

# Corporate & Incentive Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL PLANNERS

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the Storm**  
When Natural  
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MPI-WEC attendees participate  
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GPS-powered scavenger hunt.

Photo by Jack Huynh / Orange Photography

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Photo by Orange Photography for MPI-WEC



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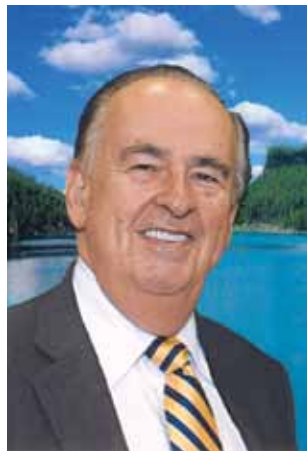


# PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

## The Changing Landscape

What will they think of next? In our Cool Tech Tools cover story, we discover a new app called Point & Measure that meeting planners can use to accurately calculate room dimensions using their iPad or iPhone. And that's just one of the multitude of smart device apps out now that make a planners' 24/7 job a mite easier.

James Spellos, CMP, president of NYC-based Meeting U, says, "I really think that the apps are where it's at. There's so much that's out there that's helping productivity



or connectivity for people while they're at the event or doing a site inspection." There are apps for assessing the level of technology available in hotels, apps for total event management, apps to boost attendee interaction, apps for greener meetings, and the list goes on and on. When you don't have time to research apps that are suitable for your meetings, go to [www.meetingapps.com](http://www.meetingapps.com). See page 30 for some of the founders' faves such as the Bed Bug Registry (no explanation necessary), Projectorfy, an iPad app that speakers can use to project live events such as the results of audience polls, and SuperPlanner — the ultimate in planning tools.

When some experts estimate that as many as 80 percent of attendees use smartphones, savvy meeting planners know they have to be one step ahead to keep up with the changing landscape of mobile technology...and the latest in health care meetings and events. As most of you know, come this January, the Sunshine Act will require the tracking of payments to physicians from HCP-attended meetings and events. In Pharma Meetings on page 12, we provide the latest information to help you navigate this perplexing issue. As a matter of fact, The International Medical Meeting Professionals Association (IMMPA) was created in 2009 to guide planners through these kinds of situations. Pat Schaumann, IMMPA founder, says, "Meeting professionals in the health care segment face the stiffest and most complex government regulations of any industry. With required reporting and transparency, understanding compliance is critical for anyone involved in health care meeting management."

The changing landscape of our destinations this month tell another story. Business is improving, and meetings and incentives are coming back strong. Take a look at the wave of reinvention and reinvestment in Atlantic City on page 32; the re-emerging draw of sun-and-sand destinations in the Caribbean and The Bahamas on page 36; and how meetings are returning to the reinvigorated Southwest states on page 42.

Harvey Grotsky  
Publisher



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## Conventions don't have to be conventional

A business trip to Madrid seems less like hard work than most.

Sunny weather, conveniently located conference venues and gourmet lunches are just some of the bonuses for when you visit on business.

After a busy day, Madrid's famous museums and elegant stores are a great way to recharge before sampling the vibrant nightlife.

Relax over tapas in an outdoor café or dance until dawn. Whatever you do, Madrid is the business.

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## MGM Grand Las Vegas Completes Grand Renovation

LAS VEGAS, NV — MGM Grand announced the completion of its \$160 million room and suite remodel in the hotel's main tower, marking a major milestone in the resort's "Grand Renovation." The remodel, which began in October 2011, includes 3,570 Grand King and Queen guest rooms and 642 suites of varying types including the Skyline Terrace and Skyline Marquee Suites. The newly remodeled rooms and suites incorporate environmentally responsible elements including LED

lighting; improved thermostats and solar shades to better manage temperature and guest comfort; upgraded faucets and showers; and bath amenities that are 100 percent biodegradable. MGM Grand also announced the Stay Well collection featuring 42 rooms and suites designed for guests looking to take their wellness lifestyle on the road when traveling. In spring 2013, MGM Grand will open Hakkasan Las Vegas Restaurant and Nightclub, an upscale dining experience combined with multiple nightlife components in the space where Studio 54 stood for 14 years. [www.mgmresorts.com](http://www.mgmresorts.com)



*The Executive King Suite at MGM Grand Las Vegas.*

## The Venetian Macao Launches Meeting Offer

MACAO, CHINA — The Venetian Macao Resort Hotel has launched a brand new "Yes! Meet You in Macao" offer valid until December 31, 2012, offering event planners the ultimate flexibility in



*The Venetian Macao.*

organizing meetings and conventions at the center of Sands China's Cotai Strip development, with a wide selection of attractive added-value benefits. From now until December 31, 2012, meeting groups who book a full-day meeting package or banquet dinner for events to be held by December 30, 2013, as well as a minimum of 20 room nights at The Venetian Macao, can enjoy the following offers:

- Choice of one valued-added benefit for bookings of 20 to 250 room nights.
- Choice of two valued-added benefits for bookings of 251 to 500 room nights.
- Choice of three valued-added benefits for bookings of 501 room nights or above.

The valued-added benefits include but are not limited to: free Wi-Fi access in room; complimentary breakfast; one-hour themed cocktail reception; complimentary CotaiJet tickets from Macao to Hong Kong; dedicated transfer coach for main group arrival and departure; 30-minute complimentary Streetmosphere entertainment; 50 percent discount on venue rental. The award-winning Venetian Macao has been named The Best Meetings & Conventions Hotel in Macao by the 5th Annual TTG China Travel Awards 2012 for the fifth consecutive year. For more information, go to [www.venetianmacao.com/Meetings\\_Offers/](http://www.venetianmacao.com/Meetings_Offers/).

## MGM Resorts to Develop Casino-Resort in Massachusetts

LAS VEGAS, NV — MGM Resorts International's Chairman and CEO Jim Murren announced plans to develop an \$800 million world-class dining, retail and entertainment district on about 10 acres of land in downtown Springfield, MA. The more than 500,000-sf mixed-used development project would include a 25-story, 250-room hotel with a spa, pool and roof deck; 89,000 sf of gaming space; about 70,000 sf of retail and restaurant space accommodating 15 shops and restaurants; and a multi-level parking garage. Plans also call for a dining, retail and entertainment district, tentatively named Armory Square, which will be directly accessible from the garage parking and include about 25 dining and retail venues such as a 12-screen cinema, bowling alley and outdoor stage. The MGM project also includes a pedestrian bridge to the MassMutual Center, which offers 100,000 sf of flexible event space. [www.mgmspringfield.com](http://www.mgmspringfield.com)

## Ocean Reef Club to Debut Newly Renovated Spa

KEY LARGO, FL — The Ocean Reef Club will unveil The Spa at Ocean Reef in December. The 8,000-sf spa's transformation will blend new and remodeled spaces and expand its offerings to include 10 individual massage and treatment rooms and a VIP couples suite. "The new spa will be a flagship amenity for Ocean Reef Club," said Richard Weinstein, vice president of membership development, Ocean Reef Club. The Spa at Ocean Reef will feature a co-ed wet lounge with a whirlpool, lifestyle shower and sauna; men's and women's changing rooms with adjacent steam room; specialized spa retail area with salon products and cosmetics; full-service salon and spa café. A private member-owned community, Ocean Reef Club's non-member guests are welcome to enjoy the spa as guests of members or conference attendees. Ocean Reef offers 30,000 sf of meeting space, including a 7,500-sf ballroom. The resort has 175 rooms, 100 one-, two- and three-bedroom villas and private homes. Located within an hour from Miami International Airport, Ocean Reef Club is also serviced by its own 4,456-foot lighted runway. [www.oceanreef.com](http://www.oceanreef.com)

## Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando Unveil New Spaces

ORLANDO, FL — Planners have more than 80,000 sf of newly renovated space to host their meetings and events at Loews Royal Pacific Resort and Hard Rock Hotel at Universal Orlando. The enhancements mark the completion of meeting space renovations at all three hotels, including sister property Loews Portofino Bay Hotel. The new designs invoke each hotel's distinctive theme into the ballroom and meeting areas. "Our design for the renovation of the pre-function and banquet spaces at Hard Rock Hotel at Universal Orlando celebrates the spirit of rock 'n' roll," said Karen Daroff, president of Daroff Design. "A sophisticated palette of shades of gray, black and cream, activated by high-energy red is featured in the musical score-inspired carpet patterns." Loews Royal Pacific Resort's fresh look features an updated tropical palette of saturated aqua, pomegranate and tangerine, paired with organic patterns that infuse the ballroom and function spaces with the bold, vibrant charm of the South Pacific. For groups that book by December 31, 2012 and actualize by December 31, 2013, Loews Hotels & Resorts is offering two new programs that streamline and customize the needs for any size group: The Meetings Made Simple or Power Breakfast. For more information, go to [www.uomeetingsandevents.com](http://www.uomeetingsandevents.com) or call 888-266-2121. [www.loewshotels.com](http://www.loewshotels.com)

## Lyons Named AIBTM Executive Director

LONDON, ENGLAND — Reed Travel Exhibitions announced the appointment of Michael J. Lyons as the new exhibition



LYONS

director for AIBTM, the Americas Meetings & Events Exhibition. Lyons, a well-known and respected figure in the meetings and events community for more than 30 years, will lead AIBTM's efforts to enhance its position as the premier global exhibition for the U.S. meetings, events, incentive and business travel industry. Lyons' background includes senior level positions with Global Events Partners, Carlson Wagonlit Travel and Rosenbluth Travel (now American Express). He is involved in numerous hospitality industry organizations such as MPI and PCMA, and is the recipient of numerous industry awards. [www.aibtm.com](http://www.aibtm.com)

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**NOVEMBER 11-14, 2012**  
**FICP ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
JW Marriott Los Angeles  
Los Angeles, CA  
[www.ficpnet.com](http://www.ficpnet.com)

**NOVEMBER 27-29, 2012**  
**EIBTM - THE GLOBAL MEETINGS & INCENTIVES EXHIBITION**  
Fira Gran Via  
Barcelona, Spain  
[www.eibtm.com](http://www.eibtm.com)

**DECEMBER 4-6, 2012**  
**EXPO! EXPO! IAEE'S ANNUAL MEETING & EXHIBITION 2012**  
Orange County Convention Center  
Orlando, Florida  
[www.myexpoexpo.com](http://www.myexpoexpo.com)

**JANUARY 11-13, 2013**  
**EVENT SERVICE PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION (ESPA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Hotel  
Orlando, FL  
[www.espaonline.org](http://www.espaonline.org)

**JANUARY 13-16 2013**  
**PCMA ANNUAL MEETING CONVENING LEADERS**  
Orange County Convention Center  
Orlando, FL  
[www.pcma.org](http://www.pcma.org)

**JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 1, 2013**  
**RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis, MN  
[www.rcmaweb.org](http://www.rcmaweb.org)

**MARCH 19-22, 2013**  
**IACC-AMERICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
Eaglewood Resort & Spa  
Itasca, IL (Chicago)  
[www.iacconline.org](http://www.iacconline.org)

**APRIL 21-23, 2013**  
**ACTE GLOBAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**  
New York Marriott Marquis  
New York City, NY  
[www.acte.org](http://www.acte.org)



## La Cumbre Numbers Surpass 2011 Event

ORLANDO, FL — Organized by Reed Travel Exhibitions, La Cumbre, The Americas' Travel Industry Summit, is a three-day annual event for meeting industry professionals from the leisure, corporate and MICE travel segments. La Cumbre 2012 was held last month at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek | Waldorf Astoria Orlando in Orlando, FL. This year, 234 exhibitors from throughout the Americas and 210 international buyers met in a total of 10,986 appointments surpassing last year's numbers. In addition, social activities such as FAM tours, the opening reception, power lunches and the closing luncheon provided additional opportunities for networking among participants. The first day concluded with a welcome party at Animal Kingdom, the theme park in Walt Disney World Resort and the next evening Universal Parks & Resorts hosted a reception. [www.lacumbre.com](http://www.lacumbre.com), [www.reedtravelexhibitions.com](http://www.reedtravelexhibitions.com)



(L to r) Alison Gilmore and Gaston Isoldi from Reed Travel Exhibitions join Paul Tang, Larry Hendricks and Danielle Courtenay from Visit Orlando for the La Cumbre ribbon cutting.

## MEETING VALUES



### Doral Golf Resort & Spa, Miami, FL.

Events with a minimum of 25 room nights completed between now and December 31, 2012 receive: comp one-hour welcome reception; 25 percent off parking; 10 percent off AV and Internet access; 10 percent off spa services; and special golf rates. Meetings in 2013 with at least 100 room nights, booked by

December 30, 2012, receive: dedicated meeting planner concierge; comp dessert for one dinner or reception; 25 percent off parking; 10 percent off AV and Internet access; 10 percent off spa services; 50 percent off moonlight golf activity; special golf rates; one VIP suite upgrade with welcome amenity per 40 rooms; meeting room rental charges waived; comp non-alcoholic welcome beverages; and more. Contact Melinda Reilly, director of group sales, [mreilly@trumphotels.com](mailto:mreilly@trumphotels.com), 305-591-6461, [www.doralresort.com](http://www.doralresort.com).

■ **Woodstock Inn & Resort, Woodstock, VT.** Groups that book meetings for the remainder of the 2012 calendar year receive a 10 percent credit on guest room revenue for a 2013 meeting. Special rates include \$159 Sunday–Thursday; \$189 Friday and Saturday nights. Rates are based on availability from October 30–December 23, 2012. Blackout dates do apply. Rates do not include applicable VT state room tax, and our \$20 per room, per day resort fee. Group is considered six rooms or more per night. Credit must be used in the 2013 calendar year. Contact Courtney Lowe, director of sales & marketing, [wcl@woodstockinn.com](mailto:wcl@woodstockinn.com), 802-457-6670, [www.woodstockinn.com](http://www.woodstockinn.com)

■ **Southern California Marriott and Renaissance Hotels.** Planners receive complimentary parking for overnight attendees; complimentary in-room high-speed Internet access for overnight attendees; and 50,000 Marriott Rewards Points when they book 50 peak rooms minimum by December 31, 2012 for arrival from October 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013 at participating hotels: Renaissance Long Beach Hotel (562-437-5900), Torrance Marriott South Bay (310-316-3636), Los Angeles Airport Marriott (310-641-5700), Renaissance Los Angeles Airport Hotel (310-337-2800), Marina Del Rey Marriott (310-301-3000).



Photo credits: 1. Houston First; 2. AlliedPRA; 3. Reed Travel Exhibitions; 4. Philadelphia CVB; 5. Global Business Travel Association; 6. Hamilton Lunch; Tourism NSW; 7. Pacific Asia Travel Association

**1** Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center celebrated its 25th anniversary on September 26 with a toast by five of the facility's remaining original employees: (l to r) Luther Villagomez, Anita Mendieta, Charmaine Pilgrim, Frank Randolph and Joey Granado. **2** AlliedPRA New York was honored with a Site Crystal Award for "Powerful Partnerships: Most Effective Team Effort at Producing an Incentive Program or Event" during the Site International Conference in Beijing, China. (L to r) Site President Alejandro Verzoub; Ray Bloom, chairman, IMEX Group; Patrick Sullivan, president of AlliedPRA New York; and Site Director Allison Summers. **3** Attendees of La Cumbre 2012 (see story left) at a reception in Universal Orlando Resort. **4** On September 18, the Philadelphia CVB and Philadelphia International Airport honored six airport employees for their exceptional customer service at the annual Five Star Awards. Flanking the airport employees are (far left) Jack Ferguson, PCVB president and CEO; and (far right) Mark Gale, president and CEO, Philadelphia International Airport. **5** Jan Sturesson, PwC, keynote speaker at GBTA Europe's Annual Conference Sept. 24–25, presented "Giga Trends Shaping the Future Landscape of Business and Industries." **6** Crystal Cruises' glass-walled cruising vessels will be entered in the Best Dressed category in the upcoming New Year's Eve Harbour of Lights Parade in Sydney Harbour, Sydney, Australia. **7** The 2012 PATA Travel Mart returned to Manila after having hosted the very first PATA in 1978. This year's show was held at the SMX Convention Center, the largest private venue in the Philippines.





