relationships with regional, national and local sales reps have diminished. They have gotten rid of people who knew each property — knew what color the carpet is. Now you might have people working in remote locations and selling blind.”

Parks will even insert clauses in con-

## Tech Checklist

Qualifying a meeting venue is no longer simply a question of square footage and availability. How a venue shapes up technologically is taking on an ever more significant role. To help planners deal with that development, Corbin Ball, CMP, and James Spellos, CMP, both well-known meeting tech gurus, have come up with TechSpec, a set of checklists designed to help planners measure and gauge technology during a hotel site inspection.

The checklist scoring has been weighted to reflect current technology needs. It includes items such as: wired guest room connectivity; wireless guest room connectivity; in-house (24/7) Internet guest room support; in-room safe with outlet for computer charging; mobile app for hotel functionality (e.g., room service, housekeeping); Internet cost; and more. Each criterion is assigned a point score — with the final score determining the technological viability for a meeting.

Spellos told C&IT that, “The timing is right for this. It took some time because we know it won’t be a one size fits all. A lot of planners don’t have a comfort zone with technology and might get hit with unexpected expenses because they didn’t anticipate some issues associated with technology.”

Planners can modify the list for their own use, says Stellos, who added, “It’s like any other part of the negotiation process. You need to know what to ask for and put it on the table.”



**James Spellos, CMP**  
President  
Meeting U  
New York, NY

Spellos says what he has seen is “under-valuation” of the technology that’s actually required.

Eventually, says Spellos, “We will have a benchmark of what a venue should offer. This list is part of an ongoing discussion.” Spellos adds that there is a TechSpec Facebook group to allow for discussion and improvements to the list: <http://goo.gl/B55Gk>.

***“A lot of planners don’t have a comfort zone with technology and might get hit with unexpected expenses because they didn’t anticipate some issues associated with technology.”***

“Our industry is so slow to come to grips with this,” says Spellos. “I think the most important thing right now is having a bandwidth adequate for the needs of the group. Bandwidth just to check email is not enough. People want to be able to see videos and do whatever else they do at home.

“Many hotel salespeople don’t understand technology,” says Spellos, “and that has to be part of this conversation.”

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she says, it has sometimes become challenging to convince clients to go there.

However, she added, “Because Mexico is so affordable and because the resorts offer the all-inclusive option, which is very popular, we still do quite a few trips there.” While destinations like Jamaica and the Dominican Republic have come on strong and do offer all-inclusives, Ford says the Caribbean is sometimes challenging to reach.

Occasionally, a meeting literally just fits. As Kelli Erickson, manager of business development for Oakley, a Foothill Ranch, CA-based company that makes high-quality eyewear for athletes, says, “What’s important to us in our selection is being able to take over the entire hotel to keep our event as intact and cohesive as possible for participants.

“We liked the JW Marriott in Los Angeles for our upcoming sales meeting in January because it is the exact size we need (878 rooms) to take over the hotel and conference spaces. That’s very important to us in our selection,” Erickson says. “In addition, we like for the meeting to be contained in the hotel to avoid distractions, as might be the case in cities like Las Vegas. We want to provide them an Oakley experience, which the JW allows us to do since our group is the perfect size for their hotel.”

### Content Rules

Meeting content, which might seem unrelated to a destination, has become intertwined with the venue, according to some planners.

“Our focus,” says Mietkiewicz, “re-

mains on the big-picture meeting goals and objectives, which ultimately define geographic and hotel profile criteria. The emphasis on Strategic Meetings Management Programs has had a significant impact on site selection as far as what destinations and hotels are considered, as well as creating more budget parameters, all of which must be factored into the site selection process.”

Criteria well beyond space and availability may make all the difference. Erickson will be having a meeting of 1,000 people early next year at the JW Marriott in Los Angeles despite the fact that the property is quite new.

“Our meeting is very tied in with the branding of our products,” says Erickson, “and the JW Marriott’s managers just got it when understanding the importance of



our event branding.” What that may include, says Erickson, are huge static-cling window campaigns, banners around the hotel, mock-up stores, mannequin displays and pole wraps.

