

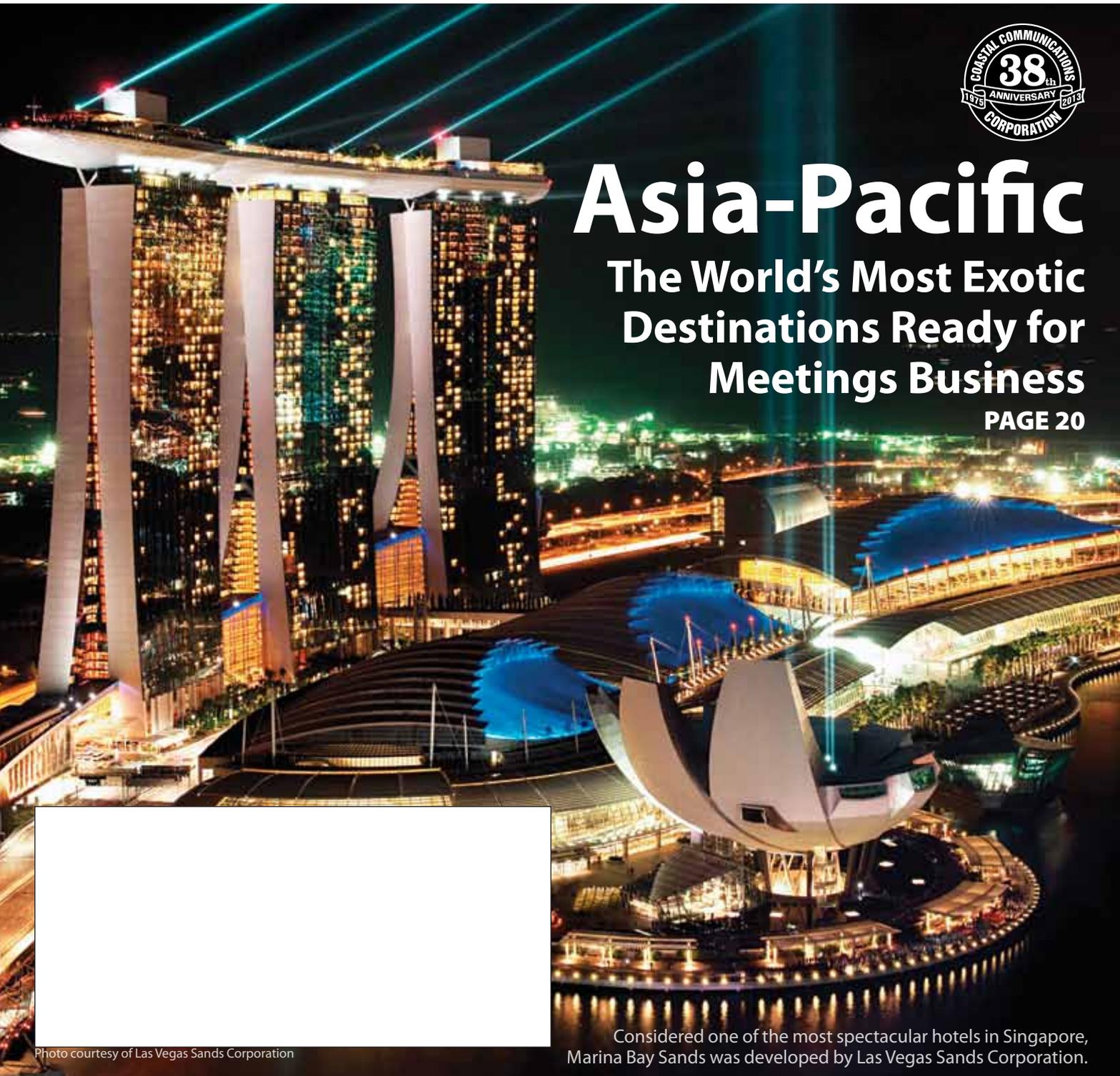
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CONVENTIONS & FACILITIES

APRIL/MAY
2013

THE SOURCE FOR ASSOCIATION MEETING PLANNING MANAGEMENT



Asia-Pacific

The World's Most Exotic Destinations Ready for Meetings Business

PAGE 20

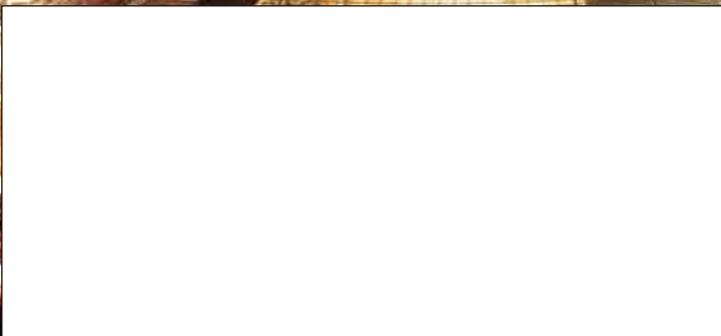


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Considered one of the most spectacular hotels in Singapore, Marina Bay Sands was developed by Las Vegas Sands Corporation.

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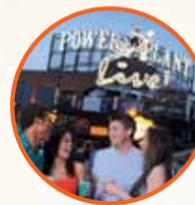
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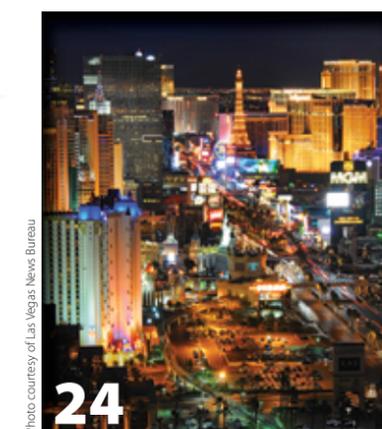


Photo courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau

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Asia-Pacific's on the Move



According to Chinese astrology, 2013 is the Year of the Snake. A tremendously diverse species, snakes are uniquely beautiful and hypnotizing. They're also highly successful taking on prey larger than themselves. It might be a bit of a stretch, but you could think of them as a metaphor for Asia-Pacific's expanding meeting and convention industry.

The exotic Asia-Pacific region is on the hunt to overtake a plodding U.S. economy, with economic growth in China predicted to be nearly 9 percent in 2014, according to the Global Business Travel Association. GBTA's V.P. Operations Welf J. Ebeling noted in a recent report that "China is projected to become the top business travel market in the world as early as 2015." And Martin Sirk, CEO of the International Congress and Convention Association, is expecting record attendance for ICCA's 2013 Congress, due in large part to the fact that it will be held for the first time in Shanghai, China, this November. "China really matters," he says, "as a source of delegates whose presence is desired by every organizer and venue, as a country with fantastic destinations and facilities for international meetings, as a future research and development powerhouse, as a present and future competitor."

Singapore, which experienced a 46 percent growth in the number of conventions and trade shows it hosted in 2011, is busy upgrading infrastructure to meet demand. For example, the Suntec International Convention and Exhibition Centre is undergoing a \$147 million redesign. The flamboyant architecture of Singapore's Marina Bay Sands Hotel, pictured on our cover, embodies the energy and excitement that awaits convention-goers to Singapore — and The Sands Expo and Convention Center, which can accommodate 45,000, was recognized as "Best Business Event Venue Experience" by the Singapore Tourism Board last fall.

ASAE's Key Global Associations Committee is helping U.S.-based associations learn how to capitalize on the many new business opportunities available internationally. The committee, which convened for the first time last year, met recently in Hong Kong for a learning and networking event. "With Hong Kong's robust infrastructure and well-developed system of business support and services, U.S. associations and their members will find Hong Kong a key destination for future Asia-Pacific outreach efforts," said Abe Eshkenazi, CSCCP, FACHE, CPA, CAE, chief executive officer, APICS The Association for Operations Management. Planners and other senior executives involved in global outreach will find a wealth of information at ASAE's Association International Conference May 14-16 in Washington, DC, in conjunction with Springtime Expo.

For now, turn to page 20 for more on some of Asia-Pacific's top destinations for meetings in the Year of the Snake and beyond.

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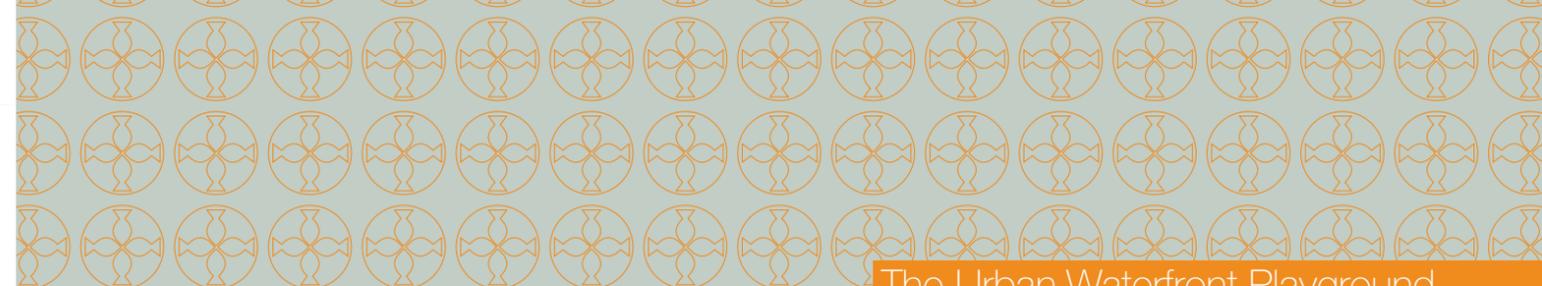
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VisitPittsburgh Welcomes Meeting Planners



PITTSBURGH, PA — VisitPittsburgh recently welcomed meeting planners to the city for a familiarization (FAM) tour centered on Pittsburgh's exciting sports scene. "What better way to tell a part of the Pittsburgh story than with sports," said Craig Davis, VisitPittsburgh president and CEO. "Everybody is a sports fan, and we have world-class venues to show off, from Heinz Field and CONSOL Energy Center to PNC Park, which is consistently rated as one of the best ballparks in MLB." VisitPittsburgh hosted the Sports FAM tour in conjunction with the local hospitality community. Participants, pictured on Heinz Field, home of the Pittsburgh Steelers, included (l to r): **First Row:** Robert Peschel, guest; Susan Peschel, NACIS; Cathy Sherrill, Hotel Hunters; Rusty Sherrill, guest; Tarah Smith, The Meeting Connection; Angie Ahrens, Collinson Media & Events; Vicki Kelley, VisitPittsburgh; Robert Leff, VisitPittsburgh; Sara Holzer, VisitPittsburgh; David Atkins, VisitPittsburgh. **Second Row:** Tamara Whiting, VisitPittsburgh; Andy Ryzner, guest; Melisa Ryzner, North American Die Casting Association; Courtney Blackford, guest; Kelly Moran, AHI Meeting Services Inc.; Beth Longnaker, HPN; Lisa Love, Simpleview; Asaka Narumi, VisitPittsburgh. **Third Row:** Karl Piertzak, VisitPittsburgh; Jennifer Vacek, VisitPittsburgh; Ernst Ducasse, Collinson Media & Events; Angela Corvello, VisitPittsburgh; Derek Dawson, VisitPittsburgh; Mark Smith, Collinson Media & Events; Tim Thurein, Simpleview; Henry Greenberg, Simpleview; John Duncan, Simpleview; Derek Smith, guest. www.visitpittsburgh.com