By Melissa Van Dyke

## Game On: Transform Your Meeting Through Gamification

In early 2011, Dell Computer Systems faced a common meetings challenge: how to engage the end users who would be arriving at the Dell World Conference that fall. Adding to this overall challenge were two important facts: attendees would be arriving in the thousands, and this would be their first Dell user conference experience ever. To transform this challenge into an opportunity, Dell applied a technique growing in popularity and demand: gamification.

### A New Engagement Strategy

Dell is not alone in this pursuit. Gamification, or the use of game mechanics to drive behavior in a non-game context, has been a rising trend in business. Gartner, a leading information technology research and advisory company, predicts that by the end of this year, 100 of the top 135 global Fortune 500 companies will have used serious gaming in their training efforts. They also predict that by the year 2014, more than 70 percent of the 2,000 global organizations will have at least one gamified application. The Incentive Research Foundation (IRF) has been tracking this trend as well. In our recent Fall 2012 Pulse Study, 36 percent of incentive program owners stated they would be using game techniques to enhance their programs. This is up from 19 percent just a year ago.

To understand this trend, the IRF spent the spring crafting a white paper on the role of gamification in incentives. This effort gave us an important view into the steps necessary to effectively apply these techniques in modern incentive travel programs. Three of these steps are outlined below. They include understanding the basis upon which gamification is built, looking beyond the basics

of games, and, most important, focusing on the behaviors that will drive a successful program and a successful event. Each of these concepts is covered in depth in an upcoming IRF white paper.

### The Need to Know

**1. Understand the basis.** Although gamification is based on games, it is not the same as simply adding a game to an existing website or experience. That approach often backfires. The strategic use of game mechanics to drive engagement requires a deeper review of the effort and is based on models similar to those used in traditional incentive programs. One example is the use of the Fogg Behavior Model (FBM). The Fogg Behavior Model shows that in order to move individuals to action, an experience must not only provide motivation and the ability to perform the task, it must also provide a trigger that spurs the participant to action.

**2. Beyond the basics.** There are somewhere between five and 50 published game mechanics and dynamics. Points, Status, Levels, Achievements, Leaderboards, Challenges and Competitions are all examples of basic mechanics employed in gamification efforts. But there are a number of other important tools such as Epic Meaning, Clan Mentality or Appointment Dynamics that may be effective for your program. What is most important is to work with a partner who knows how to combine these tools in a pattern and manner that engages your particular audience. A key tenet of gamifying an experience is understanding the types of mechanics combinations that will appeal to the various personality types in your particular audience.

**3. Focus on behaviors.** Although the first

instinct with gamification is to focus on the fun and interesting tools involved, what is most important in applying a game layer to a program is starting with your vision then working backward to the behaviors in which you truly want participants to engage. Marrying an understanding of the game mechanics that best fit your audience to the desired actions and behaviors that comprise a success vision of your program, is the crux of any successful gamification effort.

### The Dell Experience

The Dell World Conference provides a solid example of these pointers. The vision of the Dell World Conference planners was to help attendees maximize their time spent at the conference across five separate conference tracks. Using an outside partner that had expertise in the basis of game mechanics (BigDoor, a company that provides loyalty solutions through gamified loyalty platforms), Dell used its gamification efforts to focus on the primary behaviors that would maximize both Dell's and the participant's experience: consuming content and amplifying the social elements of the event.

To do this, they used the Dell World Mobile App, creating a designated "journey" for different conference tracks. Hundreds of QR codes were created that allowed participants to check-in to booths, education sessions, exhibits and event food stations. Participants were rewarded for scanning individual codes and completing entire journeys through a series of badges, leaderboards, and progress bars.

But Dell was rewarded as well. Their reward was not only a successful event, but a bevy of information that told them in real time what content, visuals and even food types were most popular, allowing them to adjust on the fly.

Since the public release of Dell's experience there have been several organizations that now create plug-and-play mobile apps for game layers over an event. The companies also offer different types of apps depending on whether you're looking to drive foot traffic to booths or help attendees absorb meeting content.

Look for gamification to continue to be a popular trend in events and meetings as program owners realize the untapped power of transforming traditional meeting elements into engaging gamified experiences.

C&amp;IT

“The use of game mechanics to **drive behavior** in a non-game context, has been a rising trend in business.”



**Melissa Van Dyke**

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# Pharma Meetings

## Face a Changing and Challenging Landscape

By John Buchanan

As if medical meeting professionals aren't under the gun enough as it is with all the regulations imposed on their industry, including the voluntary PhRMA code and, beginning this January, the Sunshine Act, which will require the tracking of payments to physicians from HCP-attended meetings and events (see box on page 16). There's yet another major challenge impacting pharma meetings, and this time, it boils down to basic economics.

"A big change happening now and one that will continue through 2013 and beyond is that the entire pharmaceutical industry is dealing with the reality of a lot of off-patent drugs coming up and not a whole lot of pipeline happening for new drugs, so that is a real concern," says Andy McNeill, CEO of American Meetings Inc. (AMI), a Fort Lauderdale-based event marketing and meeting management company that specializes in pharmaceutical, biotech and health care meetings. "So they're cutting back on all expenses, including meetings, as a result of that. They realize they're not going to have such deep pockets for a while, so a lot of meeting budgets are being restricted now to account for that. And I don't know that it has ever happened to the extent it's happening now and will over the next few years."

The underlying issue, McNeill says, is the potential loss of the practical impact that meetings have on the overall success of pharma companies. "They're not just putting out information," he says. "They're establishing relationships with

physicians and educating them about new drugs and how to prescribe them."

That, he notes, is the direct link between meetings, sales, revenues and profits that is being threatened by reduced budgets. And there could be an unprecedented trickle-down effect in terms of market dynamics, under the old banner of the law of unintended consequences.

Nevertheless, McNeill says, acute and enduring cost-consciousness will almost inevitably mean fewer meetings for many if not all pharma providers.

"It will be on a case-by-case basis," he says. "You can't really make a blanket statement about what will happen. For example, there might be a phase-one drug from a small pharma company that

carefully shifted around, with some budgets reduced while others are increased, based on current market potential for a particular drug.

Debbie Webber, associate director, corporate events, at Astellas Pharma US Inc. in Northbrook, IL, corroborates McNeill's concerns. "Budgets are always challenged and we're always being tasked to come up with creative ways to handle our meetings without increasing the budget," she says. "And that's where our relationships with our hotel partners really come in, in terms of helping us achieve those goals. That's important, because budgets are continuing to be looked at."

As a result, Astellas' meetings have

***"Our meetings are strictly meetings. We don't have a lot of fluff. For example, we don't spend a lot of money on entertainment because we view our meetings as business meetings."***

Debbie Webber, Associate Director, Corporate Events  
Astellas Pharma US Inc., Northbrook, IL

has no revenue yet and is just trying to develop one blockbuster drug. So they're probably going to continue their same basic meeting strategy. There might be a big company like Pfizer that is losing some drugs to off-patents in the next couple of years and their budgets might be reduced. But they might have another new drug that they know is going to be a blockbuster, so you'll see bigger budgets attached to it and more meetings."

Within the largest pharma companies, expenditures will be prioritized and

been pared down to no-frills efficiency. "Our meetings are strictly meetings," Webber says. "We don't have a lot of fluff. For example, we don't spend a lot of money on entertainment because we view our meetings as business meetings."

Christine Damico, senior director, strategic business development at Johnson & Johnson in Raritan, NJ, is currently experiencing similar budget pressures as she manages the company's product launches and other strategic business initiatives, working with AMI.



Photo by Matt Carbone Photography



Photo by Iwan Baan

The Keep Memory Alive Event Center, part of the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health — an anchor of Las Vegas' Symphony Park — is a unique meeting space with iconic architecture by Frank Gehry that accommodates up to 400 for dinner and 900 for a reception.

"We are in a financially constrained environment, as most organizations are these days," says Damico, who is not a meeting planner, which is why she uses a third-party vendor. "And we have been evaluating opportunities for us to cut costs, including the size of meetings because they represent enormous expenditures, especially when you have sales forces that employ thousands of people. So right now, cost-cutting is probably one of the most important areas of activity for us. And it's also one of the biggest challenges."

That challenge has been exacerbated over the last 18 months, Damico says, by the fact that although a face-to-face meeting is deemed ideal for a particular purpose, such as training sales reps during a product launch, management has asked that Damico look at virtual meetings as a cost-cutting alternative. "We've had a number of instances now where we felt that the best way to engage our reps and properly train them would be a face-to-face meeting, but instead we've used virtual meetings," she says, adding that she expects even more pressure to replace face-to-face

meetings with virtual technology for smaller or more secondary events.

And in some cases, the virtual alternative will be applied to major meetings, including one for 2,000 attendees later this year. As a result, Damico says, Johnson & Johnson will save 40-50 percent of the cost of a traditional face-to-face meeting. Furthermore, given that relative cost-effectiveness, it is inevitable that virtual meetings will continue to replace more face-to-face meetings in the future.

Meanwhile, the duration of some face-to-face meetings is being cut back to save money. "For example," Damico says, "for one recent meeting, we reduced it from three days to a day and a half. And that also represents substantial savings. But when you do that, you're not just saving on hotel rooms and food. You're also saving on employee time by not having them be out of the field for as long."

### Destination Selection

Yet another budgetary consideration these days is the relative cost of a particular destination. "I've been with J&J for a year and a half," Damico says, "and ever

since I've been here, we've been looking at less expensive destinations."

Webber agrees that the value proposition of a given destination is more important than ever before. "We're always looking for the best value and the best venues, so we're always scouring the country to come up with alternative options," she says. In addition to that, she explains, Astellas also looks for the right combination of value and something new. "We like to change things up a little bit sometimes and not go to the same destinations all the time. So that is also something we continue to try to work on."

For this year's national sales meeting, a three-day event for 1,400 attendees from across the U.S., Astellas chose Orlando, after not having been there for a few years, and the 2,000-room Orlando World Center Marriott. The hotel has 450,000 sf of meeting space, including the new 105,000-sf Cypress Ballroom, the largest pillar-free resort ballroom in the U.S., and a 14,000-sf dedicated conference center event space located in the exclusive North Tower.

In addition to finding Orlando cost-



## Community Appeal

As more and more destinations compete for pharma meetings, a relatively new differentiator introduced itself into the equation this year for Astellas Pharma US Inc.

One key factor in the company's selection of Orlando for this year's June sales meeting, which drew 1,400 attendees, was the existence of the charity Give Kids the World Village and its sprawling campus, where Astellas and Chicago-based Kindle Communications, which has helped the company stage its sales meeting for the last four years, could mount a day of community service that could accommodate all the attendees at one time.

Give Kids the World Village is a 70-acre nonprofit "storybook" resort that provides free weeklong vacations to children with life-threatening diseases and their families.

Chris Harrell, a Kindle Communications producer who worked with Astellas, explains how the charity was selected. "We were looking for a really nice philanthropic event we could do in Orlando, and we pitched the idea of going offsite and doing an event on the campus of a charitable organization," he says. "We had never done that before, and we thought it would be a nice challenge and get everyone excited because they'd feel like they were really doing hands-on within the local community."

On the second day of the meeting, all 1,400 attendees participated in a resort-wide facelift for the vast Give Kids the World campus that included cleaning, painting and landscaping. "In order to do that, it would have taken their staff more than a year to do what we did in four hours," Harrell says.

In addition, the Astellas initiative reportedly set a new record for the largest community service event ever staged by a pharmaceutical company at a meeting.



Photo courtesy of Astellas Pharma US Inc.

Give Kids the World Village welcomed the largest single volunteer group in its history in June when 1,400 Astellas Pharma US Inc. employees helped preserve the Village's pristine grounds as part of their CSR event.

Debbie Webber, Astellas' associate director of corporate events, also delivered yet another innovation for this year's meeting.

"When we do philanthropic events, we're always ordering T-shirts and things like that," she says. "This year, we came across an organization called 'You and Who' that gave us a new opportunity to give back. When you purchase your T-shirts through them, for every T-shirt you purchase, they give a free T-shirt to the organization of your choice. What we did was negotiate for them to give a meal to Covenant House of Florida for every shirt we bought. It just added another dimension to what we were doing."

You and Who has operations in 33 U.S. cities, including Orlando.

The combination of its charitable activities with the opportunity at Give Kids the World Village won praise from Astellas attendees and management.

"We like Orlando as a destination for a lot of reasons," Webber says. "One is the relationships we've now built with Give Kids the World. So now, we want to continue to go back there and help that organization." —JB

effective for such a major meeting, Webber also liked the destination because of its formidable airlift. "A lot of people can get direct flights, which we like," Webber says. "And Orlando also has some great hotel product that is adjacent to the Orange County Convention Center, such as the new tower at The Peabody and the new Hilton convention center hotel. That kind of infrastructure has just opened up new opportunities for us to put meetings into Orlando."

Even though Orlando already ranks as one of the top destinations in the

country for medical and pharmaceutical meetings, the city has undertaken an aggressive expansion of specialized infrastructure designed to attract even more business.

For example, under development is a new \$2 billion, 650-acre Lake Nona "medical city," located five minutes from Orlando International Airport, that includes a new University of Central Florida Medical School that opened last year and a host of hospital and research laboratories to come. Other new Orlando medical infrastructure

includes Florida Hospital and Orlando Health, as well as innovative bioscience and life science enterprises.

Meanwhile, other major destinations are developing new infrastructure that targets pharma and medical meetings.

New Orleans debuted a new cancer research center in February and is developing a new \$3 billion downtown medical complex that will be completed in 2014 and include a University Medical Center in partnership with Louisiana State University, Tulane and Xavier.

Las Vegas has created a Lou Ruvo

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## IMMPA Helps Planners Navigate Sunshine Act

The International Medical Meeting Professionals Association (IMMPA) [www.immpa-med.com](http://www.immpa-med.com), founded in 2009 by Pat Schaumann, CMP, CSEP, DMCP, president of St. Louis-based Meeting IQ, is an independent group providing health care planners and suppliers education and a support group of their peers to discuss the changing meeting environment within the health care industry. IMMPA was instrumental in encouraging the Convention Industry Council to develop the industry's first health care meetings certification, which should be available sometime next year.

The certification is arriving at a critical time as the Physician Payment Sunshine Act (PPSA), part of the health care reform act that requires pharmaceutical and device companies to report their payments to physicians and other health care workers and organizations, takes effect January 2013.

"Meeting professionals in the health care seg-

ment face the stiffest and most complex government regulations of any industry," says Schaumann. "With required reporting and transparency, understanding compliance is critical for anyone involved in health care meeting management."

The IMMPA conference, to be held in May 2013 in Cleveland, will present education seminars and updates on the Sunshine Act and its effects on meeting professionals.

*Breaking the Code to Health Care Compliance*, a new book by Pat Schaumann and the first of its kind, offers a quick reference guide to U.S. compliance laws as well as global health care regulations.

In addition, IMMPA is expanding its presence globally with the recent announcement of a European IMMPA Board. Compliance regulations are not just a U.S. issue, it is affecting meetings/events all over the world, says Schaumann.

Center for Brain Health that opened in 2009 and has gone so far as to create a Las Vegas Health and Wellness Destination Guide as a lure for planners.

At the same time, other, less well-known destinations are competing for market share.

Among them is Nashville, where medicine is the No. 1 employer. The city is now building the new \$5 billion Music City Center, which will debut with 1.2 million sf of exhibit and meeting space next March. Adjoining it will be a new 800-room Omni Nashville convention hotel set to open in early 2014.

Cleveland, home to the world-renowned Mayo Clinic, also has entered the medical meeting market with its development of the new \$465 million Cleveland Medical Mart and Convention Center that will open in the fall of next year with 237,000 sf of exhibit and meeting space.

### The Space Challenge

Despite the availability of budget-friendly second-tier destinations and the emergence of increasingly popular new options such as Nashville and Cleveland, pharma meeting planners are often limited by the number of breakout rooms in a traditional hotel.

"Our biggest challenge is finding ho-

tels that are large enough to accommodate us," says Webber. "And I think any big pharmaceutical meeting planner would tell you this, but in terms of breakouts, we potentially need as many as 130 breakout rooms. So finding the right fit in a hotel is, for us, always a challenge."

