

Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

Asia Pacific

**Exotic Settings for
Perfectly Executed Meetings**

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Unique Venues

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California

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*California claims
one of America's
most beautiful and
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grandeur of San Francisco's historic
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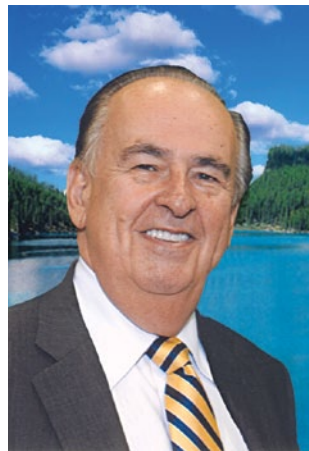
*The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel,
located on the southern tip of China
on the Cotai Strip, offers nearly
70,000 sf of pillarless ballroom space.*

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A One-of-a-Kind Experience
By Mike Bassett

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Strategies for Success

Every year at forecasting time, we note that professional meeting planners find themselves charged with “doing more with less.” This year is no different. Technological advances, the sluggish economy and rising costs of travel will challenge planners in 2012 and beyond as they navigate the “new normal” of tighter budgets, strategic meetings management (SMM), ROI, the rules of engagement and much more.



In Outlook 2012 (page 18), we learn from savvy meeting professionals like Diane L. Davis, CMP, CMM, a conference manager at SAP, who predicts that smart planners will accept the challenges of SMM: “It’s down now to adapt and survive — trim your sails to the wind,” she says. “And as a planner, you can’t let your subjective feelings get in the way of real data, real metrics. The bottom line is that you have to capture and analyze the event metrics to really demonstrate the ROI from your meetings to management.”

A true market recovery is in sight, says Chris Gaia, vice president of marketing, Maritz Travel, “Year over year for 2011 versus 2010, we’ve seen a fairly significant increase in the average per-person spend for incentive programs. And our IT business is up by about 19 percent. We expect that positive momentum to carry into 2012.”

Furthermore, the international IT market is booming says Allison Summers, managing director of Site in Chicago. And China is in the forefront. “The Chinese are using incentive travel programs more than ever before. We are seeing programs as large as 8,000 people participating in Chinese programs. You don’t see those kinds of numbers anywhere else,” says Summers.

Global destinations from Macau to Singapore and Hawaii to Australia are also booming, as is most of the Asia-Pacific region (see page 32). Peter Duncan, CMP, senior planner at Meetings & Incentives Inc. in Caledonia, WI, suggests that Asia-Pacific destinations gain in popularity as large numbers of U.S. companies go global and realize they can meet globally instead of in the U.S. “And that means they are also culturally embracing their international counterparts. So now those destinations know how to deliver a quality meeting, and they’re doing it over and over again,” he says.

Harvey Grotsky
Publisher



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WEBSITE

www.themeetingmagazines.com

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Harvey Grotsky
cccpublisher@att.net

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Mitch D. Miller
cccartdirector@att.net

MANAGING EDITORS

Susan Wyckoff Fell
ccceditor1@att.net
Susan S. Gregg
ccceditor2@att.net

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Mike Bassett
Karen Brost
John Buchanan
Harvey Chipkin
Stella Johnson
Derek Reveron
George Seli

PRESIDENT & CEO

Harvey Grotsky

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

David A. Middlebrook
cccoperations@att.net

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES

2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 120
Boca Raton, FL 33431-6394
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cccadvertising@att.net

FLORIDA/CARIBBEAN

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cccadvertising@att.net

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SOUTHEAST

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cccadvertising@att.net

MIDWEST

561-989-0600, ext. 114 • Fax: 561-989-9509
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WEST

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Omni Dallas Hotel Celebrates Opening

DALLAS, TX — The City of Dallas and Omni Hotels & Resorts held a ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the opening of the Omni Dallas Hotel. A little more than two years after the groundbreaking, the 1,001-room convention center hotel is officially open for business. Owned by the City of Dallas, the luxury hotel is located on eight acres in the heart of the nation's eighth-largest city, which is experiencing a renaissance from more than \$14 billion in new development underway in and near the urban core. "As we open the doors to the Omni Dallas Hotel today, we can confidently say Dallas is again competitive," said Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings. "We have reinvigorated our world-class reputation in the large meetings and convention industry." The Omni Dallas Hotel has already contracted nearly 300,000 room nights. The hotel, connected to the Dallas Convention Center, offers 110,000 sf of meeting and event space, 39 meeting rooms, including the Dallas and Trinity Ballrooms, encompassing 32,000 sf and 15,000 sf respectively. The hotel will comfortably accommodate groups of more than 3,300 attendees at any given time. www.omnidallashotel.com



On 11-11-11, the City of Dallas and Omni Hotels & Resorts held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Omni Dallas Hotel. Larry Hagman and Linda Gray of the hit TV show "Dallas" were on hand to cut the ribbon.

Photo by PRNewsfoto/Omni Hotels & Resorts, Jason Kindig

Fountains of Bellagio Event Venue Opens New Year's Eve



Rendering of Hyde Bellagio.

LAS VEGAS, NV — Hyde Bellagio, a new event venue in Las Vegas opening December 31, 2011, is a seamless 12,000-sf indoor/outdoor space with floor-to-ceiling windows and an expansive terrace that showcases Las Vegas' Fountains of Bellagio. Each space within the venue can be utilized as a place for discussion, brainstorming or socializing. In addition to meeting space, Hyde Bellagio will introduce an exclusive early-evening experience from 5 to 11 p.m. highlighted by an award-winning mixology program and a menu of small plates. At 11 p.m., the venue transforms into Vegas' hottest nightlife venue. Hyde Bellagio is designed by Philippe Starck with Gulla Jonsdottir of G+ Design. www.hydebellaio.com

The Broadmoor Wins 36th Five Diamond Award

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — The Broadmoor resort in Colorado Springs, CO, received the AAA Five Diamond Award for Excellence for 36 consecutive years — a distinction held by only three other U.S. properties. In addition, Penrose Room at The Broadmoor was awarded five diamonds for the fifth consecutive year and remains Colorado's only restaurant to hold both the Five Diamond Award and the Forbes Five Star Award. "We are extremely honored to be the recipient of the AAA Five Diamond awards again for 2012," says Stephen Bartolin, Jr., president and CEO of The Broadmoor. "To have received this AAA Five Diamond award for 36 consecutive years speaks strongly to our commitment in providing the best in service to our guests — and to our community. It is also a true testament to our superlative staff." www.broadmoor.com

M Resort Spa Casino Expands Banquet and Meeting Space

LAS VEGAS, NV — The M Resort Spa Casino has announced that it is expanding its banquet and meeting space to include Veloce Cibo, the 16th floor fine dining restaurant atop the four-star resort. Due to the high demand for versatile function space, the restaurant will close immediately to allow for renovations. With expansive views of the Las Vegas Strip and the mountains, the 16th floor function space will offer 7,200 sf for special events including an outdoor terrace with fireplace. The project is anticipated to take approximately 12 weeks to complete. Currently, the resort offers 60,000 sf of meeting space. With the addition of the M Pavilion and the new 16th floor catering space the total will amount to more than 92,000 sf. www.themresort.com

Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore Opens

BALTIMORE, MD — Rising 18 stories above Baltimore's historic waterside Harbor East community of shops, restaurants and art galleries is the new Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore. The 256-room hotel features cutting-edge technologies and 20,000 sf of meeting facilities, including the 5,300-sf Grand Ballroom, which offers stunning harbor views; the dividable Cobalt Ballroom; 10 smaller meeting rooms; and an executive boardroom. Dining options include Wit & Wisdom, A Tavern by Michael Mina. Amenities include The Spa at Four Seasons, a large pool deck with infinity edge pool and a "wet deck," a pool-size area immersed in three inches of water. www.fourseasons.com/baltimore

GLOBAL DESTINATIONS

First Jumeirah Hotel Opens in Abu Dhabi

Jumeirah at Etihad Towers opened on November 1, 2011. The 382-room hotel is located on the Arabian Gulf in the Ras Al Akhdar area of Abu Dhabi, which is close to the central business district and ministry compounds. The new property includes 199 residences, 12 restaurants, bars and lounges, Talise Spa and the Conference Center, one of Abu Dhabi's largest. The Conference Center, which can accommodate up to 1,400 guests in a conference setting or 1,000 guests for a seated banquet dinner, features the Mezzoon ballroom, 13 meeting rooms, VIP suites, business center and Events Showroom. www.jumeirah.com



Cancun Honored at 2011 World Travel Awards. At the World Travel Awards Cancun was named both "Mexico and Central America's Leading Destination" and "Mexico and Central America's Leading Beach Destination." In addition, the Dreams Cancun Resort & Spa, Mexico was named "Mexico and Central America's Leading Family Resort 2011"; The Cancun Center was named "Mexico and Central America's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre"; and the Rio Secreto was named "Mexico and Central America's Leading Green Expedition." The Cancun Convention and Visitors Bureau was named "Mexico and Central America's Leading Tourist Board." Located in the state of Quintana Roo, Cancun is Mexico's No. 1 tourist destination and is known for its spectacular beaches, which recently underwent a \$71 million makeover. www.cancun.travel

Three New Hotels Added in Kuala Lumpur. The InterContinental in Jalan Ampang debuted recently in Kuala Lumpur City Center, and the Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar and the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur in Jalan Pinang are expected to open there in 2012, providing a significant number of new guest rooms for the area.

- The 473-room InterContinental Kuala Lumpur is located along Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur's embassy district featuring premier business, shopping, restaurants and entertainment. The hotel offers spacious meeting rooms and event facilities, business center, gymnasium, pool, spa and more.
- The 513-room Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar, expected to open in February 2012 offers state-of-the-art communications facilities with Wi-Fi access in all rooms and public areas of the hotel. It is situated in the heart of the commercial and entertainment hub with an extensive selection of dining options.
- The 360-room Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur is under construction. This five-star luxury city center hotel will be within walking distance to the entertainment district, popular shopping malls and tourist attractions, including the Petronas Towers. www.tourism.gov.my/accommodations/

Wyndham to Open New Hotel in Turkey. The 211-room hotel, the second Wyndham hotel in Turkey, will be located across from the Kalamis Marina and will offer eight meeting rooms, a spa with 12 treatment rooms, a fitness center, three restaurants, a lobby bar and two pools. Wyndham Hotel Group also currently has seven other hotels in Turkey under its Ramada brand. www.wyndhamworldwide.com

Visit Denver Plants 250,000th Tree



Last month, Visit Denver's Customer Advisory Board, which is made up of top meeting planners from around the nation, and Visit Denver convention staff, including President and CEO Richard Scharf and Vice President of Convention Sales and Services Rachel Benedick, helped plant the 250,000th tree for the Mile High Million — an initiative to add 1 million new trees to the metro Denver area by 2025 to provide a cleaner, more beautiful environment. The tree was planted in front of the Colorado Convention Center. www.denver.org

New Orleans Marriott Updates Meeting Spaces

NEW ORLEANS, LA — The New Orleans Marriott, situated in the French Quarter on Canal Street, has unveiled a \$5 million enhancement to 36,000 sf of meeting space. The Mardi Gras Ballroom, Preservation Hall and La Galeries now all mirror the Grand Ballroom with new carpet, wall coverings and lighting that features a green, gold and red color palette. The hotel now has wireless Internet in all of the guest rooms, and new HDTVs will be available in all guest rooms by the end of the year. The 1,329-room New Orleans Marriott offers a total of 80,000 sf of meeting space, which includes the 27,000-sf Grand Ballroom, one of New Orleans' largest ballrooms. www.neworleansmarriott.com

Dittman and DEX Imaging Win IMA Circle of Excellence Award

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ — Dittman Incentive Marketing was recognized by the Incentive Marketing Association (IMA) as a winner of a Circle of Excellence award for creating a hallmark sales incentive program for DEX Imaging, the largest independent dealer of Konica Minolta and Kyocera document imaging equipment in the U.S. The program used a world-class travel incentive to San Francisco to drive record sales. "DEX is headquartered in Tampa, FL, and instead of offering familiar incentives like trips to Mexico or the Caribbean, we wanted to give their sales associates the unique experience of exploring the great cities of North America; cities with a definable personality that are rich in history and culture," explains Jim Dittman, president of Dittman Incentive Marketing, New Brunswick, NJ. But the net takeaway for the 2010 DEX sales incentive program was that during the contest period it generated 36.6 percent of DEX's annual sales during what is historically the slowest sales season for the company/industry. "What is really worth noting," says Dittman, "is that since the group travel incentives began, the percentage of sales increase for 2002 to 2010 has been an astounding 908.1 percent." www.incentivemarketing.org, www.dittmanincentives.com



Susan Adams (left) of Dittman Incentive Marketing accepts the Incentive Marketing Association's (IMA) Circle of Excellence for the "Sales Incentive Program of the Year" from IMA's Executive Director Karen Renk. The award was presented in October at the annual Motivation Show at Chicago's McCormick Place.

The Fairmont Washington, DC, to Redesign Meeting Space

WASHINGTON, DC — The Fairmont Washington, DC, announced that the 415-room luxury hotel will refurbish 24,000 sf of its function space. Scheduled for completion in January 2012, the project encompasses the hotel's ballroom-level meeting and prefunction space, the mezzanine level and the third-floor meeting space. All meeting space will provide the latest in technology such as strategically placed Internet docking and charging stations. Third-floor executive boardrooms will be programmed with wireless touch panels, overhead microphones and rack-mounted equipment to support audio amplifiers, Blu-ray players and audio-signal processors. The 5,460-sf ballroom's prefunction space will boast a feature wall that reflects light and texture while depicting the cherry blossoms found in the hotel's courtyard and throughout the nation's capital. www.fairmont.com

MEETING VALUES



The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach Shores, FL.