Las Vegas Named No. 1 Trade Show Destination For 19th Year



Ralenkotter

LAS VEGAS, NV — For the 19th consecutive year, Las Vegas was designated as the No. 1 trade show destination in the country, according to *Trade Show News Network's* (TSNN) "2012 TSNN Top 250 Trade Shows in the United States" list. Las Vegas hosted 53 of the largest shows, more than the next two competitors combined. "Las Vegas is honored to be recognized as the No. 1 trade show destination for the 19th year in a row, and we share this achievement with our colleagues in the meetings and convention industry of Las Vegas who make this ranking possible," said Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "The success of Las Vegas is a testament to our ability to provide exceptional customer service and more value for the experience than any other destination." The two closest competitors hosted 47 shows combined, with Orlando hosting 27 and Chicago hosting 20. For the complete TSNN list, go to www.tsnn.com/toplists-us. www.lvcva.com

MGM Resorts Outlines Plans for New Las Vegas District Surrounding Arena

LAS VEGAS, NV — MGM Resorts International released details about a new entertainment district in Las Vegas that will surround the world-class 20,000-seat arena under development in partnership with AEG. Plans include new experiences at New York-New York and Monte Carlo resorts and a public park leading to the new arena. Construction will begin on the outdoor experiences at New York-New York and Monte Carlo in the coming weeks, with anticipated completion in early 2014. Jim Murren, chairman and CEO of MGM Resorts International, said, "All great cities offer vibrant pedestrian experiences, and Las Vegas is certainly no exception, as The Strip is one of the world's greatest boulevards. Our vision is to extend the excitement we traditionally create within our world-class resorts outside onto The Strip and ultimately in an entertainment district leading to our new arena." The front facades of New York-New York and Monte Carlo will be transformed into an outdoor plaza experience featuring a series of casual bars, eateries and retail destinations. Between the two properties and leading back to the new arena will be a park environment featuring dining pavilions and performance spaces complemented by areas for quiet relaxation. www.mgmresorts.com

Susan Cain to Kick Off 2013 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition in Atlanta

WASHINGTON, DC — More than 5,500 nonprofit and association professionals are expected to attend the 2013 ASAE



Cain

Annual Meeting & Exposition in Atlanta, August 3-6. On August 4, Susan Cain, author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, will advise how to

develop leaders, manage teams, make smart hires and stimulate innovation, as well as how to structure an organization so the best ideas dominate. At the closing general session, bestselling author Dan Heath, senior fellow at Duke University's CASE Center, will discuss how decisions are disrupted by an array of biases and irrationalities and will introduce a four-step process designed to counteract these biases, share stories, and give attendees fresh strategies and practical tools that will enable them to make better choices. Three game changer sessions will be facilitated by Kat Cole, president of Cinnabon; Bob Kupbens, vice president of marketing and digital commerce for Delta, and John Spence, business thought leader and author of *Awesomely Simple*. "We wanted to focus on enhancing our members' leadership skills as well as helping them find new creative and innovative ways to move their association to the next level," said ASAE President & CEO John H. Graham IV, CAE. www.asaeannualmeeting.org, www.asaecenter.org

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Sustainable Meetings Standards Completed

The American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM) has published standard E2772 on sustainable accommodations, giving professionals in the meetings industry access to a complete suite of standards for producing sustainable meetings and events. Publication of this ninth and final APEX/ASTM standard completes a period of development that began in 2008. The standards, produced as a partnership between the Convention Industry Council's Accepted Practices Exchange (APEX) and ASTM, are comprised of nine individual "sectors," which cover all facets of event planning and management: Accommodations; Audio-Visual; Communication & Marketing Materials; Destinations; Exhibits; Food & Beverage; Meeting Venue; Onsite Office; and Transportation. The standards are available for purchase as a specially priced bundle and as individual documents through ASTM International. For more information, visit www.conventionindustry.org/StandardsPractices/APEXASTM.



Image courtesy of Timothy Hursley ©
Singapore's Marina Bay Sands.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. Expands ECO360° Program. Las Vegas Sands Corp. announced new offerings for its Sands ECO360° Meetings program, including: "Green Meeting Concierges" to guide the entire sustainable meeting-planning process; "Sands ECO360° Event Impact Statement" — a report to track a meeting's sustainability performance; and the option to add community engagement events to the meeting experience. Concierges use the new Sands ECO360° Event Planning Tool to customize programs so they meet individual sustainability goals. The "Sands ECO360° Event Impact Statement" details performance against a variety of sustainability metrics, including a carbon footprint calculation, utility consumption, recycling and waste diversion, sustainable food and community benefit. Meeting customers will receive consistent services worldwide as the Sands ECO360° Meetings program has been implemented in Las Vegas Sands' global properties including The Venetian and The Palazzo, Las Vegas; Sands Bethlehem, PA; Marina Bay Sands, Singapore's Downtown Marina Bay District; and a portfolio of properties on Macao's Cotai Strip. www.lasvegassands.com

Las Vegas CVA Hits Record Recycle Rate. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) set a record in 2012 by recycling 68 percent or 3,288 tons of materials at the Las Vegas Convention Center and Cashman Center. The amount of items recycled is roughly the equivalent of diverting 14.5 Statues of Liberty or 651 schools buses from landfills. The LVCVA partners with Evergreen Recycling, a subsidiary of Republic Services, to sort and recycle materials during and after trade shows in the building. www.lvcva.com, www.lasvegas.com

Disneyland Helps to Clean the World. Disneyland Resort was honored by the Clean the World Foundation Inc. for donating nearly 20,000 pounds of partially used soap and bottled bath amenities in 2012. The nonprofit organization sanitizes, repackages and distributes the amenities to people in need around the world, helping to prevent hygiene-related illnesses. Combined, the Disneyland Hotel, Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel and Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa donated more than any other property in California. www.disneymeetings.com

Latest Tech Showcased at Walt Disney World Resort

ORLANDO, FL — CEOs and volunteer leaders from America's most influential professional, trade and non-profit associations convened at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida for the 13th annual digitalNow conference held April 4-6. This summit, co-produced by Fusion Productions and Disney Institute, showcased the latest technology trends and their applications for associations. Pictured (l to r) are Peter O'Neil, FSAE, CAE, executive director, American Industrial Hygiene Association; Arlene Pietranton, Ph.D., CAE, CEO, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; Don Dea, co-founder, Fusion Productions; Anne Hamilton, vice president resort sales and services, Disney Destinations; Hugh Lee, president, Fusion Productions; and Matt Loeb, CAE, staff executive, IEEE, executive director and CEO, American Counseling Association. www.disneymeetings.com, www.digitalnowconference.com



New Orleans Welcomes More than 9 Million Visitors

NEW ORLEANS, LA — New Orleans' tourism industry welcomed 9.01 million visitors in 2012 — numbers not seen by the city in nearly 10 years. Total visitor numbers increased by 3 percent, or 255,027 from the number of visitors in 2011 (8.75 million.) The 9.01 million visitors spent \$6 billion, a nine percent or \$512 million increase over 2011 and the highest spending in the city's history, according to the 2012 New Orleans Area Visitor Profile study. Nearly 14 percent of visitors surveyed were in New Orleans for association, convention, trade show or corporate meetings. www.neworleanscvb.com



Experience Arlington Names New President & CEO

ARLINGTON, TX — After a nationwide search, Experience Arlington announced that Ronnie Price was chosen to lead the city's destination marketing organization, effective April 22, 2013. Price is replacing Jay Burress, who had been chief since 2008. Burress resigned in December to head the Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau in California. "The board of directors and search committee reviewed numerous talented candidates during this process. Ronnie's diversified sales and marketing background, and his CVB experience with another top Texas destination made him a great choice," said Jim Brothers, chairman of the Experience Arlington board of directors. Price comes to Arlington with more than 16 years of hospitality leadership, sales and marketing experience. Most recently, he worked for the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau where he served for five years as assistant executive director of sales and marketing. During his time there, he was responsible for a \$20 million annual budget and 44,000 hotel rooms. www.experiencearlington.org



Price

Houston Convention Center Hotel Set for 2016 Opening

HOUSTON, TX — Houston's second convention center hotel, the 1,000-room Houston Marriott Marquis next to the George R. Brown Convention Center, is on target to break ground in 2014 and open in spring 2016. Houston Mayor Annise Parker and Ric Campo, chairman of Houston First Corporation, said the agreement between Houston First and RIDA Development Corporation, the hotel developer, has been executed. In addition, financing for the project has been completed. "With this agreement, RIDA can now begin work in earnest," Mayor Parker said. "It's an exciting project that will help increase our convention business and generate more activity in downtown Houston." The Marriott Marquis designation is reserved for large convention hotels of iconic design in America's premier gateway cities. Houston will be the sixth city to fly the Marquis flag after New York, Washington, DC, San Francisco, San Diego and Atlanta. Houston First Corporation operates the George R. Brown Convention Center, Hilton Americas-Houston hotel, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Wortham Theater Center and Jones Hall. www.houstonfirst.com



Rendering of Houston Marriott Marquis.



Photos credits: 1. Visit Orlando, 2. Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau, 3. Julianne Schaefer, 4. ASAE, 5. WTM, 6. City of Phoenix-Aviation Department, 7. Chuck Fazio

1 During a visit of 22 wounded warriors from the U.K. and U.S. who enjoyed golf and more sponsored by On Course Foundation, Visit Orlando helped coordinate activities and hosted a dinner jointly with Rosen Hotels at Rosen Shingle Creek. **2** Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders helped Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings and the Dallas CVB unveil the city's new brand, logo and tagline "Big Things Happen Here" at a community event, which Access Destination Services helped coordinate. **3** Rockettes flank (l to r) Alan Steel, president and CEO of Jacob K. Javits Center, George Fertitta, NYC & Company CEO, and Hank Ratner, president and CEO of Madison Square Garden, at the NYC & Company Foundation Leadership Awards Dinner at The Plaza Hotel, March 18. The Javits Center and Madison Square Garden Company were honored. **4** ASAE Foundation President Susan Robertson (l) and executives greet guests at the ASAE Foundation Pour, a new event held at the Great Ideas Conference. **5** ICCA in April hosted "The growth of the Latin American Congress & Convention Sector in the World Scenario" during the first World Travel Market Latin America in Brazil. **6** On April 8, Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton joined dignitaries and cut the ribbon for the opening of the PHX Sky Train at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. **7** Linda Erickson, conference co-chair and director of sales, Events DC, passes the gavel to incoming 2013 CSPI President Eric Blanc, director of sales, marketing and convention services at Tampa Convention Center.

Technology

Wi-Fi at Your Meeting – Is Free Really Free?