Damico concurs, but quickly adds that Johnson & Johnson has found a solution. "And that," she says, "is to utilize a very, very large ballroom that we subdivide up into a number of smaller spaces. So that meant we could use the center of the ballroom for general sessions, but still accommodate breakout rooms on the periphery. But in general, I agree that finding enough breakout rooms for a large meeting continues to be an issue."

Because Astellas also prefers to keep even its largest meetings, such as its annual sales meeting, under one roof, Webber often feels limited to a relative handful of destinations, such as Orlando and Las Vegas. "We don't want to expand to multiple hotels if we don't have to, because that creates other issues," she says. "That was one of the things that made Orlando a good option for us this year. The Orlando World Center Marriott worked very well for us, because we want everyone to have the same meeting experience in the same hotel."

Given that consideration, Webber

says, there are other options, such as the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville and the Gaylord National Resort outside Washington, DC.

"But the number of options is fairly short," Webber says.

But, she says, she also finds that Astellas' hotel partners are also willing to do whatever is required to accommodate a particular meeting. "For example," Webber says, "we find they will clear out sleeping rooms to create more breakout rooms if we need that to be done. That's one of the advantages of having great partnerships with all the major chains."

Going forward, notes McNeill, those relationships will be more important than ever as pharma companies and meeting planners deal with the current challenges to their traditional activities.

But one thing is for sure, McNeill says. Despite all the continuing chatter in the wake of a deep and lasting recession that had a profound impact on the meeting industry, executives at pharma companies will not lose sight of the critical importance of meetings to their business.

"Especially for pharma companies," he says, "meetings are very, very effective ways to gather information, train doctors and get the doctors comfortable with new drugs and potential drugs. And that is never going to change." **C&IT**



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According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the first six months of 2012 went down in history as being the hottest January-to-June period ever recorded in the continental U.S. The council also reports that more than two-thirds of the continental United States was in drought at the end of July 2012 — the largest drought declaration in more than 50 years — among other alarming weather-related statistics. The NRDC notes that this January-to-June period is not the exception but fast-becoming the new normal: in 2011, “an unprecedented 14 disastrous weather events resulted in an estimated \$53 billion in damage.” They state further, “There is little doubt that climate change is contributing to the extreme weather disasters we’ve been experiencing.” In other words, planner beware and be prepared. Weather events are the one thing that

## When Natural Disasters Strike

By Stella Johnson

even the most competent and organized meeting planner cannot control — and are the only “events” planners want no part of. When faced with the harsh realities of wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes and other natural disasters that disrupt the best-laid plans, it pays to take seriously the little red hen’s “sky is falling” warnings with a disaster preparedness plan.

### Fighting the Waldo Canyon Fires

Consider last June when the Waldo Canyon Fire near Colorado Springs, CO, broke out, destroying acres of land, hundreds of homes and threatening tourist

sites and resorts. For a Southwestern destination known for its beauty so exquisite that it inspired our patriotic hymn “America, the Beautiful,” the fires hit the area hard, nearly bringing its meetings, conventions and tourism business to a screeching halt.

In response, Colorado Springs CVB President and CEO Doug Price issued a letter to the travel trade reminding meeting planners that as an increasing number of destinations throughout the country face disasters of one kind or another, CVBs are their best ally. Price confirms that during the Waldo Canyon fires, the Colorado Springs CVB’s role was to provide both timely and accurate information, as well as serve as a resource for individuals, business travelers and meeting attendees.

“While we were often not the original source for most of the logistics in terms

of evacuation information, as this was overseen by city and county government, we did make sure to provide that information on our website as it became available to us,” he adds.

“For the handful of hotels that were pre-evacuated on the north of town as a precautionary measure, we were also a source of information for available lodging in the non-evacuated parts of the region. This information was updated in real time for anyone who needed to make use of it. Safety for residents and travelers alike was our top priority. We also worked closely with the correct sources of information to make sure we had the most up-to-date reports for air quality,” Price states. “Thankfully the fire reached 100 percent containment in less than two weeks with the air quality no longer posing a concern. ...Once we knew that all was safe and running again as normal, we launched a vacation and meetings campaign under the umbrella theme of Welcome Back Colorado Springs.”

All lodging properties and meeting venues were soon back to normal, including the historic Broadmoor resort, which was unscathed, except for the fact that fallout from the crisis drastically affected group and leisure business.

But that’s all bouncing back, according to The Broadmoor’s longtime president, Steve Bartolin. In a recent interview for *Hotels* magazine, Bartolin was quoted as saying that although the proximity of the wildfire cost the Broadmoor more than 6,000 room nights — and at a time when it is undergoing a \$60 million renovation — they were able to work with some of the booked groups to reschedule their events later on in the year. “Daily, we took time-stamped photos of guests using the facilities, showing that the environment was good, and posted them on Facebook and Twitter. It helped alleviate fears or cancellations would have been double,” Bartolin says.

Singing the praises of The Broadmoor is industry leader Meg Proskey, vice president of air, registration and technology at Maritz Travel in Fenton, MO. She considers national emergencies and natural disasters a very important segment in the meeting planning process and an area



**Meg Proskey**  
V.P. Air, Registration and Technology  
Maritz Travel  
Fenton, MO

*“People today know things instantly. While attendees are ‘living’ the event, they are also posting, blogging and tweeting about it in real time, and planners should be aware of that fact.”*

where third-party companies can help meeting planners minimize their risk.

For planners who go it alone, however, Proskey advises that when disaster does hit, the best plan is an open plan. “Keep communications open at all times,” she says. “Let the participants know what’s going on as much as possible. Remember, if you are seeing things on the local news channels, so are they.”

Proskey, who has found herself against a backdrop of erupting volcanoes as well as the most recent wildfires in Colorado, swears you never know what can happen. “Even an earthquake in Japan can have a negative effect on destinations as far away as Hawaii,” says Proskey, who had to relocate one corporate group in the building trade from one Four Seasons hotel on one Hawaiian island to another Four Seasons hotel on another Hawaiian Island all within five hours.

### Rescheduling Challenges

More recently in Colorado, however, Proskey represented a financial services company’s incentive sales program that

included approximately 600 people — one of the groups that The Broadmoor rescheduled as the wildfires were encroaching on Colorado Springs.

“At that point, the fire was not contained, so anything could have happened,” she says. To rectify the matter, the client asked to move the June meeting (2012) to October, four months later — a request that came very close to the opening day of the corporate event, and a request that The Broadmoor did everything it could to accommodate.

Although the legendary resort was already in the process of rescheduling various groups, this was a family program so it wasn’t an easy thing to do as children were out of school in June but would not be in October.

“That was a little more challenging,” Proskey says, “because some of the people were planning to extend the meeting into vacation time. So, the client gave everyone various options whereby they could keep their family vacation plans and attend the October meeting as well.”

Keep in mind that Maritz had to contract with all of the people individually so that they had workable schedules and all the necessary airline tickets. “This originally involved hundreds of people but there will probably be fewer as it’s hard to take kids out of school in October,” she notes. “Things are different today, a fact that is obviously reflected in social media. People today know things instantly. While attendees are ‘living’ the event, they are also posting, blogging and tweeting about it in real time, and planners should be aware of that fact.”

Furthermore, Proskey adds that planners have to consider identity theft, too. For instance, as Maritz collects a lot of PCI (Personal Cardholders Information), they are sure to mask all credit card information. “Planners need to be concerned about these things and only work with partners, vendors and suppliers who are PCI-compliant,” she warns.

What Proskey is referring to here is the PCI Security Standards Council ([www.pcisecuritystandards.org](http://www.pcisecuritystandards.org)), an open global forum that is responsible for the development, management, education and awareness of the PCI Security Standards,



including the PIN Transaction Security (PTS) requirements.

### Hurricane Isaac Tests RNC Readiness

As Doug Price previously stated, CVBs can be a planner's best ally in the midst of almost any crisis, especially when it's weather related. One only has to look at Tampa, FL which was expected to be hit hard by Hurricane Isaac the last week of August — a week that also marked the first week of the Republican National Convention (RNC) in that city. Fortunately for Tampa and the Republicans, things turned out all right with Isaac veering more northwest.

Still, it's necessary to have a contingency plan in the house. According to RNC official spokesman James Davis, officials had more than one plan in pocket as they were in constant contact with the United States Secret Service for the possibility of evacuating as many as 50,000 politicians, delegates and other attendees, while they shortened the convention by approximately one day.

To be sure, Tampa Bay & Company, the city's official CVB, prepared for an even worse outcome than actually occurred. The bureau's President and CEO Kelly Miller says, "During severe weather times such as Hurricane Isaac, Tampa Bay & Company's priority was the safety of all visitors to the destination, and communication was key to that effort. Working with local emergency agencies, the community and the tourism industry, our goal, as always, was to keep visitors and residents informed and updated."

One example of those initiatives during the RNC was the Social Media Command Center, which Miller claims was the first-of-its-kind for a national political convention, as well as a great communication model for planners to consider for their events.

"The command center gave us the ability to communicate in real time and provide up-to-date information to the 50,000 visitors and delegates who were in Tampa for the RNC. This was a resounding success. Although Hurricane Isaac missed Tampa Bay, we continue to hone these efforts and be even more prepared



**Lydia Janow**  
Director of Trade Shows  
and Conferences  
Aviation Week, New York, NY

*"We got thousands of people below ground safely, and just to add a little humor to the situation, it created quite a networking opportunity."*

for future meetings and conventions."

In addition to Tampa's expertise in handling such meteorological roller coasters, the whole state of Florida, it should be noted, is on the case as Visit Florida offers complimentary Cover Your Event supplemental insurance plan that is especially designed for groups that meet during a named hurricane and during the months of August, September and October. While restrictions apply, the Cover Your Event insurance program makes the going easier for groups who like to meet in Florida but are concerned about losses during such an unstable season. (Applications for 2013 are now being accepted. Go to [www.meetings.visitflorida.com](http://www.meetings.visitflorida.com) and navigate accordingly.)

### Tornadoes Temporarily Ground Aviation Conference

Lydia Janow, CMP, knows firsthand about getting back to CVBs for help and guidance. The New York City-based director of trade shows and conferences for aviation information and services publisher and provider Aviation Week booked the Dallas Convention Center

for the first time for the company's MRO annual conference and exhibition, held right after April Fool's Day, April 3-5, 2012. The major industry event was a huge success, but in more ways than she could have predicted, thanks to the emergency preparedness of the Dallas CVB.

"Tuesday was opening day, and the second-floor conference center opened its doors promptly at 1 p.m. for various meeting sessions that were to run concurrently with our first-floor exhibit, which opened its doors promptly at 1:30," Janow recalls. "Then, all of a sudden, I got a call from the director of safety at the Dallas CVB telling me that not one but two tornadoes were heading our way, and we had to start immediate evacuation procedures. Sirens went off and the director joined me at the center to start the evacuation process of those on the first and second floors, as we safely guided them to the basement, a 5,000-sf area."

There were already about 500 people upstairs in the conference center and another 5,000 people flooding the exhibit hall, even though the doors had just opened. "I had to get them all into one room," she notes. "Right away, security staff at the convention center kicked into high gear demanding exhibitors to shut down their booths and for everyone to evacuate to the basement immediately, while the director and I used the microphone and mandated orders."

Problem No. 1 for Janow was that a lot of people didn't believe it. "Sure, people from the Midwest did, as they were used to this sort of thing, but other people from other parts of the country thought it was some April Fool's joke. Or, some dramatic, theatrical approach to the opening ceremony. Finally, we got thousands of people below ground safely, and just to add a little humor to the situation, it created quite a networking opportunity."

After one hour, though, everything blew over with one tornado veering right and one veering left of the convention center, and the doors reopened for business. By the end of the day, however, at least a dozen tornadoes touched down in north Texas, a rare occurrence, according to Ron King, executive director

## 10 Reasons Disruptions Become Disasters

Ijet Inc. is a risk management company based in Annapolis, MD. Bruce McIndoe, founder and CEO, believes "disruptions become disasters" too often because those who should be prepared for them are not. Accordingly, he has created a list of common safety and security miscues and suggested solutions for meeting planners to ponder:

- 1. Planner does not know what to do in an emergency:** Don't be reactive. Get a basic plan in place and make sure you know where to get help.
- 2. Out-of-date contact numbers:** Get contact numbers (cell, home, office, email, IM, etc.) for the people that you need in an emergency, and periodically get them updated and verified.
- 3. Primary and backup person are not available:** This happens frequently. Have multiple backup contacts. Think about people who are normally available.
- 4. Cell phones don't always work:** Verify public address systems and consider using two-way radios with staff.
- 5. Third-party resources do not know what is going on:** Talk to your vendors. Include them in the planning process. Rehearse, run exercises and drills.

**6. No response resource retained:** Ask yourself, who would you turn to in the case of a kidnapping? Or a medical emergency? Car accident? An incident at an outside venue? Make a list of incident types and answer the question, who would I turn to?

**7. Protocols are not maintained:** Planners and organizations need to periodically review their plans and protocols at least annually. Train staff on procedures. Review prior to each event.

**8. Protocol or procedure is too complex:** Many times the plans and procedures are way too complex. Look to streamline the process. In an emergency, you will only have time and bandwidth for the basics.

**9. Inconsistent skill level within the team:** Crisis and emergency management is not the core competency of most meeting planners. Get training for the core team that will be called to deal with an emergency.

**10. Cost-sensitivity delays response:** Deal with where the funds will come from and who will pay *before* the event. Delay in response increases cost and can cost lives.

For more information, visit [www.ijet.com](http://www.ijet.com).

— SJ

at the convention center, who says they were in touch with every city agency and emergency crew every step of the way "to relay all information in real time to all of our stakeholders."

Janow concludes, "It also helps to have a terrific staff that doesn't panic as I had that day, and still do."

### A Snowstorm of Rare Occurrence

Cameron Dunlap goes a few steps further with his recent blizzard experience, one that *The New York Times* (October 30, 2011) called "a storm of record consequence, disrupting large swaths of the Northeast in ways large and small."

Call it more "a storm of rare occurrence" for the Northeast. By the time this late October storm finished trick-or-treating around a six-state area, more than 3 million households would be without power for several days. Reported snowfalls throughout the region were tallied as high as 30.5 inches as several governors declared states of emergencies.

But when Dunlap, president of Specialty Communications Inc., booked the Hilton Hasbrouck Heights/Meadowlands in New Jersey for a real

estate investment training program for 125 meeting attendees a year prior, he was planning for a financially successful sales event and not snowballs in the middle of autumn.

"I already knew it was coming on Friday, the first day of the event, but was hopeful it would miss us," he elaborates. "By Saturday afternoon, however, we were getting hammered, then the power went out at around 4 p.m. and was out all night and most of Sunday, the final day of the event."

Still, the optimistic Dunlap adds that the storm's impact really didn't become a reality until they were already in a session and the ballroom went dark except for two emergency lights. "It made it almost impossible to continue without any sound or projection."

Determined, Dunlap and his staff pushed on the best they could even though on Sunday, quite a few people didn't make it back. "Attendees were from all over the U.S. but heavily weighted in the Northeast," he notes, "and people wanted to get back home."

With nothing more than a small generator to run the LCD projectors, Dunlap went with the flow, worked with what

he had, raised his voice as needed and continued with the program anyway. Surprisingly, the remaining registrants really appreciated his willingness to continue and oddly found the whole thing entertaining. "Everyone who stayed on made the best of it as we bonded. Sure, sales were down by about 20 percent, but we ended up doing fairly well considering the situation."

The small generator Dunlap previously mentioned was actually a maintenance man's personal unit that he brought from home for the group to use. "Of course, the hotel also ordered one of those huge generators that takes up the whole back of an 18-wheeler truck," Dunlap says, "but the power came back on before it arrived."

That happened at approximately 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, and the group ended up finishing the last two hours of the sales program with everything back to normal.

"They not only appreciated the fact that we didn't just pack up and leave, but actually enjoyed the adventure," he says. "And sales were not a total disaster either, even though the event technically was. I guess all I can say is that the old adage 'the show must go on' certainly applied here."