Meeting planners may now earn one point for every dollar spent on rooms and F&B items* in the Stash Hotel Rewards program. In addition, now through January 15, 2012, any planner who enrolls in the program receives an extra 1,000 points. And, groups who book and hold their meetings by March 31, 2012 will receive double points. Points are redeemable for stays at nearly 150 luxury resorts, hotels and inns throughout North America and the U.S. Virgin Islands. *Points are not awarded for AV, tax, surcharges and meeting room rentals. 386-322-7262, www.shoresresort.com

■ **The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club, Naples, FL.** The Meet for Change — Meetings Make America Shine promotion offers multiple tiers of incentives, with values that could reach \$10,000 or more per program. Available to groups with 20 peak rooms or more for a minimum of three nights and booked by March 30, 2012. Valid for new programs in any year from June 1–September 30 or December 1–19. For details, call 800-866-1946, groupsales@naplesbeachhotel.com

■ **Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa, Dana Point, CA.** Meetings booked between now and February 28, 2012 receive a two-hour welcome reception, which includes beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages. The welcome package is valid for bookings of 30 or more room nights and an F&B minimum. 949-487-7542, www.lagunacliffs.com

■ **Harbourtowne Golf Resort & Conference Center, St. Michaels, MD.** Rates starting at \$186.99/person include: breakfast and lunch; continuous coffee, tea and assorted Pepsi products; a.m. and p.m. snacks; meeting space; wireless Internet; complimentary parking; and gratuities. 800-446-9066, sales@harbourtowne.com, www.harbourtownemeetings.com

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www.TheMeetingMagazines.com

Access Destination Services Wins Award

SAN DIEGO, CA — For the third consecutive year, Access Destination Services has been named "Best Event Planning Company" by readers of *California Meetings + Events* magazine in the publication's third annual "Readers' Choice Best of Awards." The award was presented to Chris Lee, DMCP, partner and CEO of Access Destination Services. "It is truly an honor to be recognized as the best DMC in California by our clients, hotel partners and industry colleagues. Our team works very hard to exceed our clients' expectations on every program," Lee stated. Since 1970, Access Destination Services has provided full-service, professional destination management and event production services in North America, with offices in Los Angeles, Orange County, Palm Springs, San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas and now, in Orlando, Miami and Chicago. www.accessdmc.com



(Left to right) Marisa Fulton, Emily Tisdale, CEO Chris Lee and Shelby Williams of Access Destination Services display their Best Event Planning Company award.

Events Calendar

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

JANUARY 24-27, 2012

RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (RCMA) WORLD CONFERENCE AND EXPO

Kansas City Convention Center
Kansas City, MO
317-632-1888
www.rcmaweb.org

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 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS SHOWCASE WASHINGTON

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

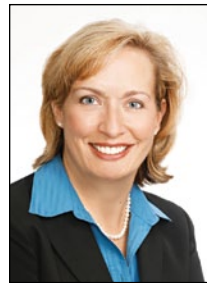
MARCH 21-23, 2012

IACC-AMERICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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

APEX Green Meetings Standards Nearing Completion

WASHINGTON, DC — The meetings industry is one step closer to the introduction of the very first green meetings and event standards. The Convention Industry Council (CIC) announced on October 31 that eight of the nine APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Meeting Standards are complete. “This is a major accomplishment for the collective conventions, meetings, events and exhibitions industry,” says Karen Kotowski, CAE, CMP, CEO of the CIC. “Sustainability is a strategic concern for planners, suppliers and the organizations they represent. These standards are much anticipated so this is a great moment for the volunteers who put such effort to this project.”



KOTOWSKI

The APEX/ASTM standards include nine individual sector standards, covering all facets of event planning and management. The eight standards that have been ratified cover audio-visual, communication and marketing materials, destinations, exhibits, food and beverage, meeting venue, onsite office and transportation. The last standard, accommodations, is undergoing final balloting. For more information, visit www.conventionindustry.org.

Green Destination Orlando Program Launched

ORLANDO, FL — The U.S. Green Building Council, Central Florida Chapter, on November 9 announced the launch of Green Destination Orlando (GDO) — a program that aims to make Orlando the greenest destination in the world. The program is designed as a total sustainable experience from the moment a visitor steps off the plane in Orlando, to the transportation to their hotel, their stay at local lodging, their daily activities, and back to the airport — a completely sustainable loop that never breaks. Created to answer the increasing inquiries from meeting planners who wanted real and verifiable documentation of the destination's sustainability efforts, the four-level rating program was tested over the last year by pilot participants including Rosen Shingle Creek, Hilton Orlando, Peabody Orlando, Universal Orlando, Pointe Orlando and the Orange County Convention Center. The program — a designation, not a certification — is open to any hospitality facility including airports, restaurants, shopping venues, entertainment, theme parks, convention and meeting facilities, hotels, transportation and others. For more information about GDO, visit www.usgbc-cf.org/committees/hospitality-advocacy or e-mail Dina Belon at hospitality@usgbc-cf.org.

The Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites, Los Angeles Unveils New Look

LOS ANGELES, CA — The Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites, Los Angeles completed a comprehensive renovation, which included the rejuvenation of 1,209 guest rooms and 145 suites, public areas, the Lobby Court and Lobby Lounge, LA Prime, BonaVista Lounge, the front desk, the outdoor pool and all 110,000 sf of meeting, event and banquet space. www.thebonaventure.com



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Changing the Game Plan When the Bottom Line Is ROI

By Mike Bassett

In the old days a meeting planner used to take a third-year budget, perhaps increased it by a set percentage and then rolled it over into the following year," says Lisa English, CMP, CMM, marketing manager, strategic meetings management, at Cvent Inc. "Those days are gone."

For a lot of good reasons, English says, meeting planners have to look at budgets strategically from year to year so that they deliver the meeting that makes the most sense strategically.

"It really starts with coming up with measurable objectives," says English. "Objectives that can be specified so that we can tell when we're having success. And that puts it into the realm of ROI (Return on Investment) and puts us in a better position to make budgetary decisions."

Budget Development and ROI

"You can't know how to be successful," says English, "unless you know how to measure success."

Measuring success via ROI calculations may seem — initially, at any rate — extremely complex to a meeting planner dealing with the concept for the first time. "Particularly if you are looking at a full ROI study and you haven't trained for it," English says. But it doesn't have to be too complex, and it can have major implications for budgeting.

Taking the leap into ROI may be as simple as looking at the overall category of travel costs by specific meetings, or meetings by different divisions, and taking those numbers and creating reports that can show negotiated savings.

Or a planner can, English says, take a fresh look at post-event surveys and put some questions with quantifiable answers on the survey and decide what you want to measure program to program.

"It's important to be thinking about these post-event surveys and to ask questions that go beyond, 'did you like

the hotel and the food?'" English says. "Did you learn something at the conference and did you leave feeling motivated?" And then, she adds, the planner can re-survey attendees a few months after the conference to see whether anything learned at the conference has stuck with the attendees, and, for example, had an impact on sales.



Lisa English, CMP, CMM
Marketing Manager, Strategic
Meetings Management
Cvent, San Diego, CA

"As organizations we don't have meetings in order to save money. ...They are supposed to be successful endeavors for driving business forward."

"All of these things should be on the planner's mind when thinking about budgets," she says. "As organizations we don't have meetings in order to save money. We have meetings in order to make money. They are supposed to be successful endeavors for driving business forward." So, English adds, planners have to think about the purpose



Marci DuBois
Corporate Meetings
and Events Leader
Taco Bell Corporation, Irvine, CA

"We still have to... have a meeting that makes sense for people to attend and not be a waste of their time. We just have to do it with fewer resources."

of a meeting, its past history, and come up with measurable objectives for it.

Once those measurable objectives have been established, English says a good planner should be able to see trends developing in meeting budgets and ROI reports that allow her to make budget recommendations that can tweak ROI.

For example, accumulated information and history could help a planner take a meeting that's pulled in a 3 percent ROI for the last three years and increase that ROI to 5 percent by changing location or agenda, or spending less on travel and more on speakers.

"If you have a meeting that year after year doesn't seem to be having enough success, enough ROI, then

the budget season is the perfect time to take another look at that meeting," says English.

Costs and Creativity

In an environment in which meeting planners are consistently being asked to do more with fewer resources, English suggests that meeting professionals need to both look at the basics and also think more creatively when it comes to budgeting, whether it involves evoking change in meetings or finding new ways to save money:

Travel

The more information planners have access to, the better. English references a recent Carlson Wagonlit Travel report that, among other things, forecasts a fairly steep increase in travel prices for Latin America in 2012.

"So that kind of information gives us more detail about where to have a meeting," says English. "You may want to have a meeting in Latin America, but since it's become more expensive there you might want to think of new locations. Think about what the needs and desires of your internal clients are — as well as what the meeting objectives are — in conjunction with the information you've gathered about travel costs."

Flexibility is always helpful when it comes to travel. A second- or third-tier city should work as a possible destination if the goals of the meeting are met, English says.

Three years ago, Marci DuBois, corporate meetings and events leader for Taco Bell Corporation, moved an annual incentive from Hawaii to Newport Beach, CA, not too far from her company's headquarters.

While it may not be Hawaii, DuBois says Newport Beach is still a great destination for many of her attendees who come from the middle of the U.S. and don't get to the West Coast too often.

"It is also a good home base for activities to Disneyland, Laguna Beach, shopping, outdoor adventures and dining,"

says DuBois. "And being in Southern California, we can utilize the Taco Bell corporate office for a visit, and our attendees really enjoy seeing the corporate office and meeting the team."

Other than location, the event hasn't changed in format. "It is a different level of incentive," DuBois says, "but it's a lot less expensive than Hawaii, and it definitely does what it needs to do."

Rooms

Have a good history, English says, so that when you go to negotiate with hotels "it will give you a solid leg up if you can show them the attrition you've had in a similar program so you can show them what you can actually provide as overall business value to the venue."



Sandy Biback, CMP, CMM
Founder
Imagination+ Meeting Planners Inc.
Toronto, ON

"It's about the name badges or the extra cost of gratuities for staff. If you don't take those kinds of things into account, they can really throw a wrench into your budget."

Food and Beverage

Negotiate, but not just for a discount, says English. "Know your groups and the kinds of items they consume the most," she says. "Maybe they drink lots of coffee. So talk to your venue and ask for special pricing on the coffee."

Sandy Biback, CMP, CMM, founder of Imagination+ Meeting Planners Inc. in Toronto, says that planners must understand the value of the business they bring to their suppliers. They need to track not only what they've spent in the past, but what their attendees have spent as well. "That's good ancillary information you can use when negotiating," she says.

Audio-Visual and Décor

Jennifer Squeglia, CMP, owner at RLC events in Marlborough, MA, says that while "it may sound simple," when it comes to items like AV and décor, make sure that you get more than one bid and that the vendors are aware of this. "They may sharpen their pencils," she says. And when it comes to something like flowers, she adds, a planner might budget on the high side for an incentive, but definitely cut back on that item if the event involves mostly male executives.

Transportation

Kathleen McCasland, executive director of an Oracle Development Tools User Group in Wilmington, NC, has found that choosing a foot-friendly destination can positively impact transportation budgets, not only for planners, but for attendees as well.

McCasland recently brought a group of 1,300 to Long Beach, CA, which has a fairly compact downtown. "There were all kinds of very nice restaurants within walking distance of the hotels and convention center," she says. "So if our sponsors and exhibitors wanted to take clients to dinner they didn't have to worry about hiring limos or buses. And you don't have to worry about rain in Southern California."



Jennifer Squeglia, CMP
Owner
RLC Events
Marlborough, MA

"The power of relationships is one of the best things I can bring to my clients."

The Little Things

"It's about the name badges or the extra cost of gratuities for staff," says Sandy Biback. "If you don't take those kinds of things into account, they can really throw a wrench into your budget. For example, if you're planning a five-day conference and you don't budget for coat-check and have to add it in on-site, it's going to cost you thousands of dollars."

Budgets and Relationships

Both Squeglia and Biback emphasize that planner/vendor relationships are still critical when it comes to successful budgeting.

"I think a lot of newbies don't really understand that," says Biback, who adds that building a list of friends on social media sites isn't nearly as valuable as establishing close business —

and even personal — relationships with vendors.

Biback recalls a recent situation in which a client asked her to go with an audio-visual vendor who differed from the vendor she usually uses. She got a bid that was about \$15,000 more than what her usual AV vendor would have charged. "My client asked me how that was possible, and I told them it was because of the relationship I built with that vendor," Biback says. "So guess what vendor they went with — \$15,000 is a lot of money."

Relationships are "a critical piece" in working out budgets, adds Squeglia. "The power of relationships is one of the best things I can bring to my clients."

These relationships add value in a number of ways, Squeglia says. Hospitality partners are usually "very creative" when it comes to budgets, so that when she has a limited amount of meeting spend she can count on those partners to help make it work, particularly since they know she's been a loyal client and will continue to bring them business.

It's also important to remember that relationships have to work in both directions.

While it may be tempting, for example, to negotiate for the cheapest rates possible for hotel rooms in a buyers market, Biback says a planner runs the risk of creating a resentful partner who is being forced to accept business that is unprofitable. "And the wheel will eventually turn," she says.

"I really believe that everyone has to profit," says Biback. "The suppliers need to profit, my client needs to profit, and, in my case, I need to profit since I'm an independent."

Victim of Her Own Success

Like many planners, DuBois is being asked to reduce her budgets or keep them flat. "We are asked to do more for less," she says. "But Taco Bell is still a multibillion-dollar company. We still

have to be on stage and be polished, have good speaker support, good video and have a meeting that makes sense for people to attend and not be a waste of their time. We just have to do it with fewer resources."