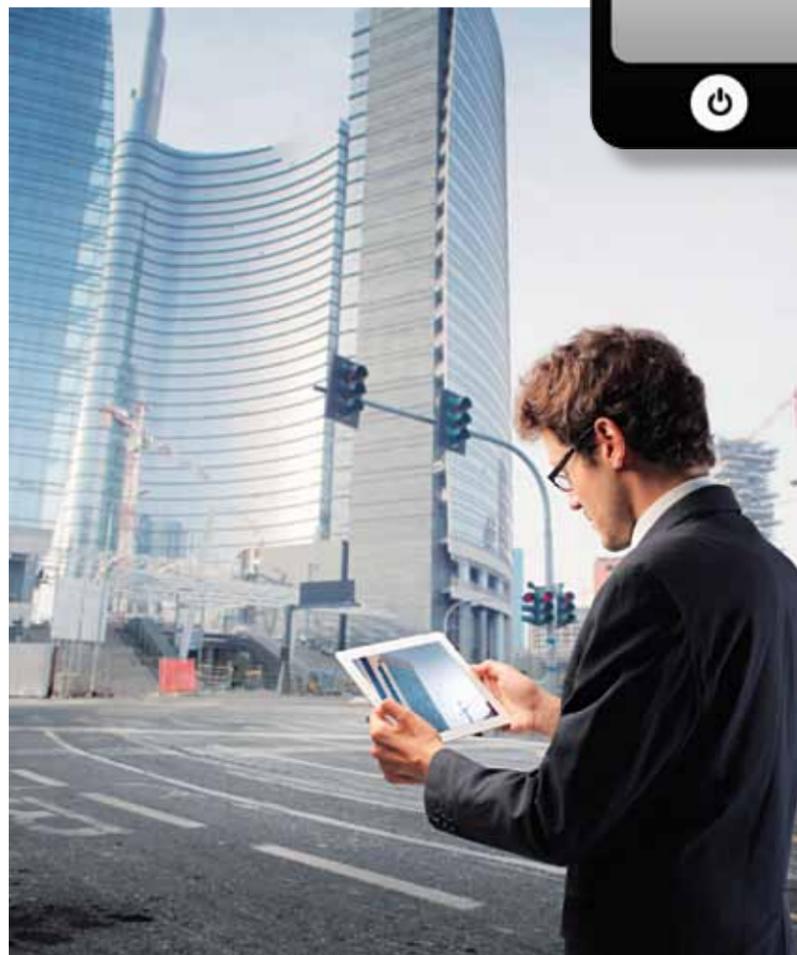
With last month's smartphone set to be obsolete almost as soon as you've mastered its apps, it's difficult to keep up with the ever-changing world of onsite technology. However, what remains constant is that event attendees expect Wi-Fi to power their technology gadgets. The hotel and convention center for your next meeting have agreed to include free Wi-Fi in your contract! That's good, right? Well...maybe. And maybe not. Here are some recommendations from Anita O'Boyle, director of event services at SmithBucklin Corporation, on how to ensure you get the Wi-Fi coverage you really need — and your attendees expect — at your next meeting.

YOU CAN'T SEE WI-FI!

Let's face it, you can't see Wi-Fi! When you go on a site visit you can view the layout of the meeting rooms, check out a few hotel guest rooms and visit the ballrooms and large spaces where your trade show will be held. So, when your hotel or convention center representative notices you looking at folks beavering away at their laptops in the lobby and agrees to include Wi-Fi "at no extra charge," you're very pleased. But what does "free Wi-Fi" really mean? Make certain that your technology needs and expectations match what your venue is offering the same way you would double check a room setup. Your due diligence before the event will ensure your conference runs smoothly and you don't face any last-minute issues and up-charges onsite.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BEHIND THAT POTTED PLANT?

Anticipate how and how often attendees will use Wi-Fi. Will speakers need Wi-Fi to access the Internet during their presentations? Will you have 3,000 people logging in at the



same time every day to check their email? Will 500 people at a general session be logging in for two hours to follow a presentation on the speaker's website or live stream? Are you using a mobile app? Does your "free Wi-Fi" extend throughout the facility (sleeping rooms, session rooms, trade show floor, etc.)? Do your attendees expect to stay connected 24/7? Understanding Wi-Fi coverage needs will eliminate attendees crowding around that potted plant in the corner of the lobby where there appears to be a bit of a signal — if they lean to the left.



MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE!

O'Boyle advises meeting planners to fully vet tech requirements so there are no surprises onsite. Here are six tips to use when planning your Wi-Fi needs:

1. Find the right person to speak with and be persistent if you aren't getting the answers you need. The "technology director" can have a range of titles depending on the venue you're working with, so make certain you're speaking with someone who really understands your needs as well as the building's technology capabilities. (Your sales contact will admit this is not his or her area of expertise!)

2. Request your usage reports from prior meetings and bring them with you when negotiating with a new venue. These reports will capture your bandwidth, usage, time of usage, number of users, amount of time spent online, etc., and allow the new venue to prepare a bid tailored to your needs.

3. Your peers are a great resource so post your questions via a social media network such as LinkedIn to see what experiences others have had with the hotel or convention center you are working with. Ask your contact at the hotel, too, if you can speak with other event organizers that managed a highly technical meeting so you can benefit from their experience at the venue. You may well get some pointers that make your negotiations more successful and lead to a better experience for your attendees.

4. Limit free Wi-Fi in the exhibit hall to attendees. Exhibitor usage can suck up your entire bandwidth, so make sure that exhibitors purchase a hard line for use in their booths. Always include an order form for a

hard line in the exhibitor kit so it will be clear that the event Wi-Fi is not for exhibitor demonstration use.

5. Budget and negotiate for Wi-Fi like you would for food or any other conference expense. Just as there is no "free lunch" there really isn't any "free Wi-Fi," except in a very limited sense. Remember that potted plant? Wi-Fi throughout your meeting space is a negotiable item with the venue, so put it on your list!

6. Consider pricing strategies to cover Wi-Fi. If you find your Wi-Fi needs are beyond your budget, and don't feel you can scale back in this area, consider bundling at least part of the cost into the overall conference fee or the

In today's high-tech world where everyone has a laptop or a tablet or a smartphone (or all three!), 'dead zones' are deadly and can result in huge attendee dissatisfaction with your meeting.

room rate. Add \$5 or \$10 to the daily room rate or \$50 to the conference fee (if required by your bylaws, be sure to disclose that the rate includes a modest fee for unlimited Wi-Fi access throughout the meeting).

PUT YOUR ATTENDEES 'IN THE ZONE'

In today's high-tech world where everyone has a laptop or a tablet or a smartphone (or all three!), "dead zones" are deadly and can result in huge attendee dissatisfaction with your meeting. Nothing is more frustrating for attendees than finding out they can't check their email between sessions or use your mobile app in the exhibit hall. Many of yesterday's technology nice-to-haves have become today's must-haves. Make sure you're providing your attendees with the experience they desire, so they can tweet about your great conference in real time!

Linda E. Schwartz has developed and implemented marketing and communications programs for associations and their members for more than 30 years.

Linda E. Schwartz



The Best Course

By Karen Brost

For Great Networking

Jackie King wears two different hats in the association world, so she knows what it takes to pull off a successful annual meeting. She's executive vice president of King Management Group, an association management company based in Bel Air, MD, and she also serves as executive director for the American Veterinary Distributors Association (AVDA).

She describes some of the elements she looks for when searching for the right destination and property for an annual conference. "Because golf is an important and large component of the AVDA Annual Conference, I typically look for destinations/resorts that have a great golf course on-property or nearby. We also traditionally book properties with at least a AAA Four Diamond rating and like to book properties with additional amenities besides golf, like a spa, or opportunities for activities onsite like horseback riding or fishing. We also like to be at properties that are no longer than one hour from a major airport."



Jackie King
Executive Director
American Veterinary Distributors
Association
Bel Air, MD

"Because golf is an important and large component of the AVDA Annual Conference, I typically look for destinations/resorts that have a great golf course on-property or nearby."

For AVDA's 2012 Annual Conference, the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa in New Mexico's Santa Ana Pueblo fit the bill. Located between Albuquerque and Santa Fe at the base of the Sandia Mountains, the resort features 350 pueblo-style guest rooms, the nationally ranked Twin Warriors Golf Club, the Tamaya Mist Spa and horseback riding onsite.

King explained the key role golf can play at an annual conference. "AVDA holds a scramble golf tournament in conjunction with our Annual Conference because it provides a great networking opportunity for our members and allows them to get to know each other on a more personal and in-depth basis," she notes. "Many of our members develop long-lasting business relationships as a result of the time they spent together on the golf course during our annual tournament. Our tournament usually has over 85 golfers. For a meeting of 225 people, this is a large section of our membership that participates in the golf tournament, so we want the golf course to be top-notch."

The Hyatt Regency Tamaya turned out to be a good fit. "Our members enjoyed the golf, spa and horseback riding amenities available at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya," King describes. "They also liked the unique setting of the hotel being on a Native American pueblo, and the fact that the property was in New Mexico was a huge draw. Many of our members had never been there before and wanted the opportunity to explore the area surrounding the Hyatt, particularly Santa Fe. Our members also liked the cultural center and unique cultural activities that were offered at the hotel for our guests."

The Tamaya Cultural Museum and Learning Center located at the resort gives guests an opportunity to learn more about the history of the Santa Ana Pueblo and the Tamayame culture, which dates back more than 1,000 years. The resort also offers cultural



Photos courtesy of Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa

Golf or Spa? The Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa in New Mexico's Santa Ana Pueblo offered the best of both worlds for AVDA's 2012 Annual Conference. Attendees enjoyed golf at the Twin Warriors Golf Club and spa services at the Tamaya Mist Spa.



experiences that include traditional pueblo bread-baking demonstrations and Native American dancing and flute playing.

King was also pleased with the resort's event space. "The resort's meeting facilities offered lots of flexible space and some unique venues outside for our events," she notes. "We used the House of the Hummingbird for our welcome reception and had tribal dancers perform as entertainment."

House of the Hummingbird is a 12,000-sf outdoor ballroom that offers spectacular views of the Sandia Mountains and a sacred butte called Tuyuna Mesa. The venue's design reflects the style of indigenous pueblo architecture.

"We also liked the indoor space prefunction areas that have a spectacular view of the Sandia Mountains," King continues. "Our board was also impressed with the tribal boardroom where we were allowed to hold our board meeting. I have never seen another boardroom like it."

Reserved exclusively for board meetings and set apart from the resort's other meeting space, the Council Boardroom is an intimate meeting room decorated with hand-painted pueblo maps and pottery. It also features a private fireplace and lounge area.

For its 2013 annual meeting, AVDA has chosen another golf and spa resort the 454-room Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Bonita Springs, FL. The 26-acre resort includes the Stillwater Spa and the championship Raptor Bay Golf Club.

FINDING A HOME AT THE HOMESTEAD

The theme for the annual convention of the Associated General Contractors of Virginia (AGCV) could easily be "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." According to the organization's CEO, Steve Vermillion, the group has met at The Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA, "as far back as anyone can remember," and he's been

with the organization for more than 20 years. In fact, the historic, 483-room resort has been open longer than anyone can remember. It dates back to 1766.

Although The Homestead has two championship golf courses, golf is not a factor in AGCV's annual meeting because it's held in January. The group does, however, host a sporting clay tournament, and they also usually have a bowling tournament. The resort has an eight-lane bowling center onsite.

Vermillion also noted that in addition to about 420 adults, more than 50 children attend the event. "It's a good place for it. It works out well," he notes. "Basically, they get turned loose in the daytime for whatever the parents want to do. We negotiate an activity fee with the hotel, where for a flat fee they can go up and ski, they can snowboard, they can ice skate. They can do all those things, and one fee covers it all. It keeps them pretty busy."

"On Friday and Saturday evenings we have an optional program for the young kids, probably two groups, 3 to 6 and 7 to about 12," he adds. He noted that the resort also has enough activities to keep the older kids occupied. "It's a big enough and safe enough facility that they just go on their own. We've worked hard over the years to make (our event) very family-friendly."

In terms of meeting space, two of the areas AGCV uses are the resort's Commonwealth Room, which has a sunken area with railings around it as well as the 13,485-sf Grand Ballroom.

Even though The Homestead offers an extensive list of activities and amenities, Vermillion says that it has something even better. "The best asset they have is their people. They've got people that have been there for 40 or 50 years. They know the group."

They know a lot of the attendees by name. It's just a good, warm, comfortable place to go."

He and his attendees also enjoy the resort's ambience. "When we're there in the wintertime, we frequently have it around 5 or 10 degrees outside and maybe a wind blowing and maybe it's snowing. People go out and do their skiing or sporting clays or whatever, and then they come down to the Grand Hall. They've got huge, huge fireplaces cranking away. People gather around and have a drink or some afternoon tea. It's one of the great things about The Homestead."

The continuity of holding the annual convention in the same location has worked well for AGCV. Vermillion noted that some kids who have grown up attending the event now work for their parents' firms. "They still know each other from the relationships they established 10 years ago when they were 9 years old. It works having it in the same place. It's a good, safe, friendly place."