C&IT



## Building Relationships One Game at a Time

By Derek Reveron

The old adage “Eighteen holes of match or medal play will teach you more about your foe than will 18 years of dealing with him across a desk” penned by early 20th century American sportswriter Grantland Rice, describes what corporate executives have always known: Playing partners learn more about friends, foes and everyone in between during a five-hour golf round than in any other setting. Referred to as the “18-hole outdoor meeting room,” corporate meeting planners stage golf programs and tournaments to help attendees solidify existing relationships, form new ones and close deals.

Growing numbers of attendees of all ages, both genders and various golf skill levels use the game to enhance their careers and increase business. Golf events also develop teamwork, provide bunches of outdoor fun and offer opportunities to recognize and reward top performers.

### Golf as a Business Builder

A planner for a U.S.-based manufacturing division of a Fortune 500 corporation who wishes to remain anonymous,

considers golf to be the ultimate relationship builder. Earlier this year, she held a five-day incentive program for 108 executives and sales consultants of the division’s business partners and clients, including distributorships and retail operations.

Attendees who increased sales of the division’s lighting products by at least 15 percent were rewarded with this incentive program at the Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Beach, CA. Rated as the

No. 1 Golf Resort in the World in 2012 by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine, Pelican Hill offers 128 villas and 204 bungalow guest rooms and suites as well as 20,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space. The resort offers 36 championship holes on its Ocean North and Ocean South courses and 18 holes at its nearby Oak Creek Golf Club.

Golf was the centerpiece of the incentive program. During the 15 months prior to the incentive trip, the meeting planner

periodically motivated participants with mailings and small gifts. “We sent what we call teasers from Pelican Hill. It would be a sleeve of golf balls from the club, a hat, sun visor or postcard showing the course,” explains the planner.

Players were grouped according to their needs for building business relationships. Attendees were mostly avid golfers who played competitively in foursomes on two different courses on two different days. According to the meeting

planner, “We just let them play golf, versus using a specific format. They would make side bets as needed in their groups. We wanted to keep strong relationships with our customers. If we needed to strengthen relationships between a customer and a leader of our company, we would put them together. We also put groups together where we knew two distributors were close but lived in different parts of the country, to keep their relationship going.”

The pairings included two relatives who also had a business relationship. “We had two distributors who are brother and sister and own separate companies. At the last minute, they wanted to golf together with their spouses. We talked with other members of the pairings and asked them to accept different groups and tee times. You have to be willing to adapt to meet the needs of the group,” the planner says.

Pelican Hill was selected after consid-



The Ocean South Course at The Resort at Pelican Hill is one of two championship 18-hole golf courses designed by Tom Fazio.

Photo courtesy of Pelican Hill



ering eight other sites. “When I did the site visit two years ago, the sales director introduced me to a lot of people, including the golf sales manager. Through the two years of planning after I met them, it was easy to call people and ask for what I

Professional long drive and trick shot golfer Trevor Consavage entertained attendees at the Mansfield Oil Company's golf tournament, which raised funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.



Photo courtesy of Mansfield Oil Company

## Pointers from the Pros for Winning Golf Events

### Select the Right Golf Property

It is crucial to select a golf course that excites attendees, even if it means stretching the budget. Choosing an exclusive golf property motivates attendees, especially those who really love the game. Many groups opt for top-rated resorts offering more than one golf course and all of the game's amenities and services. Such properties include the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, a premier oceanfront northeast Florida resort located on 300 acres offering 250 guest rooms and suites and two 18-hole golf courses — the Ocean Course and the Lagoon Course. Ponte Vedra Inn & Club provides more than 30,000 sf of flexible meeting, function and banquet space. Like most top golf resorts, Ponte Vedra offers complete golfing services, including practice putting greens, a practice bunker, PGA professional golf staff, instructors, club cleaning and rental, and golf bag storage.

### Remember to Communicate Constantly

Communication with the property's golf director is crucial to success no matter where the fairway outing takes place. Frequently review details with the property's golf pro and provide updates, says Dave Doerr, golf director at



DOERR

La Costa Resort and Spa, Carlsbad, CA, which offers the completely restored Champions Course and the South Course as well as 100,000 sf of meeting space, 611 guest rooms, 77 suites and 137 villas. “Keep communication consistent and timely. Sometimes planners are so busy with other things we don't get informa-

### Avoid Last-Minute Changes

It's not a good idea to allow golfers to make eleventh-

hour changes after pairings are set, warns Don Ryder, golf director of The Homestead in Hot Springs, VA, the iconic mountain resort with 483 guest rooms and 72,000 sf of meeting space. The transformation of the 3,000-acre historic resort was launched in summer 2012. New and continuing additions include Allegheny Springs, a two-acre family-friendly attraction, new restaurants and bar options, and construction on the new Canyon Ranch SpaClub, which will be ready in 2013. Ryder reminds planners, “Changes shouldn't be made after about 24 hours before the tournament. It can impact the scores if too many players decide at the last minute to play with other good players. That gives them a chance to win right off the bat. You also have to redo all of the scorecards, change the names on golf carts and re-load golf bags. Making too many last minute changes impacts the golfing experience. Everything doesn't look quite as good, and it delays getting started,” he says.



RYDER

### Match Players Fairly

Know the skill level of players, especially the executives and VIPs, when pairing players. “Ideally planners should know the skill levels of participants, but that is very hard to do all the time. Typically, planners assign pairings after conferring with an executive or someone who understands who needs to be paired with whom instead of trying to guess. That's important. But even if they don't know the handicaps of players, they know the relationships between key executives and how to pair individuals according to that,” says Doerr.

Golf pros advise against matching beginners with other novices or top players with each other. Such groups can slow down play, intimidate less-skilled players and make the game less enjoyable. It's best to form pairings or groups with a mix of skill levels. Putting some good players in the front and some beginners in the back can keep play moving. Large groups should

*Continued on page 26*

needed. Plus they have a great pro shop, wonderful instructors and great forecaddies that are very knowledgeable. They even have Mercedes shuttles to the golf courses. They have a wonderful package overall,” she says.

### Fun and Charitable Events

While some groups require straightforward and competitive golf tournaments, others want golf outings that are pure fun. That's the kind of golf event that Donna Collins, senior account executive for Schaumburg, IL-based Total Event Resources, planned for a manufacturing firm. The three-day incentive for 100 salespeople took place at a Midwest golf resort. The theme of the incentive, “Decadence and Elegance,” was carried throughout the program.

Collins worked closely with the resort's golf staff to pamper attendees before, during and after golf. “We treated people royally. When they arrived, we attached customized name tags to their golf bags. On the golf course, we offered surprises at various holes, including strawberries and champagne, neck massages, a cigar roller, a golf pro giving instructions and other surprises. When holes got backed up and people had to wait, we had little competitions like chipping balls into rings and seeing who could tap a ball on the end of a club the longest. When they were done, we cleaned their shoes and clubs,” says Collins. The golf outing was very popular, she adds.

Some companies hold golf tournaments designed to build business relationships while supporting a worthy cause. Mansfield Oil Company in Gainesville, GA, holds an annual golf tournament that includes more than 400 of its suppliers, salespeople, customers and other business partners. The tournament also benefits the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This year's tournament was held in June at The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, 75 miles outside of Atlanta.

Attendees arrived early to conduct

*“We show them a good time and conduct business. The event allows us to bring in executives from middle management to the top level and hold general meetings and breakout sessions before and after the tournament.”*

**Mike Davino, Treasurer**  
Mansfield Oil Company, Gainesville, GA



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business formally in conference rooms and informally over drinks and dinner. They cemented relationships over two days of golf, and many stayed on afterwards to hold additional meetings, says Mike Davino, treasurer of Mansfield Oil Company and planner of the golf tournament. “We show them a good time and conduct business. The event allows us to bring in executives from middle management to the top level and hold

general meetings and breakout sessions before and after the tournament. Topics include oil supply, supply strategies, supplying new clients and doing business via e-commerce,” says Davino, an avid golfer who attended college on a golf scholarship.

Pairings were created to encourage business networking. “At the request of clients, we matched them with counterparts that they are currently doing

business with or those with whom they would like to do business. If company X says it doesn’t have a relationship with company Y and would like to, then we will pair their C-level executives together in a group. After the tournament, we had an hors d’oeuvres reception where you can see a lot of people who golfed together breaking into pairs or small groups to talk privately,” says Davino.

How to engage non-golfers? Turn-

*Continued from page 24*

consider resorts with two golf courses, allowing experienced players to be grouped at one course and high-handicappers at another.

### Mind Contract Details

Clearly communicate contract requirements and don’t hesitate to negotiate changes to boilerplate sections. Review contracts thoroughly to ensure they meet needs in areas such as food and beverage, weather cancellation policies, deposits, refunds and staff assistance for VIP players. Also check items such as costs for golf balls and carts, gratuities, fees for increasing or decreasing the number of players, and policies regarding the use of practice greens and driving ranges. Remember that some resorts offer discounts for week-day or off-season golf dates.



**COLLINS**

Donna Collins, senior account executive for Schaumburg, IL-based Total Event Resources, offers this food and beverage advice: “Decide what you want to do and pay attention to details. Do you want to offer coffee and pastries, have a chef creating omelets, or set up a snack bar at the turn between holes 9 and 10?

Do you want people to pick up lunchboxes, have made-to-order sandwiches or order off the menu? Do you want a drink cart to go around the course? Or do you want to give out drink tickets?”

Corporate groups must also decide beforehand which attendee expenses are charged to the company’s master account. Examples of items covered by master accounts may include rented clubs, gloves, balls, food, alcohol and cigars. Planners must also know who has the authority to change onsite, if necessary, what the company tab covers. Communicate the information to key people on the property, including the managers of the golf events, pro shop, and food and beverage.

### Know Golf Club Rental Needs

Nowadays, more and more companies are renting clubs because of high shipping costs and extra airline

fees. Let the golf property know as soon as possible the number and type of clubs that the group must rent. Here’s why, according to golf pros: Some courses have a limited supply and variety of rental clubs, and they may not be in tip-top condition. Clearly communicating rental needs allows time to rent additional clubs from other firms if necessary. It’s difficult to rent additional clubs from off-property sources at the last minute.

### Avoid Time Crunches

Allow enough time between golf outings and meetings to permit both to run smoothly. Some meeting schedules rush attendees to and from the golf course,



**FRIEDLANDER**

says Steve Friedlander, vice president of golf, The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Beach, CA. “Suppose a meeting gets out at noon, the tournament starts at 12:30 and there is a banquet at 6:00. There is not enough time between the end of the meeting and tournament start time to do things such as use the restroom, shower, change clothes, check messages and eat. You need up to an hour before golfing for everyone to get to the course, get on carts and be ready to go. And if it’s a five-hour round, you need enough time afterward to prepare for dinner. It’s a timing miscalculation that we try to prevent,” says Friedlander.

### Don’t Hesitate to Ask for Help

You need not be a golfer or have knowledge of the game (although it helps) to plan top-notch golf outings. Still, any planner can create a successful golf event by working with a resort’s golf professional or third-party firm that specializes in organizing tournaments. Think of a golf adviser as a guide to help planners achieve meeting or incentive goals, says Collins. “Surround yourself with the experts and people who do it every day and ask a lot of questions. We have our expertise as event planners so we look at it with a logistical set of eyes. They are willing to sit down with you and explain the various golf formats. I’ve been golfing for several years, and I still need to ask lots of questions,” Collins adds. —DR

berry Isle Miami, renowned for its two championship golf courses redesigned by Raymond Floyd, has a new teambuilding program to enhance creativity and improve participants’ ability to work as a unit. “Liquid Architecture” is available for all meetings booked at Turnberry Isle. Led by the resort’s new executive chef John Sexton, groups are tasked with creating a cocktail based on a set of criteria. The process begins with each team drawing a blue print design of their drink on a cocktail napkin to replicate the history of the resort, when real estate developer Donald Soffer drew his vision on a cocktail napkin in 1967. The 408-room property also features a 40,000-sf conference center with a separate private valet entrance as well as outdoor venues.

### Final Thoughts

Golf pros and planners observe that golf will become even more popular among attendees as its popularity increases among the general public, and especially as more people recognize golf



Photo courtesy of Turnberry Isle Miami

Both of Turnberry Isle Miami’s award-winning 18-hole championship golf courses — the Soffer and Miller Courses — were updated by legendary golfer Raymond Floyd.

as an indispensable business tool. The savvy planner for the manufacturing division of a Fortune 500 company urges planners to dismiss the overture that golf is overrated as a means of cementing deals. “I know that a lot of people joke

about golfing building business relationships. But it does work because people come from all over the country to have a chance to bond over the game, share best practices and become better at what they do,” she concludes. **C&IT**



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# Cool Tech Tools

## Changing the Face of Meetings

By Karen Brost

Technology has had a huge impact on so many areas of our lives, and meeting planning is no exception. Just ask James Spellos, CMP, president of Meeting U. “I really think that the apps are where it’s at,” he says. “There’s so much that’s out there that’s helping productivity or connectivity for people while they’re at the event or doing a site inspection.”

He shared his newest favorite. “It’s called **Point & Measure**. It actually lets you get accurate dimensions (of a room) using your iPad or iPhone. For what we do during a site inspection to check on room dimensions, it’s pretty darn accurate. It’s not a free one, it’s \$1.99, so it’s one of those bank breakers,” he laughs. “It’s one of the perfect apps for what we need to do in our industry just to make sure that the room is the size that we think it is.

“One that I’m using most frequently now is called **DocuSign**,” he continues. “If I’m on the road and I’m going to get a contract sent in a Word file or a PDF file from a client, I can use this app to get a fully executed copy of the contract done just using my iPad.” He explained that DocuSign stores his signature electronically, so he can just grab it and affix it to the proper space(s) on the contract.

“Another cool one is **Doc Scan HD**,” he adds. “This one is like a \$2.99 bank breaker, as well. It is an app that allows you to literally take a photo of a document and instantly convert it into a PDF file.”

### Assessing Hotel Tech Specs

Spellos and another meetings technology leader, Corbin Ball, CSP, CMP, MS, of Corbin Ball Associates, have collaborated

to create an app called **TechSpec** with the goal of advancing the level of conversation about the technology provided in hotels. “I don’t think anyone’s really comfortable with knowing what questions to ask and what would be considered an adequate standard for guest rooms or for meeting space, so we developed TechSpec to create a point system for this purpose.” He added that the technology part of a site inspection is just as important as food and beverage, logistics, room layout, audio-visual and other factors.

“This app is completely free,” he says. “We are very thankful for the folks at QuickMobile who agreed to also undertake this project and create the app for us. We’re looking to get feedback from people to see what they think is working and not working so we can help to create a better next step.”

He explained how TechSpec works. “Within the checklist for a hotel, you have three different areas that you can assign points to: the guest rooms, the meeting space and then the lobby/public space. What we’re finding is that the most important of the three for most planners is the guest room technology. The list goes through such questions as what is the price per day and what is the speed of the connection. We talk about tools such as [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net) to allow the planner, with their own device, to quickly get a sense of what the current bandwidth is for the room. Our standard is that you need to be able to make your guest room your office.

“We assign points for how the room is set up ergonomically. Do I have to crawl on my hands and needs to find the power outlets? Are there surge protectors? Is the television capable of inputting from my computer? It’s stuff that would really differentiate an adequate or OK room with one that is really set up to be your mobile office.

“The meeting room space does require a little more conversation with the salespeople,” he continues, “which is good, because clearly there’s the price conversation.” He explains that knowing the right questions to ask can help uncover hidden costs.

“We also play to questions such as how many simultaneous connections (the room can handle) and what the upload and



The new TechSpec app allows planners to assess and rate the technology services provided by hotels and other venues.

download speeds are. It’s kind of tricky because each property and each meeting is different, but we’re trying to give some sort of standard. We even have a question about cellular reception, which is a tough one, too, because that’s subjective.” He described an app called **Coverage?** “It gives you the four major carriers and how their

like Poll Everywhere are critical because it engages the audience.” He explained that the service is free for meetings with fewer than 40 attendees. For larger events, it becomes a subscription-based service.