Fewer resources means eliminating sleeping rooms by holding executive meetings at local country clubs rather than hotels. "There's no golf or spa," she says. "No frills — just the basics needed to get business done."

"From a staging standpoint, we're doing a lot less," DuBois continues,

adding that while meetings still use light and sound, she hasn't built sets in a while, using video and graphic design in their place.

"They're (Taco Bell events) not as glamorous and exciting and as dynamic as they used to be — or as much fun — and budgeting for them presented a challenge for a while," she says. "But we've figured out how to do it, and we've done it pretty well." Which means, she says, that even if/when the economy turns around, "I don't know if we'll ever get back to the days of big meeting spend."

Keeping It Simple

While DuBois may be a victim of her own success, Jeff De Cagna, FRSA, FASAE, believes that planners like DuBois — with her ability to reduce budgets and simplify events, yet meet her organization's goals — represent what meeting planning should become.

As chief strategist and founder of Principled Innovation LLC, De Cagna has looked at the role of meetings in organizations and observes they still have a long way to go to optimally create value.

Planners who are waiting for the good old days to return, may be deluding themselves, De Cagna says. "The economy may cycle back," he says. "But I don't think it's going to cycle back in the same way. I think organizations are still going to be asking fundamental questions like, 'Do we really need to put as much money into events to get the intended effect?'"

Planners should be asking what's going to create maximum value for meeting stakeholders and not focus on anything that's extraneous. "For example, it's great to apply technology to a meeting," says De Cagna, "but not if the purpose is simply because the technology is 'cool' or different, but because it creates actual value. And then planners should follow through to ensure the value that technology is supposed to create actually occurs."

So what's really going to create value



Jeff De Cagna, FRSA, FASAE
Chief Strategist and Founder
Principled Innovation LLC
Reston, VA

"I think organizations are still going to be asking fundamental questions like, 'Do we really need to put as much money into events to get the intended effect?'"

in this environment? "I think people are going to expect more of a shift towards simplicity in a lot of the experiences they're having," says De Cagna. "They're lives are already complicated, so if you want your event to have an effect on these people, you might want to wring as much of the complexity from the experience as possible."

De Cagna believes that meetings "in general" are still guilty of being more about the experience and less about the outcome. So when it comes to budgeting for events, "let's focus on value creation and then make that as easy to achieve as possible," he says. "Focusing on the ability of stakeholders to achieve outcomes will really be a positive shift, and will also save their companies a lot of money." **C&IT**

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Kathleen McCasland
Executive Director
Oracle Development Tools
User Group, Wilmington, NC

"There were all kinds of very nice restaurants within walking distance of the hotels and convention center. So if our sponsors and exhibitors wanted to take clients to dinner they didn't have to worry about hiring limos or buses."

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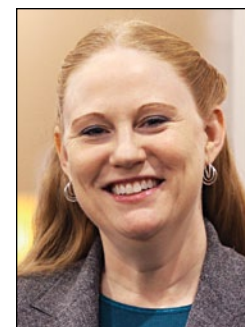
By John Buchanan

The meetings industry has been dealt a one-two punch over the past three years, thanks to an ever more global and competitive economy, and rapidly evolving technological advances.

At the same time that planners are grappling with the new and unique

we will continue to have a job? Does it mean we won't have a job? Or that we'll have more work? How is all this going to affect us?"

Despite such hypothetical questions, she says she has reached a conclusion about a planner's current circumstances. "SMM will either threaten or



"The bottom line is that you have to capture and analyze the event metrics to really demonstrate the ROI from your meetings to management."

Diane L. Davis, CMP, CMM
Conference Manager, SAP

challenges of strategic meetings management programs (SMMP), they are still struggling with a sluggish economy. Meanwhile, a host of other issues — from technology and corporate social responsibility to rising costs and tighter budgets for basics such as F&B — confront planners with new challenges and opportunities every day.

And no one can accurately predict when, if ever, the market will get back to "normal." To address such issues, *Corporate & Incentive Travel* sought out veteran planners and industry leaders for their perspective on the coming year. And the uncertain future beyond that.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE The Harsh Spotlight of SMM

Over the last several years, the corporate discipline known as strategic meetings management (SMM) has begun to transform the meetings industry. Over the last two years, however — largely as a result of the recession and the AIG effect of 2009 — it has turned it on its head. And many veteran planners are worried — to put it mildly.

"A lot of us who have been at this for a long time are concerned," says a highly respected planner, a CMP/CMM at a Fortune 500 company. "Does it mean

reinforce what we are doing," she says. "And that choice of outcome is largely up to us."

Yet even with that perspective, she sees senior executives coming to her planning sessions and asking lots of questions about choices, costs and other factors. "They're scrutinizing and micro-managing," she says. "It's awful. They don't understand that what I bring to the table is relevant. They treat me more like an admin or a mere function-

"SMM is changing the industry in terms of how business gets done. And I think it will change the sales process between hotels and corporate clients."

Robert A. Gilbert, CHME, CHA, President and CEO
Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International



ary. They don't really understand what we do as planners."

As a result, she observes what she calls "a shift in the planning process itself — at least for those people who have been planning meetings for at least the last decade or so." And the timing is significant because that "last decade or so" coincides precisely with the

first whispers of what would become known as SMM.

And the end result of that, she says, is that "we will see a lot of planners going on to new careers to do something else."

However, she stresses, she will not be among them. "I am going to fight through this, because I do believe that from management's perspective, SMM is a legitimate business tool. I just think we're making it too complicated."

Diane L. Davis, CMP, CMM, conference manager at SAP agrees that SMM is having a major impact on the traditional role of meeting planner. But, she adds, smart planners who want to survive will embrace this growing strategic evolution, because ultimately it will be good for both companies and planners. It's the old tactical (sourcing) planners who resist it who will fall out of step and risk the consequences. "It's down now to adapt and survive — trim your sails to the wind," she says. "And as a planner, you can't let your subjective feelings get in the way of real data, real metrics. The bottom line is that you have to capture and analyze the event metrics to really demonstrate the ROI from your meetings to management."

At the same time SMM has caused

in-house planners to feel threatened. It has been a catalyst for more business going to independent third-party planning organizations large and small. "In the past year or two, a lot of meeting planners have been let go," says Doug McPhee, CMP, CMM, national accounts manager at Experient in Duanesburg, NY. "So more and more companies are

looking at third-party planners more than ever before.”

And somewhat ironically, McPhee says, many terminated meeting planners are now looking for jobs at third-party companies. “The problem with many of them is that they’ve been at it for a long time and become set in their ways, and they haven’t continued their education,” he says.

As a result, they are the ones having the hardest time finding new jobs in a changing industry, he says. “And some of them are very frightened now because they don’t know what to do.”

At the same time, SMM is changing the fundamental relationship between planner as buyer and vendor as seller, says Bob Gilbert, CHME, CHA, president and CEO of Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIAI). “SMM is changing the industry in terms of how business gets done,” he says. “And I think it will change the sales process between hotels and corporate clients, because obviously the additional points of contact at a company are going to be higher up in the organization (than planners). That’s really how the procurement theme is going to play out in large companies.”

And for those planners who still cling to the belief — the dream — that SMM



“(Companies) are seeing that SMM is a real opportunity to save money. They’re seeing that it’s not an illusion.”

Kari Wendel, SMMC, Senior Director, SMM Program Management + Solutions, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Minnetonka, MN

in strategic meetings management practices who led the development of the Global Business Travel Association’s (GBTA) strategic meetings management certification program, and now is senior director, SMM program management + solutions at Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) in Minnetonka, MN, says, “That’s because more and more companies are seeing all the public discussion about SMM and looking at the pioneering companies that have actually done it, and they’re seeing that’s it a real opportunity (to save money). They’re seeing that it’s not an illusion.”

GBTA

Changes Afoot

GBTA has been a pioneering organization in the development and continuous implementation of SMM.

This year, as part of a “major overhaul” of its education program, GBTA

Corporate Travel Executive (CTE) and SMMC programs.

GBTA Academy will offer three certificates for business travel professionals at different levels. An associate-level certificate will be offered for travel buyers and suppliers with less than three years experience. A manager-level certificate, starting in early 2012 and offered in partnership with the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, will be offered to those with three to seven years of experience. A leader-level certificate, available now, is offered for highly experienced travel professionals.

Meanwhile, GBTA also announced a new SMM Maturity Index in partnership with the Strategic Meetings Management Taskforce and StarCite. It delivers a standardized set of guidelines for assessing the developmental progress of a strategic meetings management program (SMMP) and a “prescriptive report” of recommendations for further refinement and improvement.

MARKET FORECAST

Mixed Prognostications

While planners, vendors and industry experts concur that SMM and the ever-increasing role of procurement will be the big industry news going forward, they do not agree on when the battered meetings market will recover from the lingering recession.

“Unfortunately, I think that 2012 will be flat,” says Deborah Sexton, president and CEO of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). “I hope I’m wrong. I hope there’s an uptick. But I think the market is going to be flat,



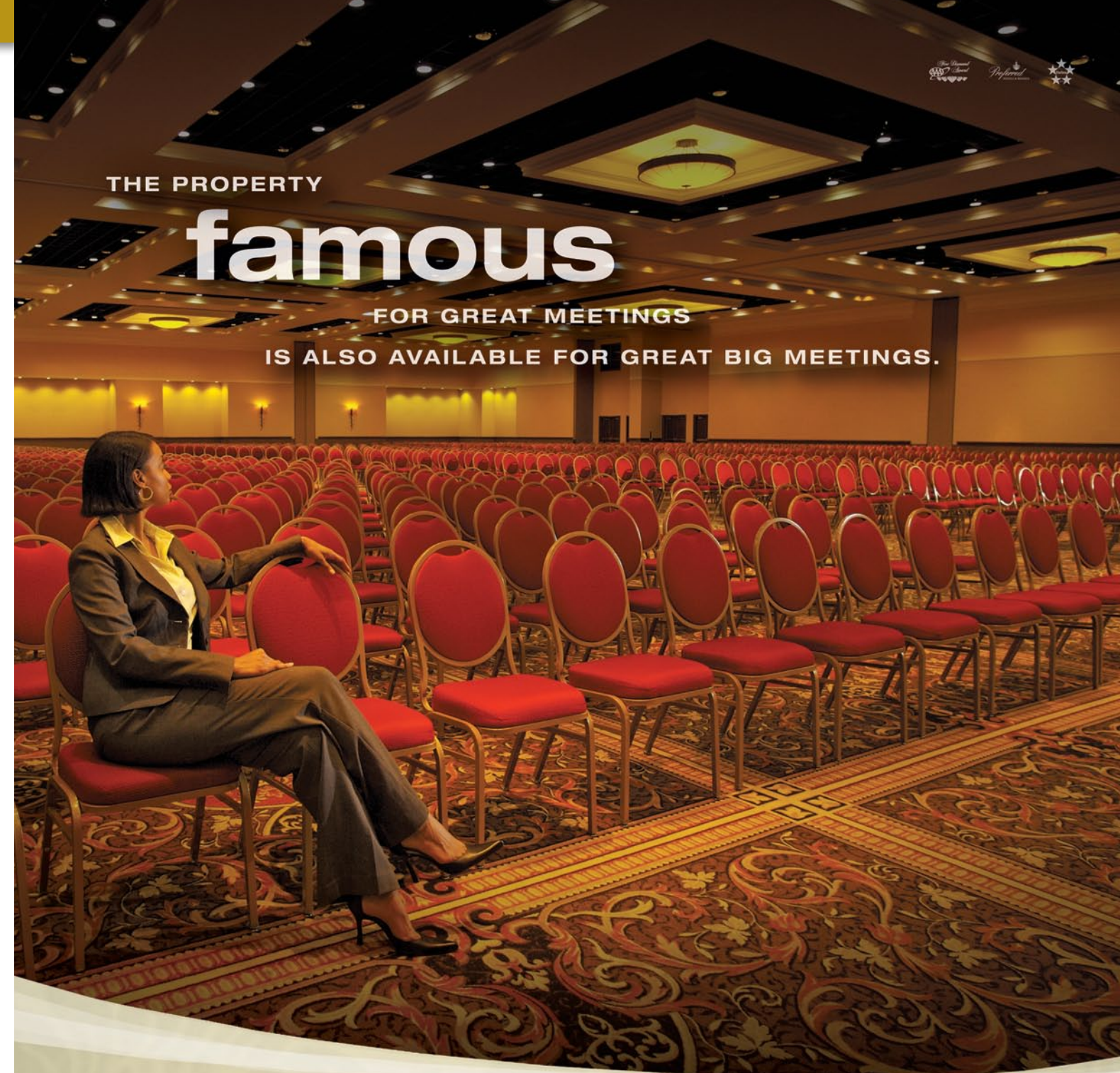
“I think the really big change is that we’re not going back to the ‘same old, same old.’ We’re going to have to think about how we do business differently going forward.”

Deborah Sexton, President and CEO, PCMA, Chicago, IL

will go away, Kari Wendel, SMMC, has a simple, direct message for you: That is not going to happen. In fact, now that SMM has swept through the Fortune 1000 like a hurricane over the last three years, its influence will extend to even smaller companies. Wendel, a pioneer

discontinued its two-year-old strategic meetings management certification (SMMC) program.

At the same press conference, GBTA also announced the creation of GBTA Academy, which will replace the existing Corporate Travel Expert (CTE), Certified



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“We see companies striving to balance financial considerations against the well-established value of face-to-face meetings. And that’s what will eventually drive the market back to normalcy and new growth.”