This spring, The Homestead will debut the Canyon Ranch SpaClub. In addition to offering a full menu of the renowned spa's signature treatments, the new spa will offer Aquavana, described as a "European-inspired aquathermal oasis." It also will be the first Canyon Ranch SpaClub to introduce family spa services.

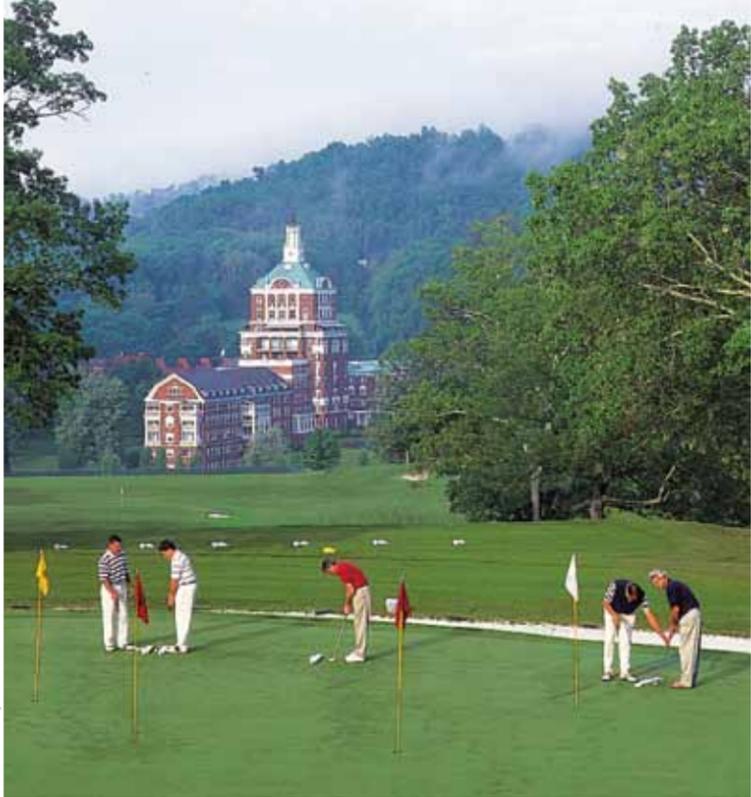
The new spa should prove popular with AGCV's attendees. "They've always been very heavy users of the spa," Vermillion explains. "They usually are booked solid during our event."

HEALTH AND WEALTH IN SOCIAL

The American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD) has chosen the legendary La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad, CA, as the site of its annual conference in July. Set on 400 rolling acres in Southern California's coastal foothills, La Costa offers 611 guest rooms including luxury villas and suites, as well as 36 holes of golf and 17 tennis courts, seven of which are lit for night play.

The resort is also home to the 28,000-sf Spa at La Costa, the first resort spa established in the U.S. The Spanish Colonial-style spa offers 42 treatment rooms and has been recognized by *Spa Magazine* as the "#1 Wellness Spa in the Nation."

Matilda Dhima, DMD, director of public relations for AAWD and Fellow at the Mayo Clinic Department of Dental Specialties, describes her organization's rationale for choosing a spa resort for its annual event. "It allows for attendees and members to interact socially in environments that focus on relaxation, mind, body and spirit health," she notes. "This meeting weekend for our organization has the focus of WEALTH — (Wisdom, Excellence, Achievement, Leadership,



Golf is king at The Homestead, the historic landmark resort and spa in Hot Springs, VA, where the legendary Sam Snead launched his golf career.

Teambuilding and Health) for women dentists, their staff members and their families.

"What a great way to offer the above to our members of AAWD," she continues. "One of the main focuses of the association is to empower our members and strengthen and create new friendships between busy women dentists."

CHOOSING A GOLF RESORT

Fred Stringfellow, CAE, president of the association management firm Stringfellow Management Group Inc., located in Bel Air, MD, explained why golf matters. "I think most of our association meetings do have a golf tournament or golf outing component. It's always been a great networking opportunity for associations where there is a supplier/customer relationship, which is certainly typical. It's a way to bring both sides together to pair them up. You also have the flexibility of controlling how your golfers are paired, so we really find that works hand in hand with the networking spirit of most association meetings."

He describes some of the factors he looks for when evaluating resort properties. "What we find is that it's always nice when they have golf on-property because that's less time you have to spend transporting your guests, and you avoid the cost of transportation to go to a

course that's not on-property, so it definitely works well to have that at the resort."

Stringfellow explains that for those who do not play golf, a trip to the spa is "the next natural thing to do. We also have tennis tournaments at our meetings, as well. We usually try not to run tennis and golf at the same time so they're not competing."

He also says that location is also important, and that he looks for properties that are "as close as you can be to an airport and still call yourself a resort. That's always a plus. Distance to the airport is probably the biggest deterrent when it comes to deciding whether to have it at a resort versus a downtown property. So for those (golf resorts) that are within 30 minutes of a relatively major airport, that's a huge benefit.

"One of the nice things about having a meeting at a resort versus a downtown property is that you've got kind of a captive audience," he continues. "They're more likely to eat at the hotel restaurants and hang out in the lounge areas and things like that at a resort than they are at a city property. So it really kind of reinforces that networking theme again. Many of our clients have two major meetings a year, so for almost all of them, one of the two, at least, would be at a resort property."

Sometimes, the very industry the group belongs to will determine the types of recreational activities they want to pursue. Stringfellow gave an example. "One of the associations we manage is the American Sports Builders Association (ASBA), so the members of that association build tennis courts, and track and field and sports facilities. We just got back from a resort meeting with them in Puerto Rico. The tennis portion of that was very important for obvious reasons as well as golf and other things."

ASBA's winter meeting was held at the Rio Mar Beach Resort, A Wyndham Grand Resort in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. The 600-room resort offers the Tom and George Fazio-designed Ocean Course, the Greg Norman-designed River Course and the Balinese-inspired Mandara Spa. It is also home to the Peter Burwash Tennis Center, which includes 11 Har-Tru courts and two hard courts.

GOLF AND SPA RESORT NEWS

The Westin La Cantera Hill Country Resort in San Antonio, TX, recently completed its new Westin Workout Fitness Studio. One of the studio's innovative features is its blue-light technology that uses energizing fluorescent lighting to positively impact guests' workouts. The resort also has introduced a new grab-and-go market called Henrietta's, and is adding a new lobby-level meeting space named the San Xavier room.

The Serenity by the Sea spa at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, Destin, FL, was recently recognized as one of the "Top 270 Spas in North America, Caribbean, Mexico and at Sea" in the *Condé Nast Traveler* 2013 Readers' Poll. The 11,000-sf facility features 16 treatment rooms.

"I think most of our association meetings do have a golf tournament or golf outing component. It's always been a great networking opportunity for associations where there is a supplier/customer relationship."



Fred C. Stringfellow, CAE
President
Stringfellow Management Group Inc.
Bel Air, MD

This spring, The Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa, Hollywood, FL is scheduled to open its Heavenly Spa by Westin. Measuring 14,000 sf, the new spa will include 10 treatment rooms and will offer a Halotherapy salt steam room, a Vichy shower, a relaxation area featuring a "Wall-of-Rain" and a spa café.

The 1,500-room Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando offers a wide range of golf-related services to help groups plan successful golf tournaments and outings. The resort's onsite 18-hole course at Shingle Creek Golf Club offers five sets of tees to allow players to adapt their play to the appropriate level of difficulty, and a customized website can be created to help organize and keep track of the tournament. The course also has a state-of-the-art GPS system that makes it easy for organizations to recognize hole sponsors and distribute tournament notes.

UPPING THE GAME

Just like golfers themselves, many golf resorts are looking for ways to improve their game. For example, now that the Doral Golf Resort & Spa in Miami is part of the Trump Hotel Collection, the company has announced plans to invest more than \$200 million to improve the resort, including renovations to the resort's legendary Blue Monster course. As Donald Trump, the Trump Organization's chairman and president says, "When completed, Doral will be the finest resort and golf club in the country." For "the Donald" to have such an ambitious plan sounds like par for the course. AC&F

In addition to onsite championship golf, Rosen Shingle Creek offers a multitude of relaxing spa services at The Spa at Shingle Creek, Orlando, FL.

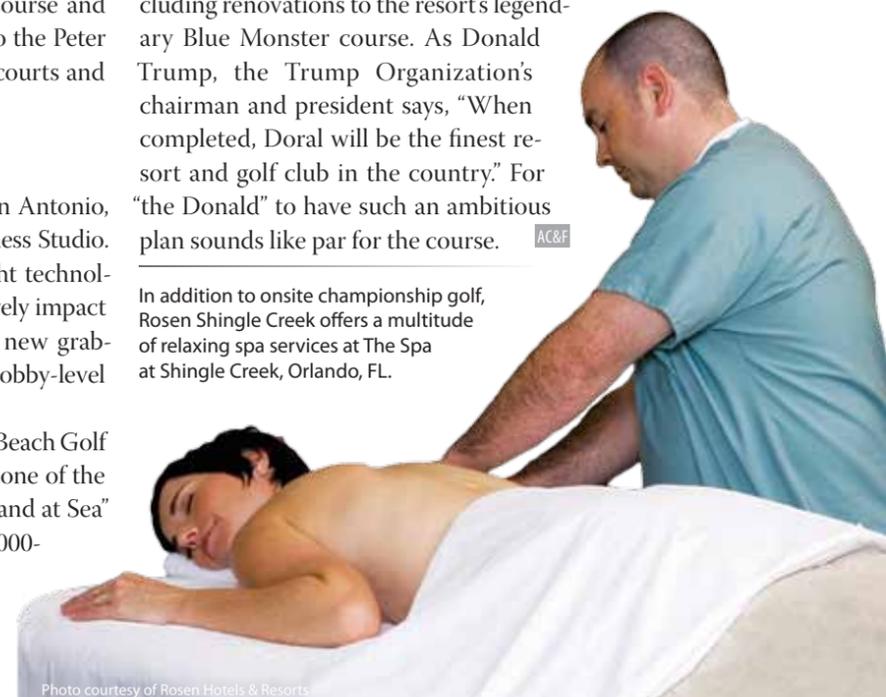


Photo courtesy of Rosen Hotels & Resorts

The Right Stuff

Attracting the Right People Spells Success

By Patrick Simms

From the viewpoint of organizers and exhibitors, one of a trade show's greatest signs of success is "the *right* people walking down the aisles," as Dave Weil, vice president, event services for SmithBucklin, puts it. Those individuals would be key buyers and industry leaders, and their attendance implies many things: an effective marketing strategy for the event, a solid reputation based on show history, highly relevant educational content as well as the presence of top exhibitors. "At the end of the day, the participation of those leaders helps encourage others to attend the show as well," Weil says.

One long-running strategy to secure those desirable attendees is the hosted-buyer model developed in 1986 by Ray Bloom, chairman of the United Kingdom-based IMEX Group. Since then, Bloom has continued to optimize the approach, bringing thousands of hosted buyers to each IMEX Frankfurt show over the years, and recreating that drawing power with IMEX America, which debuted in 2011 and brought in about 2,000 hosted buyers.



Dave Weil
Vice President, Event Services
SmithBucklin
Chicago, IL

One of a trade show's greatest signs of success is "the right people walking down the aisles. At the end of the day, the participation of those leaders helps encourage others to attend the show as well."

Specialty Food Association attendees are "a passionate community that cares about its impact on the environment."



Photo courtesy of the Specialty Food Association

According to Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX Group, "In our second year, IMEX America 2012, we actually grew by about 30 percent in terms of both exhibitor numbers and floor space. So it was important for us to increase the number of hosted buyers coming, and we managed to increase that figure to 2,400." That's in addition to about 900 nonhosted buyers, meaning that IMEX is a "very business-driven show because we're highly qualifying the buyers, and then they're obligated to make business appointments when they're there."