### Assessing Airlift

While second-tier cities might be attractive for budgetary reasons, the trade-off is frequently less robust airlift.

When it comes to second-tier cities, “An important part of the destina-

choosing a destination,” says Santoro, “On a three- or four-night program, no one wants to spend two of those days traveling to and from the destination. Non-stops are also strongly preferred by clients. Plus, a reasonable travel distance from the airport to the destination is expected; anything over an hour is not optimal in terms of both time and cost.”

Parks says air costs might be deceptive, with some international destinations actually being more affordable. She also says that Caribbean airlift “is terrible right now and has been reduced a lot.”

“When budgets were better,” says Ford, “we are able to do more chartering; we can’t do much of that these days.”

### Varying the Venue

With an increase in short-term meetings, the ability to be flexible and get creative has been a must, according to

Mietkiewicz. “We have partnered with multiple hotels in close proximity to get a deal done, and utilized offsite venues for meeting and event space. Often, our primary hotel can accommodate offsite catering, and our customer can capture that revenue toward their food and beverage guarantee. If an offsite venue requires a transportation shuttle, these costs can often be negotiated as part of the package.”

“I like to think I keep all options open,” says Kleinfeld. “As a planner, I try not to turn down any ideas such as non-traditional venues. Again, it’s a matter of what my clients want and then convincing them of the benefit of looking at other options. Money is always at the top of the priority list, so if a non-traditional venue can’t compete price-wise with a traditional venue, it may not work.”

“We now actively look at theaters, school auditoriums and conference centers to place some meetings,” says Santoro, “along with researching standard locations such as resorts.”

“We do try to use unique settings,” says Parks, “like outdoor venues. There are a

number of cost-effective solutions like universities or corporate facilities where they have training centers. We use their housing or house them at a nearby hotel. You can save a lot on taxes and gratuities.”

### Considering CVBs

While planners are predominantly fans of CVBs, there are some reservations.

“They’re an expert in their destination,” says Rivas, “so I do rely on them, especially if I’m not familiar with the city. We will copy them on RFPs, and they will do follow-up with hotels and sometimes arrange transportation to and from the airport; they’ll also provide us with collateral on the destinations.”

For our larger meetings, says Mietkiewicz, “we typically partner with the CVB to assist with recommendations for offsite venues, as well as a resource for providing outside vendor referrals for transportation, attractions, tours and meeting support services.”

“Personally, I love my CVBs,” says Kleinfeld, “but I’ve never had a bad experience using one, and I know of other planners that have. Plus, I still meet planners on a regular basis that still don’t know what a CVB is or what services they offer. When I can, I try to include my CVB in the RFP process even if I’m working with a national sales office directly.” Parks is not a big fan of CVBs, seeing them as another layer to deal with. She also wants to avoid being contacted by members or vendors whom she doesn’t want to deal with.

And, while Ford does work with CVBs as far as finding a DMC or getting marketing collateral, she usually deals with hotels directly because, she says, “I don’t want to hear from every hotel that’s a member of the CVB.”

### Focus on Safety and Security

Safety and security at a hotel or venue is of utmost importance, says Mietkiewicz. “Part of our site inspection evaluation is to review the hotel’s security process and crisis management plan. In addition to meeting attendee safety and

security, it is important to address an organization’s proprietary information, including meeting materials, and content and security of computers, equipment and technology.”

In recent years, says Kleinfeld, “this has become a much bigger issue, especially when you look at how weather, mass illness, natural disasters and threat of violence, riot or terrorism alerts and terrorist threats affect our industry. It’s always important during a site visit to get the venue’s security emergency management plan, find out what they do in case of emergency and what local authorities are responsible as well.”