Chris Gaia, Vice President of Marketing
Maritz Travel, St. Louis, MO

as a result of the continuing weakness of the global economy.”

Just as important, Sexton says, when the market has recovered, it will also be different. “I think the really big change is that we’re not going back to the ‘same old, same old,’” she says. “We’re going to have to think about how we do business differently going forward.”

Gilbert has a more optimistic view, somewhat tempered by a largely recovered — and even vibrant — hotel market. “The meeting landscape rebounded significantly in 2011,” Gilbert says. “In 2012, I think there will continue to be cautious optimism about how and when people book meetings. We’ve seen a lot of compression in lead time, and that has put an undue amount of pressure on the hotel in that equation, as well as the planner. But because of the tenuousness of the economy, companies are making decisions differently than they did five or 10 years ago.”

Maritz Travel’s Vice President of Marketing Chris Gaia sees two sides to the great SMM debate. And the other side is a careful analysis of the vital importance of meetings and events to corporate well-being over the long haul. “We see companies striving to balance financial considerations against the well-established value of face-to-face meetings,” he says. “And that’s what will eventually drive the market back to normalcy and new growth.”

Issa Jouaneh, vice president and general manager at American Express Meetings & Events in New York, is perhaps the most optimistic of the industry’s major leaders and observers. “We

saw some ‘soft’ recovery in the meetings market in 2011, but we did not get back to 2008 levels,” he says. “But I do think the meeting market will fully recover. I think it will get back to peak 2008 levels. The question is when.”

THE VIEW FROM MPI **New ‘Rules of Engagement’**

In the brave new world of 2012 and beyond, MPI sees four best practices they have dubbed “the four new rules of engagement” that will set the new standard for professional meeting planner performance.

“First is the need to continue to advance the business value of meetings,”

“More planners are getting savvy about their F&B spend. ...They’re talking to the executive chef and saying, ‘...So what can you do for us with the budget we do have available?’”

Doug McPhee, CMP, CMM, National Accounts
Manager, Experient, Duanesburg, NY

says Didier Scaillet, MPI’s Brussels-based chief development officer. “A planner’s advocacy for the value of his or her meetings and events has to happen as part of the day-to-day operations of an SMMP.

“The second new rule is that planners need to embrace technology. It can enhance not only our professional development opportunities, but also the face-to-face meetings we plan. For example, Wi-Fi is rapidly becoming an expectation, not an exception. And so is the idea that our meetings must be wired to get

outside the meeting room and connect beyond those traditional four walls.”

The third big issue Scaillet and MPI see is a genuine need for companies and planners to “truly practice corporate social responsibility (CSR),” he says. “Planners need to be prepared to design events that take into account all areas of CSR — societal, economic and environmental — as more companies are expecting CSR-conscious meetings.”

Finally, Scaillet cites as a necessity for planner survival and prosperity “forward-thinking, collaborative, unconventional and imaginative solutions” that address the complex issues now transforming the industry. “That is what will set savvy planners — and their events — apart,” Scaillet says. “In short, it’s about innovation — re-imagined.”

F&B **Progressive Thinking**

“More planners are getting savvy about their F&B spend,” says McPhee. “They’re not just working with the hotel salesperson anymore. They’re going in



and talking to the executive chef and saying, ‘Here’s my budget. I can spend \$38 for lunch or \$42 for dinner. I can’t get that up any higher, based on my total budget. So what can you do for us with the budget we do have available?’ And those executive chefs are coming back and saying, ‘We can reduce all the portion sizes,’ which is usually fine because most people at meetings leave food on the plate anyway. But the point is that hotels are being more flexible because it’s expected now.”

Davis has observed other significant changes in F&B. “We’ve already seen changes when it comes to awareness and sensitivity to cultural and dietary requirements,” she says. “And we’re seeing



“We saw some ‘soft’ recovery in the meetings market in 2011. But I do think the meeting market will fully recover. I think it will get back to peak 2008 levels. The question is when.”

Issa Jouaneh, Vice President and General Manager
American Express Meetings & Events, NY, NY

growing awareness of the carbon impact of our meetings. More than ever planners are requesting sustainable menu options that include free-range beef and poultry, ocean-friendly seafood and organic, seasonal produce — all with an emphasis on food that is grown, raised or harvested locally.” As a result, a flourishing “farm-to-table” movement has begun to spring up at progressive hotels across the country.

TRAVEL COSTS **‘Conservative’ Increases**

After a buyer’s market cycle that almost crashed the hospitality industry in early 2009 — and continued with deeply discounted deals, even from A-list properties in major destinations such as Las Vegas or Orlando — the proverbial pendulum has swung the other way, and 2012 will see a seller’s market, says McPhee.

Most industry observers seem to agree. “And,” says McPhee, “the great deals of 2009 that existed until even early this year are going to disappear as demand recovers — especially in major destinations.”

As for actual cost increases next in 2012, both STR and PKF Hospitality project U.S. growth in revenue per available room (RevPAR) generated by hoteliers to grow by about seven percent. And both market analysts agree with

McPhee that the room discounting of the past two years is coming to an end.

Meanwhile, in its annual forecast, American Express Global Business Travel predicts “conservative” cost increases in

North America and Europe. “However,” Amex says, “Asia and Latin America are likely to see relatively higher increases as travel demand within and to those regions remains strong.”

In North America, average hotel rates for mid-range properties are expected to increase 2.5 to 6.5 percent. Upper-range properties are expected to increase rates by 1.5 to 5.5 percent.

The 2011 report, released in late October, anticipates spikes in airline costs, primarily as a result of “steadfast capacity restrictions” from airlines. Even in the face of a still sluggish economy, Amex expects contracted fares to rise up to as much as 5 percent, with business class fares showing the biggest rise.

INCENTIVE TRAVEL **IT Goes Global as U.S. Market Begins to Recover**

The average incentive travel (IT) program is getting a little shorter. Attendees are enjoying more free time as part of

the program — partly because of budget considerations, but also because younger participants have made it clear they want it that way. And like meeting budgets, IT budgets and their ROI are under unprecedented scrutiny.

“I think the conservatism of how companies are spending money now is apparent to everyone,” says Allison Summers, managing director of Site and the Site International Foundation in Chicago.

Meanwhile, the economy continues to take a toll on IT budgets. As a result, Summers reports, slightly more than half of the planners who responded to a Site Index study released in August say it will be at least two more years for the industry to get back to its 2007 apex.

In the meantime, Summers says, every dollar spent must be justified today — and show a respectable ROI. Planners seem to be getting that message, too. The percentages of them who reported only “occasionally” or “never” tracking ROI dropped significantly from 2010 to 2011, according to the study. And a large majority agreed there is much more ROI scrutiny of IT expenditures.

Industry pioneer Maritz Travel, however, sees the beginning of a genuine market recovery, according to Gaia. “Year over year for 2011 versus 2010, we’ve seen a fairly significant increase in the average per-person spend for incentive programs. And our IT business is up by about 19 percent. We expect that positive momentum to carry into 2012.”

At the same time, Summers notes, the international IT market is booming — led by China. “The Chinese are using incentive travel programs more than

“A planner’s advocacy for the value of his or her meetings and events has to happen as part of the day-to-day operations of an SMMP.”

Didier Scaillet, Chief Development Officer
MPI, Brussels, Belgium



ever before," she says. "One of our recent Crystal Award winners named during IMEX in Las Vegas was a Chinese Amway program that brought five waves of 3,000 participants each to Los Angeles. And we are seeing programs as large as 8,000 people participating in Chinese programs. You don't see those kinds of numbers anywhere else."

Now, Site is witnessing significant growth in the European IT market, as Latin America — and particularly Brazil and Argentina — embraces incentive travel as a core business tool to motivate performance.

CSR/GREENING Complex, but Compelling

"Over-complicated, under-regulated, but on the money" are the three essential current characteristics of corporate social responsibility in the meetings industry, according to a three-year landmark study released by MPI at IMEX America in October. The goal of the first installment of an ongoing study was to identify impacts, trends and drivers of CSR.

The study found that CSR is a complex issue, with more than 300 codes of practice. Sorting through them and adjusting to them is often a daunting challenge, says MPI.



"They are...more open to brand new ideas like hybrid meetings. For young planners just coming into the industry, technology is like their second skin."

LoriAnn Harnish, CMP, CMM, CTA, Corporate Meetings and Events Manager, U.S. Foodservice, Phoenix, AZ

But, the organization notes, CSR is now an important business practice that creates clear associations between integrity and responsibility and a given organization or brand.

Davis agrees that CSR has become an essential element of a meetings practice.

"Questions about a vendor's sustainable policies and practices are commonplace on most RFPs now," says Davis. "I think CSR and greening are fairly mature disciplines now. And most hotels and other vendors are aware that it's now a requirement for many companies."

"The Chinese are using incentive travel programs more than ever before. ...And we are seeing programs as large as 8,000 people. You don't see those kinds of numbers anywhere else."

Allison Summers, Managing Director Site, Chicago, IL



Gilbert takes a slightly contrarian view of all the hoopla about CSR and its impact. "CSR will continue to be a part of the landscape," Gilbert says. "And it's important. But I don't think it's a real driving force in decision-making for most companies at this time. It's not one of the dominant things companies are looking at right now."

TECHNOLOGY Tools for Change and Evolution

Although a range of specialized technologies — many of them innovative

and Cvent, have come to dominate the field. In effect, they have created the fundamental technology that has enabled the SMM phenomenon. And as a result, they have reaped the rewards.

"Those two technologies have really changed the landscape of the entire in-

dustry because they are core elements of SMM programs," says Gilbert.

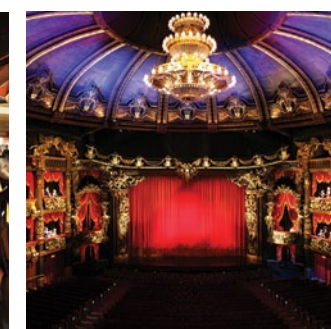
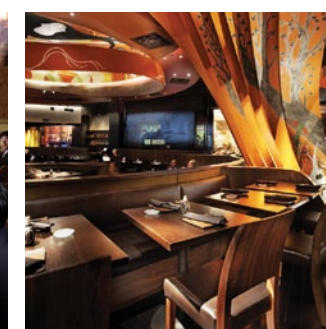
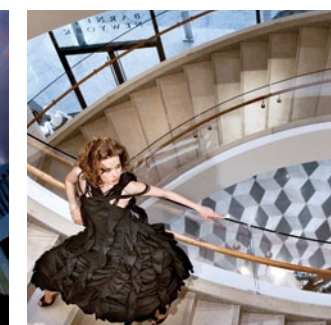
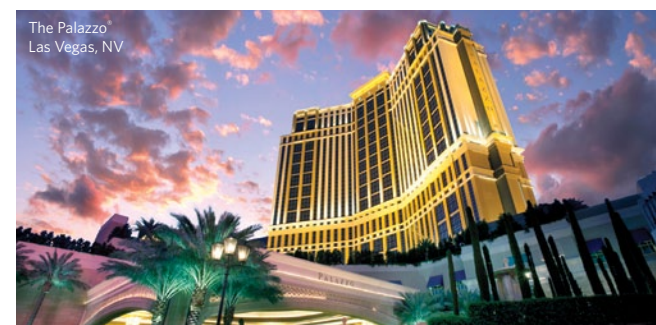
Meanwhile, virtual and "hybrid" meetings have become topics of hot debate — and examples of still more change in the industry. "Three years ago, discussion was focused around virtual meetings," says Gaia. "Now we're seeing a growing trend toward hybrid meetings. But I wouldn't call it a major trend yet."

Major trend yet or not, Sexton says "hybrid meetings are here to stay." And in the long run, she says, they are good for everybody, because they extend the meeting experience while also allowing for more interactivity between hosts, planners, attendees and vendors.

And while many older planners see virtual or hybrid meetings as a threat to their traditional roles, young planners just out of college are embracing it with a real passion, says LoriAnn Harnish, CMP, CMM, CTA, corporate meetings and events manager at U.S. Foodservice in Phoenix. "They are much more enthusiastic about the role of new technologies and therefore more open to brand new ideas like hybrid meetings," Harnish says. "It's just a basic generational difference. For young planners just coming into the industry, technology is like their second skin." **C&IT**



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Accented by a Swarovski crystal chandelier, Hall Winery's 14,000-sf wine cave hosts corporate receptions and events. Here, proprietor Kathryn Hall toasts a group.

Photo courtesy of Hall Wines

Unique Venues

Meeting Differently on Land, Sea and Rail

Splurging on theming and décor for special events isn't exactly part of the "new normal" for corporate meetings. Any degree of extravagance in that regard must be justified: Is it the best way to make an impact on incentive winners or clients, for example? Or might it be just as impactful, and more cost- and time-effective, to simply stage the event at a venue that has a built-in ambience or theme that is sure to enthrall attendees?

In some cases it is, and thankfully there are venues across the world that are replete with the history and/or character often missing from brand hotels. Yet the "uniqueness" of a venue is partly "in the eye of the beholder," more specifically in the eyes of the attendees. If an attendee hails from a culture or geographic region very different from the milieu of the meeting venue, she will likely regard that venue as being even more unique.

The Harvard Club

For instance, among Bostonians the local Harvard Club and John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum are distinctive venues in an area brimming with other exemplars, from the Paul Revere House to Faneuil Hall. But for the Brazilian clients of a major consumer products company, both the club and the library are also distinctive simply by virtue of representing Northeastern U.S.

history and culture. The company recently hosted the 60 VIPs for a business workshop at the Harvard Club and a dinner at the JFK Library, with the Liberty Hotel serving as home base.