IMEX's hosted-buyer program itself is very buyer-driven, which is one of its most distinctive features. While buyers must commit to making a certain number of appointments, they choose which exhibitors to see based on the show website's directory, and communicate with them via an integrated messaging service. "Buyers have a lot of control," Bauer says. "They do their research, and through our system they can send RFPs and messages to the exhibitors that they have appointments with prior to coming onsite, which makes the meeting onsite far more time-effective. As a result of that, we do get people signing specific proposals or even signing contracts on the show floor." Post event, IMEX surveys its hosted buyers on their experience, and among the various questions "we ask them to estimate the amount of business that they expect to place in the next 12 months with the exhibitors," Bauer explains. "So from that data we calculate that (IMEX America) hosted buyers placed approximately just over \$2.5 billion worth of business with the exhibitors."

POWERFUL MODEL

Paying for key buyers to attend, while a clearly powerful model, is not the only way to further valuable connections for exhibitors. Some organizations still get good ROI from a simple "matchmaking" service designed to foster business connections. One such organization is the New York, NY-based Specialty Food Association, which utilizes an online matchmaking tool provided by a2z Inc. "The day before the show, the buyers put in the type of products, attributes and any sort of demographics they're looking for, and the system matches the attributes of the exhibitors with (those criteria), and puts buyers and exhibitors together in 10-minute one-on-one sessions. It's like a speed-dating service," explains Bill Lynch, chief membership director. "The amount of participation in the program has doubled every year for the past three or four years. It's been tremendously successful."

The overarching priority is to promote exhibitor leads and connections. In fact, a recently released study "Scenarios for the Future: Convention Exhibits and Trade shows of 2016" identifies "Find Creative Ways to Deliver Leads" as a key takeaway. Leads will remain a critical metric for exhibitors, according to the year-long study commissioned by ASAE Foundation, Center for Exhibition Industry Research Foundation, Freeman, Gaylord Entertainment and PCMA Education Foundation. Furthermore, event manage-

"Buyers have a lot of control. They do their research and through our system they can send RFPs and messages to the exhibitors...prior to coming onsite, which makes the meeting onsite far more time-effective."



Carina Bauer
CEO
IMEX Group
London, England

ment is advised to "do everything possible" to help exhibitors generate leads, including matchmaking, setting appointments and creating targeted social functions.

Lynch observes, "A lot more business is taking place off the show floor than in years past. We absolutely promote connections, even informal connections over lunch. For example, we try to strategically place seating in a way that will encourage conversation."

MOBILE IS A PERFECT FIT

Mobile technology is certainly facilitating those exhibitor/buyer connections with 3G (third generation) and the significantly faster 4G wireless service. Francis J. Friedman, president of New York, NY-based Time & Place Strategies, a consulting company to the trade show meeting and event industry, cites one convenient function: "If you are setting appointments with people and they have a picture of themselves when they register, the picture will also transmit (to your device) along with the appointment. When you get to the booth or somebody gets to you, they know what you look like."

Mobile communications are a perfect fit for the dynamic nature of the trade show environment, adds Friedman, who was a contributor to Scenarios for the Future. "With a mobile app you can change your appointment, your location and all kinds of things on the fly." As can the show management. "If we have a schedule change, a session change or a meeting room change, we can communicate that directly (to attendees' mobile devices)," Weil says. "We can send updates to our floor plan to exhibitors; we no longer have to print addendums. We can highlight show specials or promotions. It is revolutionary in the sense that for the first time everyone has a device that we can talk to at the same time; we don't have to hope that they see that sign in the lobby. In those days you crossed your fingers and you hoped that a little more than half of the participants got the information." Electronic signage hasn't become obsolete, of course; rather, it is now often integrated with mobile technology. "If you have signage on the show floor or signage out in the halls, you can change that signage immediately wirelessly, so you don't have to string wire all over the place," Friedman says.

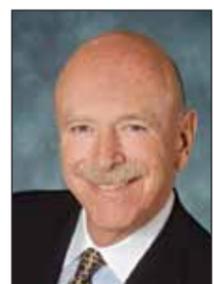
Apps aren't just about communicating schedule and session

More than 21,000 industry professionals from 61 countries and nearly 4,000 buyers connected at the Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit 2012 Convention + Expo in New Orleans in October.

info. They can also serve an engagement purpose. For example, IMEX TV, which broadcasts show floor interviews, footage and live "roundups" of each day, is accessible via the IMEX App, as well as YouTube, the event website and hotel room TVs. "We also have onsite at both our shows social media teams who roam the show floor to get a bird's eye view from people who are not the show organizers," Bauer says. "So you get different perspectives, and they Tweet, post photos and support exhibitors if they need any help on social media. It's a fun addition to the show that's been very well received."

REDUCING THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Yet another plus to mobile technology — or any electronic communications for that matter — is its eco-friendly aspect. Weil cites the onset of the "virtual tote bag" that includes electronic versions of all those brochures and booklets that used to be dis-



Francis J. Friedman
President
Time & Place Strategies
New York, NY

"If you have signage on the show floor or signage out in the halls, you can change that signage immediately wirelessly, so you don't have to string wire all over the place."

tributed in hard copy. As a result, "we are printing less material, and we are shipping less material," he says.

As a premier meeting industry trade show, IMEX certainly sets a good example when it comes to green practices and social responsibility. "We work with Clean the World, which collects all the soaps and half-used bottles of shampoo from our delegates' hotel rooms, repurposes them and sends them to an organization in Las Vegas called the Shade Tree, which is a shelter for abused women and children," Bauer explains. In addition, "at the end of the show we ask attendees to drop their badges into a recycling bin: one of them is for an organization called Opportunity Village, which provides employment to mentally disabled, and the other is for Shade Tree. So depending on how many badges are in each bin, we give a donation of a few thousand dollars to each of those organizations. Of course we have an impact on Las Vegas, which we hope is generally positive, but it's also about giving back to that destination. And we do that in Frankfurt as well."

Granted, some shows have an easier time reducing their "eco-



Photo courtesy of Produce Marketing Association

logical footprint" than others. Food shows in particular are major producers of landfill waste. "Our sustainability program is a big effort for us, but in the past few years it has become more important," Lynch says. Specialty food attendees are "a passionate community that cares about its impact on the environment. So we've really made a strong effort to trade awareness about the situation and educate the attendees about putting waste products into different bins."

Kent Allaway, vice president, meetings and trade shows, for the Newark, DE-based Produce Marketing Association (PMA), describes a similar effort: "Sustainability is very difficult for us because of the amount of trash. We basically move in and out every day. Although the physical booths are the same from day to day, the exhibitors are moving in fresh product every morning. So we take the leftover product to the food banks every day, and then do a full trash dump at the end. We have about 50 reefer trailers running every day onsite at the show, and then we donate over a quarter million pounds of fresh product to the food banks every year through Feeding America. We've done this for at least 15 years, and the amount of the donation has steadily increased through the years as we get more exhibitors on board with the program."

NEW APPROACHES IN SHOW FLOOR DESIGN

Another gradual development in Fresh Summit, the PMA's trade show, is more exhibitors wanting to set up in the central aisles, Allaway notes. "Eighteen years ago everybody needed to be by one of the entrances; it's taken us many years to get people to migrate more to the 'Broadway' area," Allaway observes. "They realized that as the doors open people go past their booths in the initial wake of people spilling into the show floor to get to a central clear point. So we've seen a migration in some of the bellwethers

to that central area." Once familiar with such traffic patterns, show management can create attractions to bring buyers to the less-trodden pathways. "We want to make sure there's always an even traffic flow throughout the floor so we put some different chef demos in feature areas," Lynch says. "We also have an area called New Brands on the Shelf, and we try to put it in an area that will drive traffic. The buyers know that their first stop is going to be that new product area."

The goal of show floor attractions is not only to spread out traffic flow, but also to keep attendees on the floor as long as possible. "We are trying to create more of a hub of activities within the show floor, putting some of the special areas such as food stations, the association's booth, education and so on, in a central location to give people more reasons to stay on the show floor," Weil comments.

The IMEX show is a case study in this kind of approach. "We have short seminars in a little theater running throughout the day, but also what we call Campfires, which are 10–15 people sitting in a circle with an expert on a subject and having a 20–30



Kent Allaway
V.P. Meetings and Trade Shows
Produce Marketing Association
Newark, DE

"Big corporate is now learning from medical that instead of spending money on pens and other tchotchkes, they can get more ROI from booth design, sponsorship" and other elements of the exhibit.

"The system puts buyers and exhibitors together. It's like a speed-dating service. The amount of participation in the program has doubled every year for the past three or four years. It's been tremendously successful."



Bill Lynch
Chief Membership Director
Specialty Food Association
New York, NY

minute conversation; it's very popular," says Bauer. "We also have Lightning Learning Labs, which are 15-minute presentations. And then we have an App Bar that is hugely popular, with education running throughout the day on the use of mobile technology specifically for events." The idea is to give attendees some of the education they want, while keeping the show floor busy. "It's our ethos that we don't take buyers off the show floor in the middle of the day. We've never allowed any (formal) education to take place during the core business hours, say 10-4. So for us (these on-floor activities) are the only way to provide some educational content during those hours, and we found it's what people wanted."

Monitoring floor traffic via RFID scanners — specifically how many attendees have entered a certain area over a certain time period — has become more affordable, Weil points out. But he stresses that RFID, like any investment, needs to be justified. "The big question is, if you are going to purchase that tool, how are you going to use the information you are gathering? How can it change your future planning? It might not be necessarily that interesting that a bunch of attendees are gathered in this particular spot. It could be helpful if you are pricing it as real estate: You say to exhibitors, 'We have statistics that show that 70 percent of our attendees go to the right wing of the hall every year.' So, know what you are trying to accomplish, and then figure out what technology to use, rather than just implementing it because other shows are."

FINDING VALUE

Just as show management needs to invest wisely in the features of their event, so do exhibitors themselves when it comes to the features of their booths. More of them seem to be learning from the approach that pharmaceutical show exhibitors have taken under the stricter PhRMA code, which has greatly limited the giveaway practice. "I think what we're starting to see is a carry-over of how medical exhibitors are continuing to find value working within the law," Allaway says. "Big corporate is now learning from medical that instead of spending money on pens and other tchotchkes, they can get more ROI from booth design, sponsorship" and other elements of the exhibit. Though giveaways will likely never go away, there's certainly value in learning how to rely less on them and still draw the "right" people. AC&F

Asia-Pacific

The World's Most Exotic Destinations Ready for Meetings Business

By John Buchanan

As U.S. associations focus on more international meetings and events aimed at attracting local attendees in an increasingly global economy — or bringing American attendees into alluring locations such as Macau, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea or Australia — the Asia-Pacific region continues to grow and evolve as a popular destination.

Once dismissed as distant outposts difficult to get to and lacking venues and amenities comparable to the U.S., Asia-Pacific destinations have labored long and hard to develop infrastructure that equals — and in some cases even surpasses — anything in the world.

And the ever-growing list of options now includes offerings from



The new Sydney International Convention, Exhibition & Entertainment Precinct will combine meeting, convention and entertainment facilities.

major meeting and convention players such as Las Vegas Sands Corporation, MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts.

Macau

Located on the Pearl River Delta just west of Hong Kong, Macau — a former Portuguese colony first settled in the 16th century — ranks as one of the world's most exotic destinations. Along with Hong Kong, it is one of two special administrative districts of the People's Republic of China.

Today, thanks to the presence of major hotels and related infrastructure from Las Vegas Sands Corporation, MGM Resorts International and Wynn Resorts, Macau is a fast-growing meeting and convention destination popular because of its ability to draw attendance from across the Asia-Pacific region while offering a unique fascination for U.S. attendees.