“Entire countries and regions are on our ‘banned’ list due to safety and security concerns,” says Santoro. “Even at domestic properties, a meeting with a resort’s medical and security staff always takes place either at a pre-con or at a separate



Alan L. Kleinfeld, MTA, CMM, CMP  
Chief Advisor, CMM Advisors, Charleston, SC

***“(Safety) has become a much bigger issue, especially when you look at how weather, mass illness, natural disasters and threat of violence, riot or terrorism alerts and terrorist threats affect our industry. It’s always important during a site visit to get the venue’s security emergency management plan.”***

meeting. If a resort doesn’t have medical staff on property, for larger programs we will bring medical staff in. Our own meeting planners are all CPR-certified and have taken basic first-aid classes.”

If a destination is prone to natural disasters, says Rivas, “we will make sure we specify that in our force majeure clause. We recently booked a September meeting in the Southeast and included hurricanes in our force majeure.”

And at least one planner is aiming to really simplify its site selection. According to Ford, her parent company, a travel agency, intends to fold itself and her meeting division into one company called Hawaii Travel Solutions and focus on incentives to that state, with later extension to the South Pacific. “We have been moving more and more toward incentives,” says Ford, “and Hawaii is ideal for that market.”

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***“We now actively look at theaters, school auditoriums and conference centers to place some meetings, along with...resorts.”***



Maureen Santoro  
Manager of Group Operations  
Atlas Travel  
Milford, MA

tion analysis must be on airlift,” says Mietkiewicz, “Planners must factor in fewer direct flights, overall air costs and attendee logistics.”

Rising fuel prices and airfare costs in general clearly impact the meetings industry, says Mietkiewicz. “With the additional fuel surcharges and fees being added, a negotiation plan is a must. Developing a strong relationship with air-travel partners will be essential and may help reduce the burden. Look for opportunities to develop strategic partnerships to leverage volume buying opportunities.”

Says Kleinfeld, “It depends on the size of the event and what we hope will be the attendee turnout. In general, it still seems that cities with easy access get the most attention. But destinations can easily make up for this with competitive rates and an overall attractive place to visit.”

“Airlift is often the biggest criteria in

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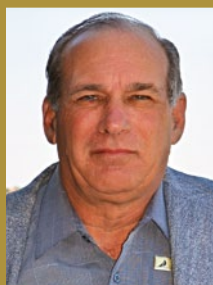
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KING

The Founders Inn and Spa, Virginia Beach, VA, has named **Dwayne King** as senior sales manager. He most recently served as group sales manager at Ocean Place Resort, Long Branch, NJ.



BICKART

Lakeway Resort and Spa, Austin, TX, has named **Jack G. Bickart** as director of sales and marketing. He was chief sales officer at Horseshoe Bay Resort, Horseshoe Bay, TX.



SHAUGHNESSY

**Dan Shaughnessy** was named director of sales and marketing for the Anaheim Marriott, Anaheim, CA. He was director of sales and marketing at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel & Spa, Hollywood, CA.

The Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau, Austin, TX, has named **Steve Genovesi** as senior vice president, sales. He was most recently vice president of sales and marketing for the Chattanooga (TN) Convention & Visitors Bureau.



GENOVESI

PGA National Resort & Spa, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, has named **Anne Mahon-Bomser** as director of Northeast sales. She was senior sales manager, regional sales, for the Mandarin Hotel Group in New York City.

The Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau, Philadelphia, PA, has named **Dan Miller** as executive director, hotel sales, and **Katie Bender** as Midwest national account sales director. Miller was director of sales at the Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing. Bender was Midwest regional citywide director for the Toronto Convention and Visitors Association.



MAHON-BOMSER

The San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau has named **Barry David Jr.** as express sales manager responsible for the Midwest region. He formerly served as event services manager for the bureau. **Christopher Havins** was named destination sales manager. He previously served as convention sales manager for the CVB under the Midland, TX, Chamber of Commerce.

The Westin Peachtree Plaza, Atlanta, GA, has named **Michael Fletcher** as director of sales and marketing. Most recently, he was director of hotel sales for the Atlanta Marriott Marquis.

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