### Boosting Attendee Interaction

SaraBeth Donaghy, president of the event planning firm The Eventurist, agrees that apps are where it’s at. “Definitely, the newest trend has been event apps, and it’s mainly for the attendees. The main thing that I love about it is it makes the conference so much more green. Every attendee now has at least a smartphone, if not a tablet and a laptop. There’s an event app where you can see the full schedule of the conference and pull out which courses you want to take and build your own agenda. It’s really handy instead of carrying around a huge program and wasting a bunch of paper and ink and having a print deadline that’s a month before the event where things change. Ultimately, they always do, and you have to do a reprint. (With apps), you just have this great tool where you can change it the ‘day of’ and attendees can track it and it’s awesome.

“There’s one company I work with called **unsocial**, and it’s a very cool tool. Their app allows for attendees to log in using their LinkedIn profile, and once they’re within 25 feet of the event, it sends them



**“Listen to your audience and get a sense of what (apps) they’re utilizing and try stuff out. Some are going to work, some won’t, but some might be critical tools for your meeting.”**

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

coverage is in a given location.” This app covers iPhones and iPads, and there are similar apps for Android devices.

“I’m also a huge, huge fan of **Poll Everywhere**, which I’ve been using for years,” he adds. “Poll Everywhere is an audience response system that’s based on texting. Today, with the necessity of having interactivity in your sessions, tools

a notification ‘You’re an IT director, and there’s an event across the street from where you are currently. Are you attending this event?’ If you are, you can log in as an attendee and see who else is attending the event via their LinkedIn profile. It’s a more direct way for attendees to network, and it’s way more effective than walking around and saying ‘What do you do?’

Supporting the “Creating New Connectivity” theme at MPI’s World Education Congress in St. Louis in July were (top) David Stevens, Global Event Manager at Atlona Technologies and Jody Brandes, CMP, Sr. Meeting Partner, RA Franchise, Genentech Inc., who participated in San Francisco Travel’s Goose Chase smartphone photo scavenger hunt presented by Geoteaming Inc.; and (above) “The Hive,” where attendees learned about the latest trends in mobile apps, event technology, audio-visual and more.



"It also allows for the meeting planners to send a direct message to the attendees. Let's say that sessions are running a little behind. You can send a direct message to all attendees via a text message that pops up on their device. 'Please note that the general session is getting a 10-minute late start, but please get into your seats because we are filling up fast.' You can announce the winners of contests or announce a thank you for the break sponsor, such as 'Please enjoy the cookies and coffee courtesy of HP computers.' You can talk to attendees without being in their face, but they get the message."

Donaghy also mentioned an app called **EventPoint**. "It is a fully functioning event management platform. It allows meeting planners to manage agenda sessions, side meetings and exhibit floors, and will soon have a hotel and registration application. I have not used this program yet, but I have demoed it, and it is very user-friendly, and I look forward to



EventMobi allows planners to customize mobile apps for their conferences.

using it for future clients when the budget will allow."

Donaghy also recently used an app called **EventMobi** as a conference attendee. "It was very user-friendly, allowed me to plan my own agenda based on the full conference agenda, map out the meeting space and connect with other attendees. I thought it was pretty awesome because I got a (paper) program and I didn't even use it."

you a pretty good rate." Unfortunately, her client didn't have the budget to use event-related apps. "If they wanted to, it was going to be so easy for the Loews there to accommodate our event apps. They already have digital agendas in their lobbies. There's a digital map of the hotel and the meeting spaces with the day's agenda, so they can change it automatically, as well, which is nice."

"A lot of hotels are going that way," she adds, "but Loews has been the most accommodating I've worked with in the most recent past. Loews Coronado Bay

Donaghy has been working with Loews Coronado Bay resort in San Diego on an upcoming event, and she discussed the value of choosing a hotel that has the latest technology in place. "Loews recently did an upgrade of all of their wireless systems. They have an in-house AV team, which is always nice because they know what the hotel is capable of and what they can offer you, and they usually give

is the one I've worked with most closely, but I'm looking into doing (a program at) Loews New Orleans, and I know they have the same capabilities."

## Price Points

Donaghy says that event planning app pricing varies by company. It may be based on the number of attendees or per event. "In the case of unsocial, they can also build your own unique app that you can use at all your events, which is nice, because if an attendee attends three or four of your events a year, they're already in the application and they don't have to download a new one for every event they go to. They'll just get an automatic notification that there's a new event. They can cruise the agenda, and they can register right there. It's really an awesome tool."

Donaghy is also a big believer in using Twitter and Facebook to promote events. "It really connects your attendees on a personal level. It gets them excited that it's more than a business trip. It's great to really connect with those attendees, both before they get there and also while they're there. It's changed the entire world of giveaways. (Instead of) drawing a business card out of a bowl, you can announce it via Twitter. It's changed the whole dynamics of events."

## Calling on Kiosks

Of course, all of those smartphones, tablets and other devices need to be charged, and Donaghy says that sponsored charging stations offer a way for event planners to increase revenue.

"(These) sponsored kiosks have a bunch of different plugs for every device," she explains. "Attendees can go over and charge up their device, and in the meantime get to know other attendees and read whatever the sponsor is promoting on that kiosk. That's been a great way for companies to get more sponsor dollars at a trade show, and it's also a great way to get attendees to feel like they're being catered to."

Social media kiosks, like those offered by **Keshot**, are another option. These kiosks enable individuals or a group of individuals attending an event to snap a photo and post it to their social networks. The advantage to the sponsor is

that the photos are branded with the name of the event or product, and this branding will receive exposure throughout each attendee's social network.

## Game Changers

"Another fun app is **Goose Chase**," Donaghy says. "It's an interactive scavenger hunt game that engages the attendees and prompts them to interact with the



Attendees can post branded event photos to social media sites via the Keshot kiosk.

conference and each other. Usually you have to find something and take a picture of it or with it and post it to your network and then you get points. At the end of it, whoever gets the most points wins a prize. It's continually having your attendees broadcast your event. I have used this app as an attendee and was totally engaged and had a lot of fun with it." **Geoteaming Inc.** offers the Goose Chase teambuilding app, as well as other GPS-powered teambuilding races and programs.

**Audience Entertainment** has developed an innovative technology that harnesses the energy of attendees and virtually turns the audience into a massive video game controller. By waving their arms, the crowd controls the movement on the screen, which is not only fun, but it creates an instant sense of community.

## Pinpointing Fresh Ideas

The wildly popular website **Pinterest** is also growing in use as an event planning/promotion tool. Online pinboards are being created to showcase ("pin") photos of creative event decorating and theme ideas, and venues are creating their

own pinboards to show how their meeting space can be transformed to meet the needs of different kinds of events. Planners also can designate a Pinterest page for a specific event, where attendees can view photos of not only the destination and venues but featured speakers or other visuals that give them an overall snapshot of what they can expect.

## Coming Attractions

The only thing constant about technology is that it keeps changing. "I'm very much looking forward to the Windows release of their tablet, **Surface**, this October," Spellos says, "because the promise of Surface gives two things that might really move us beyond the PC into a solely tablet-based work environment. One is a built-in keyboard. More importantly, it will have fully functional Microsoft Office. Everyone says the tablets are great because I can have some apps and I can stream social, but I can't necessarily replace my PC. But if you had something where you were able to access Word and PowerPoint and Outlook and Excel, that does potentially become a game changer."

## The Tech Advantage

"I've really been an advocate for technology in events," Donaghy notes. "Especially being from Seattle, I want to be green and there are so many things about events that aren't. There are so many options now to make your event so much more interactive and so much more clean, without all that paper. More attendees nowadays are adapting to it and appreciating it. They'd rather be able to go online and download the presentation instead of having a printout. They'd much rather be able to plan their own agenda instead of highlighting it in a book."

Spellos has a few words of advice for those who are new to the world of meeting planning apps. "Just don't be afraid to try it. It's not always going to work, but that's OK. Listen to your audience and get a sense of what they're utilizing and try stuff out. Some are going to work, some won't, but some might be critical tools for your meeting that will help you be able to move forward and engage all generations of your audience." **C&IT**

# Yep, There's an App for That, Too

So many meeting planning apps, so little time to research them all. Fortunately, there's a website [www.meetingapps.com](http://www.meetingapps.com), which lists the latest apps available. The site's co-founders, Kirsten Strand, CMM, CITE, Joseph Lo and Jane Huynn shared a few of their favorite picks for planning tools and risk management:

**Aon WorldAware.** This global travel information app is designed to inform travelers about the risk profile of individual countries around the globe.

**Bed Bug Registry.** As the official iPhone app of the Bedbug Registry, this app offers access to user-submitted bed bug reports from hotels throughout the U.S.

**Bizzabo.** This free app helps professionals discover new business opportunities at meetings and conferences, and enables event organizers to engage more effectively with their attendees.

**FlightTrack.** Considered by [www.meetingapps.com](http://www.meetingapps.com) to be one of the better flight tracking apps, FlightTrack allows users to track both domestic and international flights, including information on departure gates, duration of flights and how to contact the airlines.

**Pocket First Aid & CPR from the American Heart**



STRAND

**Association.** Increased search functionality and reorganized content now make it easier to use this app to find help in an emergency. It includes 34 videos and 46 high-resolution illustrations.

**Projectorfy.** Speakers can use this iPad app to project live events, including the results of audience polls and a tweetwall showing event-specific hashtags or current trends.

**SuperPlanner.** This app is packed with planning tools, including calculators for venue capacities, staffing, catering, staging and dance floor size. Cape not included.

**Travel Med.** Designed with the non-medical professional in mind, Travel Med will guide travelers through pre-travel preparation, in-travel emergencies, and post-travel health and medical problems when immediate access to medical care may not be available.

**WordLens.** This app uses the built-in camera on a mobile device to capture words printed in a foreign language (such as on a street sign) and translate them in real time.

[Meetingapps.com](http://Meetingapps.com) offers an "App Alert Club" planners can sign up for to receive automatic updates via email when new meeting-related apps are released. — **KB**



# Atlantic City

## Riding a Wave of Reinvestment and Reinvention

Since the 1880s, Atlantic City has reigned as one of the most revered vacation resorts in the country. And for more than a half-century, it also has been popular as a meeting and convention destination. In recent years, however, riding a wave of major investment, it has reinvented itself.

"We do not talk about gambling anymore," says Gary Musich, vice president of convention sales for the Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority (ACCVA) and Atlantic City Convention Center.

"That is now just an amenity. We sell our non-gaming related amenities for meetings that really make us unique. And more of that infrastructure is now being developed to make us an even more multifaceted resort destination."

Among the city's strongest selling points, Musich says, is the investment being made in new hotels, restaurants and off-site venues created specifically to support meetings and events.

"We like to point out, especially to the corporate market, the capital investment now being made in Atlantic City," he says. "In the past 13 years, \$10 billion has been invested in the

destination. And now, since the recession, even more investment is being made. That means we're headed in a very positive direction as a destination. And that's really something that corporate planners want to hear."

For example, major restaurant operator Landry's acquired the Trump Marina property last year and has invested \$200 million to transform it into the East Coast outpost of the legendary Golden Nugget in Las Vegas. Retail and mixed-use developer Tanger spent \$270 million to purchase The Walk, a 10-square-block dining and retail complex located adjacent to the convention center and connecting it with the world-famous Boardwalk.

As a symbol of the modern Atlantic City as a world-class meeting destination, Musich cites the \$2.4 billion, 1,898-room Revel, which opened in May, with 160,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting and function space. "In terms of what Revel delivers as a meeting property," Musich says, "it's the most important development in Atlantic City in years. It takes us to a whole new level."

At the same time, the ACCVA has focused on developing the corporate meeting market as a complement to its association business.

### Catering to the Corporate Market

"One of the things we like to do as a convention bureau is to customize a program by working with a corporate customer to find out what property in Atlantic City will work best for their specific meeting or event," Musich says. "So the first thing we do is help evaluate what a planner needs in terms of a property and then help them find the right match."

In general, however, Atlantic City also pushes a solid value proposition that Musich says is increasingly important in a post-recession corporate market facing tight budgets.

"There are 20,000 hotel rooms in Atlantic City now," he says. "And that means planners are getting good value. We have four- and five-star resorts that can be booked at very good prices, so we are now a very economic destination."

In addition, a number of major Atlantic City hotels, such as the 2,000-room Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, specialize in corporate meeting business. "Borgata is a spectacular property," Musich says. "And within its complex is the boutique Water Club hotel, which is also spectacular."

Sue Gazaleh, vice president at New York City-based financial software provider Numerix, shares Musich's enthusiasm for Borgata. In June of last year, she hosted her first meeting there, a senior management meeting for 25 attendees from all

over the world. In January, Numerix returned for a company-wide meeting for 225 attendees and in April went back for another management meeting.

"We're based in New York City, and we wanted to try something different," Gazaleh says. "And Atlantic City is not very far from New York, so it was easy for our senior management to fly in from anywhere in the world, either to Newark or Philadelphia, and then drive in."

Based on her research, the selection of Borgata was easy, Gazaleh says. "It's the best hotel in Atlantic City, by far, in my opinion," she says. "It's not the cheapest hotel in town. But overall, it has the best product for the meetings we do, especially our senior management meeting. But it's also a very good venue for our company-wide meeting."

And it's a bargain compared to New York City hotels, she says. "It's just a great venue. And the sleeping rooms are great, because they've all been renovated."

Borgata recently spent \$50 million to refresh all 1,566 of its "classic" guest rooms. Upgrades include 46-inch flat-screen televisions equipped with All-In interactive technology.

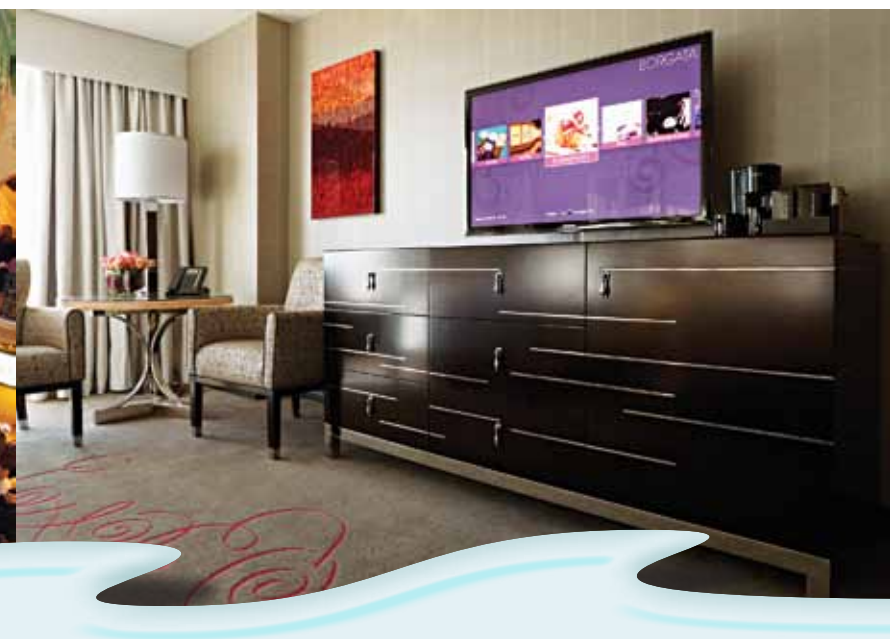
Borgata features 70,000 sf of meeting and event space, as well as a 54,000-sf spa, six restaurants, 11 upscale retail boutiques and four nightlife venues. The Water Club at Borgata hotel features 800 guest rooms, 18,000 sf of meeting space and a 36,000 sf spa.

Gazaleh used the indoor pool at the exclusive Water Club to stage a dinner. "It's a beautiful setting," she says.

She also had high praise for the hotel's service. "The staff at

**"We...wanted to try something different. And Atlantic City is not very far from New York, so it was easy for our senior management to fly in from anywhere in the world, either to Newark or Philadelphia, and then drive in."**

**Sue Gazaleh, Vice President  
Numerix, New York, NY**



(L to r): The first Jimmy Buffett brand Margaritaville casino and entertainment complex on the East Coast is slated to open at Resorts Hotel Casino in May 2013; The Quarter at Tropicana Casino and Resort features world-class restaurants, top-notch entertainment, a

luxurious spa and 30 shops; one of the 1,566 classic newly refreshed guest rooms at Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa.