Like its renowned sister property in Las Vegas, the 3,000-unit, all-suite The Venetian Macau features stunningly realistic replicas of the architectural icons and canals of Venice, Italy. The sprawling resort complex includes more than 1 million sf of meeting and exhibit space, including the 15,000-sf Cotai Arena and 1,800-seat Venetian Theatre. Its acclaimed amenities include more than 30 world-class restaurants and a Mayo Clinic Health & Wellness facility.

The CotaiExpo features seven junior ballrooms, ranging in size from 10,031 sf to 15,284 sf, as well as four 689-sf boardrooms.

Located on the Cotai Strip, the nearby Sands Cotai Central complex features three hotels — a 636-room Conrad Macao, 3,896-room Sheraton Macao and 1,224-room Holiday Inn Macao Central — and 215,000 sf of meeting and event space.

Located at the historical center of Macau and overlooking the South China Sea, MGM Macau is a 35-story, 600-room resort that made its debut in December 2007.

Opened in September 2006 and the first local hotel to win a Forbes Five Star Award, the 1,004-unit Wynn Macau, owned by another Las Vegas powerhouse, Wynn Resorts, and featuring 23,680 sf of meeting and conference space, is a luxury resort integrated into Macau Peninsula.

Hong Kong

Much better known to the average American than Macau, Hong Kong is a sprawling Chinese metropolis that offers sophisticated infrastructure that has made it Asia's premier destination for meetings and conventions.

It features a number of major venues including the Asia World Expo, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre and Kowloon Bay International Trade & Exhibition Centre.

A portfolio of more than 250 hotels features a total of more than 70,000 rooms, supported by unique offsite venues and a wide range of internationally acclaimed restaurants.

Among a handful of new hotels is the four-star, 359-room Crowne Plaza Kowloon East, which features an 11,100-sf ballroom, one of the largest in Hong Kong, eight breakout rooms and a boardroom.

The 325-room Auberge Discovery Bay, is a five-star beach resort located along Discovery Bay on Lantau Island. The hotel features 13,000 sf of meeting space and a luxury spa.

The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) has been voted "Asia's Best Convention and Exhibition Centre" for the 10th time by readers of *CEI Asia*, the region's magazine for the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) and business events industry. In addition, HKCEC was voted "Best Convention & Exhibition Centre" for the fourth time in the 23rd Annual TTG Travel Awards 2012 conducted by TTG magazine, a travel trade business resource publication in the Asia-Pacific. The HKCEC provides 710,418 sf of purpose-built exhibition space, 215,278 sf of multifunctional venues and 59,201 sf of event support space.

On the other hand, associations seeking to bring their Hong Kong-based members to the U.S. for meetings may be aided by Senator Mazie Hirono's (D-HI) bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act, which will help Hong Kong to become eligible to participate in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, in April stated, "The U.S. travel industry applauds Senator Hirono for identifying



The award-winning Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

a simple fix that would help pave the way for Hong Kong to be considered for the VWP. It is important for Congress to continue to look for opportunities, such as the one presented by Senator Hirono, to drive increased visitation and spending in the United States. America and Americans will only benefit."

According to U.S. Travel, nearly 129,000 travelers from Hong Kong visited the United States in 2011.

Singapore

Singapore, a Southeast Asia city-state located off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula just north of the equator, has a rich and fascinating history that dates back to the second century.

Today, it is one of Asia's most urban destinations, even though the country encompasses 63 islands, and ranks as the world's fourth leading financial center.

Singapore is known as one of the cleanest and safest destinations in Asia, with a world-famous cuisine and street food scene.

Business magnate Sheldon Adelson, chairman and chief executive officer of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, also operates a major meeting and convention property in Singapore, the 55-story, 2,561-room Marina Bay Sands Hotel, the centerpiece of a complex that includes the 1.3-million-sf Sands Expo and Convention Center, the largest and most modern meeting facility in Singapore. Its infrastructure can support a convention with up to 45,000 attendees.

The convention complex's Grand Ballroom measures more than 86,000 sf, making it the region's largest, and it can accommodate up to 6,600 guests for a sit-down dinner and 11,000 attendees for a theater-style conference event. The facility can host 2,000 exhibition spaces and also includes 250 individual meeting rooms.

The Sands SkyPark is a modern architectural masterpiece that sits atop the hotel's three towers. The tropical oasis, which boasts 250 trees and more than 650 exotic plants, is the size of three

football fields. The Club at Marina Bay Sands is a private executive club lounge where hotel guests enjoy breakfast, afternoon tea and evening cocktails while taking advantage of breathtaking views of the city.

Marina Bay Sands also features some of Singapore's finest restaurants, including Waku Ghin and Osteria Mozza, both of which were recently named among Asia's 50 best restaurants.

Other major meeting properties in Singapore include the new, 240-room W Singapore Sentosa Cove, opened last October, and the 157-room Sofitel So Singapore, which will make its debut later this year. The Westin Singapore, a 301-unit hotel, will open in November in the heart of the city's financial district.

Korea

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) reported that the number of international tourists to Korea exceeded 11 million in 2012, and as of March 2013, more than 1 million international tourists visited Korea — just the second time international visitors topped 1 million in one month.

They expect this growth to continue. However, threats from North Korea may currently hamper visitation. As of this writing, KTO officials maintain that the country is safe for visitors. "North Korea has a long history of making confrontational rhetoric and empty threats to South Korea, the United States and other nations as well. All the experts in this matter, both international and based in the U.S., agree that there is no real or present danger that North Korea would act on its threats," Sejoon You, executive director of KTO's New York office said in a letter to the travel industry and travelers to Korea. "Korea remains a safe, pleasant and beautiful destination to be enjoyed now and later. All hotels, airports, airlines, cities and attractions are operating normally." Furthermore, the U.S. Embassy informs U.S. citizens there is no specific information to suggest there are imminent threats to U.S. citizens or facilities in the Republic of Korea.

Korea is constantly working on enhancing its competitiveness as a destination by developing various tourism programs including family-friendly experiences for association groups. For example, in Seoul, a walking tour of Cheonggyecheon is a great activity for families, as is a trip to Seoul Forest to see the animals, enjoy some ice cream, or have a picnic. Also, The National Museum of Korea makes for an educational afternoon, and the Samsung Children's Museum, which encourages young artists and scientists with hands-on exhibits provides a more interactive experience. In addition, Seoul has great theme parks including Lotte World, Everland and Seoul Land.

A few of the several MICE hotels in the Gangnam downtown section of Seoul include the 497-room JW Marriott Seoul with eight meeting rooms, which is close to the convention and exhibition center. The Imperial Palace Hotel offers 405 guest rooms, 13 restaurants and bars, a convention center, which is capable

of hosting 1,200 people at a time, and a fitness center. The Ritz-Carlton, Seoul has a total of 375 guest rooms including 83 suites and 100 club rooms as well as a variety of banquet and meeting facilities that can accommodate up to 500 attendees.

In the Gyeonggi Province, the Hallyu Tourism MICE Complex project is set for completion in 2017. "Hallyu" is the Korean term for the spread of Korean pop culture. Province officials and the Korea Tourism Organization are working together to make Gyeonggi Province Korea's largest center of hallyu tourism with the construction of the 15,000-seat K-pop arena (ready in time for South Korean pop singing sensation Psy's next K-pop concert), complete with shopping facilities, cultural institutions and MICE accommodations. Conveniently located, it will take 40 minutes by car from Incheon International Airport and downtown Seoul, and only 10 minutes away from the subway station.

Government officials and private developers also are working on plans for a high-tech medical tourism industrial complex in Daejeon City for some time after 2014. The center would include the capability to host large international medical conferences and much more.

Australia

Australia, another gem in Asia-Pacific's meeting and convention crown, is working aggressively to keep pace with its major competitors such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

Its most recent focus has been on a new wave of infrastructure development that includes the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition & Entertainment Precinct, a huge complex that will combine state-of-the-art meeting, convention and entertainment facilities. It will feature Australia's largest single convention venue, capable of accommodating 12,000 attendees, as well as a 35-story, 900-room hotel and an entertainment venue that will replace the current Sydney Entertainment Centre.

In January, the city debuted The Star, a multipurpose events center, which offers breathtaking views of iconic Sydney Harbor, whose skyline features the Sydney Opera House, one of the most celebrated architectural landmarks in the world. The Star can accommodate 1,000 attendees banquet-style or 3,000 auditorium-style.

Another new conference facility in Sydney is Water@Pier One, located at the Sebel Pier One complex. The new facility is aimed at small meetings and can accommodate 168 attendees cabaret-style, 220 banquet-style, 300 theater-style and 440 cocktail-style. Water@PierOne features eight individual reception and conference rooms.

One of Australia's most popular beach resorts, the 295-room Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa on its Gold Coast, has completed a \$26 million (Australian) renovation that includes new reception space and an upgrade to its meeting and event space, which can accommodate up to 1,000 attendees. AC&F



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Nevada

Adding Value to Glitz Has Revived Meetings in Las Vegas and Reno

Timothy Herrick

Glamorous, 24-hour excitement used to be the only image associated with the Nevada cities of Las Vegas and Reno. That image attracted conventions, trade shows, meetings and other events — and certainly planners recognized that hyperactive fun and glitz are undeniable attendee enticements. But the meetings industry — and the associations and other organizations planner professionals serve — are in a place that is now much more austere than in the past. One might even assume that the shine is off the apple. But it turns out the opposite is true, and not by accident.

In just a few short years, Las Vegas and Reno have success-

fully reinvented themselves, adapting to new economic realities. They've augmented what works in their destinations by implementing policies more relevant to the budgetary constraints and other considerations defining the current meeting planning environment. With competitive pricing, reinvestment in destination-wide meetings infrastructure, and providing planner-centric contracting, Reno and Las Vegas saw a significant rebound in the meetings business. Their strategy of adding value to glitz paid off in 2012 and indicates further growth in the near-term.

When the Great Recession began, and political debates over bailout funds and stimulus spending filled the headlines, the meeting industry suffered setbacks, but few destinations were as directly impacted as Reno and Las Vegas.

The AIG scandal — when executives of a leading financial firm that received government bailout funds, were seen gathered at a high-profile, Las Vegas luxury resort — negatively affected the entire meeting industry, but the damage to Nevada events was particularly acute, making many question the value of any event held in a city known mainly for fun.

"Beginning in '08, we saw some cancellations," says Danielle Babilino, senior vice president of hotel sales, Wynn/Encore. "The AIG effect was real for Las Vegas."

The second blow — this time to government meetings — came when reports surfaced last spring about excessive spending during GSA's 2010 Western Regions Conference in Las Vegas.

A MEETINGS TURNAROUND

But the impact of the nation's financial crisis overshadowed the ramifications of these sensationalized news stories. "The econo-

my had a more far-reaching impact on meetings of all sizes," says Chris Meyer, CEM, CMP, vice president of sales for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCA).

In 2012, the destination has seen a turnaround in the meetings business. Myer points out, "We are happy to see those impacts subsiding and business returning. We continue to see improvement in the travel and tourism market in Las Vegas, including the meeting and convention industry. In 2012, we welcomed more than 21,000 events and nearly 5 million business travelers."

In 2012, Las Vegas welcomed a record 39.7 million visitors and a 2.1 percent increase over 2011 — approximately a half-million more visitors than the previous high of 39.2 million set in 2007. Las Vegas hosted 21,615 meetings, trade shows or conventions in 2012, up 13.6 percent from the 2011 total of 19,029. The 2012 total is the highest number of meetings and conventions held in Las Vegas since 2008.

In other words, Las Vegas meetings — both booking and attendance levels — seem to be nearly back to pre-recession levels. The resurgence in conventions, trade shows, meetings and other events — a notable feat considering the anemic (so far) economic recovery — also appears to be spread across industry sectors.

"We continue to book a mix of all business," says Babilino. "The industries we have seen that are strong are tech and automotive, education and medical. We are seeing a big return of finance and

banking, which has been a major change, because they were the hardest hit by the recession and by the AIG effect."