"Boston is among the most unique cities in the United States; it has a very European feeling," remarks Carlos Arruda, partner/director with Case Imagine, the incentive house that staged the event in cooperation with Corinthian Events, a Boston DMC. "And this group was especially excited because they usually travel to Miami and New York City."

The event was designed for the host company "to position themselves differently than the other competitors they have here in Brazil," he says, and the Harvard name certainly furthered that goal. "We definitely chose Boston because of Harvard; it's a brand that we planned to link with the business," Arruda relates. In fact, some of the speakers at the workshop, which was intended to help the clients grow their retail businesses, were Harvard students.

Founded in 1908 with the aim of "giving effective expression to the Harvard Spirit," the club has hosted distinguished speakers including many presidents, from William Howard Taft to Gerald Ford to George H. Walker Bush. "The private social club is a very Northeast thing, whether you're doing it in New York or DC or here in Boston," says Courtney Church, partner with Corinthian Events. "It's always an option to consider, especially in the fall and winter months. You go there for that old Brahmin experience ("Boston Brahmins," a term coined by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., designates a group of aristocratic families associated with Harvard University). Some of the clubs can hold up to 350 people. It's a very good value, and it's more unique than going to a hotel or chain restaurant."

Corinthian helped Case Imagine source the Harvard Club, set up English-Portuguese translation booths and made the AV arrangements. "It's a very old building, and we had to bring in additional NSTAR power to the building to accommodate our AV needs," says Church. The Club catering, according to Arruda, "was amazing, one of the good surprises we had. Some of the VIPs own supermarkets in Brazil, each one of them around 200-300 stores, and they are looking for good wine and good food."

The Main Clubhouse offers fine dining in the Boston Room, casual fare

in the Grill Bar and appetizers in the Commonwealth Lounge. There are a total of 11 function halls, 42 overnight rooms and eight squash courts. After the second-day workshop, the group visited the JFK Library to experience what the facility describes as "the Kennedy legacy of gracious entertaining." The event be-



Jennie Jacobson
President and Founder
Unique Events Inc.
Agoura Hills, CA

"For us the most incredible venues are in Napa at the vineyards. That's the big 'wow': You take over a vineyard and cater a dinner."

gan with a private tour of the museum and continued with a cocktail reception and dinner at the Museum Pavilion, a 5,800-sf room with 115-foot high glass walls offering panoramic views of Boston Harbor. A pianist set the elegant mood, and a huge American flag was suspended from the ceiling.

Wine Country

Some groups might prefer to experience life as "country folk" rather than "city slickers," yet still want that touch of elegance. They would do well to try wine country out West. Napa and Sonoma immediately come to mind, but Willamette Valley's wine country has a similar appeal. It's the reason Oregon is recognized worldwide as a producer of stellar pinot noir.

Oregon also happens to be where Nike Inc. is based, specifically in Beaverton, about 40 minutes from the

By George Seli



Photo courtesy of Corinthian Events

heart of wine country. Groups looking for a unique venue in that region need look no further than the Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg.

"In wine country, it's the only full-service, luxury-style hotel. Everything else out there is either going to be a bed-and-breakfast or a lower-end property," observes Eric Smith, manager, global meetings and events at Nike. The company holds a variety of leadership re-

Courtney Church
Partner
Corinthian Events
Boston, MA



"The private social club is a very Northeast thing, whether you're doing it in New York or DC or Boston. It's always an option to consider, especially in the fall and winter."

treats and department meetings at the Allison, which is "right in the middle of vineyards, and the décor and overall ambience is very relaxing and inviting. You're not in a large hotel where you're surrounded by hundreds of other attendees. Usually if your group is in the ballroom, chances are yours is the only

Corporate dinners of distinction find an equally distinctive venue in Boston's Harvard Club, founded in 1908.

group they have in-house," Smith explains.

The property has 85 guest rooms, including eight suites, each with a gas fireplace and either a balcony or deck with vineyard views. Convention staff can assist a planner with staging a visit to a local vineyard or gourmet restaurant, or host the group in Jory, the Allison's 100-seat, 6,000-sf signature restaurant that showcases Oregon's agricultural bounty and acclaimed wines. On premises is also a spa with 12 treatment rooms and a "living room" off the main lobby with "an oversized wood-burning fireplace with couches and chairs set out in multiple conversational areas," as Smith describes it. "Often we will find that to be kind of the meeting place after the day's meetings. Attendees will gather there for a glass of wine before heading off to dinner that night."

Interestingly, the Allison

sees a good number of visitors from the Napa area looking to experience "something different," according to the sales staff, and Willamette is arguably less touristy than its California counterpart.

But Napa is by no means played out as a destination among the well-traveled, and corporate groups can find some very intriguing venues in the area. As president of Agora Hills, CA-based Unique Events, Jennie Jacobson has a real insider's perspective on how to make Napa the most memorable it can be. Hall Winery's Rutherford, CA, branch, located in the Sacrashe vineyard, is among the options she recommends. Here, groups can convene underground in 14,000 sf of caves finished with handmade Austrian brick

recovered from the Vienna area. Works from Craig and Kathryn Hall's art collection are displayed throughout the caves, which house a reception area for private tastings and entertaining. The room's centerpiece is a striking Swarovski crystal chandelier, hanging over a single long table that seats about 35.

"For us the most incredible venues are in Napa at the vineyards. That's the big 'wow': You take over a vineyard and cater a dinner," says Jacobson. "We recently did a wine-pairing dinner at Hall's wine caves for a very VIP incentive group in the medical device industry. It's a stunning location. First we did cocktails at sunset, and it feels like this big, beautiful home, sitting up in Napa looking over into the vineyard. Next we walked the group down to the wine caves into that amazing room for the dinner."

Jacobson calls the experience "the perfect day in Napa," and typically works with the 336-room Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, which is about an hour and 15 minutes' drive to Napa and offers 23,000 sf of meeting space. The



Photo courtesy of Unique Events Inc.

San Francisco's "crown jewel" venue for elegant corporate events is the Beaux-Arts City Hall building, rebuilt in 1915. The dome is the fifth largest in the world.

Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco's impressive Grecian-style building, erected in 1909 as the headquarters of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, is among many historical buildings in the city that can also serve as unique sites for corporate events. These include the Ferry Building (erected in 1898 on The Embarcadero waterfront), Alcatraz (rentable for lunches and dinners), and especially the city's "crown jewel," City Hall. Reopened in 1915 after the original was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, the Beaux-Arts building's dome rises more than 300 feet and is the fifth largest in the world. "You walk into City Hall and it's so beautiful, ideal for attendees that enjoy architecture," says Jacobson. "For one incentive group, we did a red carpet all the way down the entrance steps, and then a white-glove dinner catered by the Ritz-Carlton."

Over-the-Top Overseas

If it's modern architecture that inspires a group, then Marina Bay Sands qualifies as a unique venue if anything does. Opened just about a year ago fronting Marina Bay in Singapore, the Las Vegas Sands property features three architectural standouts: a trio of sloping hotel towers joined along the top by the Sands SkyPark, glass and steel pavilions "floating" on the bay, and an ArtScience Museum whose shape recalls a lotus flower. The SkyPark is a 1.2 hectare tropical oasis (large enough to fit three football fields) with 250 trees and 650 plants. Recently made available for corporate bookings, the museum is surrounded by a 40,000-sf lily pond reflecting pool. (For more on Marina Bay Sands, turn to "Asia-Pacific" on page 32.)

Just as Marina Bay Sands gives participants a sense of being transported into the future, a venue like Ireland's Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort will whisk them away to a time when archery and falconry were everyday rec-

reational pursuits. Located on 840 acres of stylized gardens and parklands near Limerick and Shannon International Airport, the Adare Manor Hotel has made the *Condé Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice "Best in the World" list for 2011. And it is no less choice-worthy for small corporate groups, who can avail themselves of a 62-room Manor House and several pristine meeting rooms, including the 1,080-sf Boardroom and 1,296-sf Robert Trent Jones Room.

Their experience can begin with the Adare's "Horse and Hound" welcome, where riders on horseback and their Irish hounds escort the group to the gates of the Manor, built from 1832-1862 for the Second Earl of Dunraven and his wife, Lady Caroline Wyndham. A restoration and transformation into one of Ireland's greatest manor hotels was finished in 1988, but the Manor's gothic character, complete with arches,



Photo courtesy of Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort

A 19th century gothic castle, Adare Manor Hotel & Golf Resort near Limerick, Ireland, offers more than 5,000 sf of exquisite function space, golf, falconry and more.

gargoyles, and stain-glass windows, was untouched. (Interestingly, the Manor is a "calendar house," with 365 stained glass windows representing the days of the year, 52 chimneys for the weeks of the year, seven pillars in the lobby for the days of the week and four towers representing the seasons.) Inside, attendees will be enchanted by the Minstrel's Gallery, 132 feet long, 26½



Carlos Arruda
Partner/Director
Case Imagine
Sao Paulo, Brazil

"We definitely chose Boston because of Harvard; it's a brand that we planned to link with the business."

feet high and lined on either side with 17th century Flemish choir stalls.

"The manor has one of the most unique long gallery rooms in all of Europe," asserts Michael Campbell, vice president of Atlanta, GA-based US Motivation, which recently staged an incentive program at the Adare for the U.S. customers of a Japanese-owned firm in the copier/fax industry. "It's just a phenomenal room with a fireplace and chandeliers. We try to hide participants so they don't see the room until they enter it for the event itself. They have no idea that size of room is in the manor on the second level, so it just takes their breath away." All 110 participants dined at the same long table in the hall. "These are very well-traveled individuals, and they recognize uniqueness," says Campbell. "Many of the castle-mansion properties in Ireland aren't that big, so I was very personally excited about the Adare; it gave

me an outlet for a group larger than 50."

Attendees also can dine in The Oakroom Restaurant, overlooking the River Maigue, one of Ireland's best rivers for trout fishing. Irish whiskey tastings and Irish cookery demonstrations are among the very indigenous options, as is the 18-hole Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed championship golf course.

"As to the Irish people, it's the only

destination in the world where I do what I call home hospitality, where we turn participants loose in an actual local home. It works very well in Ireland from a safety and quality standpoint," says Campbell. "The Adare is perfectly situated for something like that." The local family entertained, and US Motivation provided the food for them to prepare. "They hosted several couples from the group, and we practically had to drag them out of the home for the evening because they were having so much fun."

Sea-Level Ceremony

Planners are continually challenged to come up with unique themes for their special events, and it's useful to bear in mind that a distinctive venue or setting will almost always make the overall experience more intriguing for attendees, whether or not the venue itself is part of the theme. For example, a masquerade ball at an Irish manor hotel like the Adare would become even more distinctive due to the setting, despite the fact that masquerades are historically tied to the cultures of Italy and France.

Similarly, suppose a corporate group runs its awards ceremony in the style of the Academy Awards aboard a cruise ship. There's nothing inherently nautical about the Academy Awards, but ev-



Carnival's Spirit hosted a corporate Academy Awards gala during an Alaska voyage.

everything becomes more special — even adventuresome — when it happens at sea. A corporate client of Carnival Cruise Lines did just that for a group of 650 attendees aboard its Spirit ship on an Alaska itinerary that includes stops at Juneau, Skagway and Ketchikan.

The private event was held in the ship's Main Showroom and featured a crystal podium and palm tree-lined red carpet, all rented and brought in by the company. According to Ann N. Sedgwick, Carnival's director of sales, charters, meetings and incentives, the group "was so thrilled with the private reception that they have utilized the same format for all future functions, including any land-based ones." But those future attendees may well envy those who literally returned from sea with an award in hand.

Riding the Rails

When a travel experience makes National Geographic's "World's Greatest Trips" list, chances are good it's on many attendees' bucket lists as well. Rocky Mountaineer's Canadian train journeys are fully customizable for meetings and incentives, with itineraries between Vancouver, BC, and the breathtakingly beautiful Canadian Rockies and Banff National Park. Groups can charter one rail car or even the entire train for one-day or two-day customizable trips. The train offers special lounge cars with conference and meeting facilities including boardroom tables and LCD screens. Group Travel Consultants arrange accommodations with partner hotels, help plan events such as cocktail receptions and can provide company logos on head rests.

VIA Rail Canada also offers charter options for one or several train cars for a few hours or an extended trans-Canada journey. Technical services and equipment are available, and planners can customize the experience by choosing itineraries, meals and entertainment — including an interactive "Murder on the Orient-Express"-inspired production with attendee participation.