Photos courtesy of Resorts Casino Hotel; Tropicana Casino and Resort; Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa



Borgata is amazing,” she says. “We were sometimes very demanding. For example, we had a lot of last-minute requests as things came up. And they were right there, on top of everything as it came up. They helped us out with whatever we needed.”

Gazaleh and her management liked the hotel so much, in fact, that Numerix will return in January for another company-wide meeting.

### Three Decades of Satisfaction

Ron Tilley, who retired in June as a director of operations for Brunswick Recreation Centers, a division of the fabled Brunswick Corporation, the bowling and billiards company that operates 100 bowling and recreation centers throughout the U.S. and Canada, used Atlantic City regularly during the more than 30 years he planned meetings and events. He staged a meeting there in February, a manager’s meeting for 45 attendees.

His venue of choice was the 2,079-room Tropicana Casino & Resort, another East Coast outpost of one of the most famous landmark properties in Las Vegas. The property features 122,000 sf of meeting and event space, including 45,000 sf of function space and 20,400 sf of executive meeting space in the hotel’s Havana Tower, located in The Quarter, one of Atlantic City’s largest non-gaming expansions and home to a range of world-class restaurants and entertainment venues, as well as retail shopping. Tropicana also boasts a Bluemercury Apothecary and Spa, an IMAX Theater and the Tropicana Showroom.

For Tilley and his attendees, the recreational opportunities at the Tropicana and in Atlantic City at large were what made the destination so popular for so long.

“The people we had coming in were mainly from the Northeast,” he says. “They might have been from as far away as Boston or Canada. So, we had sometimes used venues other than Atlantic City in the same general area. But attendees often complained there was nothing to do after the meeting day was over. There was nowhere to go. In Atlantic City, there’s a lot to do and a lot of places to go. That’s one of the main reasons why it worked so well for us all those years.”

Yet another Atlantic City property that has a famous sister in Las Vegas is the 1,144-room Caesars Atlantic City, with 24,000 sf of meeting space and upscale restaurants including Morton’s The Steakhouse. The hotel also includes what Musich cites as one of the city’s most spectacular meeting venues One Atlantic, located on the pier and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

Another popular venue, at the 2,600-room Harrah’s Resort Atlantic City, is The Loft, an elevated area with comfortable lounge-style furnishings that overlooks a domed-in tropical environment developed in 2008 as part of an expansion project.

Music also favors the House of Blues, which includes a 10,000-sf Harlem Ballroom and a smaller, more intimate Club

Worship, as well as the live performance venue, which can accommodate 2,500 people.

The 596,000-sf Atlantic City Convention Center features 486,000 sf of exhibit space and 110,000 sf of meeting space divided into 45 meeting rooms. The adjoining convention center hotel, connected by a skywalk, is the 500-room Sheraton Atlantic City.

### Perception Improving

Efforts to improve the perception of Atlantic City are starting to pay off. Jeff Guaracino, chief strategy officer with the Atlantic City Alliance, says the advertising campaign entitled “Do AC” is beginning to change negative perceptions about the seaside resort. “Our key audience...is starting to associate Atlantic City with more amenities,” said Guaracino in a local news report. John Palmieri, executive director of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, cites new private investment as a factor in the improved image. New projects underway include the \$35 million Margaritaville development at Resorts Casino Hotel, a new Bass Pro Shops

outlet, a new parking garage in the mall area and more. Area golf courses recently announced a new joint marketing effort.

Mohegan Gaming Advisors (MGA), a subsidiary of the Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority (MTGA) announced that it will be entering into a management contract and investment agreement with Resorts Casino Hotel – Atlantic City. MTGA operates Mohegan Sun in Connecticut and Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs in Pennsylvania.

“The timing is right,” said MTGA Chief Executive Officer Mitchell Etes. “We have long looked at the Atlantic City market as an excellent opportunity and with a solid commitment by state and local agencies to revitalize the area, the addition of notable partners and new offerings like Jimmy Buffett’s Margaritaville, this is the perfect time to align our brands.”

The Margaritaville complex at Resorts, planned for a 2013 opening, will feature a casino, restaurant, Five O’clock Somewhere Bar, retail stores, LandShark Bar and Grill, a year-round beach bar complex, and their first-ever coffee shop. Additionally, the Resorts Boardwalk facade will be re-themed with the Margaritaville brand.

“It is certainly no surprise to me that a huge flock of Parrotheads reside on the Jersey Shore,” said Jimmy Buffett in a statement. “I am very grateful for the years of support from some of our most die-hard fans in the country. Atlantic City is a historic beach town, and I am very happy to be a part of helping it find its place again as a beach vacation destination. I’ll see you on the Shore.”

So it seems that everyone is getting into the act and betting that this historic seaside resort will find its rightful place under the sun.

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## The Caribbean and The Bahamas

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's four-day, three-night annual conference in February was held at the 3,414-room Atlantis, Paradise Island.

Photo courtesy of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group

### Maximum Bang for the Buck With a Motivational Punch

In a global village that is constantly developing new and exotic destinations, the Caribbean continues to be one of the most popular places on the planet when it comes to incentive travel. And the reasons are fairly simple and rather obvious.

"Earlier this year, we did a participant study, across industry sectors, of people that are eligible for incentive programs," says Heather Heidbrink, director of travel purchasing at Maritz Travel in Fenton, MO, "and we found that the appeal of sun-and-sand destinations and having the sand between your toes remains a very big draw. That's just a very popular aspect of incentive destinations. So the Caribbean really fits that bill. And the great drivers of the Caribbean are that it's not in the U.S., but it's a relatively short trip, and there is good airlift. And you also now have quite a few all-inclusive options, which helps drive the value proposition. And in addition to the beach, you have golf and spa destinations. So it just gives people a chance to get away to an island, which has a huge appeal."

The basic formula for post-recession incentive programs, Heidbrink says, is maximum bang for the buck combined with

a great experience that delivers motivational punch. "And those are the areas where the Caribbean can really deliver," she says. "And the other obvious appeal, for planners, is the range of price points, from very exclusive destinations and resorts down to bargain-priced all-inclusive properties."

And the shopping list includes a number of time-tested brands known for delivering memorable experiences and competitive costs, such as Club Med. The globally renowned company operates five Caribbean resorts, including the upscale Turquoise, featuring 12 miles of secluded beach on the island of Providenciales in the British territory of Turks & Caicos. Club Med also operates properties on the relatively exotic French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, as well as the new-and-hot Dominican Republic and the tried-and-true Bahamas, where the Columbus Isle resort on San Salvador island boasts white sand beaches and pristine turquoise waters.

At the same time that well-known brands such as Club Med continue to draw enthusiastic corporate clients, new properties offer an ever-increasing list of good options.

In the Dominican Republic, a new 1,800-room Hard Rock

Hotel & Casino opened in the celebrated Punta Cana resort area in January 2011. The hotel, a member of Hard Rock's All-Inclusive Collection, features 65,000 sf of meeting space, including three ballrooms, nine restaurants and 15 bars, a European-style adult pool, two tennis courts, miniature golf, a rock-climbing tower and a basketball court.

Hyatt Hotels is extending its reach in the Caribbean with a new 200-room Park Hyatt hotel set to open in 2015 in the 2,500-acre Christophe Harbour planned community on Banana Bay in St. Kitts. Hyatt also operates Hyatt Regency outposts in Aruba, Curaçao and Trinidad. Under current development are a Park Hyatt in Bermuda and an upscale boutique Andaz property in Turks and Caicos, as well as Hyatt Place and El Tropical Casino in Puerto Rico.

New venues in the Caribbean include Jamaica's Montego Bay Convention Centre. Situated on the waterfront, the facility features a combined total of 142,000 sf of meeting and exhibition space.

### Appealing Aruba and Charming Curaçao

Although not as well known as destinations such as the Bahamas or Jamaica, Aruba — a Dutch territory located in the Lesser Antilles in the southern Caribbean, just north of Venezuela — offers unique benefits including modern infrastructure and a broad array of dining and shopping brands familiar to discerning Americans and Europeans. Unlike much of the Caribbean, Aruba has a dry climate and an arid, cactus-strewn landscape. The island is constantly cooled by trade winds, which make it famously pleasant, even on hot days.

Donna Walker, CMP, meeting planner at medical technology provider Hill-Rom in Batesville, IN, hosted an incentive program for 240 attendees in Aruba in 2010.

"We've island-hopped around the Caribbean," Walker says. "We've done St. Thomas, St. John's, St. Maarten, Curaçao. And we ended up on Aruba just because it's a nice island to be on. It's easy to get around. It also has great airlift for our international attendees."

Hill-Rom's hotel of choice was the 411-room Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, located on the island's premier Palm Beach and featuring 11,600 sf of meeting space, as well as a Mandara Spa Aruba and Tierra Del Sol Golf Club.

"One of the main reasons we chose the hotel was that the sleeping room product had been fairly recently renovated," Walker says. "They also have great outdoor event space."

Aruba and the Marriott also delivered in terms of their value proposition. "That is always a big consideration for us," Walker says. "As a planner, I'm always trying to make my des-

tinations work based on the budget I have. But the other goal is also to give attendees the best trip they can possibly have. And we were able to negotiate some really good rates in Aruba and provide a great experience."

The Aruba Marriott Resort also has undergone other upgrades. Along with its renovated rooms, the hotel last year unveiled a new \$1.5 million adults-only swimming pool that features a 10,000-sf terrace for outdoor events. In 2009, a \$50 million makeover included the addition of the Tradewinds Club, an adults-only boutique hotel within the resort complex.

The island's modern infrastructure and range of well-known dining and shopping options, which are constantly being improved upon, were another positive factor for Walker. "When you look at a property," she says, "you try to find things to do that are within walking distance. That's important to us, because we want people to be able to do fun things without having to hop into a car or take a taxi. And there's just so much to do in Aruba, including many shopping and restaurant brands that are very familiar to our attendees. And that's something that is of particular interest to our international attendees. They really liked the shopping there and also the big brand-name restaurants."

All of those factors added up to high marks from Walker's attendees. "Aruba scored off the charts," she says. "People still come up to me and hug me when I see them, and they tell me what a great experience they had. They say that Aruba was the best program they've ever been a part of."

Given that kind of success, Hill-Rom now plans to go back to Aruba in 2014. "It's just a great destination," Walker says. "The people are very, very friendly. You can just see that they know that tourism and incentive programs are their livelihood, so they all work very hard to make things easy for planners. And there are also some very good DMCs on the island."

Located just a few miles



Tented or not, the Great Lawn at Grand Lucayan Beach & Golf Resort, Bahamas, is an ideal oceanfront setting for 2,100 attendees seated for dinner or up to 2,865 guests for a reception.

Photos courtesy of Grand Lucayan Beach & Golf Resort





***“We also want to strike a balance between the fact that this is a working conference and a very important meeting, but we also want people to be able to relax and have some fun. We want them to enjoy the destination and the hotel. And I think we accomplished that with Atlantis.”***

**Kristin Hanousek**, Senior Director, Meetings and Events  
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, Minnetonka, MN

away is Curaçao, the largest and most populous of the Lesser Antilles and sister island to Aruba and Bonaire. The appeal of Curaçao is its charming Dutch culture and architecture, with its waterfront capital looking like a colorful miniature version of Amsterdam.

Although less well-known than even relatively little-known Aruba, Curaçao has been gaining favor in recent years.

“Curaçao has also seen a lot of development in the last few years, and it’s a fairly unique destination,” says Heidbrink. “It offers something different and unique. And that, in and of itself, is appealing to some planners.”

Curaçao also offers a handful of truly world-class hotel properties. Opened in April 2010, the 350-room Hyatt Regency Curaçao features 9,000 sf of indoor meeting and function space and 25,000 sf of outdoor function space. The resort includes an 18-hole championship golf course, four tennis courts, and a 4,500-sf Atabei Spa.

The Marriott Curaçao Beach Resort & Emerald Casino features 247 rooms and 3,000 sf of meeting space. However, the adjacent World Trade Center offers more than 27,000 sf of meeting and event space.

#### Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

Although there is now an almost endless list of destination options in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin islands are particularly popular because they offer an important and distinct advantage: they are on U.S. soil. As a result, no U.S. passport is required and the U.S. dollar is accepted everywhere.

Unlike many Caribbean islands, Puerto Rico offers formidable airlift, with hundreds of daily nonstop flights in and out of Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, which is just four hours from New York City and less than five hours from Chicago.

Puerto Rico also boasts a wide assortment of meeting properties, from world-class waterfront resorts to rustic tropical retreats ideal for small groups that want to be pampered with privacy.

Among the most popular choices are the 672-room Rio Mar Beach Resort, a Wyndham Grand Resort, with 48,000 sf of meeting space, that is conveniently located near the El Yunque Caribbean National Forest.

Also, Gran Meliá Golf Resort, with 486 junior suites nestled among 20 two-story bungalows and 36,918 sf of meeting space, offers a championship golf course, a variety of fine-dining venues, a casino, and a tranquil, full-service spa.

Puerto Rico also offers a number of new and renovated hotels. The 139-room St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort made its debut just over a year ago in Rio Grande. Next year, the 371-room JW Marriott Hotel & Resort at Coco Beach will open its doors with 21,000 sf of meeting space including a 12,000-sf ballroom and two boardrooms. Meanwhile, the 255-room Hilton Ponce Golf & Casino Resort is undergoing a complete makeover.

The U.S. Virgin Islands, a favored destination for incentive programs for decades, consists of three neighboring but distinctly different islands. St. Thomas is best known for its lavish beach resorts, such as the 478-room Frenchman’s Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort, which features 60,000 sf of indoor and outdoor meeting space.

St. Croix is world-renowned for its unparalleled selection of duty-free shopping and hotels such as the 151-unit, all-suite Carambola Beach Resort.

Located just four miles east of St. Thomas and accessible only by ferry, St. John’s is heralded for its unspoiled, pristine natural beauty and upscale atmosphere.

The island’s spectacular beauty has been carefully preserved because in 1956, Laurance Rockefeller donated most of the land he had acquired on the island to the United States National Park Service, under the condition that it must be protected from future development.

As a result, St. John’s has only one resort, the 166-room Caneel Bay, a Rosewood Resort famous for its privacy and sophisticated services to a well-heeled international clientele.

#### The Booming Bahamas

Although a number of Caribbean destinations are seeing growth in a recovering economy, the Islands of the Bahamas remains one of the region’s most popular options.

Kristin Hanousek, senior director, meetings and events, at Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, selected Atlantis, Paradise Island — often hailed as one of the world’s premier beach resorts — for a four-day, three-night annual conference held last February for 1,500 general managers of Carlson Rezidor properties.

The 3,414-room Atlantis, with more than 40 restaurants and lounges, including high-end outposts from celebrity chefs Nobu Matsuhisa, Bobby Flay and Georges Vongerichten, features more than 200,000 sf of indoor meeting space, including 30 breakout rooms and multiple boardrooms, as well as 300,000 sf of dedicated outdoor space. The resort also offers

the Tom Weiskopf-designed Ocean Club Golf Course, recently recognized as the No. 8 Resort Course in North America and the Caribbean by *Golf Digest* magazine. Atlantis also is the home of its popular, state-of-the-art dolphin interaction habitat and education center.

“For that large conference, we use the Caribbean once every four or five years,” Hanousek said. “For our smaller meetings, such as training and leadership meetings, because we have the Radisson Blu in St. Maarten and the Radisson in Aruba, we tend to use those on an annual basis once or twice a year.”

Atlantis, Paradise Island was chosen for this year’s meeting because Carlson Rezidor does not operate a Caribbean property large enough to host its GM conference. “But another reason is that Atlantis is an independent property not owned by any of our competitors,” Hanousek said. “And yet another reason is that it’s also a draw in the hotel industry. And for this meeting, as a way to entice our franchisees to attend, we always want a destination and a hotel that will generate interest and enthusiasm for attendance. Of course, the content is the most important aspect of the meeting, but we also try to make sure the experience of the destination will appeal to the audience we are catering to.”