"We have seen a tremendous rebound in meetings involving technology, financial and insurance segments," says Mike Dominguez, senior vice president of sales for MGM Resorts International. "This makes sense as these segments had fallen off significantly during the great recession. Associations are recognizing an increase in attendance, which again correlates with the improved economic environment."

Across the state, Reno may not be experiencing the same level of post-AIG resurgence, but according to John Leinen, vice president of sales, Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority (RSCVA)/Reno-Sparks Convention Center, while the AIG effect still seems to be impeding the return of government meetings, other sectors have revived. "The government segment has suffered as a result of misconceptions. Reno-Tahoe has always been a popular destination with the environmental, outdoor recreation, education and engineering segments. We are seeing more interest from medical, health care and corporate planners, while our sports segment is showing exponential growth."

INFRASTRUCTURE RE-INVESTMENT

Both Las Vegas and Reno have made recent, significant investments in their meetings and hospitality infrastructure. "With



A vision of the future — A conceptual design of the Las Vegas Global Business District, an international business destination coming in phases.

Rendering courtesy of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority



The world-famous Las Vegas Strip as seen from Mandalay Bay.

Photo courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau



“The city itself is a huge draw for potential attendees. As someone who works for a nonprofit and never has a large meeting budget, I appreciate the budget-friendly catering options and low-cost hotel rooms.”

Janice Prestwood
General Manager/Director of
Operations
Joint Commission on Allied Health
Personnel in Ophthalmology
St. Paul, MN

more than \$2 billion of reinvestment in the destination, Las Vegas is well positioned for continued growth in 2013,” says Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO of the LVCVA.

Adds Leinen, “Our hotel and tourism partners have invested more than \$1 billion into the community over the last five years. This includes hotel rooms, restaurants, resort meeting facilities, the triple-A baseball’s Reno Aces Stadium, the Midtown restaurant and boutique shopping district and so much more. Reno-Tahoe resorts offer a high-quality product to rival any of the traditional first-tier cities, but at a much greater value.”

This value is often more apparent to stakeholders than meeting planners or convention attendees. “Planners who bring business here understand very clearly why it’s a good value, and how we can help them execute better conferences and meetings,” says Amy Allen, director of marketing at Caesars Entertainment. “The issue really is making sure that decision-makers outside of the industry understand why Las Vegas is a legitimate place for business. It is the misperceptions by many of those individuals — and perpetuated by the news media — that have made it difficult sometimes for a planner to get approval for destinations like Las Vegas.”

LOW-COST FIRST-TIER EXPERIENCES

Affordability for attendees — defined as low cost and evident value for the price paid — tops the list for association planners utilizing Las Vegas. Joe Miller, chairman of the PowerSchool User Group (PSUG) of Michigan, is the acting planner for the annual National PowerSchool User Group Conference. A nonprofit association of teachers, administrators and other education professionals whose use PowerSchool software, the conference attendees are under significant out-of-pocket and/or school system budgetary restrictions. “It is the least expensive place I could find that has this amount of meeting space and hotel rooms,” says Miller. “Schools are on tight budgets, and I had to find a way to provide our attendees with a great event at the lowest possible price. I can’t justify moving our event to another city that might cause me to double my registration rates for my attendees.”

Compared with other first-tier cities, Las Vegas has “amazing value for the product in comparison,” says Veronica Kistner, vice president of sales, Red Rock Casino, Resort & Spa. “What makes it more affordable? Flight availability and hotel supply. Today’s planners want value, service and facilities for their meeting.”

“There is an abundance of daily flights in and out of the city from all major metropolitan areas,” adds Allen. “The proximity of the airport to the heart of the city — just a mile or so — along with the concentration of hotels along The Strip keeps ground transportation costs very low. The city’s large number of hotel rooms makes room rates very competitive.”

According to Leinen, “Reno-Tahoe provides one of the greatest value-to-quality ratios in the country. Hotel room rates average roughly 30 percent less than other major markets, and you won’t sacrifice any luxury while realizing those savings. Food and beverage expenses will cost you between 40 percent and 60 percent less here as well. One example is catered coffee at less than \$40 per gallon. You’d be hard-pressed to find that value anywhere else in the country. There are a couple of priorities we consistently see planners striving for — return on investment and creating positive memories for their attendees. Reno-Tahoe has made the necessary investment in creating a positive, successful experience for any group.”

Janice Prestwood, general manager/director of operations, Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO), who organized the ophthalmic technician continuing education seminar in August 2012, says, “The city itself is a huge draw for potential attendees. As someone who works for a nonprofit and never has a large meeting budget, I appreciate the budget-friendly catering options and low-cost hotel rooms.”

In contrast to other destinations, Prestwood insists that Las Vegas “is much more affordable.” A key savings has to do with how well attuned Nevada has become to current convention budgetary restraints. “Many large cities like Chicago, San Francisco or New York tend to charge large meeting-room rental fees and typically have a high F&B minimum,” Prestwood continues. “In Vegas, I can typically have the rental fees waived and can negotiate a more acceptable F&B minimum, while also getting comped items, such as a one-hour, wine-and-cheese reception, door prizes, etc.”

REPOSITIONING GAMING

Nevada’s hospitality industry was built on gambling, and casinos often can offer more competitive rates on lodging or catering because the tables, slots and other games of chance generated so much revenue. But gaming is no longer unique to Las Vegas and Reno, nor by itself an adequate attraction for 21st century meeting attendees. Nevada has repositioned gaming, making it one aspect of the destination experience, but not the entirety of that experience. Simultaneously, Reno and Las Vegas significantly bolstered their entertainment, dining and other activities, greatly expanding the options for meeting attendees.



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L A S V E G A S



Joe Miller
Chairman
PowerSchool User Group of
Michigan

“Schools are on tight budgets, and I had to find a way to provide our attendees with a great event at the lowest possible price. I can’t justify moving our event to another city that might cause me to double my registration rates for my attendees.”

Today, when planners talk about the attraction of Las Vegas to attendees, they claim gaming as just another line-item on a long list of enticements. Jan J. Ross, director of meetings and education, Physician Insurers Association of America, books her annual event every other year in Las Vegas, because the city always generates “high attendance,” adding that the biggest misconception about Las Vegas “is that if you don’t gamble, there’s nothing to do.”

“We have been operating for some time on the suspicion that the draw of gaming will never again be the motivating factor it was decades ago,” says Leinen, who points out “there are only two states in the whole country that don’t offer some level of legalized gambling. The proliferation of gaming has decreased the stigma associated with the activity. The gaming expansion has created an environment where going to a gaming destination has for the most part become a nonfactor.”

Nevada destinations now emphasize the total meeting experience, a marketing strategy that has succeeded with meeting attendees as well as leisure travelers. “Gaming is an amenity that Las Vegas offers,” explains Babilino. “The proliferation of gaming around the country means gaming is no longer unique to Las Vegas. Las Vegas offers the best in a range of amenities, from nightlife and entertainment to spas and golf. We look at gaming as one of the factors that brings people to Las Vegas, but not the only factor.”

Miller agrees: “Vegas is about more than gambling. Yes that does go on out there, but it also is a great destination. From our conference evaluations, people love us having it in Las Vegas.”

BUDGET-FRIENDLY

For planners, organizing events in Nevada can be a more seamless contracting experience than in other destinations. That’s because, unlike other destinations where other industries can be more prominent, in Reno and Las Vegas, leisure tourism, business travel and group meetings and conventions dominate. This focus means a degree of attentiveness to planner needs. “The facilities are top-notch, and hotels have vendors that take care of all of my Internet demands for my training,” says Miller. “In other cities, we have issues getting our bandwidth needs met. We usually have

a reception sponsored by some of our vendors that we like to provide entertainment for. Where else could I find a selection of great local talent to perform for us outside of Las Vegas?” He adds, “We had Kevin Lepine perform a PG-13 version of his Hypnosis Unleashed show from Hooters Casino Hotel Las Vegas; the Mac King Comedy Magic Show from Harrahs; and we also had Last Comic Standing winner John Heffron perform for us. Only in Las Vegas could we get shows like this at prices that fit in our budget.”

Nevada offers a dynamic variety of meeting spaces, so that receptions, parties and ancillary sessions can be organized in a range of nearby settings, infusing a distinct energy to all event components of a convention or trade show. “We gave away prizes that included tickets to shows and attractions that were going on while we were there,” says Miller. “We had Vegas entertainers perform for us at our evening networking receptions. Attendees just loved all the wonderful resorts that they could tour and spend time in.”

Says Babilino, “In Las Vegas, you are dealing with a team of professionals that deliver all the needs to planners. We have been handling meetings of all sizes longer than other cities, and that makes a huge difference. Time is money, and we save the planner time. We have the widest range of options that will fit a budget’s needs, of both the overall event and for the individual attendees.”

“The Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority holds a unique owner-operator role at numerous facilities throughout the destination as well,” says Leinen. “This gives the RSCVA more flexibility regarding negotiations and allows for relaxed labor policies, which directly translate to cost savings for meeting planners. An added benefit more for attendees than planners is free parking, free valet parking and free airport shuttles to every major resort in the city.”

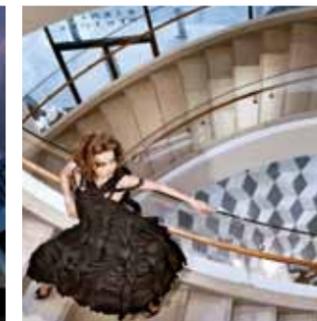
GLITZ APPEAL

Prestwood points out that the biggest misconception is not that Las Vegas is too glitzy, but that the glitz will impede an event. She dismisses the notion that attendees will come to Las Vegas, but not the classes, that they will be “out playing.” Instead, with so much going on after hours, “We actually have better attendance in Vegas during the day than a lot of cities, because attendees know they aren’t going to miss anything,” she continues. “Sure, there is glitz and excess in Vegas, but that’s a win-win for us and the attendees. When planning any meeting, we see our largest attendance when in Las Vegas hands down.”

Fun and unforgettable experiences are a critical reason why attendees attend meetings and conventions, but planners also have to provide verifiable value to stakeholders. Nevada has situated itself at the forefront of the meeting industry resurgence, giving meeting planners tangible assurance that Las Vegas and Reno are places where business can get done, where cost-effective meetings will succeed.



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Chris Meyer, CEM, CMP
Vice President of Sales
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors
Authority
Las Vegas, NV

“I think if you ask our regular clients, they will tell you that what is appealing to them about holding their functions in Las Vegas is the success rather than the excess,” says Meyer. “Our research has shown that events that move to Las Vegas from another destination regularly see an increase in attendance of approximately 15 percent. Trade show attendees are more likely to be the decision-maker for their company with the power to write business there on the show floor. So, anyone who still is hung up on the perception of excess in Las Vegas has not taken the time to experience a business function here.”

LAS VEGAS NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority recently unveiled an ambitious plan for the Las Vegas Global Business District, a dynamic reimagining of the Las Vegas Convention Center neighborhood. To be completed in phases, the Las Vegas Global Business District creates an international business destination by incorporating major renovations of the Las Vegas Convention Center, creating a World Trade Center facility and developing transportation connectivity through a centralized hub. “Las Vegas is known for defining moments that change the hospitality industry, and this project will be the next defining moment,” predicts Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO of the LVCVA. “This is more than a project, this is a vision that will launch Las Vegas forward ahead of the competition for decades to come.” The project includes a Las Vegas Convention Center renovation, creating a convention district campus, building additional exhibit space, meeting rooms and general session space; upgrading technology; adding new food and beverage outlets; and, creating a grand concourse connector with more lobby space. Outside the convention center, plans call for outdoor public and gathering spaces and various design elements to further enhance the neighborhood. This will be the first major expansion of the 54-year-old Las Vegas Convention Center in more than a decade.