Whether on land, sea or rail, there's a venue sure to inspire and motivate attendees of every and any type of meeting and incentive. For planners, the fun part is finding them. **C&IT**



Photos courtesy of Rocky Mountaineer



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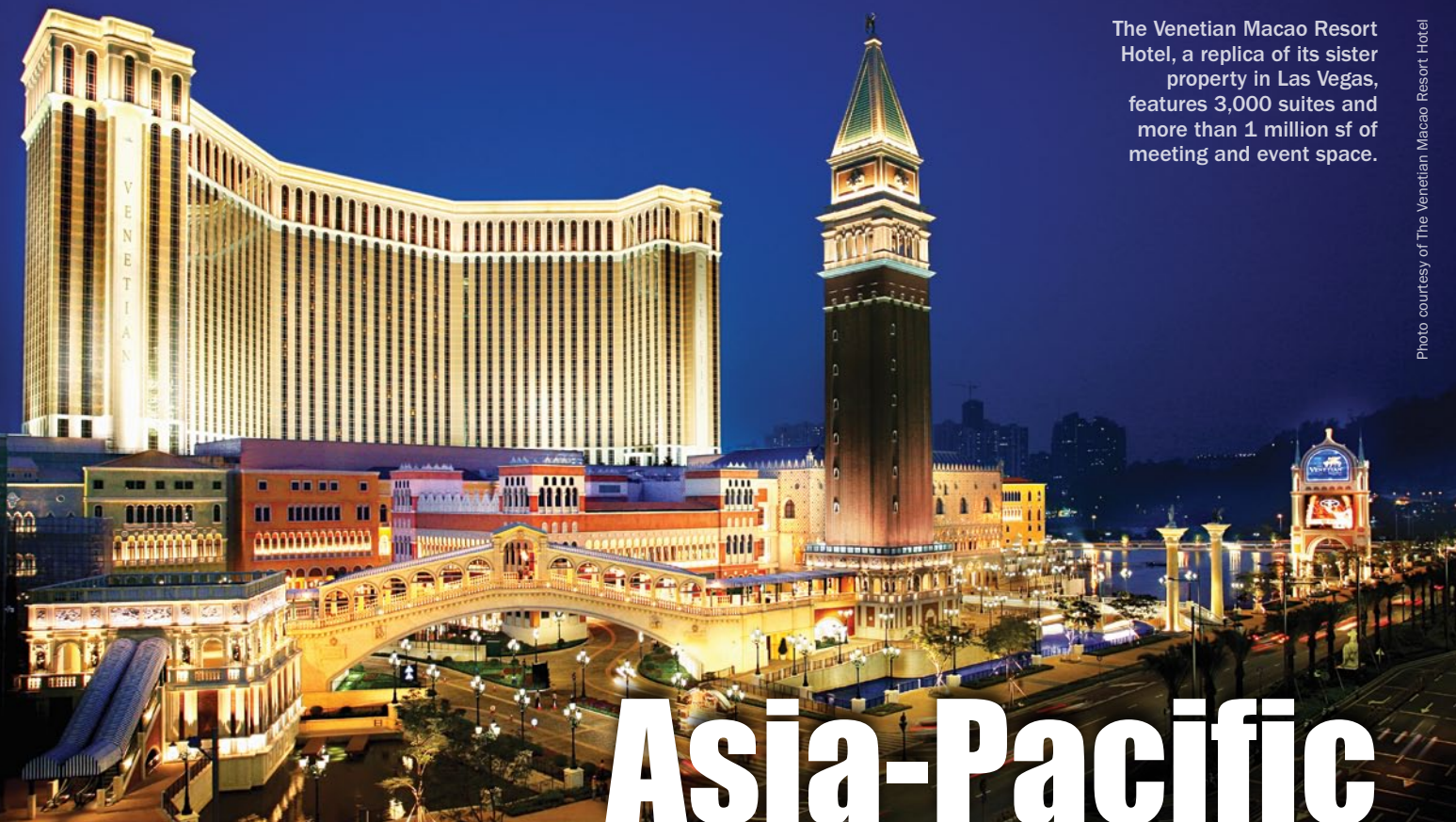
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The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, a replica of its sister property in Las Vegas, features 3,000 suites and more than 1 million sf of meeting and event space.

Photo courtesy of The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel

Asia-Pacific

Exotic Settings for Perfectly Executed Meetings

Now that meetings, events, conferences and incentive programs are returning as mainstream corporate activities, the Asia-Pacific region has stepped to the foreground with a robust roster of individual destinations that are attracting more and more interest from planners and more enthusiasm from attendees.

Maritz Travel Co., for example, has seen a 33 percent increase in international meetings over the last year, and many of them are going to Asia-Pacific, says Director of Marketing Jim Ruzala. One reason: the still “exotic” list of options, such as Macau, the rest of still-emerging China, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, Tahiti and always popular Hawaii.

“The primary reason for the popularity of Asia-Pacific destinations is that so many U.S. companies are global now, and they are embracing the fact that they are global, and they can now go there instead of bringing everyone to the U.S.,” says Peter Duncan, CMP, senior planner at Meetings & Incentives Inc. in Caledonia, WI. “And that means they are also culturally embracing their international counterparts. So now those destinations know how to deliver a quality meeting, and they’re doing it over and over again.”

Macau

Located at the southern tip of China, on the western side of the Pearl River Delta and facing the South China Sea, Macau (aka Macao) — along with Hong Kong — is a special administrative district of the People’s Republic of China. As a result of billions of dollars of investment in its meeting and convention infrastructure by Las Vegas Sands Corporation, Wynn Resorts, MGM Resorts International and others, it has quickly become one of the most unique and exotic destinations in the world.

“We’re seeing Macau come up in a lot more requests,” says Megan Barry, lead travel buyer at Maritz Travel. “Macau has an enormous amount of function space, and the three major hotel brands there now are well-known to U.S. companies. They all have excellent meeting space and other facilities. And Macau is very accessible via Hong Kong.”

Veronica Zamora, international marketing and education manager at Birmingham, AL-based dental implant supplier BioHorizons, hosted her first Macau meeting in September, a two-day, three-night event for 420 dentists from the Asia-Pacific region and United Kingdom.

Why Macau? “We asked our major distributors in Japan, Taiwan and China, and they were the ones who wanted it to

“I give The Venetian Macao a 10. The service...was fast and efficient, and there was great clarity in their contracting. Everyone speaks English, so there was no language barrier.”

Veronica Zamora, International Marketing and Education Manager, BioHorizons, Birmingham, AL

be in Macau because they said it is a very attractive destination for Asians,” says Zamora, who plans a half-dozen major international meetings a year.

She found The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel in an Internet search and booked it because of the size of the ballrooms and range and quality of its meeting space.

“On the 1–10 scale, I definitely give The Venetian Macao a 10,” she says. “The service from everyone in every department was fast and efficient, and there was also great clarity in their contracting, which is kind of unusual based on my experience doing international meetings in other destinations. Another important factor was that everyone speaks English, so there was no language barrier.”

Based on such a positive experience, she says, she and BioHorizons are inclined to go back. “We had a great experience there,” she says. “I would definitely go back.”

When the colossal Venetian Macao Resort Hotel — double the size of its namesake property in Las Vegas — opened in 2007, it marked the true beginning of the Las Vegas-style Cotai Strip. The Venetian, developed by casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, president and CEO of Las Vegas Sands Corporation and Sands China Ltd., features 3,000 suites and more than 1 million sf of meeting and event space. Two adjacent sister properties are the 289-suite Sands Macao, which opened in 2004, and the Plaza Macao, which opened in 2008 and is comprised of the 360-room Four Seasons Hotel Macao, Cotai Strip; the Paiza Mansions; The Plaza Casino; The Shoppes at Four Seasons; and restaurants and bars.

Meeting and event facilities in the mammoth complex include the 15,000-seat Cotai Arena and a state-of-the-art 1,800-seat theater that is home to Cirque du Soleil’s ZAIA show. The hotel also features more than 30 restaurants, 330 retail shops and a Malo Clinic Health & Wellness spa.

The Venetian is specifically designed to meet the needs of meeting planners. Cotai Expo at The Venetian, which offers more than 800,000 sf of exhibition space, is one of the largest exhibition centers in Asia. It is complemented by nearly 70,000 sf of pillar-free ballroom space and 108 meeting rooms.

The exhibition space occupies two floors. On the ground level, three halls combined offer more than 400,000 sf of space, and on the upper level another three halls combined

offer about 402,215 sf of space. In addition to several junior ballrooms, the Venetian Ballroom is an ideal venue for the largest and most lavish themed events.

From now until January 15, 2012, meeting groups who book their accommodations for three consecutive nights or more at The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel can enjoy their meeting facilities for free. The special Meet-for-Free package is valid for meetings held between April 1 and June 30, 2012. (For more details, go to www.venetianmeetings.com.)

The area is booming. Case in point: Next year, Sands China Ltd. will open three hotel brands — Conrad, Sheraton and Holiday Inn — with a total of nearly 5,800 hotel rooms in Sands Cotai Central. When Sands Cotai Central is completed in 2013, Sheldon Adelson’s vision for the Cotai Strip will be well on its way. The combined Sands China portfolio of properties will feature more than 9,000 hotel rooms and suites, 1.3 million sf of meetings and convention space, more than 90 different dining options, more than 470 retail shops and 920,000 sf of gaming space.

Another of the high-profile trio of dominant Macau meeting properties is the 468-room MGM Macau, which features 99 suites and 15 luxury villas, as well as just under 16,000 sf of meeting space. Among its stunning visual amenities is the Grande Praca, a central plaza that rises from the floor to a dramatic glass dome and showcases European-inspired architecture and breathtaking landscapes. MGM Macau offers a range of international dining options, from its Aux Beaux Arts French brasserie to Imperial Court, which serves fine Chinese fare. The hotel also features a Six Senses Spa and One Central Macau, a 200,000-sf shopping complex.

Not to be outdone in the fiercely competitive luxury marketplace, the 1,000-room Wynn Macau includes 544 luxury suites and four Encore Villas. A Forbes Five Star property, Wynn Macau features a pair of luxury towers and a 23,680-sf meeting and convention facility.



The Grand Ballroom at Level 5 of the Sands Expo and Convention Center at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore can accommodate 6,600 guests for a banquet or 11,000 attendees theater-style.

Photo courtesy of Las Vegas Sands Corp.

By John Buchanan

“Macau has an enormous amount of function space, and the three major hotel brands...are well-known to U.S. companies. And Macau is very accessible via Hong Kong.”

Megan Barry, Lead Travel Buyer
Maritz Travel Company, St. Louis, MO



Fine-dining options include Golden Flower, which specializes in northern Chinese cuisine; Wing Lei, which serves Cantonese fare; Restaurant del Teatro, which serves Italian food; and Okada, which features Japanese cuisine. Wynn Macau also boasts two spas and an upscale shopping complex. Unique amenities include the perfectly choreographed Performance Lake, an astrologically themed atrium featur-



Photo courtesy of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

Located on Victoria Harbor, the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre is experiencing record attendance.

ing a Tree of Prosperity and a Dragon of Fortune, and a Moon Jellyfish Aquarium.

World-class offsite venues in Macau include St. Mark's Square, which showcases a Viennese opera house and gondola rides, as well as a unique F&B experience at Crown Aurora and the Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Center, which provides sweeping 360-degree views of the thriving metropolis.

Singapore

Inhabited since the second century, Singapore is a Southeast Asia city-state located off the southern tip of

the Malay Peninsula. Long hailed as one of Asia's top meeting destinations, it has evolved into a global business center and high-tech hub.

“Singapore is one of those Asian countries that is literally on the cutting edge of everything from technology to building,” says Duncan. “It's also a modern international business center. There are many companies headquartered there now. And it's easy to get to.”

Barry agrees that Singapore is high atop the Asia-Pacific A-list when it comes to popular destinations. “Singapore has done an amazing job of marketing itself,” she says. “And it's definitely on people's radar because of the new Marina Bay Sands hotel there. It also has great accessibility by air.” Other key factors in its favor, Barry says, are how impeccably clean and safe it is.

Laurie Howard, a Madison, WI-based sales and marketing specialist at Sunnyvale, CA-headquartered radiation oncology manufacturer Accuray, experienced Singapore and Marina Bay Sands earlier this year for the first time when she hosted a regional user symposium there for 115 attendees.

“Singapore is a fantastic destination, and Marina Bay Sands is a beautiful, beautiful facility,” says Howard, who has hosted meetings throughout Asia-Pacific. “It is top-notch. For example, when you go to the top of Marina Bay, the view is just incredible. And there's an infinity pool. The rooms are also very clean, and the service is really top-notch, too. The staff is very, very accommodating. I felt like we really got good value for our money there.”

Howard and her attendees all had high praise for the F&B service and its presentation. “The food was excellent and the displays were beautiful,” she says. “And the service was excellent. The staff was very quiet and in the background, but they were always there.”

Like many planners before her, Howard discovered that Singapore is renowned for its service culture, considered one of the best in the world. That's one reason why

“Singapore is a fantastic destination, and Marina Bay Sands is a beautiful, beautiful facility. The service is really top-notch, too. The staff is very, very accommodating.”

Laurie Howard, Sales and Marketing Specialist
Accuray, Sunnyvale, CA



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Photo courtesy of Korea Tourism Organization
The world's largest artificial floating island recently opened on the Han river in Seoul, South Korea. It has three centers for conventions, exhibitions, concerts, restaurants and more.

Singapore Airlines regularly ranks at the top of lists of the world's best airlines.

Opened last year, Marina Bay Sands, also developed by Sheldon Adelson, features nearly 2,500 rooms and suites, as well as the 1.3 million-sf Sands Expo and Convention Center, which dominates Singapore's convention facilities as its sister facility does in Las Vegas. In fact, it features Southeast Asia's largest Grand Ballroom, which can be subdivided into 16 individual meeting rooms. The complex also features eight junior ballrooms.

The hotel boasts celebrity chef restaurants from every corner of the world from such luminaries as Mario Batali, Daniel Boulud, Wolfgang Puck, Guy Savoy, Tetsuya Wakuda and the late Santi Santamaria. The resort's signature entertainment is a co-production of "The Lion King" with Disney Theatrical Group and BASE Entertainment. And a one-of-a-kind shopping complex, featuring luxury retailers such as Louis Vuitton, includes "floating" Crystal Pavilions that are literally islands. Marina Bay Sands also includes the first Banyan Tree Spa in Singapore — a state-of-the-art luxury spa.

China

Based simply on its size and ever-increasing role in a global economy, China is now a sought-after destination for both meetings and incentive programs.

"On the incentive side, China is still a 'wow' destination," says Maritz's Barry. "Not a lot of Americans have been there. But on the meetings side, there is also a lot of development in China now. Every chain has at least five to 10 hotels opening. And in all the key cities, the new hotels have a huge amount of meeting space. They all have excellent airports, and they all host meetings very well, including large events."