Ease of travel was another consideration in the selection of the Bahamas and Atlantis. “We need to be able to get them in and out easily,” Hanousek said, “and not have them be gone from their properties for any longer than they need to be just

to be able to participate in this important meeting. We also want to strike a balance between the fact that this is a working conference and a very important meeting, but we also want people to be able to relax and have some fun. We want them to enjoy the destination and the hotel. And I think we accomplished that with Atlantis.”

One obvious challenge for a Caribbean meeting, Hanousek said, is the risk of losing attendees to the beach. “That’s always a risk that you take,” she said. “But I do think because we’re in such a dynamic time right now as a company that our people really want to hear what’s going on and what we’re doing in the market. So in that sense, I do think that having such a great location as Atlantis helped us with the overall success of the conference.” And part of that success, she said, is a glamour component that is in keeping with Carlson Rezidor’s brand image, especially in light of its aggressive current development of its upscale Radisson Blu brand in the U.S.

Adding to the success of this year’s conference was the exemplary service delivered by Atlantis. “They were all hands-on because they know this meeting represents an audience of their peers who are experiencing the property and sleeping in their beds and experiencing their service,” Hanousek said. “So that was reflected in the level of attention the staff gave us. And they really delivered.”

So did the destination, in terms of relaxation and fun. “We usually hold a trade show on the second night of this confer-



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*“We found that the appeal of sun-and-sand destinations and having the sand between your toes remains a very big draw. ...The Caribbean really fits that bill. ...And in addition to the beach, you have golf and spa destinations. So it just gives people a chance to get away to an island, which has a huge appeal.”*

**Heather Heidbrink**, Director of Travel Purchasing  
Maritz Travel Company, Fenton, MO



ence,” Hanousek said. “But this year, we figured that we were down in the islands, so we decided to reformat our trade show and do it throughout the day during food-and-beverage breaks. And so we did a really fun beach party on that second night. We wanted people to come out in shorts and flip-flops, because we tend to be fairly formal during our meeting sessions.”

Hanousek and her management also hosted an upscale Junkanoo party. “It was our welcome party event and we worked with a very good DMC, Global Event Partners (GEP),” Hanousek said. “We didn’t want to do the corny, old-fashioned event that everyone else does, so we really challenged GEP to do something really fun. And we got great reviews both nights.”

The company also held a golf tournament during a developer conference hosted just before the GM meeting. “We used the Atlantis Ocean Club course and worked with Signature Golf Events, who are the best in the business as far as I’m concerned. It was just a great event,” Hanousek said. “The purpose was to foster networking between company executives and top franchise owners and developers. And a golf tournament just provides an opportunity for conversation with our leadership about growing the brand and talking about what’s coming up.”

Despite the perennial praise heaped on Atlantis, the fabled resort will soon have stiff new completion from the \$3.5 billion Baha Mar Resort project set to open its first phase on Nassau’s Cable Beach in the Bahamas in December 2014. The sprawling complex will include a total of 2,250 hotel rooms in four individual properties — a 1,000-room Baha Mar Casino & Hotel, which will open first and include a 30,000-sf spa, followed in 2015 by the 200-room Rosewood at Baha Mar Hotel, a 700-room Grand Hyatt at Baha Mar convention hotel and a 300-room Mondrian at Baha Mar boutique hotel from Ian Schrager. The resort also will include a world-class, 18-hole championship golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus, upscale shopping, a convention center and what developers say will be the largest casino in the Caribbean.

Located on the closest Caribbean destination to the U.S., the Grand Lucayan Beach & Golf Resort, Bahamas, is a 375-acre oceanfront resort on Grand Bahama Island with 90,000 sf of meeting space. An easy-access island paradise, the resort is just a 20-minute flight from South Florida. Translucent crystalline blue waters and pure white sand beaches create irresistible allure and out-of-the-box opportunities for attendees — including shark feeding dives and dolphin encounters — as well as more traditional options such as jet-skiing, parasailing and kite-boarding. The Grand Lucayan is home to the

25,000-sf Senses Spa & Fitness Center and two 18-hole championship golf courses — The Reef Course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. and The Lucayan Country Club, designed by Dick Wilson. In addition to a Las Vegas-style casino, there are eight restaurants and bars. The flexible conference center is equipped with cutting-edge audio-visual equipment, and the stately Manor House can accommodate up to 287 guests.

Outdoor events shine at the Grand Lucayan among the 50,000 sf of space including pool decks, the beach, the Great Lawn (for up to 2,865 guests) and Chop Beach, which offers seating for 1,700 guests.

### The Cruise Option

Although the Caribbean offers an ever-growing list of destinations and hotel properties, an option that draws new planner enthusiasts every year is cruising.

“Cruises are always popular,” says Maritz’s Heidbrink. “And in the Caribbean, the ability to do a cruise-based program is always an attractive option for some companies. For example, rather than staying on just one island, you can island-hop. But you also don’t have to unpack and repack multiple times. You only have to unpack once. And that’s very appealing for some groups.”

In recent years, the cruise option has grown even more attractive for many planners with the almost constant addition of new ships and itineraries from the major cruise lines. “A lot of groups want to find the newest and hottest thing to do,” Heidbrink says, “and with cruises now you have that appeal, as well, because there are so many new choices.”

Norwegian Cruise Line offers regular excursions to the Bahamas and Bermuda, as well as multi-destination itineraries such as the Eastern Caribbean (U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and Nassau, Bahamas), the Southern Caribbean (St. Thomas, USVI, Barbados and St. Lucia) and the Western Caribbean (Bahamas, Jamaica and Grand Cayman).

Royal Caribbean also offers a range of Caribbean itineraries, with ports of call including Jamaica, Haiti, Grand Cayman, the U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and Cozumel, Mexico.

Whether on the high seas or on land, the Caribbean will always be a go-to choice for planners. “Sun-and-fun destinations like the Caribbean remain a strong option, for both incentive programs and also for meetings that have an incentive or recognition component,” Heidbrink says. “The Caribbean just continues to be a good option for a lot of groups. There is something for every taste and budget.” **C&IT**

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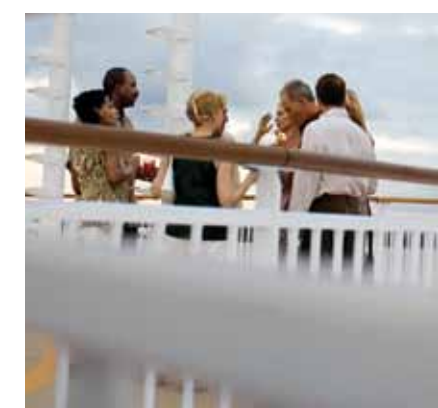
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## The Southwest The Venues and the Views

By Derek Reveron

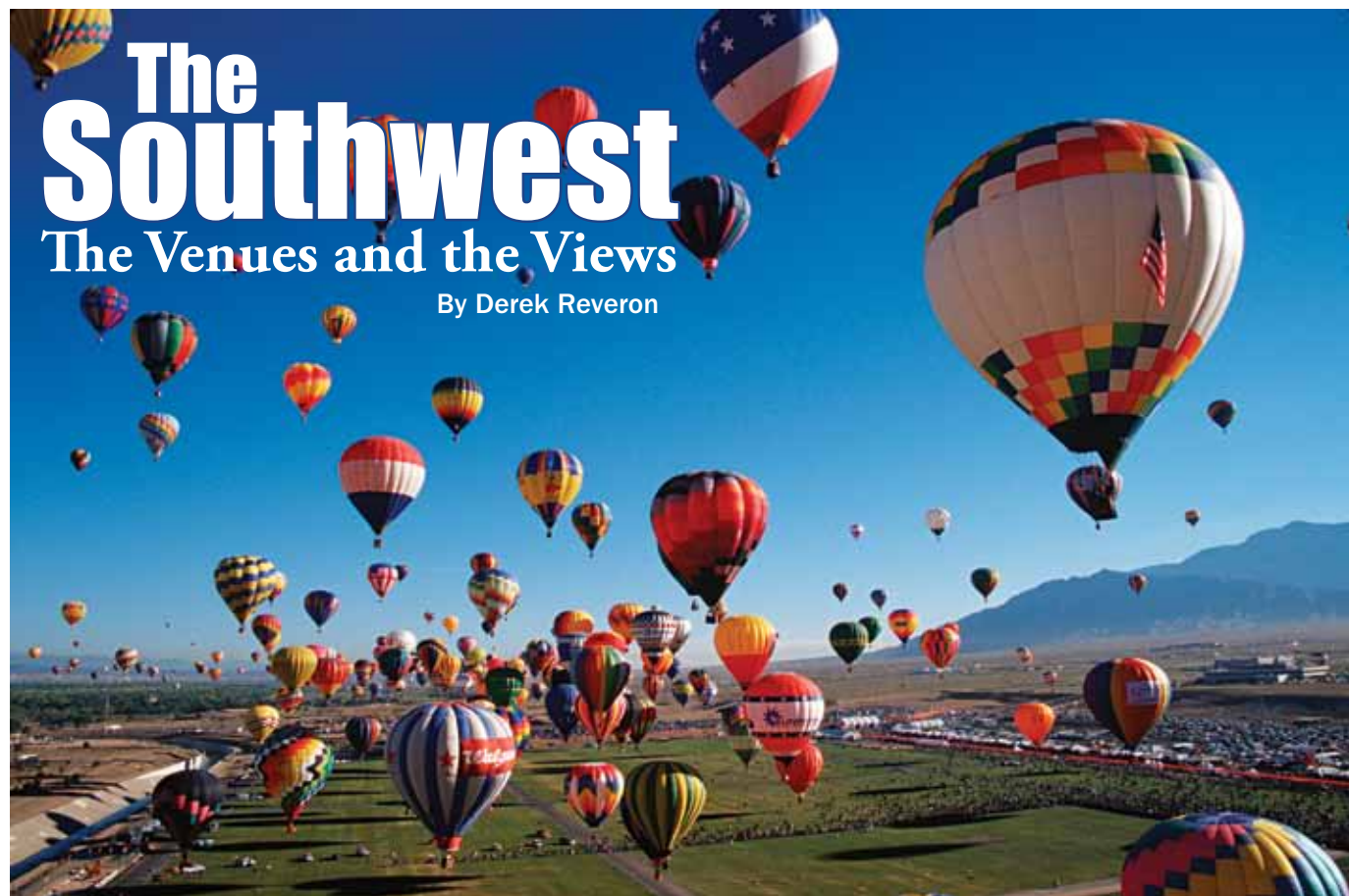


Photo by RonBehrmann/courtesy of Albuquerque CVB

Think “Southwest” and stunning landscapes of red rock canyons and desert flora and fauna quickly come to mind. But the region’s allure goes beyond a seemingly endless range of outdoor adventures: There are a variety of urban destinations with distinctive blends of cultural influences reflected in cuisine, arts, entertainment and architecture — as well as expanding meetings infrastructures, which are helping some Southwestern cities set records for the number of visitors, meetings and conventions. Here is a sampling of some of the Southwest’s most popular destinations.

### Salt Lake City

Founded as a Mormon settlement, Salt Lake City is one of the Southwest’s best-kept meeting secrets. The city offers more than 7,000 hotel rooms and 100 restaurants, many located near the Salt Palace Convention Center (SPCC). The SPCC increased its size by 40 percent with a major expansion in 2006 and now offers 515,000 sf of exhibit space and 160,000 sf of meeting space, including a 45,000-sf ballroom.

The city’s main attraction is Temple Square, located on 10 acres downtown. Temple Square is home to about 20 places of interest related to Mormon history, including the Salt Lake Temple and Museum of Church History and Art. Popular

unique venues include the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, which offers more than 17,000 ancient and modern works of art as well as several rooms that accommodate up to 300 people.

Located between two mountain ranges, Salt Lake City offers big-city meeting comfort and easy access to spectacular outdoor activities, especially skiing. There are 14 ski resorts located within an hour’s drive of Salt Lake City.

Skiing was the highlight of an annual conference held in Salt Lake City in March by computer software giant Adobe Systems Incorporated, based in San Jose, CA. The four-day conference focused on digital marketing and attracted 4,600 of the company’s customers, marketing analysts, employees and executives. Attendees stayed at eight hotels, including the conference’s two headquarter properties, the Hilton Salt Lake City Center and the Salt Lake Marriott Downtown at City Creek.

Julie Giles, Adobe’s senior manager of corporate events, says that several attendees took a ski trip to Canyons Resort in Park City, about 40 miles from Salt Lake City. “It was a day-long event. We arranged for ski rental with an independent rental company set up just for our group. We arranged for passes and buses to pick everybody up and go to the mountain. We also had a ski party at the Marriott the night before. We had food, a DJ and people signing up for prizes and drawings. There

was an area set for people to get fitted for skiing. We held an after-party at The Depot (a live music venue) with karaoke and a band,” says Giles.

The conference also involved numerous meetings, training workshops, breakout sessions, dinners, receptions and other events that took place in the Salt Palace Convention Center (SPCC) and hotels. “The center held things geared toward the group at large,” says Giles. “We built out one of the halls at the Salt Palace into an area for entertainment, a concert and other activities with food. We used the hotels for dinners and other events with some of our VIP events. We also used several local restaurants for customer dinners,” he says.

Salt Lake City was able to meet Adobe’s need for cutting-edge technology in its meetings. Adobe, the SPCC and local vendors worked together seamlessly, says Giles. “We require that our vendors use the best equipment. In our breakouts we need flawless execution. We don’t want to have anything go wrong, and we make sure our vendors understand that. The big concern is things like the network going down or not having enough bandwidth. We worked really closely with the convention center and with our network management company to ensure that there were no issues. As far as AV, we worked with a company based in Utah to have cutting-edge equipment. Everybody worked together to make it flawless,” adds Giles.

The Adobe meeting has met in Salt Lake City for nine consecutive years and is scheduled to convene in the city again in 2013. Giles cites several reasons why the group keeps coming back to Salt Lake City: “It’s an easy city to work with. It’s non-union, so we can work with vendors to do what we need to do without juggling multiple unions. There are some great local

*“The diverse culture is truly a distinguishing point. We have the Western lore, the American-Indian folklore, the Southwestern flair and a Mexican twist with its own cultural taste.”*

**Katherine Christensen, CMP**  
Owner, KCA Meeting and Event Planning, Chandler, AZ

vendors who we have good relationships with and are familiar with our needs. And it’s affordable. We are able to negotiate with vendors and hotels, which are less expensive than in many large cities,” says Giles.

She cites other reasons: The Salt Lake City International Airport has a Delta Airlines hub and has good connections with other major cities. Most major hotels are located within a 15-minute drive of the airports. Salt Lake City is a clean, safe and compact city that is designed in a grid format and is easy to navigate on foot. “Salt Lake City is a gem. Most people who



The Salt Lake City, Utah, skyline showing the Mormon Temple in downtown backed by the snowcapped Wasatch Mountains.

haven’t been here are amazed by the beauty, the accessibility and how much there is to do. Some people think it’s difficult to get alcohol and entertainment and things like that. But we were able to facilitate as much entertainment as any conference I’ve ever been to,” says Giles.

### Phoenix-Scottsdale

Large and small groups have long been attracted to the Greater Phoenix area’s classic Southwestern scenery and plentiful supply of luxury resorts and hotels. In addition, the meetings infrastructure is expanding. Phoenix is building the PHX Sky Train, a \$1.1 billion people mover that, starting in 2013, will transport passengers between the city’s light-rail system and the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

The airport is located less than five miles from the Phoenix Convention Center (PCC), which has undergone a \$600 million expansion and offers about 900,000 sf of flexible meeting and exhibition space. The PCC also provides 99 meeting rooms and an Executive Conference Center certified by the International Association of Conference Centers. A 2,400-seat performance hall adjoins the PCC.

Phoenix offers more than 72,000 guest rooms and is increasing the number. Last year, The Westin Phoenix Downtown opened one block from the PCC. The 242-room hotel takes up nine floors of the Freeport-McMoRan Center, a mixed-use property that includes offices and retail shops. Meeting and event space total 15,244 sf, including a 3,000-sf ballroom.

In other hotel news: The JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa has finished a \$16 million renovation of its guest rooms, suites and corridors to reflect the colors and character of Arizona’s landscapes. The resort features 950 rooms and 24,000 sf of meeting space.