The Genting Group has announced plans to develop **Resorts World Las Vegas** on the 87-acre site of Boyd Gaming’s abandoned Echelon project. The first phase of the project will build

3,500 guest rooms, 500,000 sf of convention space, 175,000 sf of gaming space and several luxury dining and retail amenities. A replica of the Great Wall of China and more than 300,000 feet of pool and water features also are planned. It is expected to open in 2016.

Throughout 2013, **Mandalay Bay** will introduce new amenities including restaurants, a visionary nightclub experience, a dynamic day club, a new show from Cirque du Soleil revolving around the King of Pop, Michael Jackson, and Delano Las Vegas, a new all-suite boutique hotel within the resort.

Wynn Las Vegas has unveiled a new collection of resort experiences including The Spa at Wynn Las Vegas, a 45,000-sf, renovated retreat that features 45 updated treatments, fitness center, a full-service salon and barbershop, steam rooms, saunas, whirlpools and relaxation lounges; the new Andrea’s, an Asian fusion restaurant that combines dining and nightlife; Alegro (classic Italian-American favorites); Mizumi (sushi and sashimi, robata-yaki selections and teppanyaki); and The Supper Club at Botero, a hip and trendy nightlife dining experience, offers light bites, small plates and cocktails set to music by guest deejays. Wynn Las Vegas features 2,716 luxurious guest rooms and suites, a 111,000-sf casino, 15 restaurants, a nightclub, spa and salon, an onsite 18-hole golf course, 223,000 sf of meeting space and approximately 74,000 sf of retail space. Encore, adjacent to Wynn, features a 2,034 all-suite hotel, 72,000-sf casino, six restaurants, two nightclubs, a spa and salon, approximately 60,000 sf of meeting space and approximately 27,000 sf of upscale retail outlets.

Aria Resort & Casino located at the heart of CityCenter — the 67-acre city-within-a-city located between Bellagio and Monte Carlo — has added several state-of-the-art capabilities, including: built-in videoconferencing capabilities that allow meeting organizers to stream video and simultaneously broadcast their events to up to four locales; plug-and-go live shots for newsworthy events, featuring 7,500 strands of fiber-optic cable in the convention space alone; built-in plasma televisions and HD projection screens; concert-quality sound system; control panels that simplify the management of technology within a meeting space; and fast wired and wireless Internet. Aria is the largest and tallest structure at CityCenter and features 4,004 guest rooms and suites, 16 restaurants, 10 bars and nightclubs, and a casino with 150,000 sf of gaming space, a 300,000-sf convention center and an 1,800-seat theater.

The **Sands Expo and Convention Center** will complete a facility-wide renovation and “refresh,” a construction project that upgrades the facility’s exterior and interior. The 2.25+ million sf of show floor and meeting space features “no-freight” aisles ensuring easy access to the show floor and an onsite Specialized Event Services department and a personal Event Services Coordinator assigned to planners. The facility is connected to The Venetian and The Palazzo, which together offer more than 7,000 guest

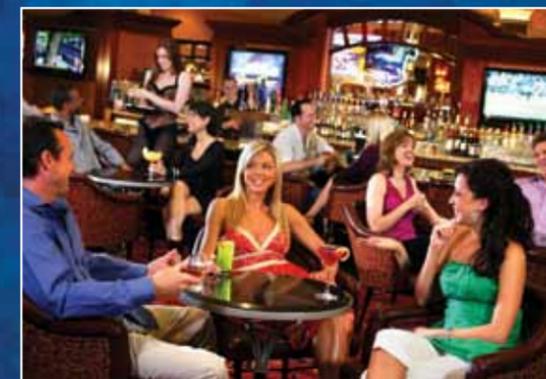
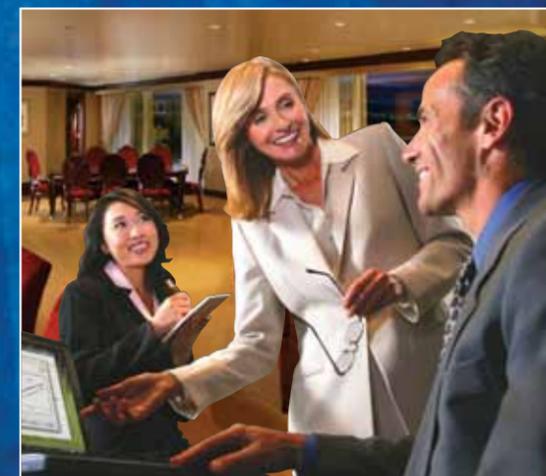
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Las Vegas Sands Corp. has recently expanded its custom Sands ECO360° Meetings program. New offerings include “Green Meeting Concierges” to guide the entire sustainable meeting-planning process, “Sands ECO360° Event Impact Statement” — a report to track a meeting’s sustainability performance, and the option to add community engagement events to the meeting experience. Meeting organizers may work with a Sands Green Meeting Concierge who also uses the new Sands ECO360° Event Planning Tool to work closely with clients to customize their programs, often innovating and implementing new practices to help them meet individual sustainability goals.

MGM Grand is debuting a spectacular new venue overlooking The Strip: Hakkasan Las Vegas Restaurant and Nightclub includes approximately 75,000 sf of space over five levels. The nightclub debuted April 18 and the restaurant opens May 3. The new project follows on the heels of the resort’s recently completed \$160 million “Grand Renovation” project that included a remodel of all of the resort’s 3,570 Grand King and Queen guest rooms and 642 suites.

MGM Resorts International has partnered with Cisco Systems to create what they describe as “the highest-performing wireless LAN in the industry” to allow guests to enjoy quality Wi-Fi on multiple wireless devices. The rollout of the new service in low-rise public spaces was completed at the Bellagio, MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay and The Mirage late last year, and the Monte Carlo, New York-New York, Luxor and Excalibur will receive the new service this year. The rollout of the new service in guest rooms also has begun.

The 2,163-room **South Point Hotel & Spa** is located just off The Strip, offering a self-contained meetings and entertainment destination with 165,000 sf of exhibit, meeting and banquet space, as well as a 4,400-seat arena, 64-lane bowling center, 16-screen movie complex and Costa del Sur Spa, which recently completed a total makeover of its facilities and services. The hotel also offers shuttle service to The Strip.

Caesars Entertainment is continuing work on its more than \$500 million dining, shopping and entertainment district The Linq, which will feature the world’s largest observation wheel — the 550-foot Las Vegas High Roller. The company also is undergoing major projects at its other properties, including the opening of the **Nobu Hotel at Caesars Palace** and unveiling renovations at **The Quad Resort & Casino**, formerly the Imperial Palace.

RENO NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

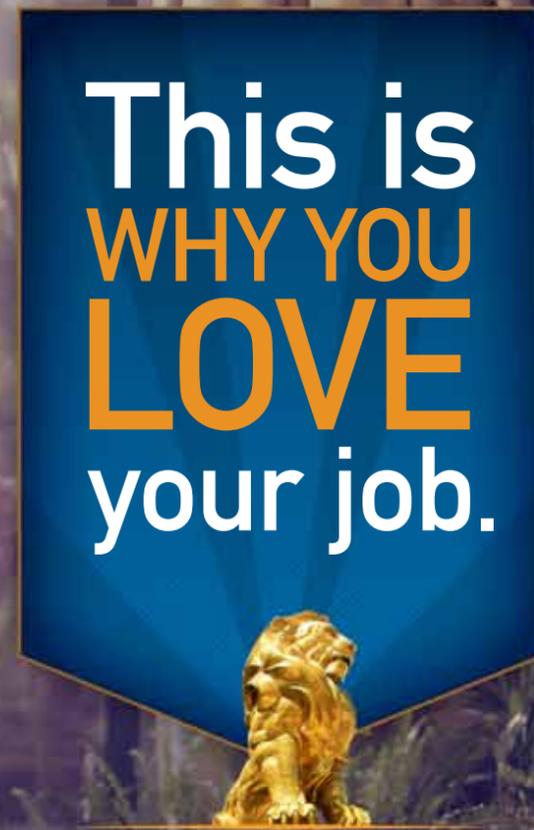
Reno is the place where your inner dude can abide. The first, and only, satellite to the International Bowling Museum & Hall of Fame, based in Arlington, TX, opened at the **National Bowling Stadium** in April of 2012. The museum features displays of bowling artifacts, history, technology and more. The National Bowling Stadium also is undergoing a \$15 million renovation, which has recently completed the new Kingpin Club by Brunswick featuring a full bar, as well as 10 new competition and training lanes. These improvements are part of an agreement which will bring United States Bowling Congress Tournaments back to Reno from 2018–2030.

Silver Legacy Resort Casino is undergoing \$6 million in additions, upgrades and renovations, including a new Starbucks on the main casino floor, and a new, old-style Mexican hot spot — Hussong’s Cantina-Taqueria. The resort has added the Aura Ultra Lounge, featuring the only Blender Bar in Reno.

Under new ownership, **Grand Sierra Resort & Casino** is completing a \$25 million renovation, which includes a new lobby, upgraded to a contemporary design with rubbed bronze and brushed aluminum; chic redesign of the property’s Summit Suites; and a new, premier ultra-lounge, Wet, featuring flair bartenders, live music and exclusive design features. The new Mexican restaurant Cantina, offers 115 different tequilas. To open in 2013: an indoor pool, nightclub, sports book and racquetball court. The facility’s 200,000+ sf of meeting space also is undergoing extensive renovation this year.

In September 2011, **Peppermill Resort Spa Casino** said goodbye to its natural gas boilers when it completed a two-year project to harness the power of a geothermal well more than a mile beneath the resort. The \$9.7 million project started in 2009, and was completed shortly after engineers found a sufficiently heated water source more than 4,400 feet underground. Geothermal energy now heats all 2.1 million sf of the Peppermill as well as all of the property’s water, including the 43,000-sf Spa Toscana, and two outdoor swimming pools and spas. This environmentally friendly project will save the Peppermill millions of dollars in heating costs, while greatly reducing the property’s carbon footprint. The geothermal well is said to be the deepest in the City of Reno, and the Peppermill is said to be the only resort property in the U.S. whose heating source is totally provided from geothermal energy produced on the immediate property.

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Jamey Dempsey was named senior sales manager of Hilton Orlando, Orlando, FL, responsible for the citywide, association and Midwest corporate sales efforts. He most recently served as director of sales for Play With a Purpose in Orlando.

Visit Phoenix has named **Troy Karnoff** as director of national accounts, based in Chicago. He most recently was director of Midwest region sales for Team San Jose, San Jose, CA.

The Peabody Memphis, Memphis, TN, has named **Donna Pope** and **Marshall Thompson** as national sales managers. Pope, who is responsible for the Washington, DC, market, previously served as general manager at the

Fairfield Inn & Suites and the Comfort Suites, both in Olive Branch, MS. **Thompson**, who will handle the Greater DC, Maryland and Virginia markets, was director of sales and marketing at the International Palms Resort & Conference Center in Orlando, FL.

The San Diego Tourism Authority has rehired **Lynn Whitehead** as national sales director in its citywide sales division based in the Washington, DC, office. Her most recent position was director of national accounts for the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Omni Nashville Hotel, Nashville, TN, has named **Shelley Bankard-Weaver** as national sales manager for the Northeast

region. She formerly served as national sales manager for the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, Nashville, TN.

The Greater Ontario Convention and Visitors Bureau, Ontario, CA, has named **Sean Keliiholokai** as director of sales and marketing. He was director of sales for the Hyatt Regency Orange County, Garden Grove, CA.

Jerry Cito was promoted to senior vice president, convention development for NYC & Company, New York City's official marketing, tourism and partnership organization. Previously, he was first vice president, convention development for NYC & Company. AC&F

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