China also offers offsite venues unmatched by almost anything else in the world, such as the Great Wall and People's Hall in Beijing. Key cities now, in addition to Beijing and Shanghai, are Guilin and Chengdou.

One major indicator of China's prominence: Last June, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide moved Frits van Paasschen, the CEO, and his leadership team to China for five weeks to support their local teams. Starwood has more hotels

in China than any other brand with 62 hotels and another 86 hotels in the pipeline. China recently became Starwood's second largest hotel market behind only the United States, and between now and 2011, one in every three new Starwood hotels will open in China.

Japan

Like China, Japan is another "wow factor" destination with the unique culture and history that date back thousands of years. "Japan is another great place to do meetings," says Duncan, who has planned several meetings there in recent years. "It's not cheap to do a meeting in Tokyo, but it's a very appealing destination."

Howard, too, has done meetings there. "Tokyo is a big city, so it gives you the kind of energy that you'd get in any other big world city," she says. "But it's also very clean and safe and the people are very polite."



Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
Multicultural conferences are welcome at the Shizuoka Convention and Arts Center in Japan. Also known as the "Granship," the 12-story hall features nearly 650,000 sf of interior floor space.

Like China, Japan has also seen a recent spike in new hotel construction. Following its expansion into Tokyo and Osaka, Ritz-Carlton will debut a Kyoto property in early 2014, followed by a new Four Seasons Kyoto. Marriott will open a new Osaka Marriott Miyako Hotel in 2014, the third in a cycle after new properties in Nagoya and Okinawa.

Korea

Korea, though smaller and less well-known than Japan and China, which flank it to the east and west, is another Asia-Pacific destination in the midst of a construction boom.

A new 239-room Stanford Hotel Seoul opened this fall in downtown Seoul, just a few minutes from the Korea International Exhibition Center. A 446-room Conrad Seoul will open next year.

Meanwhile, Korea is also showcasing a range of new offsite venues. It now boasts the world's largest floating artificial island, which is actually three manmade islets on the Han River.

A three-story event and entertainment complex features performance venues and restaurants, as well as dramatic LED lighting and a Water Garden.

Opening in April 2013 is the Dongdaemun Design Plaza, designed by globally renowned architect Zaha Hadid and featuring 86,876 sf of function space. Another world-class venue is the International Convention Center, located on the semi-tropical resort island of Jeju.

Thailand

"Thailand always comes up as a major incentive destination," says Barry. Again, the reason is exotica combined with luxury beach resorts and inland attractions such as extraordinary Buddhist temples. "Bangkok is now a top destination for a lot of companies," she says. One explanation: a strong value proposition in a still budget-challenged market.

Duncan is also a fan of the destination. "I've used Thailand for pharmaceutical companies doing R&D-related meetings in Asia-Pacific," he says. "And it's another great, centrally based destination. For example, it doesn't take a lot to get attendees into the country on a visa. It's just a lovely destination. And the people are perfectionists in executing a meeting."

The newly renovated Anantara Bangkok Riverside Resort & Spa, located on the Chao Phraya River and formerly branded as the Marriott Bangkok, opened in November. Also, Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts debuted its newly renovated 409-room Angsana Laguna Phuket, a five-star resort property that underwent a \$30 million makeover. Next March, the hotel will unveil its new Beach Club, the largest in Phuket.

Malaysia

Located between China and India, Malaysia is another fast-rising Asia-Pacific destination that combines a distinctive culture and cuisine with a budget-conscious value proposition. Currently ranked as one of the world's 10 friendliest destinations in a survey this year by HSBC Bank International, Malaysia also ranked as the second most peaceful destination in Asia, according to the 2011 Global Peace Index.

Its convention facilities rival any in the world. The ultra-modern Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, located in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, is designed to be a city within a city. The 100-acre site includes a park and the Petronas Twin Towers, the tallest twin buildings in the world, as well as a host of nearby dining and entertainment options. Currently undergoing an expansion, the facility will complete another 107,639 sf to its already state-of-the-art meeting and exhibition space.

In 2014, a new Matrade Centre will become Malaysia's largest exhibition facility boasting one million sf of space. The new facility is part of a \$4.7 billion KL Metropolis project that will take its place as one of the premier mixed-use projects in the world.

Philippines

The Philippines actually became a trendsetter back in 1976, when it developed the first convention center in Southeast Asia and launched its first convention & visitors bureau. Since then, the Philippine International Convention Center has earned a reputation as one of Asia's top facilities.

Best known for the vibrant culture and wonderful local cuisine of its capital, Manila, the Philippines also offers an astounding 7,107 island experiences, including natural wonders that range from virgin rain forests and the mysterious underground rivers of Palawan, to the graceful mosques and indigenous tribes of Muslim Mindanao.



Photo courtesy of Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau
The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is a convention and exhibition center in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre precinct — a "city within a city" project.

Its more modern wonders include the new SMX Convention Center, now its largest exhibition facility, which hosts major trade shows and major medical meetings. It anchors a Mall of Asia Complex, an innovative business and leisure park that offers a full spectrum of creative options for event planners. Future development plans include several new hotels and a 12,000-seat arena.

Australia

"Australia is very hot as a destination," Barry says. "Even if you haven't been there, you know about it. You've heard about it. And there are just so many different kinds of activities there. It is a very diverse destination. They have everything."

Adds Ruszala, "There's a lot more to Australia than just Sydney. It has every kind of ecosystem you can think of. And there's a lot of appeal to the natural settings."



Crowds gather around the iconic Sydney Opera House in Australia's natural Sydney Harbor for a celebratory fireworks show.

Tahiti. Although it has modern meeting facilities that can accommodate small groups, it is best known as a top-tier incentive destination.

"It's also very budget-friendly," Barry says. "And Tahiti is also very popular for family groups. But it also offers luxury."

Tahiti Tourisme North America (TTNA) cites a dozen reasons why Tahiti should be on a planner's informed shopping list. Key among them are that Tahiti is closer than you think — just under eight hours by air from Los Angeles and 12 hours from New York. Non-stop flights are available from Honolulu and Los Angeles.

TTNA also notes that while most of the world is now overdeveloped or on its way to being that, Tahiti is unspoiled and uncrowded. Its critically acclaimed hotel offerings include a number with overwater bungalows. And planners so inclined can get attendees there by cruise ship.

Hawaii

Time-honored as one of the world's premier incentive destinations, Hawaii has also evolved into a top-tier meeting destination as an ever more global economy has drawn more business to the Asia-Pacific region.

One of Hawaii's newest resorts is Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, located in Ko Olina, Oahu, that features 50,000 sf of meeting and event space including a 14,545-sf conference center, 36,695 sf of outdoor venues, and the 4,680-sf Kaiona Ballroom. Amenities of the 359-room resort include island-inspired restaurants; themed pools with whirlpool spas and water slides; the 18,000-sf Laniwai Spa with full-service fitness center; and more than a mile of seashore pathways.

And in November, Hawaii got a global boost to its brand when President Barack Obama hosted the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting of world leaders at the Hawaii Convention Center (HCC), located at the entrance to fabled Waikiki Beach.

"Hawaii is a special place, where people from around the world can do business while experiencing new cuisine, cultures and activities, yet feel right at home," HCC General Manager Joe Davis said during the event.

John Monahan, president and CEO of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau, says, "Hawaii is the great melting pot of the Pacific and the epitome of a place where people of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds live and work harmoniously. Groups find the Hawaii meeting experience uplifting and rewarding, partly because we are such a cosmopolitan society that is respectful and welcoming of all those who come here. It creates a very healthy, synergistic atmosphere for exchanging ideas and getting business accomplished."

C&IT



"There's a lot more to Australia than just Sydney. It has every kind of ecosystem you can think of. And there's a lot of appeal to the natural settings."

Jim Ruszala, Director of Marketing, Maritz Travel Company
St. Louis, MO



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From the San Diego Zoo in the south, to the Big Sur in the north, California offers some of the greatest attractions in the United States. Combine that with great meeting and convention venues and hotel product, along with remarkably good weather, and it should come as no surprise that California continues to be a prime corporate meeting and incentive destination.

Los Angeles

“What incentive planners want in Los Angeles is a one-of-a-kind experience,” says Michael Krouse, senior vice president, sales, LA INC. “Clients can explore the coastline in a helicopter and then visit a winery in Malibu for an exclusive event. It’s also possible to visit one of our many cultural institutions with a curator or collector. Los Angeles offers a variety of diverse range of experiences that are available at many price points.”

California

A One-of-a-Kind Experience



Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the Walt Disney Concert Hall is the home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

The city is seeing some major improvements being made to its hotel product, says Krouse. The Los Angeles Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel Los Angeles is currently undergoing a \$1.3 million renovation. The 25,000-sf space, one of the largest ballrooms in Los Angeles, will debut in January 2012 with all new carpet, paint and wall coverings throughout the California Level.



Long Beach, California's meetings infrastructure is undergoing major upgrades.

“The overall perception of Los Angeles has changed. Clients want to come to the city to do business.”

Michael Krouse, Senior Vice President, Sales, LA INC.



The Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills has recently completed a \$33 million renovation, including all 395 guest rooms and suites, The Ballroom, Windows Lounge, Cabana Restaurant and pool with new private cabanas. And the iconic Hotel Bel-Air recently reopened after 24 months of extensive refurbishment and redesign.

“The overall perception of Los Angeles has changed,” Krouse says. “With the new development throughout the city, clients want to come to the city to do business and see what’s new.”

Krouse also says that Los Angeles has become more affordable, pointing out that its average daily room rate of \$124.09 (September 2011) puts Los Angeles seventh in the top 25 markets for hotel room rates, according to Smith Travel Research.

Long Beach

When Kathleen McCasland, executive director of the Oracle Development Tools User Group in Wilmington, NC, was looking for a site for her meeting in June 2011, Long Beach wasn’t even on her list. But a full court press by the sales department of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau sold her on the city.

“I’ve been in the business for quite a while and it seemed that Long Beach was never considered to be an attractive destination,” says McCasland. “But my people just fell in love with it.”

McCasland’s 1,300 attendees stayed at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach, the Renaissance Long Beach, the Marriott Courtyard Long Beach and the Westin Long Beach. With more than 400,000 feet of exhibit and meeting space, the Long Beach Convention Center more than filled her needs, McCasland says, while the full production Terrace Theater, with its 3,000 seats, “was perfect for our general session.”

It also helped that Long Beach is served by three airports — Long Beach Airport, Los Angeles International and John Wayne Airport in Orange County. “That was a big benefit,” says McCasland.

McCasland says that Long Beach’s location on the ocean was also appealing, a feature that is a major selling point for the city, says Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau. Long Beach is one of the few downtown areas in Southern California directly on the water, and has the additional advantage of being relatively compact and intimate, says Goodling, who also points out that

there are more than 100 restaurants in an eight-block radius around the convention center.

The Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center and surrounding hotels have recently been undergoing some major upgrades. Goodling says that in 2011, the center purchased more than a \$1 million in new furniture with the objective of creating social networking seating pods within the facility that are conducive to meetings. The convention center has also renovated its bathrooms and promenade area.



“As one meeting planner recently said to me, ‘Long Beach is growing up.’”

Steve Goodling, President and CEO, Long Beach CVB

Goodling also says that Long Beach has spent \$12 million to renovate its downtown area to create a “wonderful” pedestrian thoroughfare, and the city has consistently been ranked as one of the country’s most walkable cities by www.walkscore.com.

As a matter of fact, the Long Beach City Plus Pass (LBCPP) was recently launched. The pass allows up to a 20 percent discount, 2-for-1 offers and a variety of other deals to more than 150 merchants throughout Long Beach. Conference at-

By Mike Bassett



A rendering of the new Anaheim Convention Center Grand Plaza, which will be completed by the end of 2012.

tendees may receive a LBCPP card in their registration packets or purchase one for \$10 (good for one month) on their conference website.

"All of this adds up to a great waterfront location," Goodling says. "As one meeting planner recently said to me, 'Long Beach is growing up.'"

Anaheim

Two of Anaheim's largest venues have announced expansion plans. The Anaheim Convention Center is expanding its outdoor and special event space by 100,000 sf. The new multi-use venue area will be called the Anaheim Convention Center Grand Plaza and has been strategically planned to provide meeting and event planners and attendees with plenty of open and multifunctional outdoor space that can be used year-round.

Development of the Anaheim Convention Center Grand Plaza begins in the spring of 2012 and will be completed by the end of the year. This plaza will feature lush landscaping, expansive walkways, interesting hardscape designs, dramatic water features and fountains, ample seating areas, special lighting and infrastructure necessary to support a multitude of special events.

The Grand Plaza also will provide for pedestrian circulation, concession opportunities and recreational event areas. Plans also include street improvements and a dedicated Transportation Plaza area with shuttle pick-up/drop-off areas.

The convention center also announced it will offer free Wi-Fi to all visitors beginning in January 2012.

The Honda Center, home of the Anaheim Ducks hockey team, is adding a 12,000-sf Grand Terrace. It is also adding a 250-seat, full-service restaurant, which will feature an extensive menu and will be open to the public for all events.

The Hilton Anaheim and the Marriott Anaheim have just completed multimillion-dollar renovations, while the Disneyland Resort has completed a renovation project that includes the re-theming of the hotel's three guest room towers, the opening of a new restaurant and bar, and the construction of a new pool and water play area, which includes a monorail slide pool with two water slides.

San Diego

Like much of the rest of the country, San Diego took a beating during 2009 and early 2010, particularly in the corporate meeting and incentive market. But according to Joe Terzi, president and CEO of the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, the region has rebounded nicely and has even been able to turn some of the effects of the down economy into a competitive advantage.

"We've become more affordable," Terzi says. "When we used to talk to people over the years, the message we received was that San Diego was expensive, and it was hard to find space. Now we're much more affordable than people expected, so affordability — and availability — have become major selling points. San Diego is a great buy at this point."