The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess is expanding its total meeting space to 150,000 sf with the addition of a new \$20 million conference center that is scheduled for completion later this year.

The 563-room Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort has completed a renovation of its lobby and Palacio event venue, which now offers 6,362 sf of event space. The resort provides a total of 48,000 sf of function space, including 46 conference rooms and three ballrooms.





Needless to say, one of Phoenix's biggest attractions is golf. The city is home to more than 185 golf courses, including an abundance of championship courses that host PGA and LPGA events as well as public and municipal courses. Top courses include the Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort, the Arizona Biltmore Country Club and Phoenix Country Club. Nearby Scottsdale also features some of the state's most popular courses — 200 in all. A relatively new Scottsdale resort with golf and much more is Talking Stick Resort, a AAA Four Diamond gem offering 100,000 sf of indoor and outdoor function space. Function space includes the 25,000-sf Salt River Grand Ballroom and 21 other meeting rooms. Dinner galas with Southwestern sunsets as backdrop are possible at the 15th-floor Orange Sky restaurant and lounge with three outdoor patios. There also is live entertainment in the resort's 650-seat showroom and 250,000 sf of gaming in the casino. The Troon-managed Talking Stick Golf Club is just minutes away.

But there is much more to the Phoenix-Scottsdale area than golf, says Catherine Christensen, CMP, owner of KCA, a meeting planning firm in Chandler, AZ: "This is an incredible culinary destination. There are wonderful restaurants. We have many outdoor activities, and that's one of the great draws because you can enjoy them year-round. There is hot-air ballooning, mountain biking, canyoneering, rappelling, jeep-riding tours, horseback riding. The diverse culture is truly a distin-



Photo courtesy of AlliedPRA Arizona Destination Management.

Attendees delight in a tomcar (former military vehicle) adventure in Arizona's McDowell Mountains. The rousing outing was arranged courtesy of AlliedPRA Arizona Destination Management.

guishing point. We have the Western lore, the American-Indian folklore, the Southwestern flair and a Mexican twist with its own cultural taste," says Christensen.

## Tucson

Located about 115 miles from Phoenix, Tucson is an affordable city offering more than 18,000 hotel rooms and ample meeting space and attractions. The Tucson Convention Center houses an 89,760-sf exhibition hall, a 20,164-sf Grand Ballroom and eight meeting rooms.



Photo courtesy of Bellagio

Christensen planned a three-day meeting in Tucson in January for 100 sales executives of a health care company. The meeting was held at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, which offers 398 guest rooms, 37,000 sf of indoor meeting space, 40,000 sf of outdoor event space and views of the Santa Catalina Mountains. There are also two PGA golf courses, a spa, tennis center and two pools. The incentive involved training sessions and creating a plan of action for the coming year.

The agenda included a dine-around of three restaurants. "Everybody's a little more budget-conscious so we found a spot that was convenient for dropping everybody off to let them walk to all the restaurants, saving on transportation," says Christensen.

Attendees also participated in a rather unique teambuilding session. "It took place on-property utilizing the beautiful desert area surrounding the hotel. We sent them out in groups to collect flora and fauna and choose one item to pitch to the entire group as a 'product.' They created fact sheets to describe the functions of the product and market it to their colleagues. Some of them used research on the Web and some made things up. Some of the products were functional and others were hysterical. It wasn't necessarily about the practicality of the exercise, but more about enhancing their sales techniques and teamwork," Christensen says.

In addition, each group was given a different corporate value and used it to help create a company jingle. The groups used disparate objects such as cans, sticks and Tupperware containers to pound out rhythms as they created lyrics. Each group performed its jingle on stage. Afterwards, a professional songwriter used ideas from the various songs to create a single company jingle. "The object was to have them contribute to making one voice for the company, which has been purchased recently by a private equity firm along with other similar companies. There were several different corporate cultures and systems, and the object was to unify people into a single voice," says Christensen.

## Las Vegas

In neighboring Nevada, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) reports that the city continues to

set records for visitation. Last year, the number of meetings and conventions in Las Vegas increased 5.7 percent while convention attendance soared 8.8 percent. Las Vegas continues to be North America's top trade-show destination. In 2011, Las Vegas hosted 55 of North America's 250 largest trade shows, more than the No. 2 and No. 3 destinations combined. Las Vegas has ranked No. 1 for 18 consecutive years. The growth is expected to help Las Vegas set a new record this year, surpassing 40 million visitors.

Meanwhile, the LVCVA continues to improve service for

The north terrace of Hyde Bellagio, a new special events venue overlooking the Fountains of Bellagio and Las Vegas Strip.

meetings and conventions. The Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC), which is operated by the LVCVA, has installed a red carpet in the center's meeting rooms, lobbies, grand concourse and hallways. The LVCC expanded free Wi-Fi service in public areas and installed a digital signage network that makes it even easier for attendees to navigate the center. Also, there are plans to review the LVCC's nearly \$900 million expansion plan that was put on the back burner during the recession, according to Jeremy Handel, LVCVA senior manager, public affairs.

New venues with views in Las Vegas include the Bacchanal Buffet at Caesars Palace, where nosherers can partake of a 500-dish spread in the 25,000 sf of space, which accommodates 600 guests and overlooks the Garden of the Gods pool oasis. Hyde Bellagio, which debuted last December, is a 12,000-sf indoor/outdoor event space with floor-to-ceiling windows and an expansive terrace showcasing the musical Fountains of Bellagio spectacular. M Resort Spa Casino recently added LUX, a 16th floor fine-dining restaurant with sweeping views of The Strip and the mountains, and 7,200 sf for special events. Newly renovated suites with views were recently unveiled at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino — such as the newly redesigned, two-bedroom Skyline Marquee Suite. The suite offers panoramic views of The Strip and plenty of room for VIP enter-

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taining in the 1,500-sf space, which features an oversized bar, grand foyer and billiard table.

## Denver

Colorado's sophisticated Mile High City offers everything planners need: meeting space, a variety of world-class luxury hotels, fine dining and arts. Denver is conveniently situated in the center of the country and only 15 miles from the base of the Rocky Mountains, an outdoor enthusiast's playground.

Fueled by Denver's popularity, Colorado attracted a record 57.9 million overnight visitors in 2011, the most in the state, according to a Longwoods International report commissioned by Visit Denver and the Colorado Tourism Office. Denver received a record 13.2 million overnight visitors in 2011, a four percent rise over 2010's 12.7 million visitors. The number of business travelers increased 17 percent.

Denver's largest meeting and convention venue, the Colorado Convention Center (CCC), offers nearly 600,000 sf of contiguous exhibit space and 63 meeting rooms totaling 100,000 sf. There are also two ballrooms of 50,000 sf and 35,000 sf. More than 7,000 hotel rooms and 300 restaurants are located a short distance from the CCC. In addition, the Denver Merchandise Mart Complex offers nine event spaces, the largest of which is 120,000 sf.

Denver also boasts a plenty of spacious hotels, including the AAA Four Diamond Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center. The property has 1,100 rooms and more than 60,600 sf of flexible function space. Other properties include the AAA Five Diamond Ritz-Carlton Denver (202 rooms, 13,000 sf of meeting space) and the Embassy Suites Denver-Downtown Convention Center (403 rooms, 25,000 sf of meeting space).

A plethora of outdoor activities is available in Denver, with more than 14,000 acres of mountain parks including Rocky Mountain National Park and Red Rocks Park. Located just 10 minutes from downtown Denver, Mile High Marketplace is a

popular shopping and entertainment destination that includes a huge flea market, a farmers market, restaurants and shops. World-class skiing is available at renowned ski resorts such as Breckenridge, Steamboat Springs, Vail, Keystone and Snowmass.

## Colorado Springs

Excellent skiing is also available in Colorado Springs, located 69 miles from Denver. Andy McNeill, CEO of American Meetings Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, FL, held a four-day sales incentive in Colorado Springs in April. The group of 60 people, including spouses, stayed at The Broadmoor, a AAA Five Diamond resort with 744 accommodations and 185,000 sf of meeting space. "With this group, we switch back and forth be-



*"This group...wanted something in a historical, traditional area. Santa Fe is one of those special places that has an allure when you arrive."*

**Andy McNeill, CEO**  
American Meetings Inc., Fort Lauderdale, FL

tween a beach and golf destination. This was a mountain year, and they also wanted to do something that was golf-related. The Broadmoor was recommended by one of the senior executives who had been there. It has great golf courses, so we recommended it. Although incentives are on the uptick, there are still concerns about prices, so we try to offer attractive locations and unique venues that provide value. April was a shoulder month so we got some really good rates. Next year we may take them to Mexico or the Caribbean," says McNeill.

Attendees had plenty of free time after attending morning leadership training sessions with guest speakers. "We tried not to plan too many activities to give people time to relax by the pool, play tennis and get massages in the spa or whatever they decided to do. A lot of people golfed every day. We also did white-water rafting, private tennis lessons and teambuilding using a ropes course managed by a local DMC. The course was in the woods, and everyone had to work with each other to complete it. The course had three levels of difficulty so that people of different skills could participate and have a good time. We had a lot of positive feedback on it," says McNeill.

## Santa Fe

Located 7,000 feet above sea level, Santa Fe, NM, has long been popular among savvy vacationers who have catapulted the city to the top of several lists of America's most popular cities for travelers. But Santa Fe is becoming better known among meeting planners as the Santa Fe CVB boosts efforts to attract small- and mid-size groups that account for most of the destination's meetings. The ongoing "Experience Santa Fe



Photo courtesy Santa Fe CVB

On Us" promotion offers several benefits to groups that book 500 rooms per night for at least three nights. Complimentary benefits include meeting space at the Santa Fe Convention Center; transportation between the center and hotels; a welcome reception with food, beer, wine and Native American entertainment; and up to \$1,000 in refunds for site visit expenses.

More than 1,500 of the city's 6,000 hotel rooms are located within walking distance of the 72,000-sf Santa Fe Convention Center, which has 40,000 sf of total interior event space, including four meeting rooms and an 18,000-sf ballroom. Santa Fe also offers a number of special venues that reflect the city's status as a top national arts center with 240 art galleries. The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture features some 75,000 exhibits and reception space for up to 800 people. The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum accommodates 150 visitors for receptions. Many museums and galleries are located in The Plaza, a bustling downtown district.

Earlier this year, McNeill brought an incentive group to La Fonda on the Plaza hotel for four days. The group included about 30 sales executives for a consumer products company. It was the group's first trip to New Mexico. "This group has done Mexico and the Caribbean to death, and we wanted to try something different for them," says McNeill. "They wanted something in a historical, traditional area. Santa Fe is one of those special places that has an allure when you arrive. It has beautiful weather and gorgeous sunsets."

The group enjoyed much of what Santa Fe has to offer. Activities included cooking classes for Southwestern cuisine, hot-air ballooning and mountain biking, says McNeill. Attendees strolled through the Plaza area, enjoying the galleries and

The range of rugged outdoor activities in the Southwest is endless, including white-water rafting, hot-air ballooning, mountain biking, horseback riding and more.

artists who sold their works. They were on their own for dinner, enjoying New Mexico's excellent selection of restaurants. They also enjoyed spa treatments at Ten Thousand Waves, a Japanese-themed spa. McNeill received nothing but good feedback on Santa Fe and the hotel, he says.

## Albuquerque

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Photo courtesy of Visit Denver

The Colorado Convention Center's Blue Bear art installation is titled "I See What You Mean," symbolizing a natural curiosity about the exciting events and activities going on inside.





Rendering of the Albuquerque Convention Center's West Complex, which is undergoing a \$20 million facelift, including a new exterior facade, a remodeling of the ballroom, a new entertainment deck in the ballroom, massive windows with panoramic views, and more.

in the nation. *Hotwire.com's* top 10 Travel Value Index for travelers ranks Albuquerque No. 9 among America's most affordable cities for travelers. The evaluation included costs for hotels, airfare, car rentals and entertainment.

Albuquerque has no shortage of hotel rooms and meeting space. The Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) will launch a \$20 million renovation in mid-2013. The project includes a new exterior façade, remodeled ballroom and a new entertainment deck in the ballroom. Renovations also include windows with panoramic views, a lower-level food court/café and a remodeled west building lower-level atrium that includes a fireplace. The renovations are scheduled for completion by the end of 2014. Currently, the ACC offers 27 meeting rooms, 167,000 sf of exhibit space, a 31,000-sf ballroom and 2,500-seat auditorium.

Albuquerque's attractions include one of the most unique events in the U.S. — the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. Each October, more than 500 hot-air balloons take to the sky simultaneously. Albuquerque is also home to the Anderson-Abruzzo International Balloon Museum, the world's largest hot-air ballooning museum, which offers a variety of meeting and event spaces. Popular activities include shopping at the 50-year-old Santa Fe Farmers Market, one of the largest in the U.S. The market features 9,000 sf of space for meetings and receptions. Old Town, another popular shopping district, includes more than 150 shops, galleries, restaurants and cafés



Oklahoma City's Bricktown Entertainment District.

Photo courtesy of Oklahoma City CVB

## Oklahoma City

Planners looking to flavor meetings with a mix of authentic Western heritage, top meeting facilities and urban diversity should consider Oklahoma City. The destination offers more than 13,000 hotel rooms, many of them located near the Cox Convention Center (CCC), which offers 21 meeting rooms, a

25,000-sf ballroom and 100,000 sf of exhibit space. The CCC is a 15-minute drive from the Will Rogers World Airport and is within walking distance of the Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel, the Sheraton Oklahoma City and the Courtyard Oklahoma City Downtown.

Oklahoma City plans to build a new downtown convention center that will nearly double the CCC's meeting and exhibit space. The center will be constructed next to the 15,341-seat Chesapeake Energy Arena and the current CCC. Plans call for 200,000 sf of exhibit space, 50,000 sf of meeting space and a 30,000-sf ballroom. Plans also include a new headquarters hotel. The design phase of the center will start in spring 2013 with construction scheduled to start in 2016.

When it comes to unique venues, Oklahoma City offers plenty that reflect cowboy culture. Located in the city's Adventure District, the National Cowboy Western Heritage Museum offers three event spaces, the largest of which is 16,500 sf. Nearby Stockyards City is home to the world's largest live cattle auction. Dozens of dining, shopping and entertainment venues are available in the Bricktown Entertainment District, located within walking distance of the cowboy museum. Among arts-related venues, the Civic Center Music Hall has four theaters available for groups: Thelma Gaylord Performing Arts Theatre, Rose State College Performing Arts Theatre, CitySpace Theatre and Freede Little Theatre.

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The Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, Berkeley, CA, has promoted **Adrian Larick** to regional director of sales and marketing for Pyramid Hotel Group, assisting the sales and marketing departments of The Beverly Heritage Hotel and Marriott Pleasanton. She most recently served as director of sales and marketing for The Claremont Hotel Club & Spa.

The Westin La Cantera Hill Country Resort, San Antonio, TX, has named **Joseph Thompson** as director of sales and marketing. With 20 years of sales and marketing experience, he most recently served as director of sales and marketing at Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Naples, FL.

The Omni Nashville Hotel, Nashville, TN, has named **Silvia San Martin** as

director of sales and Cindy Berdan as national sales manager for the Southeast region. San Martin formerly served as area director for Omni Houston Hotel, and Berdan was sales director at Century Park Associates in Hendersonville, TN.

The Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel, Lake Buena Vista, FL, has named **David Wahba** as director of sales. He was the complex director of sales and marketing for The Westin Beach Resort & Spa, Fort Lauderdale, FL, and the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Beach Hotel.

Stowe Mountain Lodge, Stowe, VT, has named **Michael Broderick** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales and marketing for Sunriver Resort, Bend, OR.

The Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park, Chicago, IL, has promoted **Tina Wiese** to director of group sales. She formerly served as the hotel's director of convention services.

**Rob Stirling** was named director of sales and marketing for The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, Rancho Santa Fe, CA. He was most recently director of sales and marketing for The Grand Del Mar, San Diego, CA.

**Trina Fox-Konz** was named sales manager for Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center, Branson, MO. She will be responsible for the St. Louis area, as well as the Illinois and Indiana markets. She previously served as assistant director of sales for Embassy Suites Outdoor World, Grapevine, TX.

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