Of course, with its natural beauty and some of the best weather in the country — if not the world — San Diego already had major selling points at its disposal. In addition, many of the city's major hotel properties have looked at the economic downturn as an opportunity to improve its product.

"We have some of the best product of any market," says Terzi, "and most of the major properties in town have gone through significant upgrades."

The San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina is now the San Diego Marriott Marquis and Marina. The hotel is in the



An aerial view of the Coronado Bridge and San Diego skyline.

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David Meek
Convention Center Manager, Anaheim Convention Center

Kevin Patch
General Manager, Technology Services, Anaheim Convention Center

Kevin O'Keefe
Senior Vice President, Events, UBM Canon

Tom Derr
General Manager, A/V Services, Anaheim Convention Center

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“San Diego is an easy city to get around in. It’s really good for groups because the airport is so close to the city.”

Terrence Young, International Events Manager, Pyrotek Inc., Spokane, WA



pus. The recent renovation includes a complete makeover of La Costa’s Conference Center. The new Coastal Events Center at La Costa has incorporated new technology, including interactive maps and reader boards, as well as built-in large screen televisions in the boardrooms. The Coastal Events Center and Costa del Sol Ballroom provide 50,000 sf of meeting space, while the La Costa’s garden setting provides another 50,000 sf of outdoor meeting space.

La Costa has also introduced a new series of meeting planner suites. Six guest suites have been transformed into connected living/work space areas located near the Coastal Events Center. In addition to living quarters in each suite, the attached room can be used for office space and meeting preparations.

Farther to the northeast, in the city of Rancho Mirage in Palm Springs Valley, the Rancho Las Palmas Resort & Spa offers planners 444 guest rooms and 22 suites, as well as 41,000 sf of meeting space. The 28 meeting rooms can accommodate

groups ranging from 10 to 1,200. The resort has two side-by-side ballrooms, the 12,900-sf Las Palmas Ballroom and the 10,000-sf Fiesta Ballroom, while the 10,000-sf Starlight Terrace, located above the Fiesta Ballroom, gives guests spectacular views of the neighboring San Jacinto Mountains.

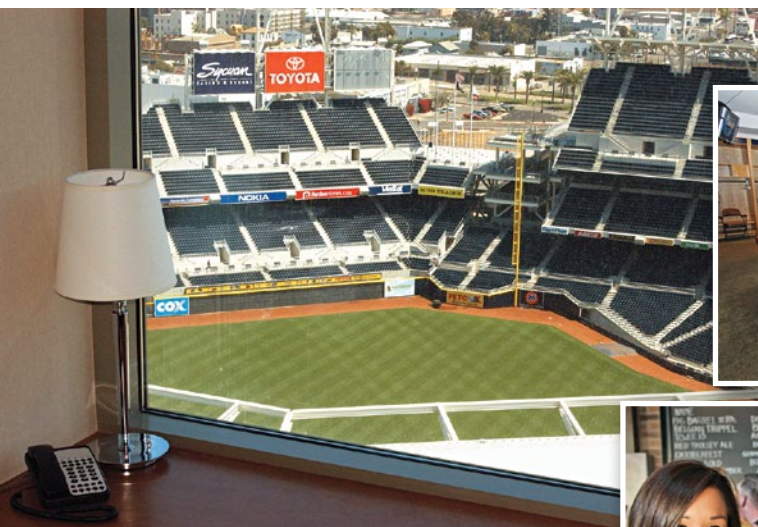
Rancho Las Palmas also offers 27 holes of desert golf as well as Splashtopia, a 1.2-acre water park featuring a lazy river, slides, pool and beach.

“Every major hotel in the downtown area has continued to invest in its assets and ensured that their products continue to improve,” Terzi says. These improvement efforts also extend to some of San Diego’s best-known attractions, such as the San Diego Zoo, Sea World and the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Midway, says Terzi.



“Affordability — and availability — have become major selling points. San Diego is a great buy at this point.”

Joe Terzi, President and CEO
San Diego CVB



The Omni San Diego Hotel has two unique group offerings: The Brewmaster Experience (right) and the Grand Slam for Groups (above) where attendees can have a “team meeting” in the San Diego Padres visitor’s clubhouse at PETCO Park.



Photos courtesy of Hilton San Diego Hotel

middle of a \$200 million renovation, which includes upgrades to rooms, the hotel entrance, lobby and pool, as well as the addition of 80,000 sf of meeting space in the form of two 40,000-sf ballrooms. Another major downtown hotel the 1,625-room Manchester Grand Hyatt recently announced plans for an extensive renovation that will involve guest rooms, meeting facilities, lounges, restaurants and the hotel’s public areas.

One of San Diego’s most iconic resorts is the Hotel del Coronado. Located on the island of Coronado, across from downtown San Diego. The Del, as it’s commonly called, is a seaside resort with 679 rooms and more than 65,000 sf of meeting space. Meeting rooms range from the historic Crown Room to the contemporary Grand Hall.

To the north of San Diego in Carlsbad, the La Costa Resort and Spa has just completed a \$50 million renovation. La Costa has 474 guest rooms, villas and suites, and about 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space across its 400-acre cam-



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San Diego is quickly rising as the capital of beer tourism, boasting more than 35 local brew houses. The Omni San Diego Hotel and Karl Strauss Brewing Company have joined forces to present one-of-a-kind group offerings. Groups at the hotel can choose from a gourmet brewmaster dinner, interactive craft beer seminar or unique beer pairings with cheese and chocolate. For a minimum 25-person group, the "Brewmaster Experience" is available throughout 2012.



"The reasons you would have for vacationing in San Francisco are the same... for bringing meetings and incentives here."

John Reyes, Executive Vice President,
San Francisco Travel

In addition, planners seeking the ultimate sports-themed



Photo courtesy of San Francisco Travel

San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Bridge celebrates its 75th birthday in 2013.

meeting experience can consider a new package offered by the Omni San Diego Hotel, which has partnered with Major League Baseball's San Diego Padres (the hotel and PETCO Park are connected via a skybridge). The "Grand Slam for Groups" package, available throughout 2012, includes: Exclusive use of the visitor's clubhouse; conference room set-up, including Padres-branded materials; personalized jerseys; a behind-the-scenes tour of PETCO Park; and overnight accommodations at the 511-room Omni San Diego Hotel.

Terrence Young, international events manager for Pyrotek Inc. in Spokane, WA, brought a group of salespeople from the U.S., Canada and Mexico to the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina in October 2011. "San Diego is an easy city to get around in," says Young. "And it's really good for groups

because the airport is so close to the city, and you can get to any hotel very easily."

Young's group also took advantage of San Diego's spectacular natural resources, spending a day golfing, biking and kayaking north of the city in La Jolla. "It's just a great location," says Young. "And it helps that the weather is fantastic."

San Francisco

John Reyes, executive vice president at San Francisco Travel, says that one of the reasons San Francisco appeals to corporate and incentive groups is "the accessibility of the destination — it allows people from all over the country the availability to fly right into San Francisco as a gateway."

Accessibility was a major reason Jerry Deeney, executive producer of the live events agency InVNT, chose San Francisco as the host city for an event publicizing the release of the Chevrolet Sonic.

Deeney flew in groups of automotive journalists for the week-long event held at the Hotel Palomar in September. San Francisco worked as the host city, Deeney says, because "we needed a destination location, not a connection airport."

But San Francisco also has a "hip, young, urban vibe," Deeney says, appropriate for an automobile that is meant to appeal to the millennial generation. "We were able to connect with that idyllic California lifestyle and do it in an urban



Photo courtesy of San Francisco Travel

A cable car in San Francisco's historic Chinatown. The cable car system was named a National Historic Landmark in 1964.

setting as well," says Deeney. "It also has a coastal setting, with great ride roads and great weather."

While airport accessibility is a key reason San Francisco appeals to the corporate and incentive market, it offers much more, says Reyes. "It's a "dual destination," he says. "The reasons you would have for vacationing in San Francisco are the same reasons you would have for bringing meetings and incentives here."

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Photos courtesy of Team San Jose

San Jose

San Jose offers meeting planners a walkable, clean and safe downtown, with about 2,900 hotel rooms within walking distance of the San Jose Convention Center. Mineta San Jose International Airport is within 3 miles of the downtown core, making transportation into the city easy.

In April 2011 plans were announced to move forward with an expansion and renovation of the San Jose Convention Center. The \$120 million project will debut in fall 2013 and will add 125,000 sf of new, flexible space to its existing 425,000 sf of meeting space. The center will remain open during the entire project.

Another local venue sporting a new look is the San Jose Civic, which recently underwent an \$11 million renovation. Conveniently located across the street from the San Jose Convention Center, the Civic accommodates groups of up to 3,000 attendees and partners with Nederlander Concerts for live music and entertainment for private events as well as creating an

ideal space for groups, product launches and general sessions. The venue's recent renovations include new state-of-the-art sound and HD video systems, new fixed seating, exterior and interior lighting, renovated restrooms and concessions, as well as a new elevator.

Mineta San Jose International Airport recently completed its \$1.3 billion modernization project in June 2010. The project has made it one of the greenest, most convenient airports for visitors. The airport now has state-of-the-art TSA security checkpoint screening technology and the most advanced baggage screening in the nation. Lounges are larger with more comfortable seats and feature free Wi-Fi and public art installations that make the airport more aesthetically pleasing. Most of the 40 shops and restaurants are new, with more than half having a local or regional connection and flavor.

Team San Jose manages the San Jose Convention Center and arts and entertainment venues including the California Theatre, the Center for the Performing Arts, Montgomery Theater, Parkside Hall, San Jose Civic and South Hall. The Crowne Plaza Hotel, which will undergo a \$7 million renovation of its 239 guest rooms and public spaces, will reopen as Hyatt Place Downtown San Jose in January 2012. The hotel will operate as the Independent Convention Plaza Hotel while it undergoes the renovation, which began in August 2011. **C&IT**



Renderings of the exterior and the interior of the San Jose Convention Center, which will add 125,000 sf of new space to its existing 425,000 sf by 2013.

from Alcatraz to Chinatown and Little Italy," says Reyes. "Then you have regional destinations like Napa and Monterey. You have a lot of choices when you go to San Francisco."

The city offers more than 35,000 hotel rooms and the Moscone Center, which features more than 992,000 sf of meeting and exhibit space, including 107 meeting rooms and three ballrooms. The center will complete a two-year, \$56 million renovation project in 2012 that includes aesthetic improvements such as new carpet, paint, lighting and ceilings; renovations to restrooms; upgraded lobbies and kitchens; and significant infrastructure projects including major upgrades to HVAC systems, elevators and escalators, and telecom/data cabling systems.

The next two years will also see San Francisco host some major sports events. The fifth U.S. Open will be held at San Francisco's Olympic Club in June 2012, according to the United States Golf Association, while the Bay Area will host the America's Cup races in 2013.

Another major San Francisco attraction, the Golden Gate Bridge, celebrates its 75th birthday in 2013, and is getting a lot of attention from both the leisure and meeting/convention markets. "Meeting planners like the idea of holding their meetings during the celebration of one of the most iconic symbols of America," says Reyes.

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PFEIFFER

Team San Jose, San Jose, CA, has named **Troy Karnoff** as director of Midwest sales in the Chicago office. He was most recently director of Midwest region hotel sales for LA INC., the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau. **Kathryn Morgan** was named senior national sales manager for the Eastern and mid-Atlantic regions, joining Tamela Blalock in the Washington, DC, office. Morgan formerly served as senior sales manager for The Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC.

Grand Hyatt New York, New York City, has named **Eamon O'Brien** as director of sales. He formerly served as associate director of sales for the Hyatt Regency in Chicago, IL.

Barcelo Hotels & Resorts has named **Alejandro Peraita** as sales manager for the Southeast region, based in Miami, FL. He most recently served as a travel agent with Majestic Travel.

Rosen Hotels & Resorts, Orlando, FL, has named **Karen Brand** as national sales manager for the mid-Atlantic states, Georgia and the Carolinas for Rosen Centre Hotel, Rosen Shingle Creek, Rosen Plaza Hotel and Rosen Inn at Pointe Orlando. She most recently served as a regional account executive for Visit Orlando.

The Meritage Resort and Spa, Napa, CA, has named **Ellie Callihan**, CHA, CHSP, as regional sales manager for the Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain area, Arizona and Southern California. She most recently served as senior regional director for La Quinta Inns & Suites, based in the hotel company's Denver, CO, office.

MGM Resorts International, Las Vegas, NV, has promoted **Mary Ann Sena-Edelen** as director of regional sales-diversity. She was director of diversity and training at Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, NV.

Loews Miami Beach Hotel, Miami Beach, FL, has named **Brad Martin** as director of national accounts, responsible for insurance and incentive markets as well as Canada and Texas. He formerly served as director of sales, worldwide accounts for Hilton Worldwide.

Amy Pfeiffer was promoted to director, resort sales for the Walt Disney World Resort. She most recently served as senior sales director.

Ken Williams was named director of trade show sales for The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO. He was director of marketing and sales for a Denver-based international trade center.

Hotel Valencia Santana Row, San Jose, CA, has named **Stacy Manzo** as director of sales and marketing. She most recently served as director of sales for Turtle Bay Resort, Oahu, HI.

The Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau has promoted **Robin O'Connor** to director of sales and services. She was assistant director of sales for the CVB.

Warwick Melrose Dallas Hotel, Dallas, TX, has promoted **Steve Sherman** to director of sales and marketing. He previously served as associate director of sales as well as the hotel's senior sales manager. **Edward Hahn III** took over as associate director of sales. He formerly served as business travel sales manager.

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